

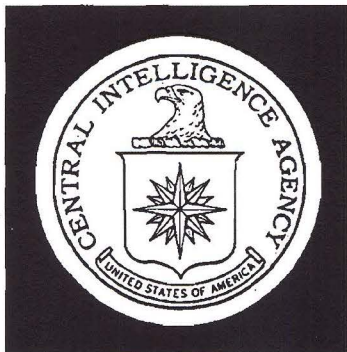
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WEEKLY REVIEW

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SOVIET SL-12 BOOSTER DIFFICULTIES CONTINUE

The Soviet space program suffered another setback on 23 September when an SL-12 launch vehicle failed in flight. The SL-12, which the Soviets probably intend to use as the general-purpose booster for their earth orbital, lunar, and interplanetary programs through the 1970s, has fully performed its mission only six out of fifteen times.

The latest failure occurred during an attempt to send an unmanned probe to the moon. The SL-12 inserted the probe into a temporary earth parking orbit, but the fourth stage failed to reignite and eject the probe into a lunar-bound trajectory. The Soviets announced the launching as Cosmos 300, an "...earth satellite...designed for carrying on space research...." The real mission of the probe probably was to land on the moon and perform experiments.

The last two previous SL-12 launches--Luna 15 and Zond 7--were successful and may have led the Soviets to believe that they had solved the earlier problems with the booster. The recent failure will further delay Soviet plans for a manned circum-lunar mission using the SL-12.

By comparison, the US Saturn I, which has about the same payload capability as the SL-12, has performed successfully 15 times in as many launches.

In addition to the disappointment that this poor performance has generated among Soviet space officials, the program is expensive to maintain. One SL-12 booster probably costs about \$45 million when measured in US-dollar terms not counting the payload, and over-all development costs have already reached some \$2 billion. ~~TOP SECRET~~

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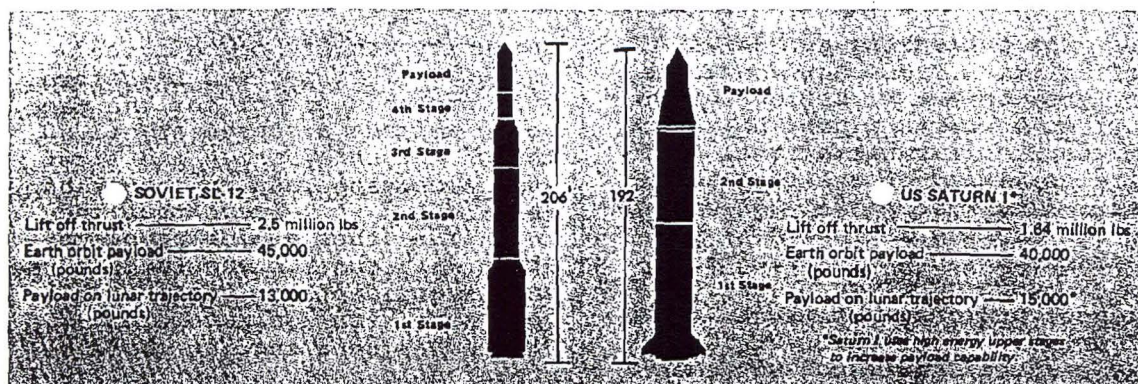
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Soviet SL-12 System Fails Again



SL-12 Record: 6 Successes in 15 Attempts

DATE	MISSION	SL-12 PERFORMANCE	REMARKS
1967 March	Cosmos 146/ SL-12 flight test	Partial failure	Probable 4th stage failure
April	Cosmos 154/ SL-12 flight test	Partial failure	4th stage failure to reignite
November	Circumlunar attempt	Failure	2nd stage failure
1968 March	Zond 4: simulated circumlunar flight	Success	
April	Circumlunar attempt	Failure	2nd stage failure
September	Zond 5: unmanned circumlunar flight	Success	
November	Zond 6: unmanned circumlunar flight	Success	
November	Proton 4: large scientific satellite	Success	Used only first three stages of SL-12
1969 January	Circumlunar attempt	Failure	2nd stage failure
March	Attempted Mars probe	Failure	Failed to achieve parking orbit
April	Attempted Mars probe	Failure	Crashed shortly after launch
June	Possible unmanned lunar attempt	Failure	4th stage failure
July	Luna 15: possible lunar soft lander/ return	Success	Crash landed attempting soft landing
August	Zond 7: unmanned circumlunar	Success	
September	Cosmos 300: unmanned lunar soft lander	Failure	4th stage failure to reignite

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