

17 JULY 1990.

EXTRA VEHICULAR ACTIVITY MIR-CREW:

PROBLEMS:

MIR-crew started with this activity on 17 July 1990 at abt. 1316UTC. The operation was a complicated one. They used a lot of time to install their equipment outside the station and to make the long 'walk' to the surface of the Landing Module of Soyuz-TM9. They left the station via the hatch of the Module-D (Kvant-2) and used a ladder for their trip. They did not use the 20 M long safety-lines, but shorter ones of 1 M each. They had to repair and/or check the damage on the thermal cover of the L.M. and of some parts of the S-TM9. They did not repair the cover but rolled up 2 of the 3 loose parts. This was to avoid misreadings of sensors during the returnflight. They also checked the connection between the service module and de landing module of S-TM9. All seemed to be good enough for a returnflight in the future.

At 1810UTC the cosmonauts got the instruction to return to the airlock of Module-D and to be inside that compartment (S.Sh.O.) with the hatch closed within 55 minutes. When MIR passed at 1913UTC the cosmonauts were inside the airlock, but they had failed to close the hatch. During radiotraffic they got instructions: open - close, open - close, try this and try that. In vain. So, as the endurance of their spacesuits already was running out, they depressurized the neighbouring compartment (P.N.O.) payload compartment opened the hatch and went inside it. Over there they pressurized that compartment and took off their spacesuits. The situation has been alarming as they were in their spacesuits for 7 hours, such exceeding the 6 hours safety limit with 1 hour!

RADIOTRAFFIC:

During 3 passes a lot of interesting radiotraffic.

RELIEFCREW:

This crew passed the final tests and medical checkups and will proceed to Baykonur for launch on 1 August 1990.

RETURN PRESENT CREW:

Solovyov and Balandin will return to earth on 9 August 1990.

SALYUT-7: This enormous station. (Sal-7 + Cosmos-1686) gradually loses altitude and will burn up in the atmosphere within half a year. Let us hope that the station fully burns up in the atmosphere, but the possibility that fragments will fall on earth is very great. Cosmonaut Dzhannibekov stated that there will be no operation to correct the orbit of the station. For such a complicated -or even impossible operation- they do not get money.

Chris v.d. Berg, NL-9165/A-UK3202