

# Putin plays up Russia-US cooperation in space

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Russian President Vladimir Putin holds a model of a space ship during a visit to Roskosmos in Moscow on Tuesday, April 12, 2016. Putin has highlighted Russia's cooperation with the United States in space, despite all of the difficulties the two countries face on Earth. Putin spoke by video link with astronauts from both countries aboard the International Space Station on Tuesday, the day Russia celebrates Cosmonauts Day. It was on April 12, 1961, that Yuri Gagarin orbited the Earth to become the first man in space. (Alexei Druzhinin/Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP)

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday highlighted the ability of Russia and the United States to cooperate closely in space, despite all of the difficulties the two countries face on Earth.

Putin spoke by video link with astronauts from both countries aboard the International Space Station on the day Russia celebrates Cosmonauts Day. It was on April 12, 1961, that Yuri Gagarin orbited the Earth to become the first man in space.

"We attach great importance that despite whatever difficulties we face on Earth, people in space work shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand, to help each other and fulfill tasks that are essential not just for our countries but for all of humanity," Putin told the six-man crew.

Timothy Kopra, the American commander of the mission, congratulated Putin on the 55th anniversary of Gagarin's flight. "I am thankful for that fantastic event," he said in Russian.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, listens to an explanation of Roskosmos CEO Igor Komarov, and deputy premier Dmitry Rogozin, center, during a visit to Roskosmos in Moscow on Tuesday, April 12, 2016. Putin has highlighted Russia's cooperation with the United States in space, despite all of the difficulties the two countries face on Earth. Putin spoke by video link with astronauts from both countries aboard the International Space Station on Tuesday, the day Russia celebrates Cosmonauts Day. It was on April 12, 1961, that Yuri Gagarin orbited the Earth to become the first man in space. (Alexei Druzhinin/Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP)

Putin also spoke by video link with officials at the Vostochny Cosmodrome, which will hold its first launch on April 27. He expressed hope that Russia and its partners in the space program—in the U.S., Europe and Japan—would work together in ways that "would help us bring our positions closer and perhaps through space understand one another better on Earth."

The sprawling [space center](#) in Russia's Far East will give Russia its own facility for manned launches and ease its reliance on the Soviet-era Baikonur launch pad in Kazakhstan.

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