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NORTH AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE COMMAND

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**WIR 18/67**  
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# NORAD

Issue No. 18/67, 5 May 1967

## Weekly Intelligence Review

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### The WIR in Brief

#### Space

2 WITH LAUNCH OF COSMOS 156, SOVIETS NOW HAVE 2 WEATHER SATELLITES OPERATING 9  
 Near-total Earth coverage afforded 4 times daily.  
 'VOSTOK' ROCKET TO APPEAR AT PARIS AIR SHOW, SAYS NEWSPAPER 'LE FIGARO' 10  
 3 Story contains discrepancies but SL-3 or some other space-launcher may be shown.

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significant  
intelligence  
on space  
developments  
and trends

With Launch of Cosmos 156, Soviets Now  
Have 2 Weather Satellites Operating

Cosmos 156, which the Soviets launched from the Plesetsk missile/ space complex at about 1250Z, 27 April, is a meteorological satellite, judging by its orbital characteristics and electronic transmissions.

Orbital parameters of the new vehicle have been reported by the NORAD Space Defense Center as follows:

Inclination	81.19 degrees
Period	96.99 minutes
Apogee	640.60 kilometers (345 n. m.)
Perigee	586.36 kilometers (314 n. m.)

The orbital altitude of over 300 n. m. and relatively circular orbit are suitable for weather-type video, and the 81-degree inclination permits coverage of practically the entire earth twice each 24 hours. Its electronic transmissions are similar to those of previously launched Soviet weather satellites.

Cosmos 156 was launched by the SS-6 booster-sustainer and light Lunik upper stage used in all Soviet weather satellite launches.

The Soviets now have two meteorological satellites operating simultaneously, permitting coverage of the Earth twice each 12 hours; the other vehicle is Cosmos 144, which was launched 28 February 1967. Their orbits are nearly perpendicular to each other.

Weather satellites can help forecast optimum dates and times for launch of photoreconnaissance satellites and, in wartime, can supply international weather data which is freely exchanged in peacetime but would not be available during hostilities because of its operational utility.  
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'Vostok' Rocket to Appear at Paris  
Air Show, Says Newspaper 'Le Figaro'

The 4-5 March issue of the Paris newspaper Le Figaro (p. 26)  
said:

"One of the most exciting features of this year's Paris Air Show at Le Bourget Field will be the rocket which boosted the first manned space vehicle into orbit. It will be the first public showing of the complete booster, which has never been seen by Western specialists. The vehicle is described as a 3-stage rocket 47 meters long and weighing 300 tons. It was first used by the Soviets in orbiting the Vostok 1 with Yuriy Gagarin on board."

Le Figaro did not give the source of its information, so this report is difficult to evaluate. Its credibility, however, is marred by some inaccuracies:

- The SL-3, the launch system for the Vostoks, was first used in the Lunik-series moon probes of 1958-1960.
- The quoted length of 47 meters (155.1 feet) is believed to be much too long for the SL-3. (The weight of 300 tons is believed to be about 20% too heavy, assuming that the vehicle is loaded with propellants and assuming the use of metric tons.)

Nevertheless, there is a distinct possibility that the Soviets will transport the SL-3 or some other space-launch vehicle to Paris, for they have both the motivation and the means to do so. Displaying the vehicle at the Paris Air Show would stimulate world interest in Soviet technical accomplishments and would please President de Gaulle (whom the Soviets have been courting) because it would spur Air Show attendance. The AN-22, which is to be shown again at this year's Paris Air Show, could transport the SL-3 by making two trips. FTD has estimated (pp. 5-8, WIR 11/66) that the AN-22 could accommodate the sustainer and two of the four boosters in one load, with the two remaining boosters, and the Lunik upper stage making up the other load.

Considering the size and fragility of the SL-3 launch vehicle, it is also possible that it might be brought to France in a suitable ship or barge. In this mode of transportation, the vehicle could enter France at LeHavre and then be transported to Paris using the Seine River.

(Le Figaro; NORAD; FTD)

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