

KOSOVO: CRUNCH TIME? ■ JAPAN REARMS

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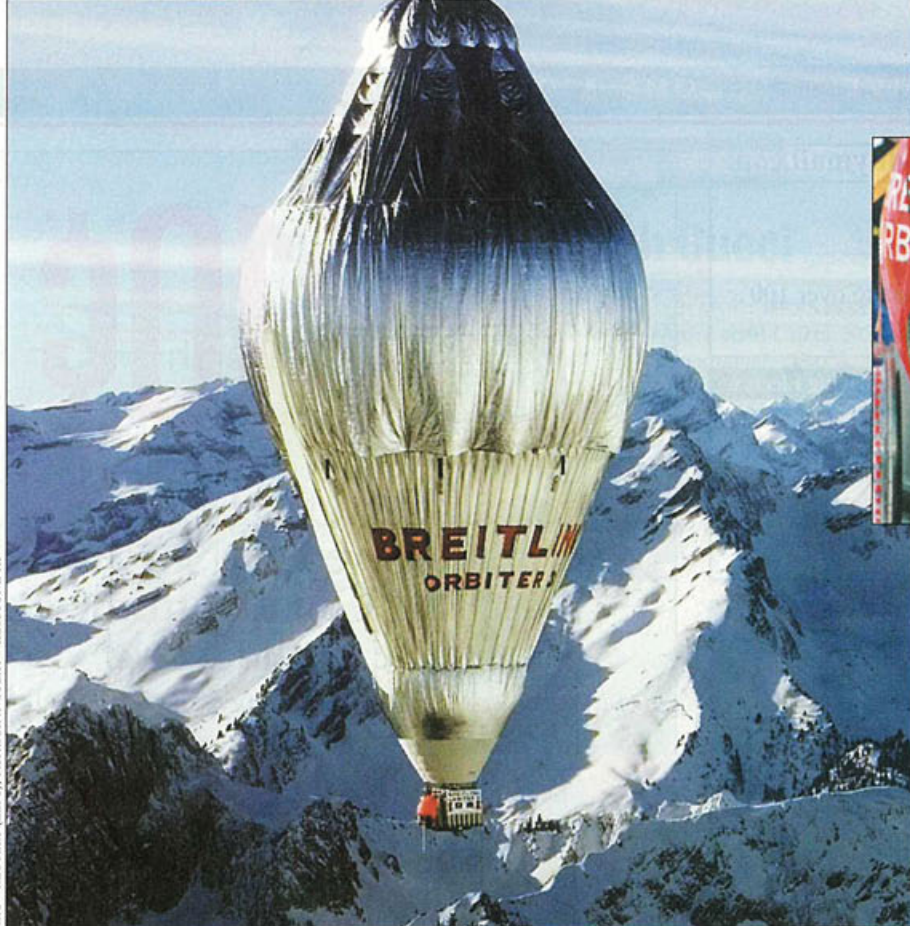
March 29, 1999

# Peewee!

## A Great Stink From Brussels



Austria	Sch 47.00	France	F 25.00	Italy	L 6500	Poland	PLN 6.50	Switzerland	SF 6.10
Belgium	BF 150.00	Germany	DM 6.90	Kazakhstan	\$4.00	Portugal Cont	Es 620	Turkey (incl. tax)	TL 600,000
Bulgaria	BGL 2000	Gibraltar	£ 2.50	Latvia	\$4.00	Romania	Lei 24,000	Ukraine	\$4.00
Croatia	KN 17.00	Greece	Drs 800	Lithuania	\$4.00	Russia	\$5.00	United Kingdom	£ 2.20
Cyprus	C£ 1.70	Hungary	Ft. 290.00	Luxembourg	LF 150.00	Slovakia	SK 65.00	U.S. Forces	\$3.00
Czech Republic	CS 75.00	Iceland	IKr 280	Malta	Lm 1.30	Slovenia	SIT 380	Yugoslavia	YUD 40.00
Denmark	Kr 29.00	Ireland (incl. tax)	IE 2.40	Netherlands	Fl 7.25	Spain	Pts 550		
Finland	Mk 22.00	Israel	NIS 14.00	Norway	Kr 30.00	Sweden	SKr 30.00		



**'An incredible achievement':** The Orbiter 3 shortly after its March 1 liftoff in the Swiss Alps, pilot Piccard and copilot Jones

## ADVENTURE

# A Record Setting Flight

For the first time, a balloon flies around the world

BY TOM MORGANTHAU

**O**K, IT WASN'T QUITE AS BIG AS Lindbergh's flight to Paris—but when Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones soared high over the coast of Mauritania last week, they earned a niche in history as the first balloonists to circle the Earth. Their 29,000-mile-plus flight, on a high-tech, 20-story-tall balloon known as the Breitling Orbiter 3, began in Switzerland on March 1 and lasted more than 19 days. Much of the voyage took place at altitudes above 30,000 feet, enabling Orbiter 3 to ride the jet stream, and the trip set new balloonists' records for distance and endurance. "I think it is an incredible achievement—the last great aviation record left," said Richard Branson, the British tycoon who made four unsuccessful attempts to break it. With their circumnavigation complete,

Piccard and Jones elected to keep on flying. "We do not land. We go to Egypt," Piccard radioed to an air-traffic controller as Orbiter 3 crossed Mauritania. "We are a balloon flying around the world."

The message sounded jaunty, but the voyage, as Piccard himself said in an earli-

er transmission to his ground controllers in Switzerland, was "no picnic." Like other modern high-altitude balloons, the Orbiter is a hybrid design that uses both helium and hot air for lift. The gondola, 9 feet by 8 feet by 18 feet, is about the size of a small house trailer, but much of that space is occupied by fuel tanks for the craft's propane burners. Piccard, 41, and Jones, 51, spent nearly three weeks in the cramped, chilly cabin, subsisting on freeze-dried rations and sleeping in short snatches. At one point they were forced to reach outside to chip off a layer of ice that threatened to force the balloon down: around 30,000 feet the temperature outside is 40 below zero. Piccard, making his third attempt to balloon around the world, was so stressed that he had trouble sleeping—and midway through the trip, he had himself hypnotized by radio so he could get some rest.

Their success, where so many others have failed, was partly luck and partly skill—every balloon voyage is a race between capricious winds and the amount of fuel on board. Unlike their competitors, Piccard and Jones managed to get permission to overfly southern China, which significantly shortened their route.

They also had expert meteorological advice from their support team to help them play the jet stream. From liftoff in the Alps, they headed south toward Africa; crossed the Middle East, India and China, and spent six days transiting the Pacific. Then the jet stream fizzled and their chances began to look slim. Morale on board plummeted until Orbiter 3 found a patch of 155-mile-an-hour winds over the Atlantic. Tired but jubilant, Piccard and Jones raced toward a landing in Egypt, where in all probability, a hero's welcome awaited. ■

## Many Had Tried, Many Had Failed

Circumnavigating the globe has long been called one of the last great adventures. Some recent attempts and the winning route.

