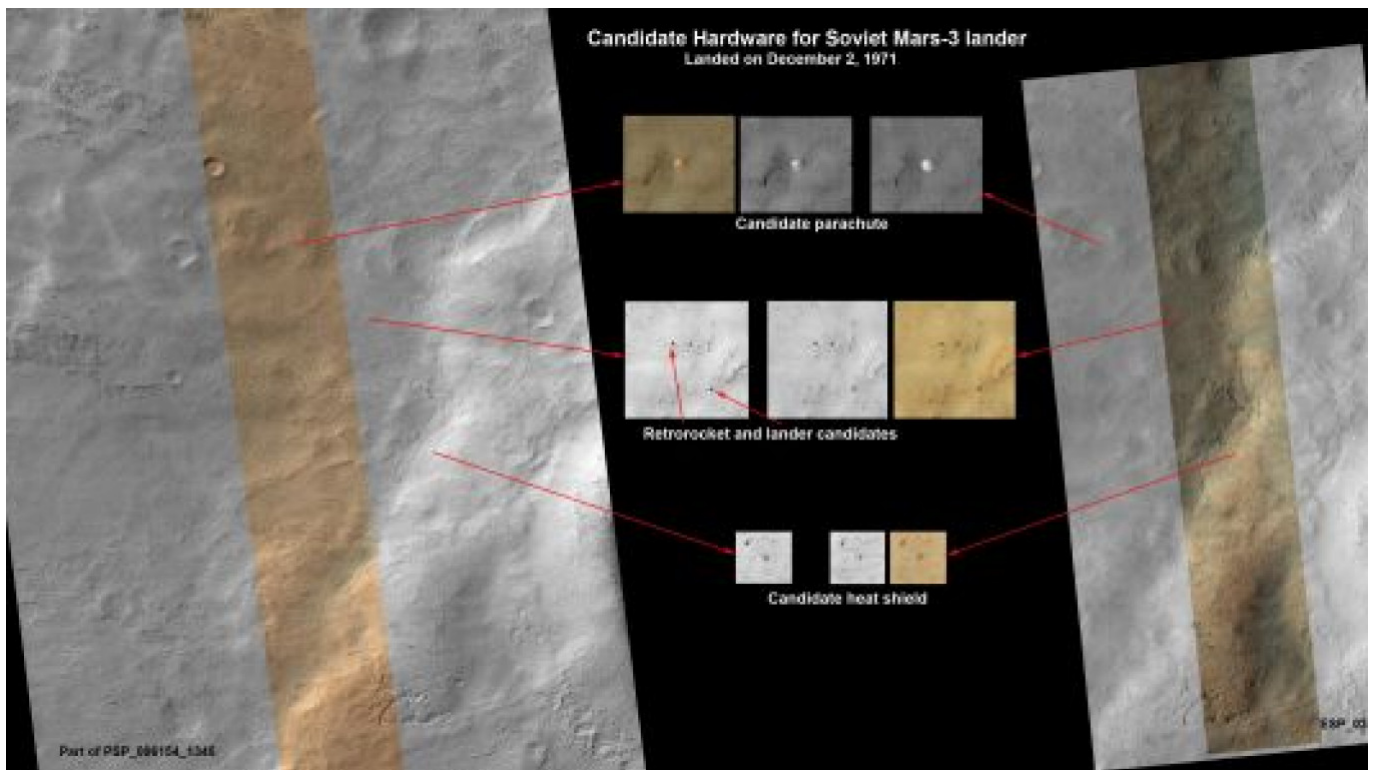


Soviet Mars Craft Possibly Spotted in NASA Pictures

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A set of images shows what might be hardware from the Soviet Union's 1971 Mars 3 lander.

Note: See a higher resolution version of this image [here](#).

Russian space fans have spotted what may be parts from a Soviet spacecraft that landed on Mars in 1971.

Poring through images taken by NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, the citizen scientists point to what could be the Mars 3 lander along with its parachute, heat shield, terminal retrorocket and lander. The lander operated for only 15 seconds after landing on Dec. 2, 1971, the first spacecraft to survive a Mars landing long enough to transmit anything.

NASA said that more follow-up is needed to confirm the images are actually that of the Soviet lander and not natural geologic features. "Together, this set of features and their layout on the ground provide a remarkable match to what is expected from the Mars 3 landing, but

alternative explanations for the features cannot be ruled out,” senior researcher Alfred McEwen said in a statement. “Further analysis of the data and future images to better understand the three-dimensional shapes may help to confirm this interpretation.”

During the Curiosity rover’s landing last year, the reconnaissance orbiter was able to locate its parachute, rocket stage and cables that were cast away as the car-size vehicle touched down inside an ancient crater.

A Moscow Times staff writer contributed to this report.

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