



*The President's Daily Brief*

27 March 1969

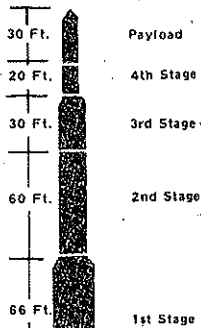
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~~Top Secret~~



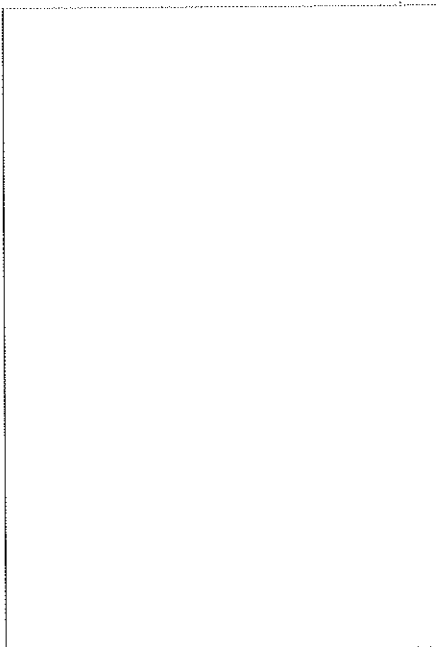
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### Failure of Large Booster Deals Setback to Soviet Space Program



SOVIET SL-12

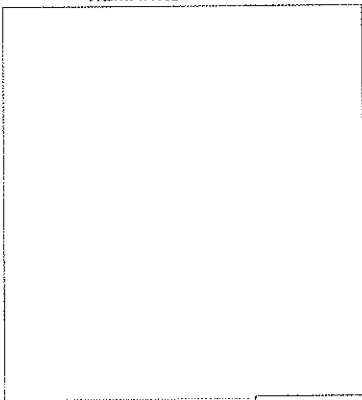
Lift off thrust 2.5 million lbs  
Earth orbit payload (pounds) 45,000  
Payload on lunar trajectory (pounds) 13,000



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#### SOVIET SL-12 RECORD

DATE	EVENT	RESULT
10 March 1967	Cosmos 146	Partial failure
8 April 1967	Cosmos 154	Partial failure
22 November 1967	Circumlunar attempt	Failure
2 March 1968	Zond 4 simulated circumlunar mission	Success
22 April 1968	Circumlunar attempt	Failure
14 September 1968	Zond 5 circumlunar mission	Success
10 November 1968	Zond 6 circumlunar mission	Success
16 November 1968	Proton 4	Success
20 January 1969	Circumlunar attempt	Failure
27 March 1969	Attempted Mars probe	Failure



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The Soviet space program suffered a major setback yesterday when its largest operational booster--the SL-12-- failed during an attempt to launch a probe toward Mars.

The Soviets probably intend the SL-12 to be the workhorse for their space program in the 1970s, but it has been plagued with problems throughout its development, having fully performed its mission only four times in ten attempts.

So far, the SL-12 has been used primarily in the circumlunar program--this latest attempt was the first time it has been tried in the planetary exploration effort. Its poor performance probably is the principal reason that the Soviet circumlunar program is at least one year behind schedule; this denied Moscow the opportunity to attempt a manned circumlunar flight before the US Apollo 8.

Apart from its effect on the space effort, the dismal record of the SL-12 seems likely to have caused considerable disappointment within the Soviet hierarchy. This could, in turn, arouse questions, and attendant political controversy, about the allocation of scarce resources.

VIETNAM

The Liberation Front has turned aside Thieu's public bid for private talks with the Front, but has not rejected the idea outright. The response was negative in tone and shot through with propaganda attacks, but it carefully

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