

Russian astronaut training flap reported

December 7 2005

Russia's Federal Space Agency says it is not ready to assume control of the Gagarin Astronaut Training Center, the Novosti news agency reported.

Agency President Anatoly Perminov said the center, now operated by the Russian Defense Ministry, would first have to be reconfigured into a non-military organization.

Government leaders want the space agency to control the training center as part of a plan to form a single astronaut corps, Novosti said.

The government also reportedly plans to replace the Soviet-era Soyuz rocket, and prepare for a manned mission to Mars.

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Citation: Russian astronaut training flap reported (2005, December 7) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-12-russian-astronaut.html>

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