MIRNEWS.070 30 SEPTEMBER 1990

PROGRESS-M5:

1 week after the decay of Pr-M4 the new freighter Pr-M5 was launched from Baykonur. This was on 27 Sept. 1990 at abt. 1030UTC. Long before the official announcement of the launch Pr-M5 could be heard during its first passes over this position transmitting strong TLM signals in the 165 and 166 mc band (in a wide range but with a strong peak on 165.863 mc) and a carrier on 922.755 mc. With the carrier on 922.755 mc it was easy to determine exact TCA-s. Using these TCA-s and other sources (among which radiotraffic of trackingships) I estimated the launch time at abt. 1030UTC. The Pr-M5 has a "ballistic return capsule" on board, but this one will only be used for a test. So operational use of these returncapsule can be expected as of Progress-M6. On 28 Sept. 1990 the autonomously flying Pr-M5 could be heard during every pass.

DOCKING OF PR-M5 WITH MIR ON 29 SEPT. 1990 AT 1227UTC:

The final approach took place within our range and was commented by TsUP and the cosmonauts. Manakov observed the approach by visual means but also on a TV-monitor with the images taken by a camera on board Pr-M5. So he saw the huge MIR complex from there and was surprised about the enormous size of the complex. He also was able to observe the scanning antennae of the Kurssystem. Strekalov monitored the approach on the monitor of the Kurssystem and reported distances and approach speeds. At 1224UTC distance 35M, appr. speed 36 cm/sec. Just before LOS at 122513UTC distance was 15 M and appr. speed 24 cm/sec. NOT ONLY FOR THE COSMONAUTS BUT ALSO FOR THIS MONITORING HOBBYIST A SENSATIONAL EVENT!!
During the next pass the hatches to Pr-M5 were still closed. There had some airseal checks to be done and they had to wait to be able to give a direct TV report. During the 3d pass, orb. 26442/443, 1534-153730UTC, the pressure was stable and Manakov opened the hatch at 153543UTC.
Progress-M5 docked the forward port of MIR (P.Kh.O. Transition-section). So this docking side made good visual observations by Manakov possible.

MIR COSMONAUTS:

During the autonomous flight of Pr-M5 they did not give any attention to that ship, but were very busy with the complex itself. There had a lot of reparation work to be done and they had to replace a lot of equipment, even their lifesupporting systems, for instance water regeneration systems VIKA and ELEKTRON, and parts of the ASU system (toilet waste system). Strekalov told a reporter on earth that all those reparations, even big ones, were necessary as the complex has been so long in space. 2d on the priority list is still the production of mono-crystalls; this goes on continuously with the Krater ovens in the Krystall module and the Gallar oven in the base block.

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REF. MIRNEWS.069 item: Observation of luminous objects: Meanwhile Moscow confirmed that the MIR COSMONAUTS HAVE SEEN A UFO OVER THE AZORES.