

PROGRESS-37 DOCKED TO MIR/KVANT ON 20 JULY 1988 AT 2234UT (21 JULY MOSCOW TIME).

As expected the Soviets soon after writing NEWSMIR.39 launched the freighter Progress-37. This launch took place around 2115UTC on 18 July 1988 (so for the S.U. already 19 July). Again all went as usual with such s/c: a flight to MIR in 2 days and according to the normal and well-known schedule: docking some minutes after LOS after the first pass of the sequence of 6 for our location. So this happened while MIR was in its 13914th orbit and passed from 2222-2228UT, and a the normal radiotraffic for such events as well. So it was obvious that the final phase of the approach was there. During this operation the tracking ship Akademik Sergey Korolyov also was involved. This ship relayed to TsUP data and communications via another satellite before TsUP had Acquisition of Signal. Approach and docking have been carried out automatically with the "Kurs" system. TsUP and Titov gave out data: Titov reported the attitude of the Progress around the 3 axes, X, Y and Z, in angles with fractions of degrees (around X-axis 1 degree, Y-axis 1/100 degree and around Z-axis 4/100). This was at 2225UT. The speed at this moment was 1.6 and the fuel consumption in KG-s was 179. TsUP confirmed reception of these data and reported distance 400 m., and the approach speed 1. TsUP also reported that they received T.V. images. Manarov was surprised and asked: from where do you receive those images and why do we have to make video recordings for you? TsUP reacted very quickly with the explanation: we receive TV from the Progress, this is a test for the future. It has something to with a (or: the) "new machine". The video recordings are for a later use. TsUP reported at 0226UT that they saw -so from the Progress-37- the docking port (they use the word landing-stage, pier, "prichal"). Until the MIR and Progress-37 vanished behind the horizon at 2228UT the exchange of these data could be heard. Shortly before LOS the distance was still 220 m. Later I got confirmation that the docking was accomplished at 2234UT, so 6 minutes later. Quite normal: 9 to 6 minutes after LOS (loss of signal) for our location. Again I missed the enthousiasm always there in the past during the flight with Romanenko, Laveykin and Aleksandrov: they did not go asleep and were active during the next pass to try to get a view in the freighter. Titov and Manarov went asleep as soon as they knew that everything was in good order. Apart from some Telemetry signals it was silent during the next orbit (orbit 13915 from 2353-0002UT). For me reason to relinquish my command and leave the duty to my time switch. I did something wrong and so I missed the pass from 0439-0450UT. No disaster as during the next pass Manarov told A.S.K. that they did not want to hurry. Meanwhile there is confirmation that the cargo consists of the normal items: fuel, water, food, technical- and scientific equipment but also tools and spareparts for the repair of the T.T.M. telescope. So we can expect an extra EVA again (extra vehicular activity).

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