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Russia Wants In on Orion, Deep-Space Exploration

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Russia's top space corporation is mulling joint projects with Boeing and Lockheed Martin despite sanctions, its top manager was cited as saying.

The state-run Energia will work to ensure that the Orion reusable spacecraft is compatible with Russian spacecraft, Vladimir Solntsev said, the Izvestia newspaper reported Tuesday.

"We've got to be able to dock spaceships together, that's just common sense," Solntsev said.

Energia, Lockheed Martin and Boeing inked a deal on Orion compatibility last week, he said.

He added that U.S. companies are also interested in joint deep space exploration projects with Russia, including moon flights.

"We largely agree on strategic vision, and there are no borders up there, so we will be collaborating," Energia's head said.

Neither Lockheed Martin nor Boeing have commented on the report as of this story's

publication.

Russia — whose relations with the U.S. are at a Cold War-era low — indicated interest in space autarky earlier this year, voicing plans to build an exclusively Russian habitat in the orbit after the International Space Station is decommissioned in 2020.

Russia has also spoken about building its own manned moon base.

The Orion, in development since 2005, is set for an unmanned moon flight by 2018. NASA also intends to utilize the reusable spacecraft for planned Mars missions.

The U.S. has suspended cooperation with Russia on space following Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in March.

The U.S. and EU have also banned exports of dual-use technologies to Russia as part of the sanctions, which impacted the space industry, Russian officials admitted.

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