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Rogozin: Androids Will Be First to Fly Russia's New Spaceship

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The first flight of Russia's new Federation spacecraft, designed to ferry cosmonauts into outer space, is slated to take off from the still-unfinished Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's Far East sometime in 2021, the head of Russia's Roscosmos space agency said Monday.

The ship, designed by Russia's Energia Rocket and Space Corporation, will be the first new spacecraft built by Russia to carry humans since the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia today uses a vehicle known as Soyuz – originally developed for an aborted moon mission in the 1960s.

"It is anticipated that the first flight of an unmanned variant will be in 2021," Roscosmos chief Igor Komarov was quoted by the TASS news agency as saying.

All Russian manned spacecraft have been designed to fly without control input

from cosmonauts, but Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin – the government's bombastic point-man for all things space and military – said Federation will innovate on this principle with robotic android pilots.

Neither Rogozin nor Komarov appeared to elaborate on the android remark, but the Roscosmos chief was quoted as saying simply: "This is one of the ideas."

Photos of the Federation spacecraft's interior surfaced online earlier this year. Whereas Soyuz is known in the space community for its cramped, spartan interior and old analogue control systems (newer versions feature digital controls, however), Federation is sleek and modern looking.

In many ways, Federation's interior design looks a lot like the in-development Dragon 2 spacecraft from Elon Musk's SpaceX company – which dazzled reporters and observers last year with an unorthodox touch-screen layout that looked more like Star Trek than anything in current use.

Embed:

> The interior of Russia's new "Federation" spacecraft looks pretty swanky, and roomy. https://t.co/Otw4M9ivKI pic.twitter.com/VZygzBxUNw
>
> — Matthew Bodner (@mattb0401) May 6, 2016

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