AUTONOMOUS NAVIGATION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM PROGRAM EARTH ORBITER 1 MISSION

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Abstract

The New Millennium Program's Earth Orbiter-1 (EO-1) spacecraft is scheduled for launch in May 1999. EO-1 will fly in formation with the Landsat 7 spacecraft to validate an advanced land imaging instrument for future Landsat missions. Autonomous navigation to support formation flying is an important new technology that will be flight validated on EO-1. Navigation here, is defined as the process of determining and controlling the orbit of a spacecraft. Orbit determination is provided by an onboard Global Positioning System (GPS) receive reprocessor; while, a simple empirical approach has been developed to provide orbit control from within the Attitude Control System (A CS) architecture. Since autonomous orbit determination has been demonstrated before, the orbit control algorithms and their integration with the GPS determined orbits are the primary focus of this paper. Simulation results are presented [hat show (he expected intervals between orbit control maneuvers.

Introduction

A key technology to be flight validated on the New Millennium program's Earth Orbiter 1 (EO- 1) Mission is autonomous navigation. Autonomous, in this context, relates to a state of self-contained sensing, judging, and decision making [o empower actions on the spacecraft without outside advice or intervention. Thus, autonomous navigation is navigation done by a spacecraft based on capabilities resident within that spacecraft and without ground intervention. Since the Global Positioning System (GPS) appears to be a stable, continuous, and reliable

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service, onboard orbit determination based on GPS is still considered an autonomous function.

Single spacecraft autonomous navigation has been proposed[1-4] and partially validated for various mission scenarios[5-6]. Within autonomous navigation, there are several possible "control objectives" dictated by the navigation requirements and implemented principally within the maneuver decision and design functions of an autonomous navigation system. Two or more spacecraft in Earth orbit actively preserving, within limits, some geometrical alignment is just one possible control objective achievable within the context of autonomous navigation. This would be formation flying. In its simplest form, two spacecrafts control and maintain their dynamic states with respect to one another according to some prespecified requirement, usually expressed as a nominal separation distance and a control band on that separation. The characteristics of this prespccified requirement, as a first order factor, determine the complexity of algorithms and the difficulty of the overall autonomous navigation implementation such that large distances and tight control bands are more difficult and costly.

For the EO-1 mission the problem is to make EO-1 fly in formation one minute (-450 km) behind the Landsat-7 (LS-7) satellite. Formation flying here is required to take coordinated, co-registered images of reference geographic sites for a scientific comparison of the two imaging systems. in this mode of operation, the relative positions of EO- 1 and LS-7 will be maintained and controlled with respect to one another according to the mission requirement for "simultaneity" of measurements. The separation distance between EO-1 and LS-7 can be as great as 15 minutes (-6750 km) and still provide adequate science data collection. The control band of ±7.5 seconds (~50km) is tierived from the mission requirement [hat the EO- 1 ground track bc no more than ±3km away from the LS-7 ground track.

LS-7 is considered to be a non-cooperative partner with EO-1, except perhaps [o share its mission plan and navigational data at Orbit Maintenance Maneuvers. Smaller control bands are possible if some form of cooperative, near real-time data exchange were possible between EO-1 and LS-7, thus providing a more rigorous demonstration of formation flying. Cooperative formation flying using various methods of filtering spacecraft [o spacecraft range have been proposed[7-9] and techniques from this paper can be extended to support such missions.

Since EO-1 is a technology validation mission several autonomous navigation approaches have been selected for flight validation. Fig. 1. shows the flight software architecture. An executive called "AUTOCON" hosts the various autonomous navigation flight software. The Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) is responsible for developing AUTOCON with it's set of autonomous navigation algorithms[10]. An empirical approach capable of using only the GPS kinematic "navigation solutions" is provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)[11]. In this reference, a generic mathematical formulation is presented that provides the basis for the simulation results presented here.

Simulation

The simulation architecture for the JPL approach is shown in Fig.2. Simulated trajectories with gravitational and drag dynamics are required. In addition, noise is added to the resulting EO-1 orbits to simulate the expected GPS measurement system performance. For the GPS "navigation solutions", random noise of 450m (30) 12 is applied. The filtered onboard solutions from "GEODE"[13] are expected to be accurate to about 5m (3σ).

