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imagery analysis report

New Probable Mobile Missile TEL Chassis, USSR (S)

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NEW PROBABLE MOBILE MISSILE TEL CHASSIS, USSR (S)

1. (S/WN) A new, heavy-duty vehicle chassis (Figures 1 and 2), probably for a new strategic mobile missile transporter-erector-launcher (TEL), was observed at the Minsk Motor Vehicle and Guided Missile Support Equipment Plant 25X1

2. (S/WN) The new probable TEL chassis is longer than the SS-16/-20 TEL chassis produced at the Minsk Plant. Although the front two axles could not be seen because of shadow, the new chassis probably has six axles. The rear four axles apparently are in the same position as those on the SS-16/-20 TEL chassis. The front two axles on the new chassis may have been moved forward to accommodate the additional length which appears to be incorporated in the area immediately behind the vehicle's cab. Recent activities at the Plesetsk Missile/Space Test Center have suggested that a longer TEL might be required for the new mobile ICBM that will be tested at the range in the near future. The meter chassis observed at Minsk could be a limited modification of the standard six-axle chassis for use other than a mobile missile TEL (e.g., a heavy-duty mobile crane, a large pipe carrier, etc.). Until the longer chassis is observed fitted out as a TEL, its function cannot be confirmed. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

3. (S/WN) Six-axle chassis of this length have not been identified at any other missile equipment production or development facility. Six-axle chassis, long, were observed at the Minsk Plant on and at Bronnitsy Armored Vehicle Research Facility These chassis were probably standard, chassis with load simulators which overhung at the rear, resulting in the additional length. This analysis is supported by attache photography of a standard-length, SS-16/-20 chassis (Figure 5) on the Minsk ring-road in August 1981. This vehicle was carrying a steel, boxlike load simulator which overhung the rear of the chassis by approximately giving the vehicle an overall length of 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

4. (S/WN) Observations of TELs longer than the normal have been reported at SS-16- and SS-20-associated facilities in the past. Reanalysis of these observations suggests that these vehicles were standard, long, six-axle TELs and that the longer dimensions were a product of appendages and/or interpretability of imagery used for mensuration. Some of these observations are discussed below. 25X1 25X1

Kapustin Yar General Support Area

5. (S/WN) A canvas-covered, standard, SS-20 TEL with a tailgatelike appendage extending from the rear was observed at Kapustin Yar General Support Area in November 1975 (Figure 6) and again in July 1977. The appendage was approximately 25X1 25X1 25X1

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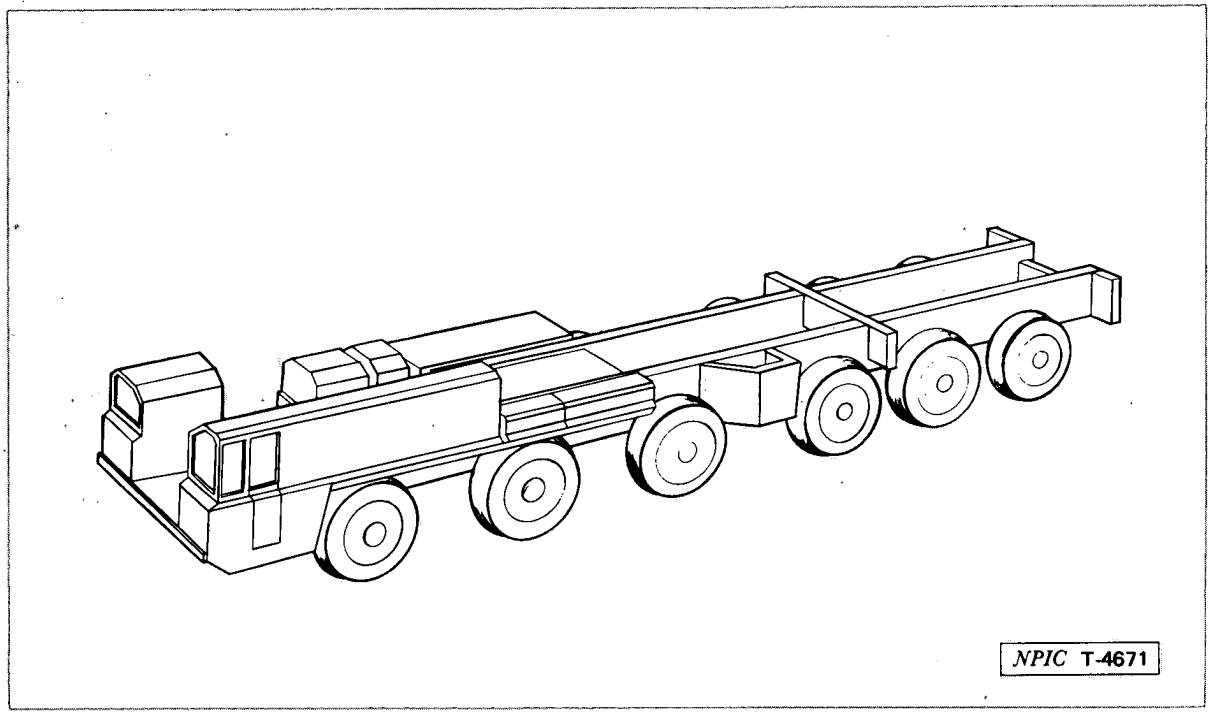

FIGURE 2. ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF NEW PROBABLE TEL CHASSIS. Location of front two axles is postulated.

