

Russian Rocket Company Scores Big Foreign Launch Contract

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Russian space launch company has signed a contract with one of the world's largest commercial satellite operators, Intelsat, to launch five telecommunications satellites by 2023 aboard Soviet-designed Proton rockets, the Roscosmos space agency website reported Wednesday.

The Russian company International Launch Services (ILS), markets the Proton-M rocket to foreign commercial customers, and has been one of the leading launch services companies in the world for the past two decades. ILS has launched 11 satellites for Intelsat in the last 18 years.

The value of the new contract was not disclosed, but Intelsat's business is important for ILS,

which has been reeling from a series of high-profile Proton launch failures over the past two years that tarnished the rocket's commercial reputation.

“The long-term contract with Intelsat proves the effectiveness of our progressive and customer-oriented sales strategy. We have started to rebuild the trust of our partners,” said Andrei Kalinovsky, the general director of Russia's Khrunichev Space Center — ILS's parent company.

Intelsat's decision to use a Russian launch company comes after the satellite firm raised the alarm on a series of suspicious Russian satellite maneuvers near several Intelsat communications satellites in orbit over the past year. Experts suggest the satellite is a testbed for an anti-satellite weapon.

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