The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

New Russian Space Station Blueprint Ready for Kremlin Consideration

By Matthew Bodner

January 19, 2015



Roscosmos chief Oleg Ostapenko confirmed that the agency was considering building a Russian space station, but did not say when such a project would be implemented.

A prominent research institute affiliated with Russia's space agency will present conceptual designs for a new Russian national space station to the government's military-industrial commission that would potentially replace the International Space Station (ISS), the institute's deputy director said.

"We have prepared the relevant materials," said Alexander Danilyuk, the first deputy general director of the Central Research Institute of Machine Building ("TsNIIMash," by its Russian acronym) was quoted by the TASS news agency as saying on Monday.

In mid-November, the Kommersant newspaper reported that the central research institute was floating a proposal to begin construction of a new Russian space station in 2017 using modules — the bus-sized building blocks of a space station — destined for Russia's segment

of the ISS.

NASA has proposed extending the $150 billion ISS project — an icon for post-Cold War international space cooperation — beyond its 2020 end date to at least 2024. But Moscow has delayed the Russian space agency, Roscosmos, from ruling on the proposal due to Russia's stand-off with the West over Ukraine.

Space firms sense an opportunity to lobby for government cash in the delay: Behind the scenes, the central research institute has been promoting its domestic space agenda. As Roscosmos' go-to think tank, the organization would likely be responsible for a good deal of the legwork on a Russian space outpost.

According to Danilyuk, the government's Military-Industrial Commission will consider the central research institute's proposals in the first quarter of this year. If the commission accepts the pitches, he said, a space station blueprint may work its way into Russia's federal space program — an outline of the country's national space exploration objectives through 2025.

Last week Kommersant reported citing an unidentified industry source that government approval of the new program, which had been scheduled for December, had been delayed until this spring due to changing spending priorities as the economy heads toward recession.

Whether that means Russia is less likely to fund its own space station is an open question. Roscosmos chief Oleg Ostapenko confirmed last month that the agency was considering building a Russian space station, but did not say when such a project would be implemented or if it would be a replacement for Russia's participation in the ISS program.

But last week the agency's deputy director, Sergei Savelyev, said it would be financially impractical for Russia to build a new space outpost before 2025 — well after the ISS program draws to a close.

Contact the author at m.bodner@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/01/19/new-russian-space-station-blueprint-ready-for-kremlin-consideration-a43013