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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548



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INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

E-168707

JUN 26 1976

The Honorable Jacob K. Javits
United States Senate

Dear Senator Javits:

In response to your letter of June 23, 1976, and the enclosure from your constituent Edward J. Branca, Jr., concerning use of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) ATS-6 communications satellite to broadcast educational television programs in India, we made an inquiry and a NASA representative provided the following information on the joint NASA-India venture.

The AIS-6, an experimental Applications Technology Satellite launched by NASA on May 31, 1974, has a principal objective of exploring the technical feasibility of erecting a large antenna structure in space and being able to point it accurately. To refer to it merely as a communications satellite is somewhat misleading, since several other applications are also under experimentation. These include meteorological and navigational applications, and scientific experiments in the space environment. The experimental AIS-6 satellite, thus, was independently planned and programed by NASA for these other purposes, which would proceed without regard to the specific Indian application.

NASA engages in two types of international programs--cooperative and reimbursable. The latter type refers to those programs in which NASA is, in effect, providing a service to the other participating country. These programs require the reimbursement to NASA of all costs associated with providing the service. The joint NASA-India venture, on the other hand, is a cooperative international program in which NASA and India have a mutual interest. According to the Memorandum of Understanding between NASA and India's Department of Atomic Energy, India is allowed the use of NASA's ATS-6 satellite for a period of 1 year to test the effectiveness of satellite-based television broadcasts in stimulating its national development. NASA's participation

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in the program is scientifically motivated--to test the design and functioning of the satellite and gain experience on the utility of this space application. The cooperative program, known as the India/US ITV Satellite Experiment Project, began on August 1, 1975, and is scheduled to end on July 31, 1976.

According to the agreement between NASA and India, each meets all costs associated with its own participation, and there is no exchange of funds. In other words, all costs related to conducting the instructional TV experiment in India--antennas, earth stations, and other broadcasting facilities--are borne entirely by the Indian Government. NASA's space segment responsibilities do not go beyond the provision of experiment time on the satellite for 1 year.

If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call us.

Sincerely yours,

Charles D. Fasick

J. K. Fasick
Director