

Russia Looks to Build Secret Military Communications Satellites

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia is considering creating a new satellite system for transmitting secret military communications, a space industry insider said, as Russia continues to beef up its defense capacities in a bid to re-emerge as a global military power.

Russia's outer space communications capabilities have deteriorated since the fall of the Soviet Union, to the extent that even the Federal Space Agency, or Roscosmos, sometimes relies on NASA infrastructure to communicate with its manned spacecraft.

The current draft of the Federal Space Program for 2016 to 2025 includes plans to create a new satellite system that would restore Russia's communications capabilities, Dmitry Bakanov, the head of satellite systems operator Gonets Satellite Systems, told ITAR-Tass.

The project has not yet been approved by the government, he said.

A source in Roscosmos told ITAR-Tass that the Finance Ministry could decide not to allocate

funding for the system's development.

Citing a draft of the Federal Space Program, Izvestia reported previously that the satellite project is expected to cost about 65.6 billion rubles (\$1.8 billion) and should be operational by 2020.

According to Izvestia, the system would be based on a new generation of satellites known as Gonets M-1 and M-2. They would be used to facilitate not only secret military communications, but also closer coordination between Glonass navigation satellites — a Russian-made competitor to the U.S.'s GPS system.

Bakanov, however, said that the system could well be based on a separate system.

"Although Gonets, of course, dreams of it being created on our base, no such decision has been made," he said.

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