

Russia: No funds to help U.S. moon station

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Russia would be keen to help NASA develop and build a permanent moon station, but would require U.S. funding, as it didn't budget for the contingency.

Igor Panarin, a spokesman for the Russian Space Agency, made the announcement in Moscow Tuesday, a day after the U.S. space agency announced its goals.

Panarin said separate funds had not been earmarked for lunar exploration under Russia's federal space program for 2006-15.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's goal is to use several robotic missions to map and explore the moon's two poles which get almost permanent sunlight beginning in 2008. Once a site for the solar-powered station is chosen, several manned missions would be used to construct the station.

Russia's Novosti news agency said scientists believe the moon is rich in natural resources, such as rare helium-3, which is a non-radioactive isotope of helium used in nuclear fusion research.

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