

Cosmogram-6 December 20, 1983  
J. Oberg, Rt2 Box 350, Dickinson, TX 77539

Holiday Greetings to One and All  
WHAT NEXT? Nov 28 quote by Boris Paton in PRAVDA: Successes "create the necessary preconditions for a qualitatively new step in space conquest -- the transition from long-term orbital stations regularly visited by replacement crews to a multiteam, permanently manned orbital complex." Viktor Blagov (Dec 8 quotation): "Preparations have begun in the USSR for a new space expedition scheduled for next year."

THREE-MAN CREW IN '84: Salyut-7's orbit will by early next year be low enough to allow a three-man Soyuz-T to reach it. Aleksandrov at PD: "In the future, with an increase in the number of the expedition, the narrow specialization principle will, it appears, be basic....[Kosmos-1443] can also be seen as a possibility for increasing the number of the crew and thus expanding the possibilities of research"

ANOTHER DIFFICULT LANDING: Quiet confirmation of "difficult meteorological conditions" (Aleksandrov's words, at press conference Dec 12); KZ (Nov 26) reports that crew spent first night inside recovery vehicle at fog-shrouded landing site; TRUD (Nov 25) says visibility had been 10 km just before landing, but fog began to appear unexpectedly and ceiling was only 150 meters at touchdown. Published photo of cosmonauts still in suits (EG, AW&ST) was taken in daylight, with paved surface in background -- the men had remained in their suits all night.

FUEL LEAK CONFIRMED, DOWNPLAYED. At Q&A after PC Dec 12, Shatalov told Western journalists, "There was a leak of some amount of fuel, but the station continued to be viable and that part of the system was excluded, switched off." Not reported in Soviet press, but Moscow World Service in English quoted, "There was also a slight leak of the propellants of one of the tanks, but the incident didn't affect either the flight or the research program." Lyakhov: "The station has been fully topped up with fuel" (Nov 26 interview at Baikonur).

LYAKHOV ON LAUNCH ABORT: At PC, "Indeed, a launching was planned for September 26 [sic! Moscow Time] and it is indeed true there was an accident, and indeed, our flight lasted longer and the program work was expanded and adjusted because of the accident." None of this has apparently appeared anywhere in the Soviet press, but western news agencies (AP, UPI, AFP, etc) carried it.

SOYUZ-T LIFETIME LIMITS: Ryumin (TRUD, Nov 25) confirms that when Soyuz T-9 was launched its "service life" was considered to be only 120 days. Subsequently, ground testing of similar equipment allowed extension of this value. "If we had the slightest doubt about the ability of Soyuz T-9 to function, we would have sent a rescue ship up to the crew right away."

MORE AW&ST REPORTS: Dec 12 issue recounts electrical power shortages which threatened viability of station (in mid-September I was told "Salyut-7 is in a Skylab-like situation" with respect to a severe power shortage), EVA preparation details (AW&ST claims L&A were NOT trained to this task, contrary to explicit Soviet assertions -- I tend to believe AW&ST on this), launch abort details (the launch escape system NEARLY did not work!), and claim that the Titov/Strekalov (STILL misspelled "Streaklov"! ) crew was merely a visiting crew purely to perform solar panel extension EVA (I am dubious). AW&ST says the mission was NOT extended and a mid-November landing had always been planned -- but this cannot be accurate, from reasons of the landing time-of-day and the original 120-day Soyuz lifetime limitation. I believe the mission was extended some 30-35 days (this suggests the planned T-9/T-10 overlap was to have been 20-25 days!).

U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT (Nov 28, p. 24) says that the Soviet space shuttle is code-named BURAN (SNOWSTORM -- also the call sign of Filipchenko, by the way) and "is expected to make its first flight next year". Report (by Stanley Wellborn, I believe) received with incredulity but I'm following up.

SALYUT-7: Rev 9609, Dec 18/0918.76 GMT, 344.14 W. P=90.92 min. WSR=23.121 deg/rev.

TYURATAM PHOTOGRAPHS: STS-9/Spacelab-1 passed repeatedly over the USSR. Hand-held 70-mm photographs were obtained of many sites including excellent views over Tyuratam (20-meter resolution), showing (inter alia) massive VAB-type structures and one enigmatic tall, thin object and shadow. Details and how-to-get-them instructions to follow.

DEAD COSMONAUTS IDENTIFIED: Reliable report received on training fatality (plane crash) of cosmonaut-trainee "Tokov" (first name possibly "Anatoliy") in late 1960s soon after his selection, aged mid-30s, formerly a test pilot. An independent source, now in Israel, tells of the death in a pressure chamber fire of cosmonaut "Boyko or Boychenko", soon after Gagarin's flight. It was Shatalov who privately told Stafford in 1974 that "six or eight" trainee cosmonauts had lost their lives in accidents; this report has since appeared in Sheldon works and Shatalov was source. The only Soviet cosmonaut-program death known to me since 1971 is Bui Thinkh Liem, backup Vietnamese cosmonaut, killed in plane crash the year after that mission was flown.

BIG BOOSTERS: I continue to be assured that both the new large booster and the new intermediate booster can be expected to fly at any time.

EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY: "Cosmogram" is not for subscription. I send it gratis to people active in the Soviet space sleuthing arena. I cannot predict how long I will keep this up but I enjoy summarizing raw material as it appears and collecting comments on it. Those of you who get it are invited to submit brief notices for inclusion in future issues (if any). Back issues are not available. Information herein may be distributed further with proper attribution.

RESOURCE SUMMARY: Here is what I see in my research, so anyone with other resources can help supplement each other: PRAVDA, OGONYOK, Aviatsiya i

Kosmonavtika, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (Soviet radio/TV reports on spaceflight), Soviet News Abstracts Publication (SNAP, from FTD, Foreign Technology Division, Wright-Patterson AFB, which abstracts reports from Soviet print media), JPRS (Joint Publications Research Service) translations of selected world literature on Soviet space, Aviation Week and Space Technology (AW&ST), Aerospace Daily, UPI wire, AP wire (usually), SPACEFLIGHT, occasional NOVOSTI stories (sent by the DC USSR embassy), occasional books and postcard sets gathered haphazardly.

MORE AW&ST -- December 19 issue had this item from "Washington Staff": "During a Moscow news conference, the Soviets also confirmed the existence of a Russian space shuttle program.... Another program publicly acknowledged by the Soviets last week is development of a Saturn 5 class booster and large new space station elements planned for launch on it. The Soviets are in final launch preparations for the booster...." None of the other western news agencies represented at the press conference reported this, to my knowledge.

HELP -- Still have obtained NO internal photographs or drawings of Kosmos-1443, and not one significant detail about the landing craft configuration. CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS -- UPI story by Daniel Gilmore, 11/19/83, reported on censored testimony last March before the House appropriations subcommittee on defense. Robert Cooper, head of DARPA, was asked about any new sputniks. He replied, "All of that space activity leads one to believe that the Soviets have some grand scheme....[They] are building components which apparently could come together into several different kinds of new space-launch vehicles. They are building at the same time (number deleted) brand new space-launch complexes that are as large and complex as the ones that we are building at KSC and VAFB for the shuttle program."

*Jim Oberg*