

Russia, China Could Create Spacecraft To Explore Mars, The Moon

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Russia and China are considering jointly creating spacecraft to explore Mars and the Moon, a senior official of the Russian Federal Space Agency Roscosmos said Monday, reports RIA Novosti.

Roscosmos deputy head Yury Nosenko said Russia proposed that both countries develop a small satellite to orbit Mars and that the 2008-2009 Mars exploration program proposed launching one or two light satellites into Mars' orbit to transmit data to earth.

The Roscosmos official also said Russia could offer China its help to explore the Moon within the Chinese space program.

"We will participate in exploring the Moon within the Chinese space program until China reaches the stage of a joint project," the official said.

According to Nosenko, Russia plans to create a satellite to study the Moon by 2012 and proposed that China participate in the project. A final stage in the Moon's exploration could be the creation of conditions for sending cosmonauts there, Nosenko said.

China has already added two successful launches of its manned space vehicles into orbit to its resume. China's first manned flight two years ago made it the third country to launch a human into space on its own along with Russia and the U.S.

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