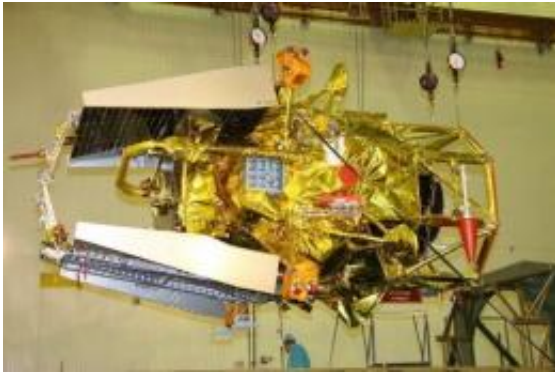


US may be behind Mars probe failure: Russia

January 17 2012



The Phobos-Grunt space probe being fitted to a delivery rocket. Russia said the failure of its Phobos-Grunt probe for Mars could have been caused by radiation from US radars, in its latest allegation of Western interference in its space programme.

Russia on Tuesday said the failure of its Phobos-Grunt probe for Mars could have been caused by radiation from US radars, in its latest allegation of Western interference in its space programme.

"There is such a theory," Yury Koptev the head of the scientific committee of state technology company Russian Technologies told the RIA-Novosti news agency.

"To test (the theory), an equipment block similar to the one on Phobos-Grunt will be exposed to radiation from the possible unintentional

exposure to American radars," said Koptev, a former head of [Russian space agency Roscosmos](#).

Roscosmos is currently looking into the possible causes of its latest major [space](#) mishap, after the probe, which was launched in November, met an inglorious end Sunday when it crashed back into Earth over the Pacific Ocean.

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said Tuesday that most of the agency's failures were aftershocks following the industry's dark period of the 1990s, when poor funding could have led to production of faulty equipment.

"If we confirm the fact of a foreign influence on our space equipment over the part of Earth we cannot see, we will come to different conclusions," he told Interfax in apparent reference to the West.

Roscosmos mentioned the possibility of foreign interference last week when the current agency chief Vladimir Popovkin openly asked why its failures often occurred when craft were over the western hemisphere.

"I do not want to blame anyone, but today there are some very powerful countermeasures that can be used against spacecraft whose use we cannot exclude," he told the Izvestia daily on January 10.

Phobos-Grunt was one of the more high-profile mishaps costing \$165 million and carrying also a [Chinese satellite](#) it was supposed to release in the Mars orbit.

It struck less than three months after an unmanned Progress supply ship bound for the [International Space Station](#) crashed into Siberia.

Russia also lost three [navigation satellites](#) as well as an advanced military

satellite and a telecommunications satellite in the past year.

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