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Tiros' Sharp Pictures Prove Sky-Spy Satellite Feasible

WASHINGTON, April 2 (UPI) — The spectacular photos flashed back to earth by America's new Tiros TV satellite made it clear today that such eyes-in-the-sky eventually could be used to spot Russian military moves.

Scientists emphasized that the 270-pound Tiros, carrying two television cameras, was designed only to snap pictures of the earth's cloud cover that will lead to more accurate weather forecasts and could help man control the climate.

But the Tiros pictures—whose clarity surprised even scientists working on the project—plainly were a giant first step toward a military reconnaissance satellite.

President Eisenhower exclaimed, "a marvelous development," when he was shown four photos of the Gulf of St. Lawrence area just seven hours after they were taken by Tiros from an altitude of 450 miles.

The drum-shaped Tiros was launched into orbit at 6:40 a.m. E.S.T. (1:40 a.m. H.S.T.) yesterday by a three-stage Thor-Able rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

It is circling earth once each 99.15 minutes.

The Tiros pictures released for public viewing were not sharp enough to disclose details on the ground that would be of military value.

But there was no way of knowing how many possibly clearer photos were withheld on security grounds. The satellite's orbit takes it over Russia.

The Tiros project—standing for television and infra-red observation satellite—is not connected with military reconnaissance satellite programs. Scientists, however, are sharing data.

The Defense Department is planning a Midas infra-red satellite to detect the flaming exhaust of Russian intercontinental Ballistic missiles almost as soon as they are launched and a Samos military spy-in-the-sky satellite.

Even without its military implications, Tiros opens new vistas for weather forecasting and control.

Scientists will relate the Tiros photos to the weather the earth was having at the moment. This will enable them to read meaning into pictures from a second Tiros satellite planned for later this year.

The second Tiros also will carry infra-red sensing devices to give scientists a picture of the earth's temperature.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
TIROS Satellites and Satellite Meteorology

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