

Soyuz Spacecraft To Cost NASA \$65 Million

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The Russian Space Agency Roscosmos will sell a Soyuz spacecraft, a carrier rocket and launch services to NASA for some \$65 million, if the American agency approves the deal, a Roscosmos official told journalists Thursday, reported RIA Novosti.

Roscosmos manned flight programs head Alexei Krasnov said the deal, which includes a Russian cosmonaut as shuttle commander, might be changed to take inflation into account.

He explained that Russia's commitments on American astronauts' delivery to the International Space Station would expire in spring 2006, meaning that in April 2006, two seats in the Soyuz would be given to Russian cosmonauts and one would go to either a space tourist, a European Space Agency astronaut or any other candidate who can pay for the flight.

"We hope American shuttles will resume regular flights and we are suggesting that our American partners use Soyuz craft as retrieving units for the ISS crew instead of as shuttles," Krasnov said.

The United States cannot currently buy the craft because of a U.S. law banning airspace equipment purchases from certain countries.

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