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DIRECTORATE OF  
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## USSR

## LUNOKHOD ROAMS AGAIN

Early this week, the Soviets successfully landed another rover vehicle, Lunokhod-2, on the moon's surface. The new rover is expected to operate for several months and to continue the exploration program conducted by Lunokhod-1 in 1970 and 1971. The Lunokhod landing is the latest in the series of unmanned lunar missions that the Soviets have been conducting for the past several years. No Soviet attempt at a manned lunar landing is likely before the end of the decade.

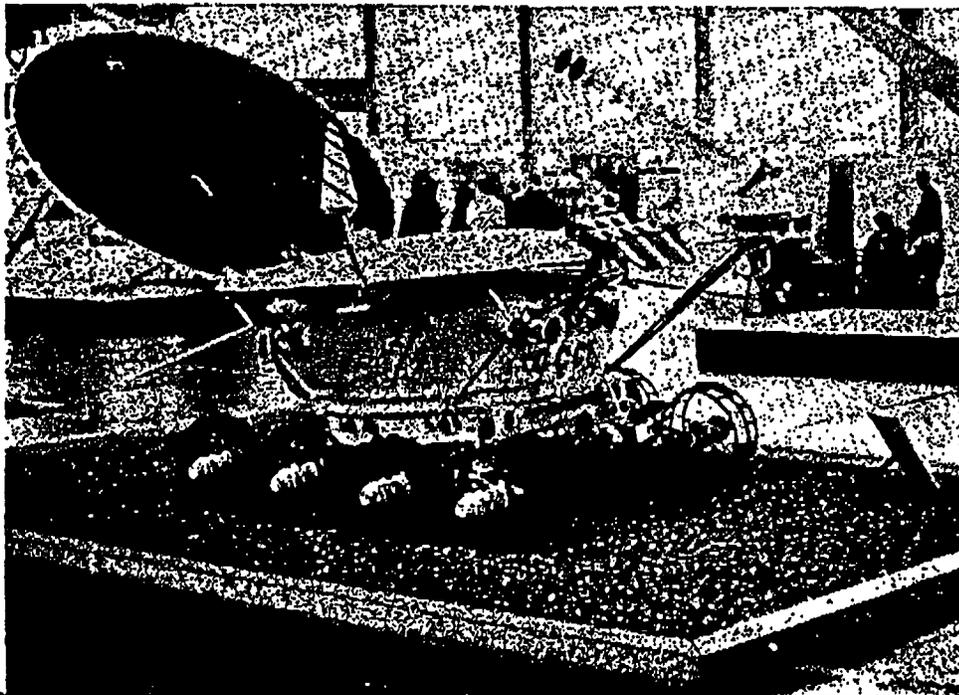
Lunokhod-2 was carried to the moon aboard Luna 21, a space probe launched from Tyuratam on 8 January. The landing occurred on 15 January in the Sea of Serenity, about 140 miles from the area of the Apollo 17 mission last month. Shortly after the probe landed, the new rover rolled down a ramp onto the moon carrying a Soviet flag and a likeness of Lenin.

The Soviets have released little information about Lunokhod-2. It is believed to be similar to the eight-wheeled Lunokhod-1, although it apparently weighs almost 200 pounds more. Like this predecessor, Lunokhod-2 will be driven remotely from a ground station in the Soviet Union and will operate only during 'lunar days,' which last about two weeks.

According to TASS, Lunokhod-2 will continue but not duplicate the work of the first

