

China: See You on the Far Side...

Source: [Giza Death Star](#)

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December 11, 2018

...of the Moon, that is.

That's right. That mission of China to land a probe on the far side of the Moon that I have blogged about before, is finally under way according to these stories shared by Mr. E.J. and Mr. H.B.:

[Meet you on the dark side of the moon: China launches historic lunar exploration mission](#)

[China launches rover for first far side of the moon landing](#)

As one might imagine, this has the high octane speculation part of my mind pondering all sorts of weird "coincidences," but before we get to that, there are a few details from both stories to note. First, there's this from the RT article:

Friday's successful launch sent China's Chang'e-4 into orbit, scheduled to make an unprecedented touch down on the dark side of the moon in January of next year, Chinese state media reports. The rover will land in the 3.9 billion year old "Von Kármán" crater, where it will take measurements and conduct experiments with the potential to uncover new information about the moon's formation and history.

The Von Karman crater is in the southern hemisphere on the Moon's far side, close to the southern pole of the Moon, which may or may not be significant, but we'll get back to that:

The Moon's Farside Von Kármán Crater

As the phys.org version of the story notes, should China's Chang-e 4 lander succeed, it will be the first time anyone has landed a probe on the far side of the Moon. The problem is of course that the lander will need to communicate with Earth, and the only way to do this is to place a relay satellite in orbit around the Moon, and this China has already done:

A major challenge for such a mission is communicating with the robotic lander: as the far side of the moon always points away from earth, there is no direct "line of sight" for signals.

As a solution, China in May blasted the Queqiao ("Magpie Bridge") satellite into the moon's orbit, positioning it so that it can relay data and commands between the lander and earth.

Adding to the difficulties, Chang'e-4 is being sent to the Aitken Basin in the lunar south pole region—known for its craggy and complex terrain—state media has said.

Again, it is to be noted that the lander will land toward the southern polar region, and as this article also notes the Chang-e 4 will be followed up by another lander which will collect samples and return them to the Earth.

It's this fascination with the south polar region of the Moon that has me intrigued. Already it is thought that the southern polar region is a good bet for the presence of water in the form of ice, deep in craters or perhaps even subsurface, and China has already expressed an interest in the region for a potential base.

But there's some things that intrigue about this story, not the least of which is the relay satellite China has placed in orbit around the Moon. Little is stated in either article

about the expected “shelf life” of this satellite, but I rather suspect, given China’s space ambitions and the expense and delicacy of placing a satellite in orbit, that it’s meant to be a long-term “investment.”

It’s the south polar region itself, however, that really intrigues me. A few years ago NASA made a big hullabaloo about its L-CROSS satellite mission to crash a probe into the lunar surface and observe the ejecta. The story was it was looking for evidence of water which it would be able to detect by spectography of the ejecta. The run up to the mission was that everyone would be able to see the crash and explosion from Earth, so more than a few eyes were turned skyward for “the big event,” which, when it happened, appeared to be a big nothing burger. But the nothing burger may have been an even bigger event than the originally hyped explosion, for Mr. Richard Hoagland made a strong argument that the reason there was no gigantic explosion was that the L-CROSS crash landing might have penetrated a hollow area (See [NASA’s Smoking Gun: Part II LCROSS’ \(and LRO’s\) Secret NASA Mission to the Moon ...](#)) . One of the more interesting features Mr. Hoagland stressed in his analysis of the L-CROSS “nothing burger” was the presence of numerous rectilinear features near the impact zone which suggested artificiality and structure. In more “out there” analyses, speculation ramped-up, too, over the name “L-CROSS” itself, for it was argued that four “L’s” in the shape of a “cross” makes (here it comes) a swastika.

In other words, something caught NASA’s eye in the southern polar regions of Luna, and whatever it was, it may have had to be “taken out.” Speculation? To be sure, but then came the news that India wanted to take a look “down there” as well, with it’s Chandrayaan 2 lander, remember? (See [INDIA’S CHANDRAYAAN 2 TO LAND AT LUNAR SOUTH POLE](#)). And what a flood of information has been coming out of that lander, right?

So now China wants to land on the far side of the Moon, in the southern polar region.

So – bottom line – what do I make of all of this? Well, public stories notwithstanding, the presence of the L-CROSS mission in the context of this interest in the lunar southern polar region implies to me at least that they're (1) aware of something and they're not telling, and (2) they're looking for something. And isn't it very interesting that China wants to do it by looking on the far side, and as it controls the relay satellite for the probe-to-Earth communications link, that's a mighty convenient thing to have in case you find something, and don't want to tell...

See you on the flip side...