

"The same mission-planning philosophy and vehicle combination was used on each of the Soviet interplanetary series. A parking orbit technique is consistently exploited, whereby the first three stages attempt to launch the payload into a low Earth-satellite orbit as in the U.S. Mariner program. After one passage around the Earth, the fourth or ejection stage is fired over Africa. If successful, this sends the instrumented probe on a ballistic path to the planets. Had the launching been successful in each of the six cases listed below, the probe would have arrived at Venus or Mars with too high a velocity to have been orbited around either planet. Optimum conditions were chosen for each launching attempted thus far so as to simplify the task of either guidance or performance—or both.

"(1) October 10, 1960: An unannounced attempt to send a probe to Mars failed before a parking orbit was achieved. Had this probe been successful, it would have reached Mars in about 230 days.

"(2) October 14, 1960: A second attempt to send a probe to Mars using virtually the same trajectory also failed before a parking orbit was achieved.

"(3) February 4, 1961: The first attempt to send a spacecraft to Venus was successfully placed in its Earth-parking orbit, but could not be ejected into its planned Venus trajectory. The Soviet Union announced the launching as a successful Earth satellite Sputnik VII and claimed for it a new weight in orbit record of 14,300 pounds. Had this probe been successfully ejected, it would have taken about 105 days to reach Venus.

"(4) February 12, 1961: A partially successful attempt to send a 1,400-pound spacecraft to Venus was made on this date. All vehicle stages functioned normally, and the probe was correctly placed on its interplanetary path. The Soviet Union correctly announced that this was the first time that a spacecraft was successfully ejected outward from orbit. The probe took 97 days to reach the vicinity of Venus. The Soviets apparently experienced a failure in the power supply or radio transmitter, and the probe was last heard from at a distance of 4.5 million miles from the Earth.

"(5) August 25, 1962: A third attempt to send a probe to Venus was made on this date. The payload was successfully placed into its satellite parking orbit, but apparently could not be ejected. Had this shot been successful, the probe would have arrived at Venus on about December 7, 1962, ahead of the U.S. Mariner II. It appears that the normal flight time of 112 days for this date was intentionally shortened to 104 days by sacrificing spacecraft weight. This launching attempt has not yet been announced by the Soviet Union.

"(6) September 1, 1962: The fourth attempt to reach Venus was also successfully placed into a satellite parking orbit, but could not be ejected. The Soviet Union has not yet announced this attempt nor the presence of the unused components in orbit."

Sincerely,

JAMES E. WEBB, *Administrator.*

Mr. Moss. Now we have here an instance where, in response to the demands of the chairman of the House and Senate committees, an immediate release was made. Therefore, we could reasonably assume that there was a very quick conference, and the material was declassified or that it had never been classified. Can you tell me which was the case?

Dr. SIMPSON. I do not know, sir. I had just got to town that very day, and I was not involved in this at that time at all.

Mr. Moss. Now if security was not breached in this instance, then why cannot similar information be publicly disclosed now.

Dr. SIMPSON. That is a classified matter, sir.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO CONGRESS

Mr. Moss. Is this type of information always available to the appropriate committees of the House and the Senate?