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FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE:

1. [Interview with V. Ivanov, Military Space Force commander, by D. Makarov; place and date not given: ''Space and the UFO'']

2. [Text]

3. [Makarov] All our lives we have been accustomed to taking pride in our achievements in space. It has been instilled in us that we are the best in the world. Now we have lost almost all our illusions from the Soviet period. Well, is at least this illusion really true?

4. [Ivanov] In general I have never said that we were the best in the world. We simply did our work, but the fact that in terms of a number of systems we are indeed ahead of the Americans has always been apparent both to them and to us.

5. [Makarov] How did the collapse of the USSR affect the Military Space Forces?

6. [Ivanov] In the past our units were distributed through what are now five states: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. Space forces subdivisions are now located only in Russia and Kazakhstan. We used to have an arsenal in Belarus but we turned it over to the Belarusians and left there. In Uzbekistan we had a high mountain command-measurement complex.

7. At first the Uzbek government stated that it had no claims to this arsenal, that it would remain in the Military Space Forces of Russia, but then it decided differently. Now almost all the Russian officers have left there. At the present time, however, we are developing a document concerning the creation of a Russian-Uzbek

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Scientific Space Center, and the Ministry of Defense of Russia, if we can reach an agreement, will cooperate with this center on a contractual basis.

8. [Makarov] What about Ukraine?

9. [Ivanov] Three of our command-measurement complexes-Yevpatoriya, Simferopol, and Dunayevtsy- have been transferred to the jurisdiction of Ukraine. I suggested that Russian and Ukrainian space agencies look for approaches to joint use of the equipment of these control points as we have agreed to do with Uzbekistan, but negotiations have been difficult so far.

10. [Makarov] Could Ukraine somehow independently use all of our antennas, control centers, etc.?

11. [Ivanov] No. These complexes cannot operate independently, without the infrastructure created over decades, without the technical base of the manufacturing enterprises, without specialists, who, incidentally, are trained by our Military Space Institute in St. Petersburg.

12. [Makarov] I know that the greatest problem for you is Baykonur. Hundreds of billions have been "poured" into there and now it has ended up outside Russia.

13. [Ivanov] In order for the space vehicle launching site to function normally, four interstate agreements have been concluded. The construction unit has now been transferred to the jurisdiction of Kazakhstan. The rest are included in the Military Space Forces of Russia. The problem is staffing them. Units at the test site are only 57.9 percent staffed with enlisted men and noncommissioned officers.

14. Recently President B. Yeltsin sent a letter to President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev with a proposal to meet in May 1993 to discuss questions of the vital activity of Baykonur.

15. [Makarov] Can you reveal the budget of the Military Space Forces?

16. [Ivanov] We do not have a new budget yet, it still has to be approved by the Supreme Soviet. I can say only that, for example, it will take about 40 billion rubles just to maintain Baykonur in 1993. In terms of expenses the space forces occupy third place in the Ministry of Defense after the Navy and Air Force. After us come the missile forces and the Antiaircraft Defense.

17. [Makarov] Who if not you should one ask about UFO's. Are there

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any, finally, or not?

18. [Ivanov] I shall begin with an example. When I was the chief of a space vehicle launching site, a general came to me and introduced himself: the chief of an institute created especially to study these phenomena. We sat down and talked. It turned out that all his data on flights of unidentified objects in the North completely coincided in time with the launches conducted in Plesetsk. The fact is that the North has one peculiarity. It is that the atmosphere there has unique properties. Launches in Plesetsk can be seen even in Novaya Zemlya.

19. There was a case about five years ago when three objects passed somewhat to the side of Baykonur at a high altitude. They were clearly visible on the radar screen. We still do not know what they were, but it is certain that they were not airplanes.

20. Like everyone else, I am interested in this problem. It is simply that I cannot deny the possibility of the existence of UFO's as many people do.

21. [Makarov] What can space do for the man on the street?

22. [Ivanov] It not only can but already is giving us a great deal. Space equipment for communications, navigation, observation, weather support, and scientific purposes makes it possible with great effectiveness to catch fish, search for minerals, draw geographical maps, warn of danger and rescue people who have suffered from disasters, and manufacture new medical preparations and metal alloys. Even now all a geologist or even a plain tourist has to do is take a small and, incidentally, inexpensive instrument in order, with the help of the GLONASS space navigation system, to know his location at any time. Incidentally, when the Americans conducted the Desert Storm operation, the troop commander said then that the division commanders were the first to assess the advantages of space communications and navigation. They were put out in the desert and told to find the coordinates of the meeting place, and with the help of portable navigation devices they arrived at the precise place at the appointed time.

23. But the main thing space can help with is bringing people together. When we experience its limitlessness, coldness, and emptiness, the need to join forces to study and inhabit it inevitably arises of its own accord.

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