

space

# The rocket's red glare?

Pentagon pushing for killer satellite development

WASHINGTON — With American-Russian detente at a new low, the Pentagon is pushing for development of futuristic weapons that could destroy Soviet satellites in outer space.

Administration officials said Friday the United States remains willing to resume the stalled U.S.-Soviet negotiations on banning anti-satellite weapons. But these talks in Helsinki do not seem likely to be revived so long as the SALT II treaty remains unratified.

Top Air Force officials now are anxious to perfect space technology that would allow the United States to deploy an effective anti-satellite

weapon.

Such a weapon could deliver a major blow by knocking out Soviet communications, reconnaissance, navigation and other satellites.

At present, the Soviets lead the United States in anti-satellite weapons. They have tested a satellite which maneuvers close to its target and then explodes.

The U.S. concept is of a miniature rocket which can be fired at an altitude of about 50,000 feet by an F-15 fighter to home in on a satellite target and incapacitate it by physically striking it.

The sources said the weapon does not explode, nor does it use a nuclear charge. They would not elaborate on

the homing sensor, which is highly classified.

Other military space projects under defense research programs costing about \$1 billion a year include high energy lasers that might be deployed on mountain tops to knock out Soviet satellites in low orbits.

The lasers would kill by overheating the internal mechanisms and circuitry of their targets. A major question is whether such lasers are cost-effective.

The Air Force is studying the problem of obtaining more routine access to space.

The space shuttle being developed by NASA is viewed as an important

interim step because it will allow the United States to recover faulty satellites and repair them either in space or on earth.

The Air Force and private manufacturers are designing an entirely new vehicle which may look something like a giant Boeing 747 jetliner but would weigh two million pounds compared to the 747's 750,000 pounds.

The vehicle could take off from a runway, fly to a high altitude, release a second vehicle which would blast off into orbit, and return to earth.

This reusable aerodynamic space vehicle (RASV) could be deployed about the year 2000, the sources said.

# Manned space flight possible for China

PEKING — Chinese astronauts are training at a special space center near Shanghai to make China the third country to launch man into orbit, Shanghai newspapers disclosed.

Publication of articles and photographs of the astronauts marked the first time China has confirmed it has

an active man-in-space program.

The astronauts were shown practicing weightlessness, how to eat fried rice and shrimp in outer space, and performing other space chores.

"China's astronauts flap their wings on the verge of takeoff," said a picture caption in the newspaper Wen Hui Bad's Friday edition,

which reached Peking Saturday.

Another newspaper, Jiefang Ribao, published a photograph of a small dog, saying the animal had returned to Chinese soil in a rocket, indicating he had been launched into space.

Neither newspaper said when China would follow the Soviet Union and the United States by sending its first man into space.

Jiefang Ribao published an article from the magazine Science Life describing how a documentary film company unit went to the space center to shoot a film.

The astronauts are training in a building complex several hours by car from Shanghai, the Science Life reporter said.

"We saw their vibration, centrifugal and shock force tests," the reporter said. "In one room there is a simulated view of the universe."

The journalist said the astronauts demonstrated how to eat dehydrated Chinese food such as noodles, eggs, shrimp and fried rice through a rub-

ber tube leading into their helmets.

China put its first satellite into orbit in 1970 and has launched several since. It was the fifth country to send a satellite into space with its own technology, following the Soviet Union, the United States, France and Japan.

In March 1978 the National Science Congress in Peking laid down a seven-year research program, including plans for a manned laboratory in outer space.

Vice Premier Fang Yi, administrator of China's science projects, said March 29 that Chinese scientists had been ordered to lay the groundwork for a Skylab program for space exploration.

The deputy chief of the armed forces, Wu Xiquan, told the delegation of visiting U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown last week that China was "researching" an astronaut program "and this indeed is a possibility."

But he said the program "is not one of our high priorities."

# USSR launches satellite for long distance telephone, television for north Siberia

MOSCOW — The Soviet Union has launched a satellite to extend its telephone and television communications links in extreme northern Siberia and remote regions of Soviet Asia, the Tass news agency reported Saturday.

The satellite, Molnia-1, was put into orbit Friday, Tass said. Its initial orbit ranged in height from 287 to 84,498 miles.

Communications satellites normally are placed in stationary orbits. Tass did not say whether the satel-

lite's elliptical path would be made circular, but said it carried a system for "correction of the orbit."

Tass said Molnia-1 had an orbit time of 12 hours, 37 minutes.

It said the satellite "is designed to ensure the exploitation of the system of long-distance telephone and telegraph radio communication and also transmission of programs of the U.S.S.R. central television to the network points, located in areas of the extreme north, Siberia, the Far East and Central Asia."

# Iranians to lose Winston privilege

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranians will soon lose the pleasure of puffing away on Winston cigarettes. The Iranian tobacco company has canceled its contract to manufacture them under license in Iran.

The state-controlled company said Sunday the Winston contract hurt the production of domestic cigarettes and turned the firm into a sales agency for foreign products.

The present officials of the tobacco company have put the attainment of self-sufficiency at the top of their agenda, a company statement said.

"Unfortunately, this company, which could have been one of the largest productive and economic plants of the country, had been turned into a sales agency for foreign

cigarettes."

About 5 million Winston cigarettes were sold in 1969-70, but by 1977-78, the figure rose to 10 million, the company said.



Separates by Howard Wolf

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