

Ukraine Hands Production of Its Giant 'Dream' Plane to China

September 01, 2016

The  **Moscow Times**

Chinese state aviation is to jointly produce the world's largest aircraft, the An-225 Mirya, previously made by Ukraine's Antonov Aircraft Company.

The agreement, signed Wednesday, aims to revive the Soviet-era aviation program which produced the world's first six engined plane in the late 80s to carry the Soviet space shuttle, Buran.

The project was shelved following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the discontinuation of the Russian shuttle program. Only one working An-225 Mirya has ever been produced, with a second lying semi completed at Antonov's factory near Kiev.

A template model of the An-225 Mriya, a name which means "dream" in Ukrainian, will be produced in Ukraine before being delivered to Aerospace Industry Corporation of China (AICC). Production will then continue in China under the Antonov license, the company

announced in a press release Wednesday.

The first Chinese-made An-225 will be completed in the first half of 2019, China's CCTV TV channel said in a statement on Facebook.

The An-225 Mriya can carry more cargo than any other plane currently in existence, with maximum takeoff weight is 640 tons. In May the craft delivered an electric generator weighing 117 tons from the Czech Republic to Australia.

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