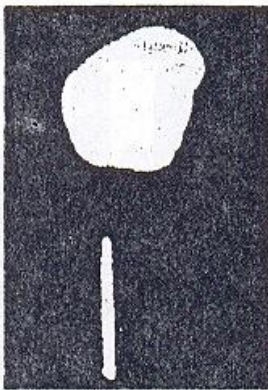
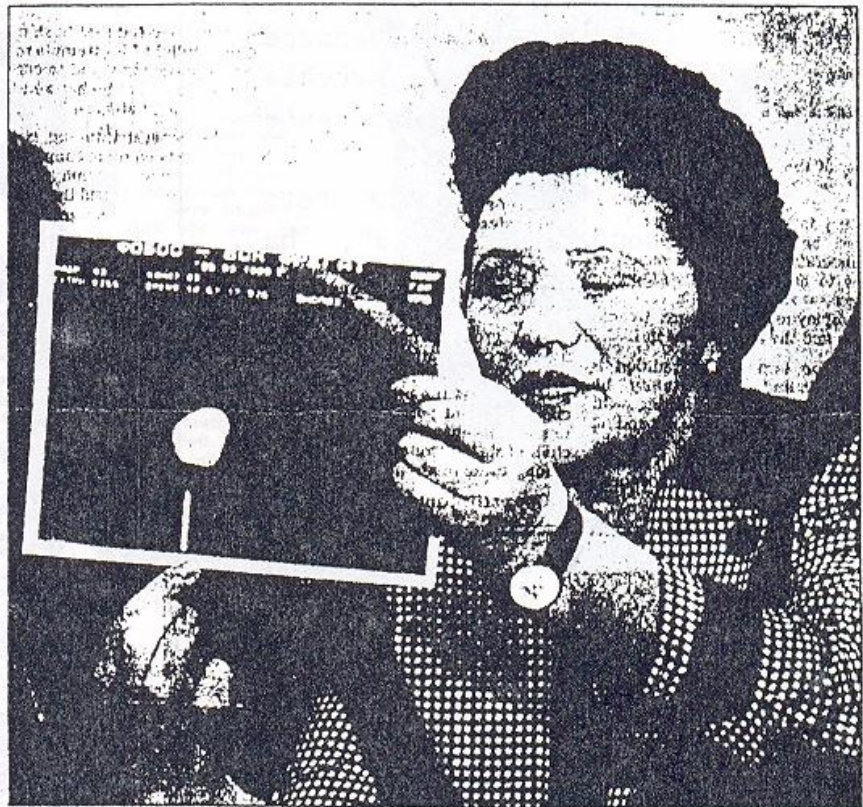


# Soviet Photo of a UFO Near Mars



PHOTOS BY FREDERIC LARSON/THE CHRONICLE

A mystery Soviet space photo (above) was displayed by test pilot Marina Popovich (right)



*By Jack Viets  
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A photo of a mysterious object in space taken by an unmanned Soviet spacecraft that inexplicably disappeared shortly afterward was displayed yesterday by one of Russia's top women test pilots on the eve of a UFO convention here.

The strange, missile-like object — which could have been anything from a dying spacecraft's last transmission of an electrical malfunction to an alien spacecraft — was photographed in deep space in the area of the Martian moon, Phobos, by the Soviet space probe Phobos 2 on March 25, 1989, said the pilot, Marina Popovich.

The speaker, a retired Soviet Air Force colonel, test pilot, aerodynamicist and cosmonaut trainee, said she had been given the photo by a high official in the Soviet space program.

The unidentified object, a long, faintly aerodynamic shape with rounded ends, appears in

the photograph beneath an irregularly shaped blob of light that is apparently the Martian moon Phobos.

Three days after it transmitted the photo to Earth, "the spacecraft disappeared," Popovich told a press conference at the Soviet consulate in San Francisco.

"The reasons for its disappearance are unknown," she said.

She suggested that it is possi-

ble that a radiation flash from the object the spacecraft photographed "turned it off" and caused it to disappear in space. "The photo is only information for thinking ... information for all kinds of decisions."

"No one can answer precisely what it is," said Professor Emeritus James Harder of the University of California at Berkeley, the former director of research for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization.

Possibilities for the origin of the object in the photo will be discussed at a Soviet-American UFO/Extraterrestrial Intelligence symposium from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. today at Wheeler Auditorium on the UC Berkeley campus.

Other speakers will include Colin Andrews, a British researcher in the phenomenon of crop circles and the mystery shafts and beams of light seen at Stonehenge, and Steven Greer, M.D.