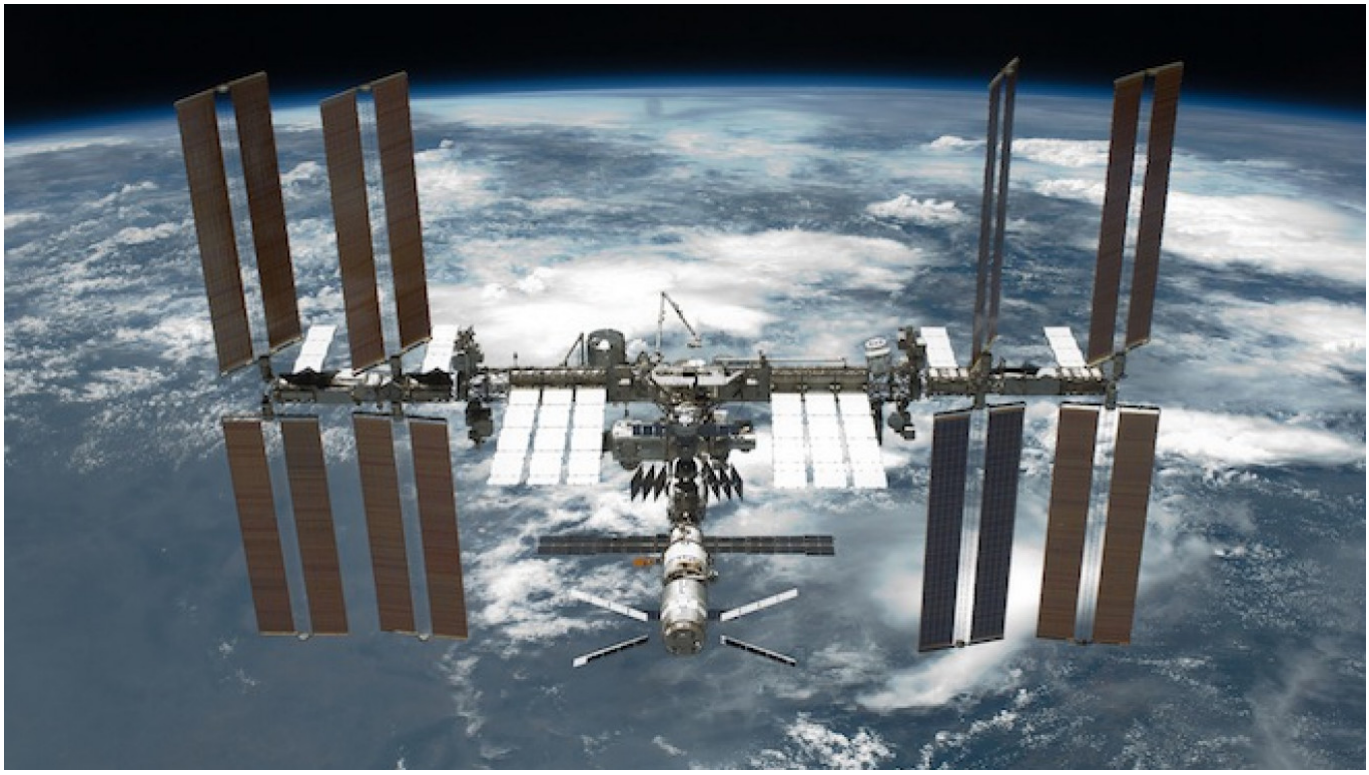
The Moscow Times
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Russia to Consider Building Own Space Station

By The Moscow Times

December 15, 2014



Russia is considering building its own space station.

Russian state space agency Roscosmos is considering building its own space station, RIA news agency quoted its chief as saying on Monday, underlining how international tensions are affecting space cooperation.

Such a project would rival the International Space Station (ISS), an orbiting laboratory that involves 15 nations including Russia and the United States. Moscow has cast doubt on the ISS's long-term future as ties with Washington plummet over Ukraine.

"I confirm we are considering such an option. This is a possible direction of development," RIA quoted Roscosmos head Oleg Ostapenko as saying when asked about whether Russia has plans to develop it own space station.

He said such a space station could become a key part of Russian missions to the moon.

It is not clear how such a project would be financed as Russia is widely expected to enter recession next year and the economic crisis is aggravated by Western sanctions over Russia's policy in the Ukraine crisis.

Washington wants to keep the $100 billion ISS in use until at least 2024, four years beyond the previous target. But a Russian government official said in May that Moscow would reject Washington's request to prolong its operations.

The Russian space station Mir, launched by the Soviet Union in 1986, operated until 2001 and President Vladimir Putin is now seeking to reform Russia's once-pioneering space industry after years of budget cuts and a brain drain that led to a series of embarrassing and costly failed launches in recent years.

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