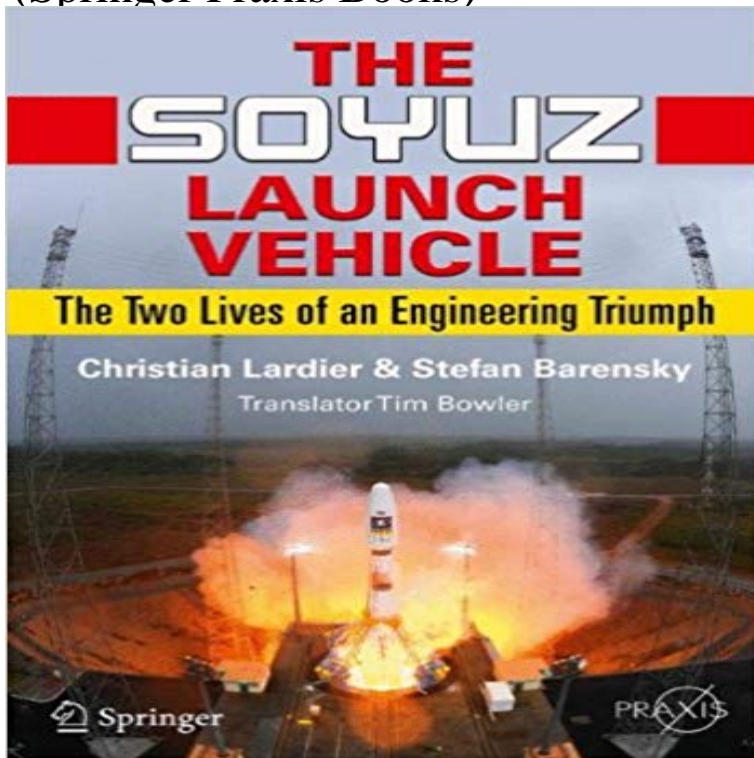


The Soyuz Launch Vehicle: The Two Lives of an Engineering Triumph (Springer Praxis Books)



The Soyuz Launch Vehicle tells the story, for the first time in a single English-language book, of the extremely successful Soyuz launch vehicle. Built as the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), Soyuz was adapted to launch not only Sputnik but also the first man to orbit Earth, and has been in service for over fifty years in a variety of forms. It has launched all Soviet manned spacecraft and is now the only means of reaching the International Space Station. It was also the workhorse for launching satellites and space probes and has recently been given a second life in French Guiana, fulfilling a commercial role in a joint venture with France. No other launch vehicle has had such a long and illustrious history. This remarkable book gives a complete and accurate description of the two lives of Soyuz, chronicling the recent cooperative space endeavors of Europe and Russia. The book is presented in two parts: Christian Lardier chronicles the first life in Russia while Stefan Barensky explores its second life, covering Starsem, the Franco-Russian company and implementation of technology for the French Guiana Space Agency by ESA. Part One has been developed from Russian sources, providing a descriptive approach to very technical issues. The second part of the book tells the contemporary story of the second life of Soyuz, gathered from Western sources and interviews with key protagonists. The Soyuz Launch Vehicle is a detailed description of a formidable human adventure, with its political, technical, and commercial ramifications. At a time when a new order was taking shape in the space sector, the players being the United States, Russia, Europe and Asia, and when economic difficulties sometimes made it tempting to give up, this book reminds us that in the global sector, nothing is impossible.

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