seven miles [92 km] south of the town of Novokazalinsk and forty-two miles [66 km] north of Dzhusaly. Arguments were advanced by others in favor of either of these locations as the designation for the Soviet missile test center. I argued that the towns were too far removed and that, since the US was so open about its space effort, the Soviets undoubtedly would eventually make public the exact location of their missile test center. My arguments prevailed and the Russian center was officially designated as Tyuratam” [52].

The missile range remained in the crosshairs of the U.S. overhead intelligence [4,43,45,60]. Another U-2 flew over the missile range on July 9, 1959 (Mission 4125) and then again on April 9, 1960 (Mission 4155). Heavy clouds covered most of the area during the latter mission. Finally, a U-2 plane piloted by Powers (Mission 4154) flew over Tyuratam on May 1, 1960 and was shot down 2 h later over the Ural mountains. From December 1960 the Corona photoreconnaissance satellites (first Discoverer XVIII) were taking photographs of the range with gradually improving resolution on a regular basis [4,43,45].

Beginning from 1957, U.S. intelligence documents described the NIIP-5 polygon as the Tyuratam Missile Test Range (TTMTR) or Tyuratam Missile Test Center [4,38,43,45]. Fig. 13 shows an example of a map of the missile range compiled by intelligence analysts in 1964 [61]. After the historic flight of Gagarin, Soviet officials would publicize a different name, a settlement Baikonur 300 km away from Tyuratam, in an unnecessary attempt to hide the real and well known by that time location.

5. FAI dossier

The USSR maintained tight secrecy about the launch location of its historic first ICBM and first artificial satellites of the Earth. The flight of the first cosmonaut in 1961 forced lifting some secrecy in order to register his record flight.

The International Aeronautical Federation, FAI, registers flight records on balloons, aircraft, and space vehicles [62]. The General
From Tyuratam Missile Range to Baikonur Cosmodrome

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Space history
Rocket history
Tyuratam
Balkonur

ABSTRACT

The Soviet space port in Kazakhstan, Baikonur cosmodrome, occupies a special place in the history of rocketry and spacelift. 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.