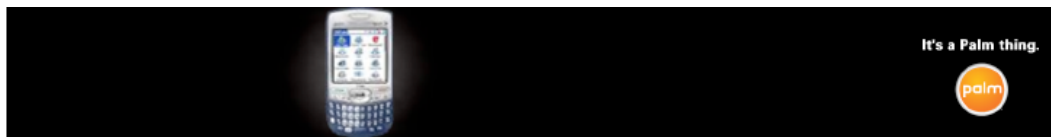


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NASA will use Russian tech to seek water on moon, Mars

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian and U.S. space chiefs signed agreements Wednesday to cooperate on unmanned missions that would search for potential water deposits beneath the surface of the moon and Mars.

The agreements signed by NASA Administrator Michael Griffin and Russian Space Agency chief Anatoly Perminov deal with putting Russian instruments on board NASA probes that would be sent to the moon and Mars.

"These two projects demonstrate the commitment by our countries to continue to look for opportunities where it's mutually beneficial to cooperate," Griffin said. "When these opportunities happen it's our intent to work together to bring them to fruition."

The first Russian instrument, called LEND, will be mounted on an unmanned NASA probe called Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, or LRO, which is to be launched in October 2008 to search for possible sources of water under the moon's poles.

Dr. Gordon Chin, project scientist for LRO, said that the Russian instrument has won an international contest for the best such device for the mission.

A similar Russian instrument will be placed on a NASA rover that is to be sent to roam Mars in 2009.

Chin said the missions were important for choosing landing sites for future missions to the moon and Mars. "The LEND instrument allows us to be able to locate very specifically potential sites where resources such as water might exist," Chin said.

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