



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Acta Astronautica

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/actaastro



From Tyuratam Missile Range to Baikonur Cosmodrome

Mike Gruntman

Department of Astronautical Engineering, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, 90089-1192, USA



ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Space history
Rocket history
Tyuratam
Baikonur

ABSTRACT

The Soviet space port in Kazakhstan, Baikonur cosmodrome, occupies a special place in the history of rocketry and spaceflight. The first intercontinental ballistic missile R-7 successfully lifted off there in August 1957 and reached the Kamchatka peninsula six thousand kilometers away. Six weeks later, a modified R-7 placed the first artificial satellite of the planet Earth, Sputnik, into orbit. In 1961, the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin began his space journey from the same launch pad. At that time the Soviet Union publicly identified, as a Cold War deception, the secret space port as Baikonur, a small town 300 km away from the real location of the launch site. American government officials had known the precise location of the launch base since 1957 and called it more accurately Tyuratam after the nearby railroad station. Space publications rarely mention the artificial, decoy nature of the name Baikonur. Most of the general public today, particularly younger generations, never heard about Tyuratam. This article describes establishment of the first cosmodrome and its naming Tyuratam and Baikonur. It includes some never published heretofore historic documents and reconnaissance photographs.

article
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.actaastro.2018.12.021>
 or email the author –
mikeg@usc.edu – for pdf

