TRW-built NASA Aqua Satellite Progressing Smoothly Through On-orbit Checkout and Activation

Redondo Beach, Calif. — May 17, 2002 — NASA's TRW-built Aqua Earth Observing System (EOS) spacecraft is progressing smoothly through on-orbit checkout and activation following its successful launch on May 4 at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. Aqua is the newest in TRW's spacecraft line designed for environmental research and operational remote sensing missions.

A highlight of Aqua's checkout and activation to date is the deployment and powering-up of the Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer for EOS (AMSR-E), perched at the leading edge of the spacecraft. A conical spinning reflector, AMSR-E is rotating at partial speed with no disruption to the spacecraft and will shortly reach its operational speed of 40 RPM. A NASA-led team of ground controllers, including TRW (NYSE:TRW) representatives at Goddard Space Flight Center, will continue testing Aqua's systems, sensors and software, until the satellite becomes fully operational in a few months.

"TRW is looking forward to the many productive years Aqua will be on-orbit, providing data to help scientists understand the intricacies of the Earth's water cycle," said Tim Hannemann, president and chief executive officer, TRW Space & Electronics. "Aqua's picture-perfect performance so early in its orbital life validates the teamwork of NASA, TRW, launch vehicle and instrument providers as well as ground system operators. We are bringing the knowledge gained building Aqua to Aura, the next in NASA's Earth Observing System missions and to future missions such as the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System."

Aura is based on the same T-300 spacecraft bus design and has many components in common with Aqua, enabling TRW's experienced workforce to build it at a lower cost and with greater efficiencies than its sibling. Aura will host four science instruments designed to conduct research on the composition, chemistry and dynamics of the Earth's upper and lower atmosphere.

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