

# American Media Seeks to Poison US-Russian Cooperation in Space

By [Ulson Gunnar](#)

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*After a string of suspicious incidents involving Russia's venerable Soyuz rocket system, several prominent American newspapers have attempted to poison the last remaining area of significant cooperation between Russia and the United States.*

This includes the Washington Post which has placed itself at the center of Washington and Wall Street's anti-Russian campaign. Its article, "[Astronauts make harrowing escape, but Russian rocket failure roils NASA](#)," would claim:

A Russian Soyuz rocket malfunctioned two minutes after liftoff Thursday on a mission to the International Space Station, triggering an automatic abort command that forced the two-member crew — an American and a Russian — to make a harrowing parachute landing in their capsule, 200 miles from the launch site in the steppes of Kazakhstan.

The Post would further state:

Thursday's launch failure came at a dicey moment in the US-Russia space partnership. The two nations have been congenial 250 miles above the Earth's surface even when events on the ground, such as the Russian annexation of Crimea or the interference of Russia in the 2016 election, have stoked tensions.

But the United States and Russia have been at odds over the cause of a small hole discovered in August on the Soyuz module — Soyuz MS-09 — currently docked at the space station. Moscow says the hole, now repaired, was the result of deliberate drilling and has suggested sabotage, while the US space agency said this week that investigators will determine the cause.

For NASA itself, it has expressed full confidence in the Russian space program and indicated no desire whatsoever to end its cooperation with its Russian counterparts.

The Guardian in its article, "['We will fly again': Nasa to keep using Russia's Soyuz despite failure](#)," would explain:

Nasa's chief has praised the Russian space programme and said that he expected a new crew to go to the International Space Station in December, despite a rocket failure.

Jim Bridenstine spoke to reporters at the US embassy in Moscow a day after a

Soyuz rocket failure forced Russian cosmonaut Aleksey Ovchinin and US astronaut Nick Hague to make an emergency landing shortly after takeoff in Kazakhstan. The pair escaped unharmed.

The Guardian would further elaborate:

"I fully anticipate that we will fly again on a Soyuz rocket and I have no reason to believe at this point that it will not be on schedule," the Nasa administrator said.

It was the first such incident in Russia's post-Soviet history – an unprecedented setback for the country's space industry.

Space travel is notoriously challenging and both incidents could just be unlucky coincidences. It is also entirely possible that quality control within Russia is lagging and needs to be reexamined and reorganized. Even for NASA, episodes of lax quality control and complacency have caused launch failures including that of the space shuttle Challenger.

Papers like the Washington Post, attempting to shoehorn the incident into the much larger adversarial narrative it has invested itself into and aimed at Moscow could indicate merely the cynical leveraging of an otherwise string of unfortunate accidents.

However, US-Russian cooperation remains a serious and prominent contradiction to those in Washington attempting to portray Russia as a threat to global peace and stability. After all, if Russia is so untrustworthy and truly involved in all that it is accused of by Washington, why does Washington still entrust the lives of NASA astronauts to the Russian Federation?

### **US-Russian Cooperation in Space Represents the Best of Both Nations**

Space truly is the final frontier, and in more ways than one. It was one of the first areas of cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union and is one of the last areas of cooperation between the United States and Russia today. America's NASA and Russia's Roscosmos have proven the height of achievements possible when the US and Russia are able to set aside their differences and move forward together.

The International Space Station represents the pinnacle of human aerospace technology, a permanent homestead in Earth orbit that has been occupied by astronauts and cosmonauts continuously for nearly 20 years. The experience earned on the ISS will be used to further extend humanity's foothold into space, possibly even making us a multiplanetary species.

The ISS would not have been possible without US-Russian cooperation. It was the US space shuttle that ferried many of the largest modules into space, but Russian components and experience with previous space stations that laid the foundation for the ISS' construction. It is a Russian and American crew that maintain the majority of the ISS' systems and primarily Russian and American unmanned spacecraft that resupply those living aboard ISS.

Since the US space shuttle fleet was retired in 2011, Russia's Soyuz spacecraft has been the only means of sending astronauts and cosmonauts into space.

Beyond the ISS, US aerospace companies have long purchased Russian rocket engines to be

fitted to their launch systems. This included United Launch Alliance's Atlas 5 rockets which used the Russian-built RD-180 engine.

## **Cutting the Last String of Cooperation?**



Facts regarding US-Russian cooperation in space have become a point of contention as US rhetoric and aggression aimed at Russia has grown with the expansion of NATO eastward toward Russia's borders and a campaign of destabilization and wars aimed at nations all along Russia's spheres of influence in the Middle East and across Eurasia.

Several attempts have been made to target Russia's aerospace industry with sanctions, including attempts at [banning the sale of the RD-180 engine](#). Sanctions elsewhere placed upon Russia seek to generally degrade Russia's economy, a move that may inevitably degrade Russia's industrial capacity including its aerospace sector.

The recent incidents surrounding an otherwise premier launch system, the Soyuz, could represent a number of things.

It could represent a simple and correctable lapse in quality control. It could represent the impact of US sanctions aimed at indirectly undermining Russia's capabilities in all areas (and thus indirectly jeopardizing the lives of American astronauts). It could also represent a concerted effort to sabotage, humiliate, and force the cancellation of US-Russian cooperation in space.

All of these possibilities must be kept in mind until evidence emerges and investigations begin yielding results.

It is clear that not everyone in the United States shares some in Washington's enthusiasm in targeting and destroying Russia economically as well as its prestigious reputation regarding its accomplishments in space. But it is also clear that those who do are willing to do anything to further poison US-Russian relations and further isolate and place pressure on Moscow.

This includes sabotage at worst, and cynically leveraging simple accidents to poison US-Russian relations instead of contributing toward solutions that allow both nations to move forward together with the best both peoples have to offer.

Either way, it highlights the true root of current and ongoing US-Russian tensions, not the American and Russian people themselves, including the consummate professionals that make up both nations' space programs, but those lurking in political and media circles with a long track record of promoting war, discord and tensions for shallow, political objectives, because no matter how grand the aspirations of these malign actors may be, they pale in comparison to what the US and Russia have already proven possible in space, together.

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**Gunnar Ulson** is a New York-based geopolitical analyst and writer especially for the online

magazine "[New Eastern Outlook](#)". He is a frequent contributor to *Global Research*.

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