



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of the Chairman

MAY 17 2000

Commander William S. Donaldson, USN/Ret.
39175 Cobrum's Wharf Road
Avenue, Maryland 20609

Dear Commander Donaldson:

This letter is in response to your February 19, 2000, letter and enclosures regarding the TWA flight 800 accident in which you repeated your belief that a missile caused the accident and made a number of other unsubstantiated accusations.

Your allegations regarding the National Transportation Safety Board's investigation are not supported by the vast amount of factual evidence that has been gathered during the investigation with the participation of the many parties to the investigation, or by the extensive tests and research accomplished in connection with the investigation.

Parties to the Safety Board's investigation include Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, TWA, the Air Line Pilots Association, Honeywell, and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. Experts consulted during the investigation include researchers from the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Navy, and some of the most prestigious universities and technical institutions in the world, including Sandia National Laboratories; University of Pittsburgh; Wright Patterson Research Laboratory; Desert Research Institute, University of Nevada; California Institute of Technology (CIT); and Christian Michelsen Research. Representatives of these organizations and institutions have had full access to the evidence, and their research has provided important information for the investigation, such as Exhibit 20F, produced by CIT, which examines the explosive characteristics of Jet A vapors. Numerous other examples can be found in our public docket. This investigation has been extensive, arduous, comprehensive, and open. Everyone associated with it has been encouraged to express his or her concerns regarding the findings of the investigation.

In addition, in accordance with the Safety Board's standard procedures, all parties to the investigation have been asked to provide submissions detailing their analyses, conclusions, probable cause(s), and recommendations. The Board will carefully consider these submissions as it prepares the accident report, and they will be entered into the public docket of the accident. On August 22 and 23, 2000, the Board will meet in public to discuss the final accident report, which will address technical issues raised in your letter.

Finally, regarding the Alaska Airlines flight 261 investigation, your statement that "not one federal official paid any attention to the surviving family members" is erroneous. A number of Government officials met with the families, including representatives from the U.S. Navy, the

U.S. Coast Guard, the American Red Cross, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Representatives from numerous State and local organizations also met with the families. In addition, I spent 4 days with them in Los Angeles, California, and have had numerous conference calls with them since then.

Sincerely,



Jim Hall
Chairman