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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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Washington, DC 20515

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July 16, 1997

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Mr. Jim Hall
Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 E. Le Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Mr. Hall:

Thank you for testifying at our July 10 hearing on the TWA investigation. Your testimony was very helpful to the Subcommittee's understanding of the issues.

Unfortunately, other obligations prevented me from staying to hear your testimony. Therefore, I would like to pose the following questions for which I would ask you to provide written responses for the record. Please understand that many of the questions are asked not because I agree with the theory that underlies them, but merely because these issues have been raised by others, and I need your help in formulating answers to them. Please send a copy of your response to the Aviation Subcommittee in 2251 Rayburn House Office Building.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely,

BUD SHUSTER
CHAIRMAN

EGS:dsr
Enclosure

- Last year, it was reported that there was an unidentified sound at the end of the cockpit voice recorder tape. Has that sound been identified?
- It has been reported that tests have been conducted in which a missile was exploded near the fuselage of a plane to see if that could have set off the fuel tank explosion. Who conducted those tests? What have they revealed?
- Lightening has caused planes to explode in the past. Can lightening occur even in the absence of a thunderstorm? Could that have occurred?
- Is it true that a Navy P-3 flying without its transponder and "marking" the ocean with an infrared beam as part of an exercise with a submarine passed 10,000 feet above the TWA jet just before the explosion? What was the P-3 doing there? Could infrared or laser beams have set off the explosion?
- Is it true that at the time of the crash, three of seven military restricted areas near Long Island were active? Who requested the use of the airspace? Were Naval maneuvers being conducted there?
- Have French investigators been permitted to participate in the investigation?
- Does the military sometimes practice by locking missile systems onto commercial aircraft but then not actually firing the missile?
- Were all the aircraft engines intact when brought up? If not, how much of them was missing?
- Could you please comment on the theory of Bob Riordan of Dallas, Texas, copy attached, that a fatigue crack exposing wires led to the explosion.
- Have all the possessions of the victims been returned to their families?