The choice of epoch was driven by the solar activity cycle since atmospheric drag depends largely on the levels of solar flux and geomagnetic index. Fig.3 shows actual solar flux data from January 1, 1986 to June 1, 1997. Accounting for the known 11 year solar cycle and noting that full closed-loop flight validation is scheduled for May 1, 2000, the epoch May 1, 1989 was selected. A 10:00 A.M. descending equatorial crossing is required for the LS-7 orbit. Thus, EO-1's requirement is 10:01A.M descending crossing. The longitude of ascending node for each spacecraft reflects these requirements and the full set

of initial mean orbital elements are given in Table 1.

Table 1

	EO-1	LS-7
Semimajor Axis (km)	7077.732	7077.732
Eccentricity	0.001175	0.001175
inclination (°)	98.2102	98.2102
Long. of Asc. Node (°)	188.547	188.297
Arg. of Periapsis (°)	90.0	90.0
Mean Anomaly (°)	-3.645	0.0

Epoch: May 1, 198900:00:00 UTC

A box-wing model was chosen for drag area representation of both spacecraft. The areas and masses selected are based on the best known dimensions as of summer 1997. Table 2. gives the EO-1 and LS-7 values used in the simulation.

Table 2

	EO-1	LS-7
Drag Area (m²)	7.7	19.0
Mass (kg)	529	2041
Ballistic Coefficient(A/M)	0.0146	0.0093

Results

Truth data are obtained from the noise free integrated orbits that include the full gravitational and atmospheric drag dynamics. Fig.4. shows the true and inferred along track variations with the nominal one minute (~450km) separation removed. The along track control band was set at ±50km (equivalent to about ±3km equatorial longitude ground track offset).

As the semimajor axes of both orbits decrease due to drag, Fig.5., the first control boundary encountered is the LS-7 east ground track constraint, see Fig.6 at about day eight. At that time both LS-7 and EO-1 perform along track maneuvers to raise their respective semimajor axes. Since the EO-1 orbit decays faster than LS-7 the EO-1 maneuver magnitude is larger to achieve the same post maneuver semimajor axis. An additional component is also added to the EO-1 maneuver to null the along track separation.

In Fig.6. [he longitude offsets relative to the desired ground track are presented for EO-I and LS-7. The EO-1 data are derived from the simulated GPS states with 450m (3σ) noise. The LS-7 data are noise free and represent "truth" values. A separation of 3km develops around 16 days and is equivalent to the 50km along track separation discussed earlier (

see Fig.4.). Thus, a single EO- 1 maneuver is performed that raises the EO- 1 semimajor axis and brings the EO- 1 ground track back toward LS-7 's.

The simulation is run out to accommodate another LS-7 maneuver at 34 days and an EO- 1 only formation maintenance maneuver at 55 days.

Conclusions

The resulting performance of using GPS "navigation solutions" for autonomous orbit determination and a simple empirical algorithm for autonomous orbit control is shown in this paper to be feasible by simulation. This approach is ready for flight validation on the New Millennium Program EO-1/LS-7 autonomous naviga[ion/formation flying mission.

