

28 JULY 1990

THE NEW GARDEN-GATE: Recently Soviet newspapers wrote about the new hatch of the Module-D and expressed their satisfaction about this nice door with a diameter of 1 M. This hatch opens by swinging to the outside. This was not so with all hatches used in the past. A door or hatch opening by swinging to the inside takes a lot of room thus meaning less room for payloads. The airlock of Module-D is also used for the MMU (SPK). So the builders of Module-D decided to have the hatch opening to the outside. Cosmonauts did not agree. A hatch swinging to the outside can give more problems and is more dangerous. This disagreement emerged during the recent problems with the hatch of Module-D. The chief-constructor of Module-D stated that the cosmonauts failed to wait until the depressurizing of the airlock to 0 mm. They hastily unlocked the hatch and this got a push by the air in the airlock and this damaged the hatch. TsUP read out a comment in a soviet paper in which the cosmonauts were criticized. Colleagues of Solovyov and Balandin expressed their concern about hatches opening to the outside. In their opinion the benefits of more room do not justify the risks. Flightcontroller Vladimir Solovyov (a very experienced cosmonaut) stated that this question has to be reconsidered in future projects. During the repairmission Balandin used equipment sent to MIR by Progress-42 and Kristall. He used a hammer which also could serve as leverage. After the provisional repair and the closing of the hatch Balandin remained in the airlock (S.Sh.O) while Solovyov waited in the instrument-scientific compartment (PNO). Both compartments were pressurized simultaneously and so it was possible to check the air-seal of the hatch. During a pass here the cosmonauts read out the values of the increasing pressures. On 26 July during pass in orbit. 25426, 1456-1505UTC.
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