

Russia ready to deliver US supplies to ISS after Antares rocket explodes

29/10/2014



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“So far NASA has not asked us, but we have a gentleman’s agreement to help each other should a need arise such as after the loss of a supply ship or another emergency,” Aleksey Krasnov, the head of Roscosmos’ manned spaceflight department, told Ria Novosti.

“In such cases we always put our partners on a priority list and they do the same thing for us. If a request comes for an emergency delivery of any cargo to the ISS with our cargo ship, we will do it,” he assured.

The Antares unmanned spacecraft crashed after a self-destruct signal was sent to it due to a catastrophic anomaly the rocket experienced 10 to 12 seconds after ignition. The \$200 million craft was lost along with its payload, which included 2,200 kg of cargo meant for the International Space Station.

NASA assured that the crash would not endanger astronauts on board the station, since they have enough critical supplies to last until March next year. The US is to launch another supply rocket, a SpaceX Dragon, on December 9.

The loss of Antares and the cargo from the Cygnus cargo spacecraft it was supposed to boost into orbit will have little impact on the actual work on the International Space Station, said

Sergey Krikalyov, head of the Central Research Institute of Machine Building, a leading Russian rocket developer, as cited by TASS

“Apparently, there will be some rescheduling and some of the [lost scientific] equipment will have to be delivered again on the next freighter,” he said. “It doesn’t mean that some experiments will not be conducted at all – they will simply be postponed.”

A Russian Progress spacecraft with supplies for the ISS was successfully launched with a Soyuz rocket on Wednesday.

The Russian launch was a maiden freighter launch for the newest incarnation of the rocket, the Soyuz 2.1a. This variant will have three more test launches with supply cargoes before the rocket is cleared to boost off a manned Soyuz spacecraft.

Krikalyov said it was not really important whether an American or a Russian freighter would do the actual delivery.

“If something is needed sooner, the Russian spacecraft can deliver it. If a later delivery is OK – the Americans will do it.”



Photo by Roscosmos