Acknowledgements

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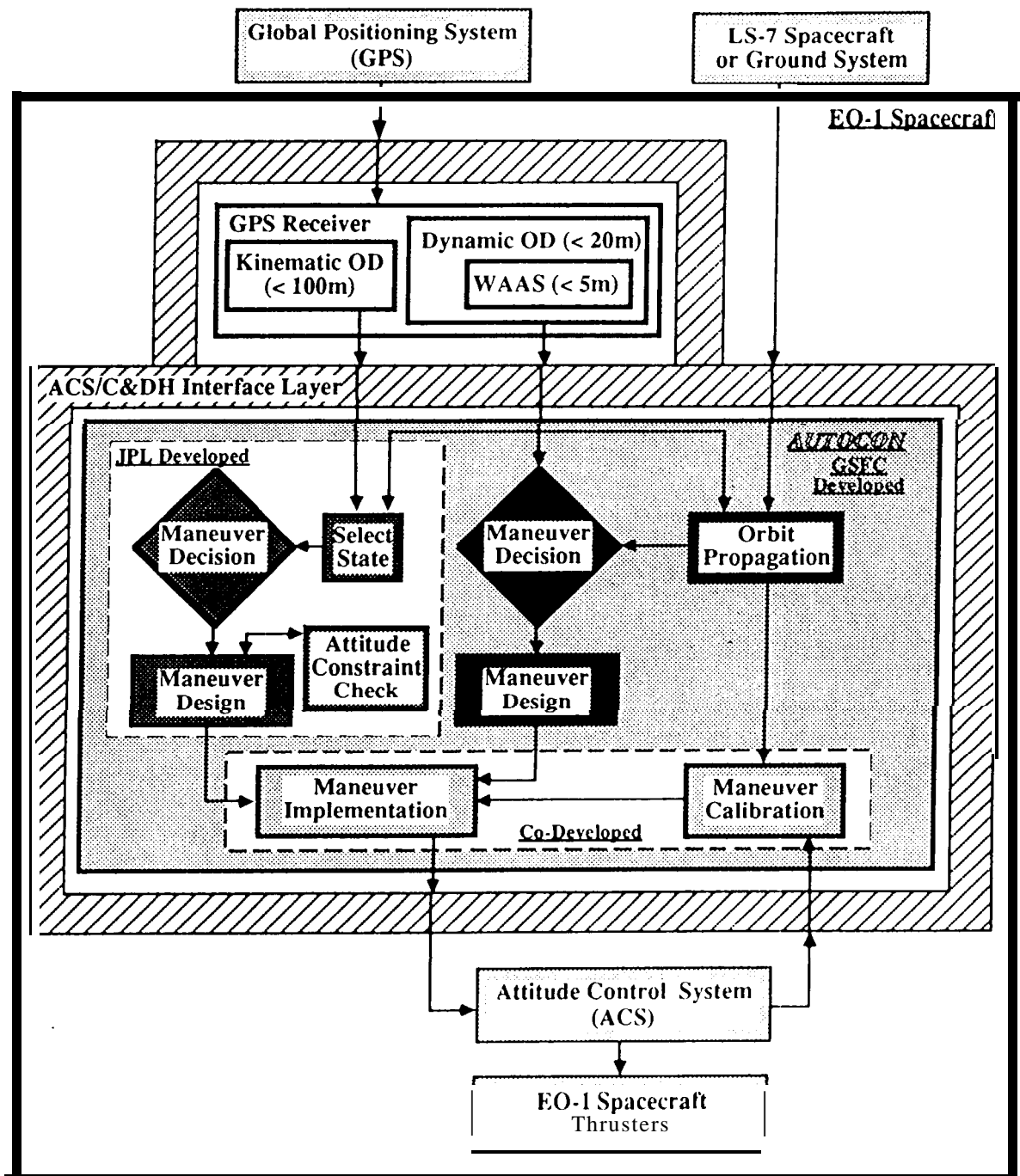
EO-1 Autonomous Navigation/Formation Flying System

Fig.1 - EO-1 Flight Software Architecture

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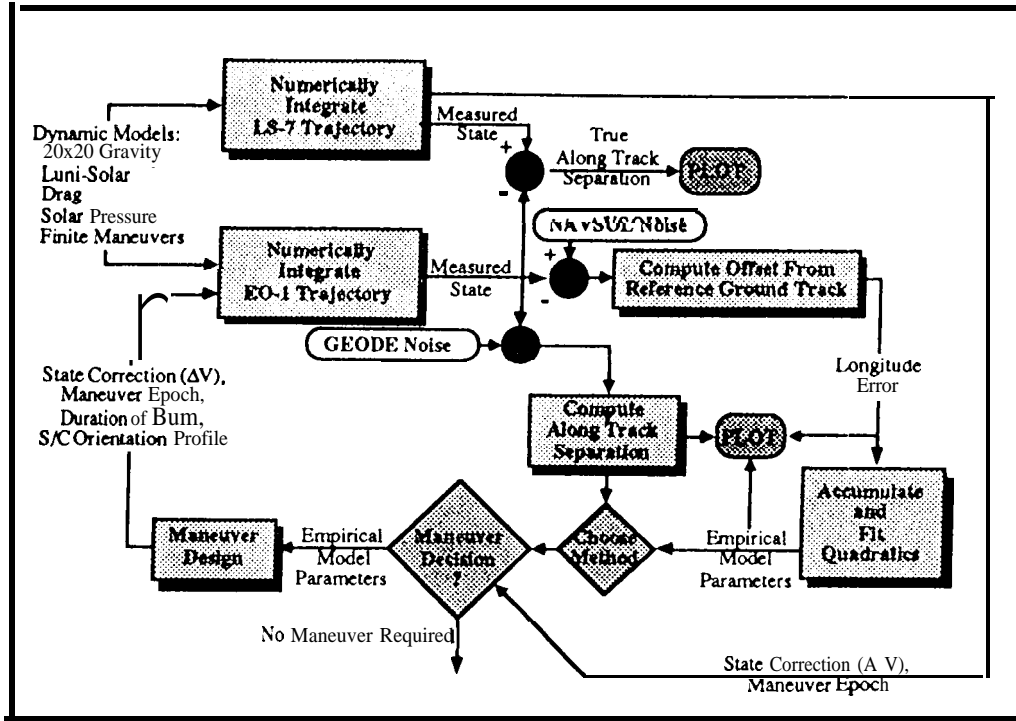## Simulation of EO-1 Autonomous Navigation/Formation Flying System

