

# It's definite now: Solar sail spacecraft lost

22 June 2005

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A solar sail spacecraft failed to reach orbit because of an apparent booster rocket problem, Roskosmos, the Russian space agency said Wednesday.

The unmanned spacecraft, called Cosmos 1, was launched at 3:46 p.m. EDT Tuesday aboard a Volna rocket, Roskosmos said, from a Russian submarine in the Barents Sea. But 83 seconds after the launch, the craft experienced a spontaneous shutdown of the first stage rocket engine.

The spacecraft with eight triangular sail blades, each 16.5 yards long, was built under a contract with the U.S. Planetary Society. Scientists planned to study the possibility of using a solar sail as a traction system and as a way to control the spacecraft during its orbit flight.

An attempt in 2001 to test a spacecraft with two sail blades also failed, because the craft failed to deploy from its booster rocket.

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