TOP SECRET

[redacted]

4 November 1966

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WEEKLY REVIEW

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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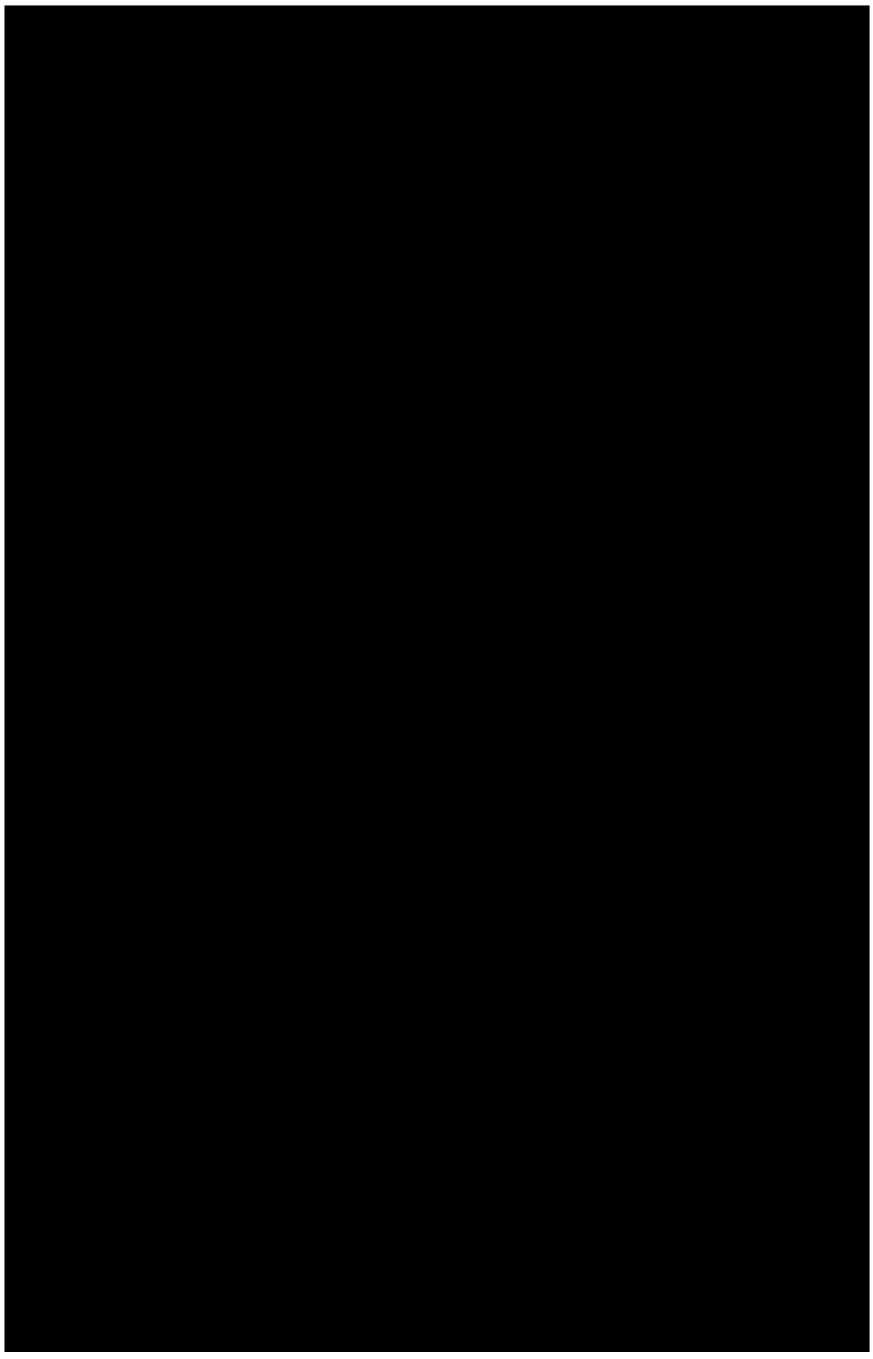

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Europe

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Europe

USSR'S LUNA 12 LOOKS AT LUNAR LANDSCAPE

On 29 October, four days after Luna 12 began orbiting the moon, the Soviets announced successful photography of the lunar surface and displayed two pictures on Moscow television.

[redacted]

As usual, the Soviets did not reveal beforehand that Luna 12 would attempt photographs, nor have they ever admitted that the partially successful Luna 11 was designed to take pictures. [redacted]

An unusual feature of the Luna 12 operation was the successful effort by the Soviets to schedule initial transmissions of photographs from the spacecraft

PARTIAL SUCCESS
SUCCESS
FAILURE

SOVIET LUNAR PROGRAM SINCE 1963

LAUNCH DATE	SOVIET DESIGNATION	OUTCOME OF EACH FLIGHT PHASE: Launch by ICBM	3rd Stage to Orbit	Stabilization in Parking Orbit	4th Stage Ejection	Spacecraft Midcourse Functions	Arrival Functions	Mission Operations
4 Jan 63								
3 Feb 63								
2 Apr 63	LUNA 4							
21 Mar 64								
20 Apr 64								
12 Mar 65	COSMOS 60							
10 Apr 65								
9 May 65	LUNA 5							
8 Jun 65	LUNA 6							
4 Oct 65	LUNA 7							
3 Dec 65	LUNA 8							
31 Jan 66	LUNA 9							
1 Mar 66	COSMOS 111							
31 Mar 66	LUNA 10							
24 Aug 66	LUNA 11							
22 Oct 66	LUNA 12							

Soft Landing Attempt
Orbiting Attempt

[redacted]

[redacted]

during periods when tracking stations in the UK could not intercept the signals. This prevented a repetition of Soviet embarrassment in February when a British facility released the photographs taken by Luna 9--the first spacecraft to soft-land on the moon--hours before the Soviets even announced that photographs had been taken. After the Soviets released the first of Luna 12's pictures on 30 October, their concern diminished: most of a two-and-one-half hour transmission of lunar photographs the next day was received by the British.

There are indications that preparations for Luna 12 were rushed to meet its 22 October launch date. On 20 October, as part of a demonstration for visiting Communist heads of state, the Soviets orbited two earth satellites--a Molniya communications vehicle and a reconnaissance satellite. One of these operations probably used the launch pad from which Luna 12 was fired. If so, the Luna 12 launch vehicle was erected on its pad, given a final checkout, fueled, and launched in only two days.

One explanation for a rush to launch on the 22nd is that the Soviets were trying for optimum photography of the area in which Luna 9 had landed. Lighting conditions on the 26th approximated those in February when Luna 9 took its pictures of the lunar terrain. A comparison of Luna 9 and Luna 12 photographs of this area would be of great value if the photographs were made under nearly identical lighting conditions. [redacted]

[redacted]