

Space Chief Touts Spacecraft Plans

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Federal Space Agency chief Anatoly Perminov told the Federation Council on Wednesday that his agency would test a next-generation spacecraft and even consider a manned mission to Mars.

But he conceded that the Russian spacecraft depends on imported electronics.

"We have to acknowledge that imported components account for 65-70 percent of electronics in the spacecraft launched last year and those set to be launched this year," Perminov said.

Perminov said the Mars mission would take place on a new spacecraft fitted with a nuclear propulsion system that would cut the flight to a month.

"It would be absurd to fly on the vehicles and with the engines that we have," he said, adding that it now takes 18 months to reach Mars, Itar-Tass reported.

He said the propulsion system would be created by next year and the new spacecraft would be ready by 2025. The first flight to Mars could take place after 2035, he said.

(AP, MT)

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