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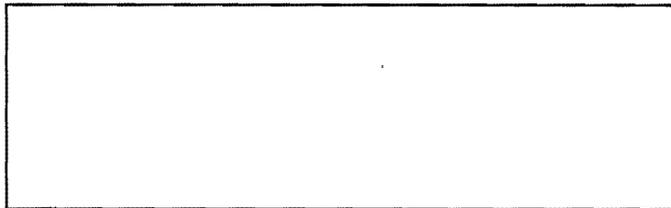
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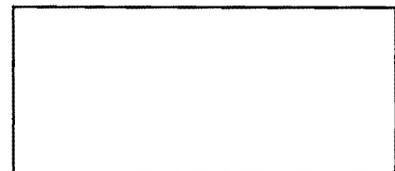
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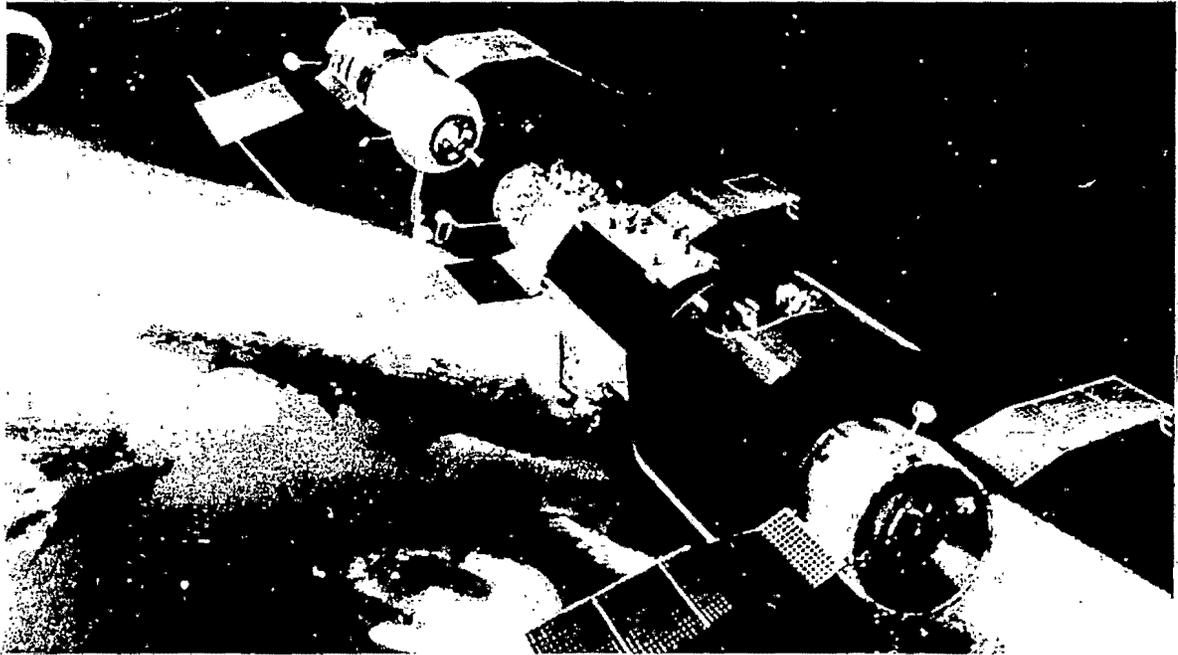


WEEKLY REVIEW

~~Top Secret~~

4 August 1972
SC No. 00771/72





Soviet Sketch of Soyuz (left) and Salyut

USSR:

THE SPACE MISSION THAT WASN'T

The trouble-plagued Soviet manned space program suffered another major setback last week when an SL-13 space booster failed to orbit an unmanned Salyut space station. If the launch had been successful, the Salyut would have been joined in orbit by a manned Soyuz spacecraft. The failure almost certainly will delay indefinitely the next Soviet manned space mission.

The launch attempt came on 28 July from the Tyuratam space center.

that the failure came when the engines of the vehicle shut down prematurely, causing the booster and its payload to crash. This was the second Soviet attempt to orbit a Salyut space station; the first, last year, was successful and the

Salyut was occupied for 23 days by the Soyuz-11 cosmonauts.

The SL-13 is the three-stage version of the four-stage SL-12 booster, the largest Soviet operational space booster. The SL-12 has been beset with problems since testing began in 1967. Last week's was the 15th failure in 31 launch attempts of these two versions of the booster. During 1971, the Soviets appeared to have worked most of the bugs out of the system; five of six launches were successful. The many failures, however, have involved a variety of problems with all stages of the vehicle, suggesting that the real cause of the difficulties may be inadequate quality control, and that could be difficult to correct.

The location of Soviet space support ships in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans last week indicated that a manned space launch was in the offing. The Soviets probably had planned another joint operation involving an extended stay by cosmonauts aboard the space station. Much information about the physiological effects of weightlessness from prolonged space flight was lost last year when the Soyuz-11 cosmonauts were killed during re-entry. The loss of the Salyut station probably will delay the mission for several months and possibly longer unless a back-up station is readily available.

The failure to orbit Salyut was a costly one for the Soviets. Not only did it delay their latest manned space venture, but it cost roughly \$300 million in US terms for the launch attempt, including an estimated \$225 million for the space station. ~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]