

Russia Unlikely to Abandon ISS for National Space Station – Roscosmos Deputy

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Despite talk that tensions over Ukraine might lead to a Russian withdrawal from the International Space Station (ISS) in favor of a new national station, a senior space official downplayed the possibility in an interview published Tuesday.

"Theoretically it is possible to create a new Russian space station, but neither the current nor future drafts of the federal space program [through 2025] touch on this subject, and any [hypothetical] implementation could be tied in with the continued operation of the ISS," Sergei Savelyev, deputy director of Russian space agency Roscosmos, said in an interview with state newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta.

The ISS, a \$150 billion project involving 15 nations, has been in operation since the early 2000s and is currently scheduled to wrap up by 2020. The U.S. space agency NASA has proposed extending the program's life to at least 2024, but political tensions between Moscow

and the West have prevented Roscosmos from ruling on the proposal one way or the other.

In recent months, a stream of Russian media reports quoting senior Russian space officials have suggested that the country might abandon space cooperation with the West and pursue the construction of a new space station, perhaps with China.

Savelyev added that he anticipates Russia will continue to use the ISS beyond 2020, but that its focus will shift toward cooperating with China on Beijing's own space stations — a small station is already in orbit, and a second larger one is set to be operational around 2020 — and aboard the Russian segment of the ISS.

However, China is not a party to the ISS program, and NASA is prohibited by the U.S. Congress from working with the Chinese space agency — making it unlikely that China would ever be allowed to participate, as the consent of all partner nations is required.

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