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The Stripes of Near-Earth Space are Visible

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Introduction

Physicists James Van Allen in the US and Sergei Vernov in the Soviet Union separately reported on defined zones of radiation in near-earth space using some of the first research satellites launched into orbit in the late 1950s. The radiation belts of Earth were considered as the first important scientific discovery of the space era. Despite decades of research, many concerns about radiation belt physics remain unresolved, particularly about the nature of the inner and outer belts, which are filled by electrons travelling at near-light speeds. Because the highest-energy "killer electrons" can result in potentially deadly damage to delicate spacecraft electronics, understanding the variability in the radiation belts is becoming increasingly vital as society grows more reliant on satellite-based technologies. The Lorentz force dominates the dynamics of energetic charged particles in earth's magnetic field, such as electrons and protons, and because the field is primarily dipolar, radiation belt-electrons can become trapped in much the same way as in the classical field arrangement known as a magnetic 'bottle.' Due to forces associated with the gradient and curvature of the magnetic field, trapped particles undergo three types of periodic motion: gyration around magnetic-field lines; bounce motion along field lines, potentially from pole to pole; and drift motion perpendicular to field lines in the azimuth (longitudinally) around the planet.

An induced electric field is also created because earth's magnetic moment is not parallel to its axis of rotation. Because the kinetic energy of radiation-belt particles is several orders of magnitude greater than that imposed by the electric field, this oscillating electric field was assumed to be insignificant for radiation-belt dynamics at earth. However, because earth's rotation is independent of geomagnetic activity, Ukhorskiy and colleagues hypothesise that the electric field may play a role in the development of zebra stripes. The researchers utilised a model that incorporates the induced, oscillating electric field and replicates the behaviour of test particles in an earth-like magnetic field. The model demonstrates how initially smooth electron distributions develop into zebra-stripe patterns.

The drift movements of electrons, which are connected to their energies and radial positions, combine with the daily cycles of the generated electric field to produce these patterns (phase resonance). The electrons undergo drift phase mixing in this interaction, which alters their energy and radial position, resulting in distinct peaks and troughs in electron intensity as a function of energy and radial location. As a result, the zebra stripes in the electron intensities seen are just representations of the electron distributions formed by such drift phase mixing. The model developed by Ukhorskiy and colleagues is basic, yet it accurately reproduces zebra stripes in calm geomagnetic circumstances. The authors also show how to tweak the model to explain how geomagnetic storms alter zebra-stripe patterns. Near-Earth Asteroids (NEAs) are difficult to study from Earth because their orbits intersect or brush Earth's. They have never been visited by a spacecraft. Galileo visited the main-belt asteroid Gaspra en route to Jupiter in 1991, and it was our first (and only) asteroid flyby. The mars- orbiting Mariner 9 spacecraft has explored the tiny asteroid-like martian moons Phobos and Deimos. The Soviet Phobos mission,

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launched in 1988, lost one spacecraft on way to Mars and the other shortly after careful scrutiny of Phobos began. These bodies have black surfaces, similar to carbonaceous asteroids, but no apparent absorption characteristic owing to chemically bonded water. The size distribution of the 200 known NEAs is comparable to that of the main belt.

Space operations have grown so integrated into modern life that they are nearly imperceptible. We are aware of the importance of communications satellite relays for low-cost long-distance calls and television news broadcasts, and we see colour representations of Earth's cloud cover in weather updates on television. However, we are frequently unaware that the commercial aeroplane we fly or the ferry we ride uses navigation satellites 12,000 miles above our heads to locate itself. We may never learn that the Soviet Union launched numerous satellites each year to examine the wheat yields in the United States, Canada, and Argentina in order to schedule grain imports. We could be even more surprised to learn that a satellite is tracking the vehicle we just passed on the highway, or that the strategic balance between the major powers has long been observed using photographic, electronic imaging, radar, infrared, and signal monitoring from space. We get our early notice of war preparations from space, which is the finest defence against a surprise strike. Oil spills, crop disease, severe storms, ozone holes, forest fires, and climate change are all mentioned. The global economy already values space at over $100 billion each year. Furthermore, space exploration is an important part of modern civilization. We learn something new every day about the origins and evolution of planets, our environment, and the rules that govern global change. We bring back a better knowledge of Earth from our research of other worlds. As human explorers explore foreign settings, we partake in the thrill of discovery. We also share western cultural traditions, in which experimentation and discovery are continuously expanding our horizons and testing prior assumptions and dogmas. The desire to put ideas, theories, and claims to the test is not just inherent in our society; it is also contagious. Where such testing is lacking, the genuine cannot be discerned from the false; the tyrant may rule without being questioned; and old habits can effectively oppose new knowledge.

A Russian–Cuban Observatory is being studied for the development of a specialised network of big, wide-angle telescopes for dispersed near-Earth space studies. Warding off dangers from both natural and technological sources is a critical aim of routine surveillance of near-Earth and near-Sun space. Asteroids or comets pose a natural hazard, while man-made junk in near-Earth space poses a technological one. A modern network of ground-based optical instruments designed to counter such threats must: (a) have a global and, if possible, uniform geographic distribution; (b) be capable of wide-angle, high-accuracy precision survey observations; and (c) be built and operated within a single network-oriented framework. Experience with the creation of one-meter-class wide-angle telescopes and an element of a super-wide-angle telescope cluster at the Institute of Astronomy is used to derive preferences for the makeup of each node in such a network. The effectiveness of dispersed observations in achieving the most precise forecasts of the trajectories of potentially harmful celestial bodies as they approach the Earth, as well as in observations of space debris and man-made satellites, is calculated. The first astroclimatic estimations at the planned site of the future Russian–Cuban Observatory in the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve Mountains have been obtained. The potential application of the network for a wide range of astrophysical research, including optical support for the localization of gravity waves and other transient occurrences, is given special consideration.