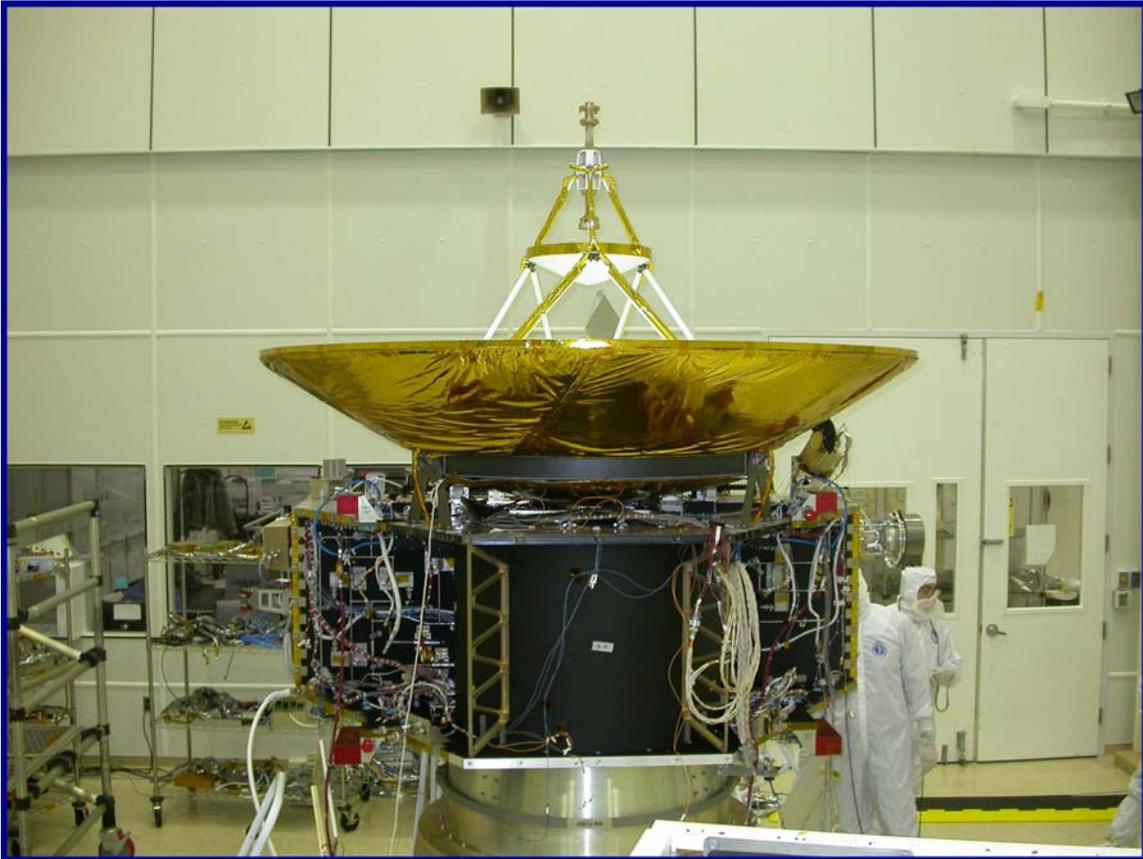


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Pluto New Horizons Mission

The Pluto New Horizons mission to Pluto and its moons was launched on January 19, 2006. Because of the distance between Pluto and the sun, the main power source for the spacecraft is a radioisotope, thermoelectric generator powered by plutonium. The picture below shows the spacecraft and its generator. To ensure the safety of the launch support team, KSC employees, and the general public, a multi-agency taskforce was formed to develop the Pluto New Horizons Radiological Contingency Plans to minimize the chance of an incident and to mitigate any hazards resulting from an incident.



The taskforce consisted of members from KSC, NASA Headquarters, the Applied Physics Laboratory, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and federal, state and local emergency preparedness agencies.

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The responsibilities of the taskforce, led by the coordinating agency representative—in this case, a KSC employee, included the following:

- Developing launch contingency scenarios
- Designing risk analyses associated with the launch contingency scenarios
- Developing and writing the Pluto New Horizons Radiological Contingency Plans based on the risk analyses
- Briefing the White House and other federal agencies on the contingency plans
- Briefing the Florida Governor and other state and local agencies on the contingency plans
- Briefing the public and the press on the contingency plans
- Performing emergency exercises per the plans
- Supporting spacecraft operations and launch activities

The team of over 60 support professionals from the agencies identified above assembled at KSC roughly a week before the launch. During this time, team members prepared monitoring equipment, tested modeling tools, and executed emergency exercises. On launch day, the team deployed to deal with any potential contingencies.

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