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NORTH AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE COMMAND

WIR

WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW (U)

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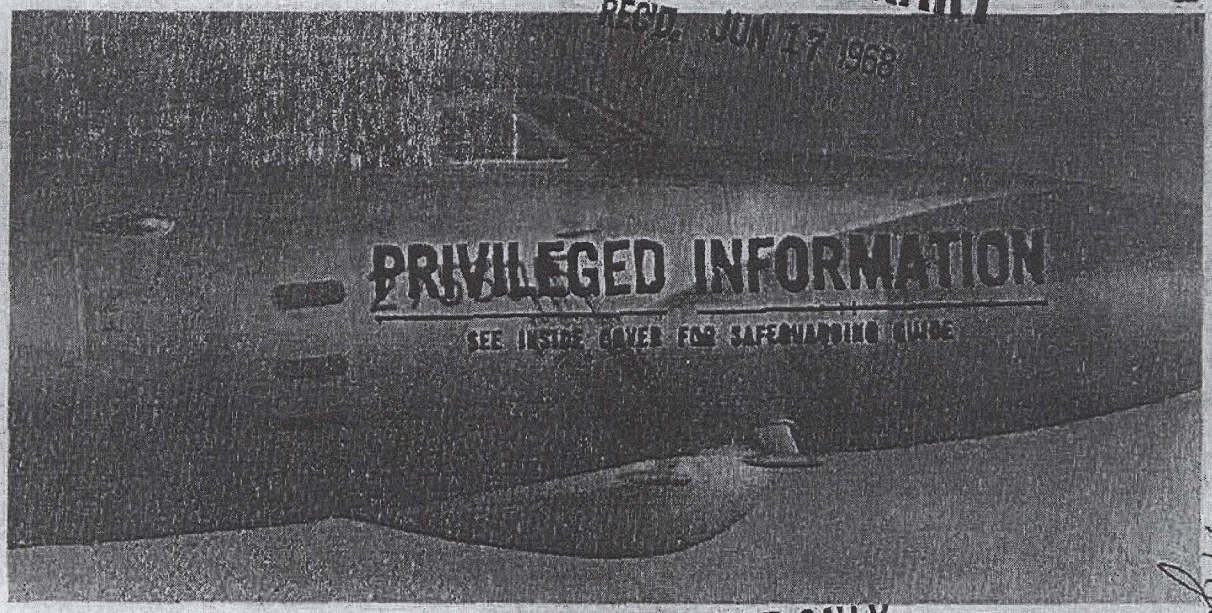

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17 Missile/Rocket, 3 Space Launches in May 1968 (S)

Over-all launch activity at Soviet space and missile test ranges and complexes was slightly below average during May 1968:

	May 1968	Previous Month (Apr 68)	Last Year (May 67)
Space launches	3	13	6
Missile launches	15	13	30#
Vertical rocket firings (Kapustin Yar)	2	---	---
TOTAL	20	26	36#

#These figures are unusually high because they include an unusual, unexplained series of firings of the SS-3, an MRBM which became obsolete in 1962.

A listing of the May 1968 launches is shown on page 31.
Most of the missile firings involved troop training.
Unusual features of the month's activity:

- Two SS-X-6s DICBMs were fired to a Pacific impact area 7400 n.m. from the Tyuratam rangehead; this is the longest range yet for any Soviet firings into the Pacific. The SS-X-6 (an SS-9 ICBM plus an upper stage for de-boost or de-orbit) is the vehicle previously used in apparent tests of a Soviet FOBS (fractional-orbit bombardment system).
- No R&D missiles were launched.
  1) The Soviets appear to behaving trouble with the solid-propellant KY-6, which has had several failures recently.
  2) The submarine-launched KY-8 may be in production; the next launches could involve tests of the production model.
- There were no launches of the SS-11 ICBM, despite the fact that this relatively small missile makes up, numerically, about half the Soviet operational ICBM force.

(Comments about the month's space launch activity -- or lack of it -- are given in the Space section of this WIR.)
(NORAD)
~~(SECRET)~~

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significant intelligence on space developments and trends

Only 3 Soviet Space Launches in May 1968 (U)

The Soviets last month launched only 3 spacecraft (Cosmoses 220, 221, and 222), all of them announced by TASS. Two were research satellites, one a navigational-aid satellite. Salient features of the month's activity:

- The 3 launches represented a sharp decline from the 13 attempts of the preceding month.
- All 3 satellites were orbited by the Soviets' smallest space-propulsion systems -- the SL-7 (the SS-4 MRBM plus an upper injection stage) and the SL-8 (the SS-5 IRBM plus a restartable upper stage). There were no launches involving any of the large propulsion systems based on the SS-6 ICBM (the workhorse of the Soviet space program since 1958) or the SL-12 (the Soviets' largest known rocket).
- No reconnaissance satellites were launched during the month, in contrast with the 2-per-month launch rate of the past 2.5 years.