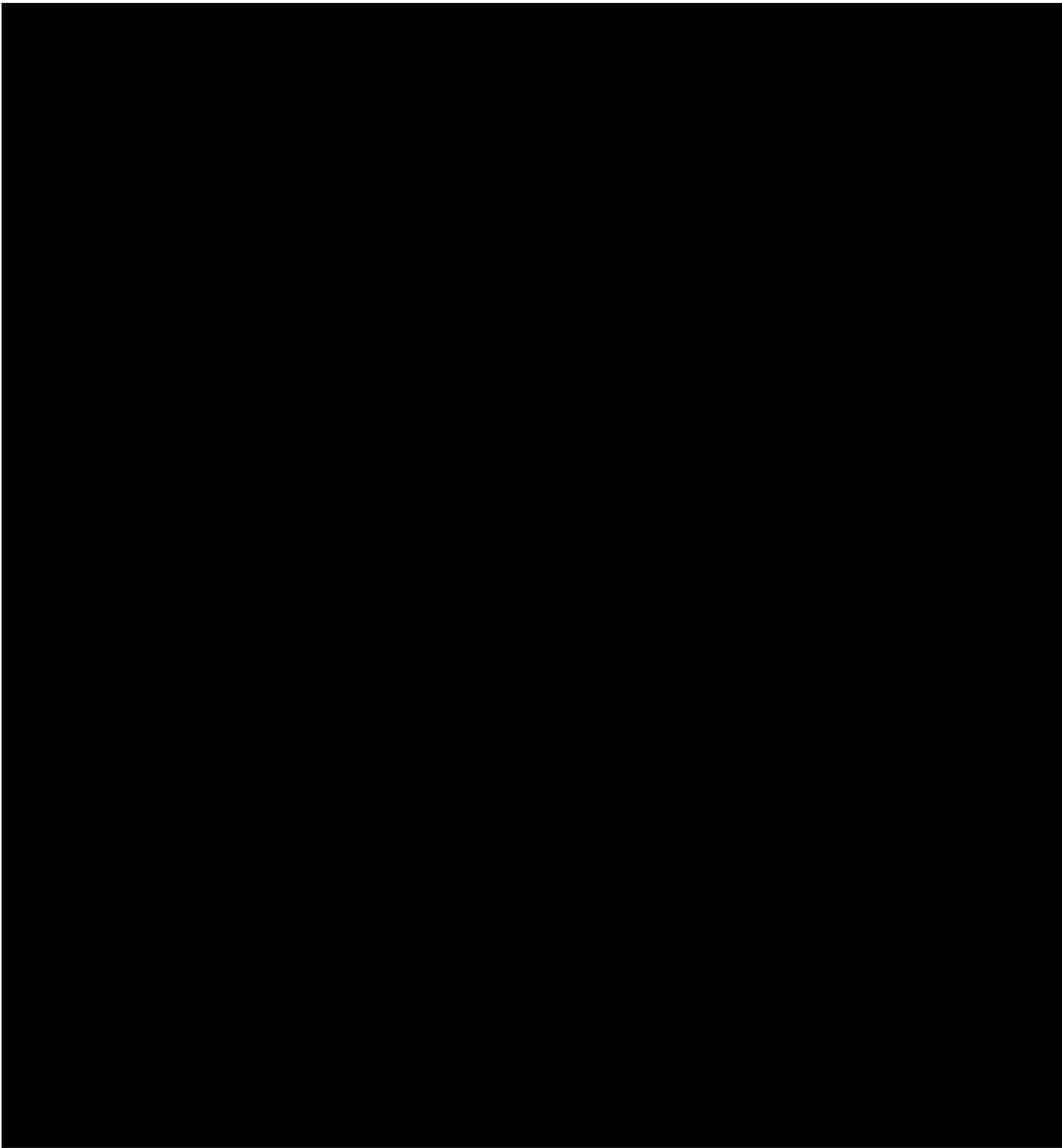
moon rover. The earlier vehicle transmitted pictures back to earth and conducted several scientific experiments, including some to determine the properties of lunar soil. Lunokhod-2 probably will carry out similar experiments, although the additional weight suggests that new programs have been added. Like the first Lunokhod, the second rover carries a French laser reflector that will be used to measure distances between the earth and the moon. The active life of Lunokhod-1 was more than ten months—far exceeding Soviet expectations—and the new vehicle could operate for about the same length of time.

The Lunokhods are part of the Soviet program of unmanned lunar research that has been under way since 1958. In addition to the rover vehicles, this effort has included experiments conducted from lunar orbit and two missions that returned a few ounces of lunar soil. The Soviets are not expected to attempt a manned lunar landing until at least the late 1970s because they lack an operational space booster comparable to the US Saturn V.



Model of Lunokhod-1

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