

SOYUZ-TM6 LAUNCHED FOR FLIGHT TO MIR.

The launch took place from Baykunur at 0423UT on 29 Aug. In the period between the docking of freighter Progress-37 to MIR on 20 July '88 the radiotraffic, as always, was very interesting. From appr. 20 July to 4 Aug. most windows were during nighthours. They often spoke with tracking ships enroute from or to their operational positions, i.e. the AKS (Akademik Sergey Korolyov) and the K.Yu.G. (Kosmonavt Yuriy Gagarin). Undoubtedly the K.Yu.G. was heading for the place from where she has to assist in the oncoming docking operation Soyuz-TM6 to MIR. Such contacts took place on 22 and 29 Aug. They often spoke with a Viktor on board of the K.Yu.G. It is a pity that the "uplink" of the ships cannot be heard via the "downlink". Sometimes the contact of the ships with MIR is "autonomous", so then the radiotraffic is not relayed to TsUP. The cosmonauts always ask are you working autonomously. If so they have friendly chats. Meanwhile another important operation took place: the undocking and putting on a destruction course of Progress-37 on 12 August '88. Before that event they were carrying goods out and in Progress-37. Equipment and other goods they need no longer they send away with Progresses. Still the day before Manarov could be heard in a conversation with TsUP while he worked in the Pr-37. The Pr-37 undocked from MIR on 12 Aug. at 0832UT when MIR was over the tracking station PFK (Petropavlovsk Kamchatka). The scarce word about that operation suggested that Pr-37 immediately had been send on destruction course and burnt up. Quite possible as the Great Ocean has room enough in case some hard pieces succeed in reaching the surface of Earth. The Progress-37 had to be send away as to make the Kvant-docking port free for the oncoming arrival of Soyuz-TM6. The crew of this s/c consists of commandant Lyakhov, the doctor Polyakov and the Afghan Abdul Makhmand. Lyakhov is a very experienced cosmonaut, with many spaceflights on his account. Doctor Polyakov will stay on board MIR after the conclusion of this "expedition". He has to observe the physical condition and health of Titov and Manarov from nearby. Thusfar these medical surveys took place via the Telemetry, from which doctor Tamara Batenchukhad to draw conclusions. On 26 Aug. she still "telemetrically" observed Titov and Manarov, which could be heard during the passes on orbit 14488 (0939-44UT - Titov) and orbit 14489 (1112-19UT) Manarov. Very soon after the launch Soyuz-TM6 could be heard on 121.750mc. The crew uses the callsign PROTON, which always has been the callsign of Lyakhov and his crews in the past. At 0722UT Lyakhov reported that the Soyuz-TM6 had been turned at 0633UT. The station, he said, was "stable". The Protons got orders to test a Television system during one of the next orbits. Again the Airport Rotterdam could be heard on the same frequency, using the AM-wide mode (S-TM6 uses FM mode). 23 minutes after LOS of the S-TM6-s signal MIR could be heard on 143.625mc. The spacecraft were unable to contact each other. Gradually the periods of the passes of MIR and S-TM6 will converge. S-TM6 in fact is gradually overtaking MIR. It has to dock to MIR on 31 Aug. If the aimingsystem Kurs is working as perfect as it did during the docking operations last years, we might be able to hear the radiotraffic in the final stage of the approach on that morning (31-VIII) between 0528 and 0533UT. The docking itself will take place just outside our "window" at appr. 0540UT. The Soyuz-TM6 will comment the approach and the commandant will report data like attitudes around X-, Y- and Z-axes, approach speeds, distances and fuel consumption. Hope that the Airport will keep quiet for a while! The frequ. will be 121.750 mc (FM). The crew of MIR will passively undergo the approach and if they do as in the past they will keep in contact with TsUP on their "home" frequ. 143.625 mc. Today (29 Aug.) the Soyuz-TM6 could be heard during all its passes. The carried out an orbit correction at 102056UT, the engine worked for 7 seconds and used 808 KG of fuel. The S-TM6 also has a Telemetry transmitter which works continuously on (+ and - for doppl) 166.138 mc. During one pass I heard an ex-colleague on the Rotterdam Tower say that he heard strange traffic on his R-receiver. For no reason to tell his what that traffic was! During the last pass of MIR on 29 Aug. (orb. 14538, 1405-1414UT) Titov asked for new about S-TM6 and he wished to know whether the correction manoeuvre had been carried out or not. I am confirmed that there had been a first orbit correction.