

Mars Global Surveyor lost in space

November 13 2006

NASA engineers tried Monday to re-establish contact with the Mars Global Surveyor, which has quit communicating with Earth.

The 10-year-old spacecraft has failed for a week to respond to communications to adjust a solar panel, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration said.

The space agency has tried to re-establish communications every two hours since Nov. 6, ABC News reported.

"The spacecraft has many redundant systems that should help us get it back into a stable operation, but first we need to re-establish communications," project manager Tom Thorpe said in a NASA statement.

If communication cannot be restored, NASA may try to diagnose the problem by having another spacecraft, the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, take pictures of the Mars Global Surveyor.

The surveyor was launched Nov. 7, 1996, and has been orbiting Mars since September 1997. It has far outlasted its original mission, which ended in 2000. NASA has continually extended its mission since then.

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