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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Mr. Donald W. Douglas, Jr.  
Douglas Aircraft Company  
3000 Ocean Park Boulevard  
Santa Monica, California

Dear Mr. Douglas

The failure of the booster on Discoverer 27 is causing me great concern. The Thor booster should be the most reliable of all the U.S. boosters and it seems to me that failures due to human error should be at the absolute minimum by this time. I understand that a faulty application of adequate procedures of recording changes resulted in a wiring error, and that the circuitry check procedure failed to isolate the error that caused the booster failure.

These experiments are of the highest importance to the nation in support of the space program. It is absolutely unacceptable that this type of failure should obstruct our progress. Douglas Aircraft Company, as a major Department of Defense contractor, must deal promptly and severely with this case of deviation from procedures in order that it does not reflect in future negotiations on other Department of Defense contracts.

Please inform me at your earliest convenience of the actions you have taken to prevent similar recurrences.

Robert S. McNamara

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In Accordance with E. O. 12958

on NOV 26 1997

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