



The President's Daily Brief

7 May 1970

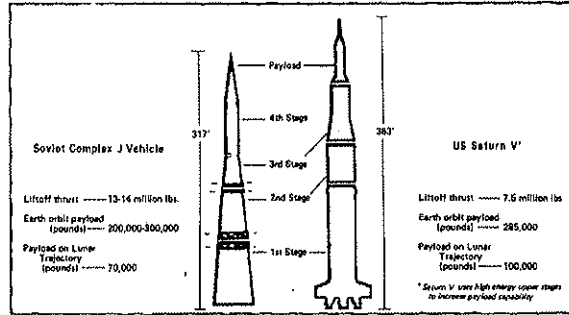
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Soviets Continue Work on Complex J Vehicle



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USSR

The latest photography from a satellite over Tyuratam shows that the Soviets are still working on their largest space booster--assembled on one of the pads at Complex J and therefore dubbed "the J-Bird" by US observers of Soviet rocketry. The first booster of this type to be tested blew up on the other pad at Complex J last July during an attempt to launch a payload to the moon. The extensive damage to that pad is still being repaired.

The J-Bird is the Soviet counterpart of the Saturn V, but

[redacted] it cannot deliver as large a payload to the moon. The difference in performance is in the high-energy propellants in the upper stages of the Saturn.

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The Soviets would have to use two J-Birds to put a man on the moon--a rendezvous would be necessary. Thus, both launch pads at Complex J would be needed. Interplanetary probes and cirumlunar missions can be handled by one J-Bird, which could also be used to orbit a permanent space station weighing 100 to 150 tons. An unmanned lunar landing and return mission could also be launched.

Because of the problems the Soviets have been having with their large space boosters, the intelligence community has estimated that they probably will not be able to make a lunar landing before 1973.

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