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Russian Rocket Company Thinks the International Space Station Would Make a Sweet Hotel

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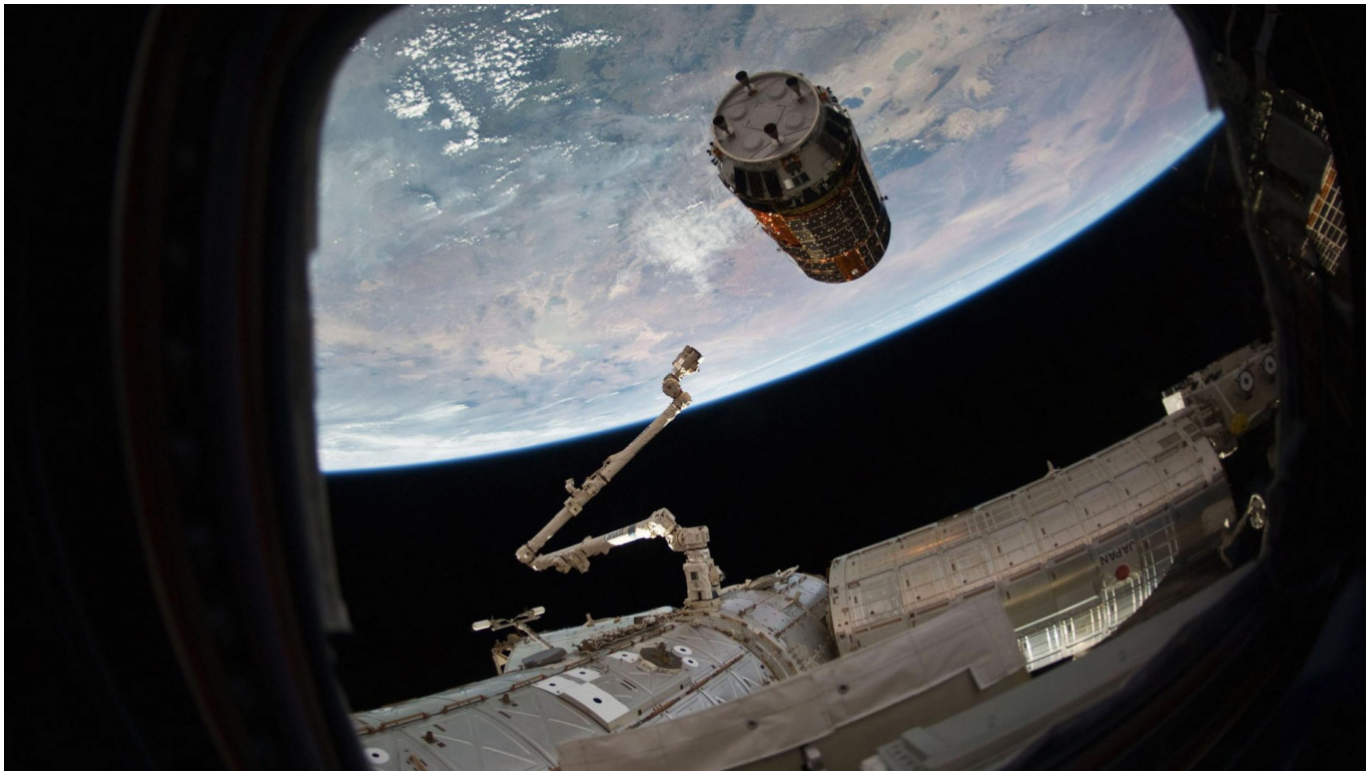

NASA

The company building Russia's segment of the $150-billion International Space Station (ISS) wants to turn portions of the facility into a hotel. Russian modules aboard the station are "underutilized," said Vladimir Solntsev, director of the RSC Energia space company, and could be suited to accommodating space guests.

"We have modules on ISS that have been flying in space for 20 to 25 years, their resources are exhausted, and it is not reasonable to use them for serious work and experiments," Solntsev told the news agency TASS on Friday. "Why not, for example, transform them into some kind of space hotel, so to speak?"

Energia is Russia's oldest and most prestigious state-owned rocket and spacecraft manufacturer. Once the design bureau of Sergei Korolyov, the father of the Soviet space

program, Energia has at times butted heads with its government owners over the direction of Russia's manned space efforts.

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Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Energia has attempted several times to repurpose Russia's space hardware for space-tourism purposes. Every few years, the company proposes ambitious projects, such as space hotels and tourist flights to the Moon. So far, none of these proposals has ever made it —if you'll forgive the pun — off the ground.

Most recently, Energia said it was planning to modify one of Russia's Soyuz spacecraft to take two wealthy clients on a flight around the Moon — a project it has announced several times. Just weeks after the most recent announcement in February, U.S. private spaceflight company SpaceX announced a similar mission.

It remains unclear if SpaceX poached its two customers from Energia.

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