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Dr. William S. Smith, Jr.  
President

OPERATING FOR THE  
NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

**Gemini Observatory**  
La Serena, Chile & Hilo, Hawaii

**National Optical Astronomy Observatory**  
Tucson, Arizona & La Serena, Chile

**National Solar Observatory**  
Sunspot, New Mexico & Tucson, Arizona

OPERATING FOR THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS  
AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

**Space Telescope Science Institute**  
Baltimore, Maryland

MEMBERS/SINCE:

Harvard University 1957  
Indiana University 1957  
Ohio State University 1957  
University of California 1957  
University of Chicago 1957  
University of Michigan 1957  
University of Wisconsin 1957  
Yale University 1958  
Princeton University 1959  
California Institute of Technology 1972  
University of Arizona 1972  
University of Texas at Austin 1972  
University of Colorado 1977  
University of Hawaii 1978  
University of Illinois 1980  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1981  
Johns Hopkins University 1982  
State University of New York at Stony Brook 1986  
University of Maryland 1986  
University of Washington 1986  
Pennsylvania State University 1990  
Iowa State University 1992  
Universidad de Chile 1992  
Boston University 1993  
University of Minnesota 1995  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1995  
Carnegie Institution of Washington 1997  
Michigan State University 1997  
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile 1997  
Australian National University 1999  
New Mexico State University 1999  
Rutgers University 1999  
Leiden University 2000  
University of Florida 2002  
University of Virginia 2003  
University of Toronto 2004  
Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias 2005  
Kiepenheuer-Institut für Sonnenphysik 2005  
Montana State University 2005

November 19, 2007

Mr. Peter Warry  
Chairman, Science and Technology Facilities Council  
**Polaris House**  
North Star Avenue  
Swindon  
SN2 1SZ  
United Kingdom

Dear Mr. Warry:

I am writing to you as President of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA). We manage operations of the Gemini Observatory on behalf of the Gemini Board to which the United Kingdom has been a partner for more than fifteen years. Over the time period since its founding, the UK has played a crucial role in forming the vision that is now Gemini.

The UK has contributed at every level in developing the management concept, the governance mechanism, the science concept, and the technical realization of Gemini. Our collective decision making has been strength for all involved. Gemini has been a uniquely successful experiment in international collaboration in a very visible field of science. The UK has greatly enriched this endeavor.

All the members of the Gemini community have been deeply disappointed at the announced decision of the UK to withdraw from the Gemini partnership. The UK has been a traditional leader in the field of astronomy and a valuable partner in Gemini. We wish to continue this valuable partnership.

I am aware that a final decision and a formal notice of withdrawal is pending. AURA will carry out all terms of the international agreement as appropriate and directed by the Gemini Board. As the managing organization responsible for the health of the observatory, we wish to minimize the impact of this decision on other partners and on Gemini observatory.

November 19, 2007

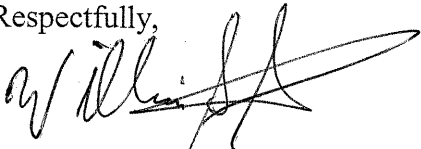
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It is crucial that:

1. Any arrangement other than a notice of withdrawal should result in a well-defined UK fraction/position and an equally well-defined timescale.
2. A proposal for other than withdrawal should not introduce more uncertainty than we currently face.

Finally I want to emphasize that an extended period of negotiation is not in the best interests of the Observatory.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William S. Smith, Jr.', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

William S. Smith, Jr.  
President

cc. Members of the STFC Council