

The Vostochny Cosmodrome And Space Industry Cluster

In August 2013, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Rogozin (in charge of defense and space industries), visited the construction site of Russia's new space center, the Vostochny Cosmodrome. He took the opportunity to formulate a perspective for development of the space industry, linking it with measures to revive and develop the region as strategically crucial to Russia's future.

As reported by RIA Novosti, Rogozin said, "We are only just beginning to reform our space-launch industry in accordance with the President's decision on the consolidation of all industry, and this means that the entire, enormous machinery of [the Russian Space Agency] will go into motion. It may well be that this motion will be toward the East. There should be a second geopolitical center here." Rogozin elaborated the idea as follows: "If the Cosmodrome is here in the Amur Region, then why is all of our industry in Western Russia? It is risky and very expensive, for example, to haul heavy craft by rail. The real situation forces us to shift production capacity and manpower to Siberia and the Far East."

Rogozin said that a Presidential decree is being

prepared on these matters, and SpaceDaily.com reported that in April, President Putin said, "The site will become a major link in Russia's aviation and space sector and a powerful innovation center for developing the whole country and the Far East."

The online publication Nakanune.ru, in reporting Rogozin's remarks, noted that "experts have been saying for a long time that you can't just build something like a cosmodrome by itself, without a production, scientific and technological, manpower and industrial base. The Cosmodrome construction project should become a breakthrough point for the country and the world."

One of those experts is Yuri Krupnov, leader of the Development Movement, who worked intensely in 2006-07 to get the decision made to build the Vostochny Cosmodrome. Nakanune.ru quoted him following Rogozin's visit, saying, "We should create a world-class national space center there. The city nearby the Cosmodrome should be built not merely to provide square meters of living space for [guest workers], but those square meters should be allocated to the best youth in our country. This city should have the best possible planning and architecture in the world. As of today, we don't have anything of the kind. Five years ago, we had no strategic program for developing the space program, and we still don't have one, although a state program has been formally adopted and approved."

—Rachel Douglas