The lull does not necessarily mean that the Soviet space program is in trouble. The large number of factors which affect the launch rate can easily combine to cause sharp fluctuations.
(NORAD)
~~(SECRET)~~

New Instrument Package for Successor to Venus 4 Apparently Being Readied ~~(S)~~

The Soviets are believed to be preparing a new instrument package for a Venus probe which will be launched late this year or early next. They have acquired pressure transducers from the French Aeronomical Service which were to be delivered before the end of May. These devices, which convert pressure into electrical impulses for recording on instrumentation,

are probably intended for use in a successor to Venus 4, which entered the Venerian atmosphere on 18 October 1967 and transmitted data on the Venerian atmosphere back to Earth.

The new instrument package will be designed to accomplish the same task but in a more satisfactory fashion than did the Venus 4 package. The Soviets claim that the Venus 4 instrumentation recorded the pressure, density, and temperature of the atmosphere of Venus from an altitude of 20-25 kilometers down to the surface of the planet. Other evidence indicates, however, that the package was designed for operation in an atmosphere of much lower density than was actually encountered, that it began to operate at an altitude well above that claimed by the Soviets, and that it probably collapsed and ceased operating at an altitude of about 26 kilometers above the surface (WIR 20/68). Consequently, the data recorded and transmitted to Earth by Venus 4 are believed to represent conditions at altitudes much higher than those reported by Moscow.

The Soviets will probably launch two or more Venus probes when the launch "window" opens again for such an event (between early December 1968 and early February 1969). They will have ample time in the coming 6-8 months to integrate the new instrumentation into the payload and to test the entire payload before launch. The Soviet design should be near optimum this time, in view of the experience gained with Venus 4.
(CIA; NORAD)
~~(SECRET)~~

Job of Space Research Institute Not Known; Could Be Development of Hardware or Theoretical Studies (C)

The mission of the USSR's Institute for Space Research, which apparently is a relatively new organization, is not known. Its existence was first noted in October 1967 when the Soviet press carried several items by its director, Georgiy Petrov. Nothing was said at that time about the nature of its work.

Yu. K. Khodarev, Deputy Director of the Institute, recently said that the institute is quite new and has a relatively small staff. It concentrates, he said, on problems of electronic control, guidance, systems reliability, computations, and communications, with emphasis on electronics rather than communications systems. Khodarev left the impression that he and his fellow scientists develop hardware for spacecraft, although he never cited an example of his work. It is still not entirely clear, therefore, whether the emphasis is on hardware development or on theoretical studies of spacecraft systems.
(CIA)
~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

Cosmos 223 De-orbited Routinely (S)

Cosmos 223, a military reconnaissance satellite which the Soviets launched from Plesetsk at about 1100Z, 1 June, was de-orbited on 9 June on Revolution 125, impacting about 90 miles west of Tselinograd at about 0603Z. The 8-day flight before de-orbit is normal for Soviet recce satellites. (NORAD)

~~(SECRET)~~

Soviet Missile and Space Launches May 1968 (U)

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Launch Date & Time (Z)	Vehicle	Rangehead
07 May, 1358	Cosmos 220 (SL-8)	Plesetsk
12 May, 0410	SS-9, ICBM	Tyuratam
17 May, 0735	SS-4, MRBM	Kapustin Yar
17 May, 1452	SS-4, MRBM	Kapustin Yar
20 May, 2205	SS-X-6, DICBM	Tyuratam
23 May, 0411	SS-9, ICBM	Tyuratam
24 May, 0405	SS-7, ICBM	Tyuratam
24 May, 0705	Cosmos 221 (SL-7)	Kapustin Yar
24 May, 1218	SS-4, MRBM	Kapustin Yar
25 May, 0601	SS-7, ICBM	Plesetsk
27 May, 0818	SS-4, MRBM	Kapustin Yar
27 May, 2315	SS-X-6, DICBM	Tyuratam
29 May, 0816	SS-5, IRBM	Kapustin Yar
29 May, 1431	SS-12, SRBM	Kapustin Yar
30 May, 1717	SS-4, MRBM	Kapustin Yar
30 May, 1331	Vertical Launch	Kapustin Yar
30 May, 2030	Cosmos 222 (SL-7)	Plesetsk
30 May, 2100	Vertical Launch	Kapustin Yar
31 May, 0600	SS-7, ICBM	Plesetsk
31 May, 0922	SS-4, MRBM	Kapustin Yar

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