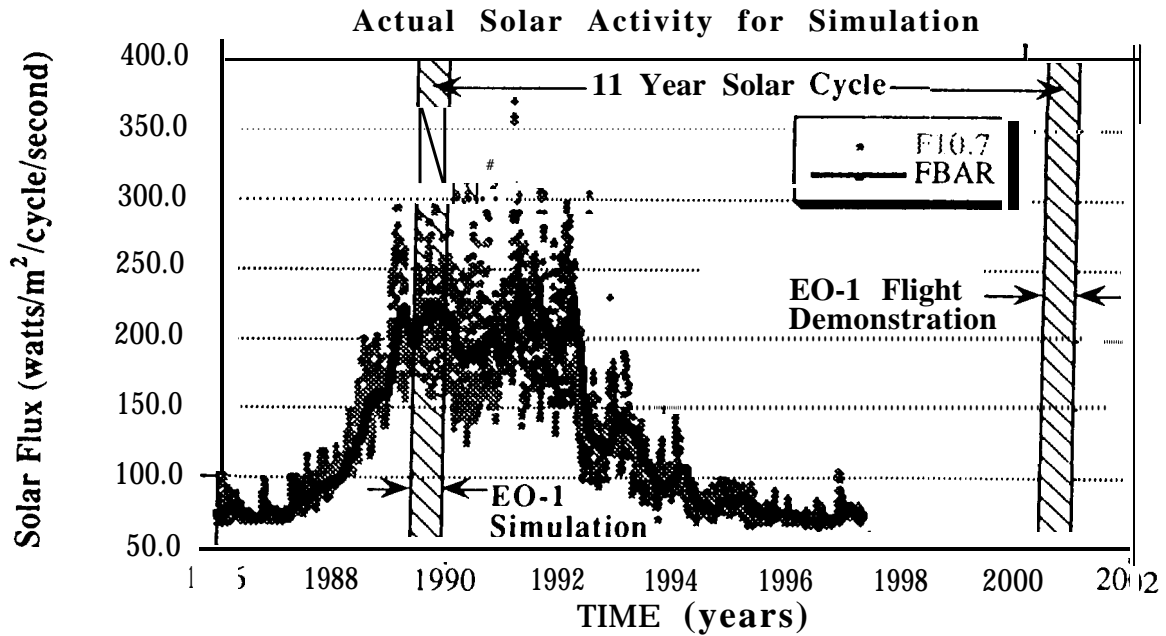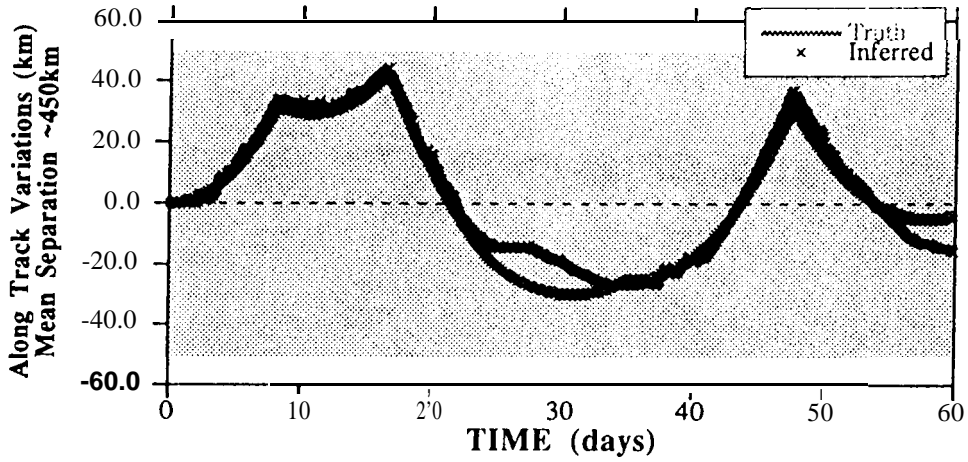Fig.2.- EO- 1 Simulation Architecture

