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Moscow Cries Foul as U.S. Bans Use of Russian Rockets

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Roscocmos

The U.S. Department of Defense will ban space launch and satellite cooperation with Russia in 2023, the Pentagon said, drawing ire from Russia's space agency.

The U.S. has been trying to cut reliance on Russian-made rocket engines, eyeing 2022 as the latest deadline, amid strained relations. Last year, Russia's top defense and space industry official said Russian-made spaceships would stop sending American astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) after April 2019.

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New Department of Defense rules list Russia alongside China, North Korea, Iran, Sudan and Syria as countries where satellite and launch vehicle contracts will be banned on Dec. 31, 2022, a Pentagon notice on the government Federal Register says.

The Pentagon's defense acquisition regulations system says the prohibition is motivated by an "unacceptable cybersecurity risk."

The move affects fewer than 86 "small entities" previously awarded contracts with commercial satellite services.

Russia's federal space agency Roscosmos condemned the U.S. move as "unfair competition in the international space services market."

"This is effectively an attempt to deprive American manufacturers of a chance to work with the Russian rocket and space industry and artificially limit the use of Russian launch vehicles internationally," Roscosmos said Thursday.

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