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Russian Space Industry Nine Times Behind U.S. Says Rogozin

By The Moscow Times

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Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has been left red-faced after telling reporters that "Russia will never catch up to the United States in the space race," the Interfax news agency reported.

"Our space industry has fallen behind the Americans ninefold. All of our ambitious projects require us to up productivity 150 percent – and even if we manage that, we will still never catch up with them," Rogozin originally said to Interfax Friday.

"We will be following the news about NASA and [Elon] Musk and licking our lips while trying to explain ourselves why we don't need what they are doing," Rogozin said, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Rogozin took to Facebook later in the day to say that his quotes had been taken out of context.

In the field of space-rocket engine construction Russia are much more competitive than the

US both in terms of quality and prices, he said.

"I said that, considering our ambitious plans of to increase labor productivity in the space industry, we will never catch up with the Americans in that regard," the deputy prime minister said.

"But this absolutely does not mean that we are behind them [the United States] in every other aspect of space exploration."

Igor Komarov, the head of Russian space agency Roscosmos, announced on April 12 that the organization would compete with SpaceX, a rocket company founded by tech billionaire Elon Musk. The claim came several days after Musk's Falcon 9 reusable rocket successfully landed on an ocean platform.

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