Fig. 3- Solar Flux History

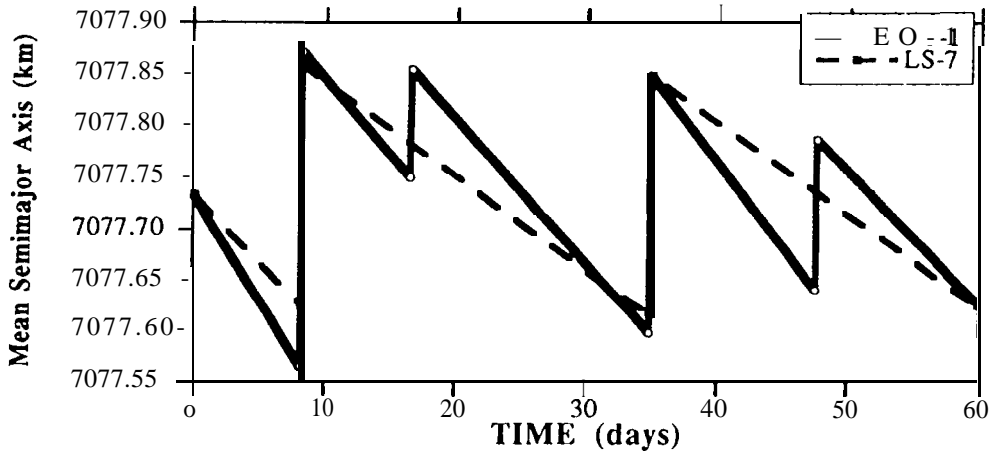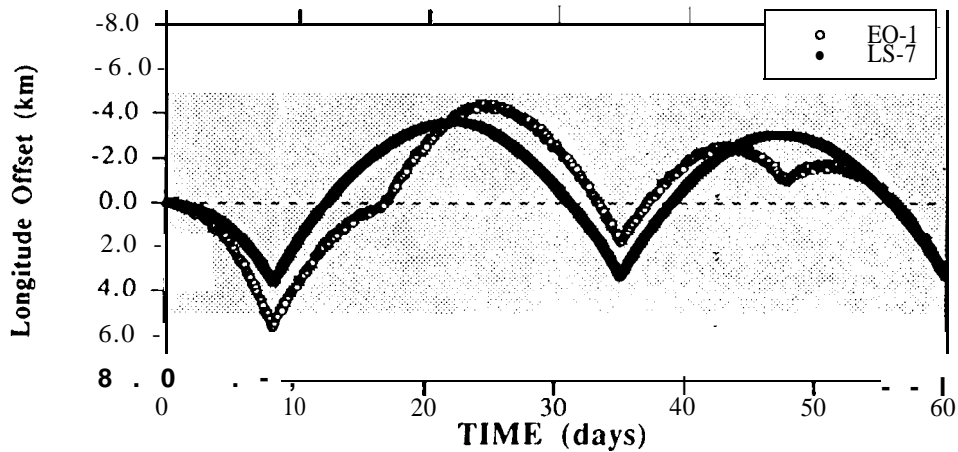Fig. **4- Mean** Along **Track Variations**

Fig. 5- **Semimajor** Axis Variations

Fig. 6 - Ground Track Variations