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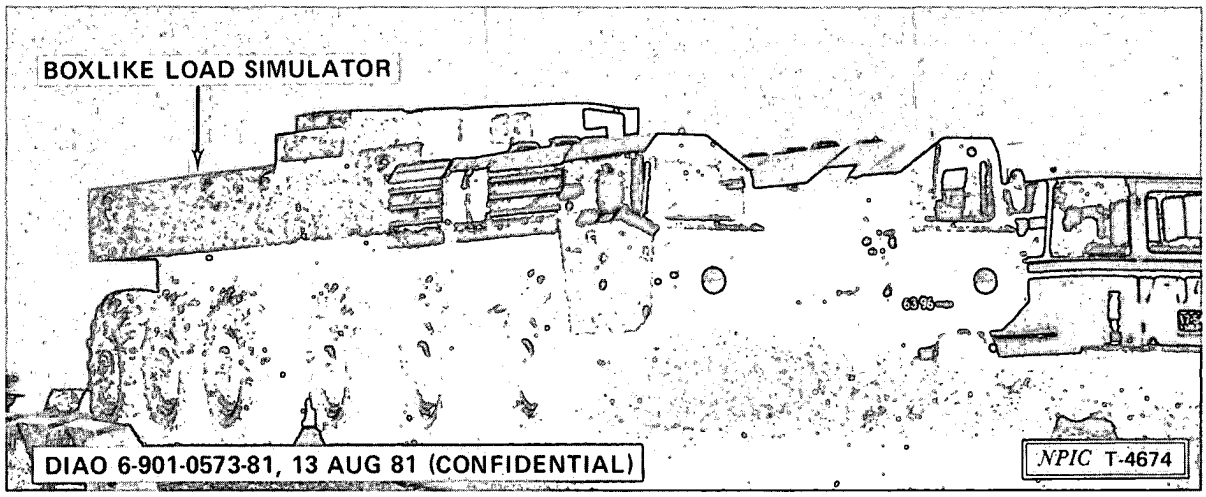

FIGURE 5. [redacted] CHASSIS WITH BOXLIKE LOAD SIMULATOR ON MINSK RING-ROAD 25X1

long, giving the vehicle an overall length of [redacted] The purpose of the tailgate is unknown, but it may have been an open-access panel, temporarily attached work platform, or shipping apparatus. 25X1

Postavy SSM Training Facility

6. (TSR) A [redacted]-long vehicle (Figure 7) was reported at Postavy SSM Training Facility [redacted] during the summer of 1979. Precise mensuration indicated that the vehicle was probably a standard, [redacted] six-axle chassis with a canvas-covered load simulator that overhung the rear of the vehicle, creating an overall length of [redacted] The wheel separation was identical to that of the standard [redacted] chassis. The load simulator appeared similar in shape and size to the one seen at Minsk during the same timeframe. Throughout the summer of 1979, similar assemblies of mobile missile-related vehicles (Figure 8) were seen concurrently at Postavy and Minsk. The presence of a resolution target (Figure 9) at Postavy during the same period strongly suggests that a test involving overhead imaging systems was underway. The proximity of the two facilities, 85 miles a part, would permit comparative imaging of both from either satellite or aircraft. In fact, both facilities were imaged on sequential [redacted] imagery on [redacted] [redacted] These tests may have been an assessment of an overhead imaging system's ability to discern characteristics and precise dimensions of mobile missile equipment. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

Plesetsk Missile/Space Center

7. (TSR) A probable SS-16 TEL, identified on [redacted] at Plesetsk ICBM Launch Test Site 16 [redacted], was originally mensurated as [redacted] long (Figure 10).[1] Remensuration of this imagery on the high-precision stereo comparator indicates that the Plesetsk vehicle was approximately [redacted] long, the same length as the standard SS-20 TEL. This has been the only identification of a probable SS-16 TEL at Plesetsk. 25X1 25X1 25X1

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IMAGERY ANALYST'S COMMENTS

8. (S/WN) The review of imagery, as far back as 1972, of Soviet facilities involved in the development and production of strategic mobile missile TELs produced no evidence to substantiate postulation that the SS-16 TEL is longer than the SS-20 TEL. Facilities reviewed in the study included the Minsk Plant, producer of the basic chassis; Volgograd Steel and Machinery Plant Krasnyy Barricada [redacted] where the chassis are fitted out with the missile-related apparatus; the Bronnitsy Armored Vehicle Research Facility, where acceptance testing is done; and the two test centers, Plesetsk and Kapustin Yar, where the systems underwent flight testing. In each instance where original mensuration had suggested a longer TEL, reanalysis indicated that the vehicles were probably standard, [redacted] TELs/chassis and that the additional length in the original measurements was because of a nonstandard feature or image interpretability. The [redacted] meter chassis seen at Minsk in March 1982 was probably a new vehicle. The chassis will probably be used for the TEL with the new solid mobile ICBM follow-on to the SS-16. 25X1 25X1 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

REFERENCES

IMAGERY

(S/WN) All applicable satellite imagery acquired from January 1972 through [redacted] was used in preparation of this report. 25X1

DOCUMENT

1. NPIC. [redacted] IAR-0081/82, *Activity in Support of New ICBM Flight Test Programs at Plesetsk, USSR (S)*, Aug 82 (TOP SECRET [redacted] 25X1 25X1

(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to the Missile Production Section, Soviet Strategic Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, [redacted] or green extension [redacted] The following imagery analysts contributed to this report: [redacted] of the Imagery Exploitation Group. 25X1 25X1 25X1

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