

## **Transitioning to a Next Generation Human Space Flight System**

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

### **Mr. Michael McCulley**

Chief Executive Officer United Space Alliance

---

Summary of Testimony of  
Michael J. McCulley  
President and CEO  
United Space Alliance  
Before the  
Subcommittee on Space, Aeronautics and Related Sciences  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
U.S. Senate  
March 28, 2007

Mike McCulley, president and chief executive officer of United Space Alliance (USA), addressed the Subcommittee on current Space Shuttle transition planning operations and the planned retirement of the Shuttle fleet.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

Mr. McCulley, a former NASA Astronaut, spoke on behalf of the 10,400 men and women of United Space Alliance, located primarily in Texas, Florida, and Alabama. The company is the leading human space flight space operations company in the world with experience in all aspects of ground processing, mission operations and planning, major system integration, and in-flight operations of multipurpose space systems.

Mr. McCulley stated that there is a four-to-five-year gap between the final Space Shuttle flight in September 2010 and the first planned crewed launch of Ares I, in 2014 or 2015. During "the gap," the United States will be dependent on Russia, ESA, Japan and COTS developmental vehicles for human and logistics transportation to the International Space Station. He stated that this gap will jeopardize U.S. space leadership and that the gap must be shortened as much as possible. He suggested neither the FY 2007 nor FY 2008 budgets are adequate to achieve the policy goals established in the Vision for Space Exploration.

McCulley told the subcommittee that USA is focused on retaining the skills of its employees and they have started company-wide initiatives that involve workforce training and development of skills for early Constellation work.

He also stated that the stockpiles of Shuttle-unique hardware are reaching sufficient levels to support the remaining missions so, therefore, contracts are not being renewed and the production and manufacturing of many "Shuttle-only" elements are being terminated. These capabilities, he said, once shut down, are costly, or impossible, to restore. He urged that NASA must have a plan in place soon, as well as the funds to implement it, if the nation is to retain skills and apply years of experience to the new missions of exploration.