

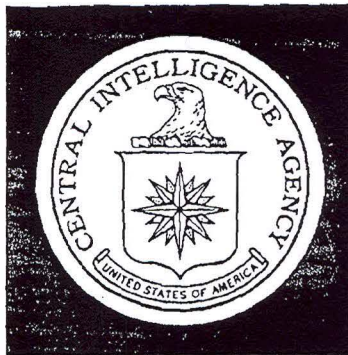
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USSR MAY HAVE TWO LUNAR PROGRAMS UNDER WAY

The Soviets apparently have two concurrent lunar programs, one involving the launch of Luna 15 on 13 July by the SL-12 and the other possibly related to the long-anticipated large new space booster.

Analysis of Soviet space operations since February indicates that launch activity associated with Luna 15 was similar to preparations which ended in a launch cancellation on 19 February and a failure on 14 June. The SL-12, which has suffered eight failures in thirteen attempts, was the booster used in these operations.

A different pattern of preparations characterized another launch cancellation on 22 February and a failure on 3 July. Both of these operations

possibly involved a booster other than the SL-12. The strength of an explosion monitored from the area of the Aral Sea on 3 July suggests that a booster larger than the SL-12 blew up at Tyuratam either on the pad or early in flight.

The precise goals of both programs are not known, but they involve missions different from previous Zond or Luna events. The current lunar program involving the SL-12 booster appears to be aimed at scientific exploration of the moon and probably is not directly related to manned lunar flight. The other program could be directed at developing capabilities and techniques required for a manned lunar landing.

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