

January 17 -- Jim Oberg advises:

1. Overnight the rhetoric about the US 'possibly' being at fault for the disaster with the Phobos-grunt failed Mars probe -- got more heated.
2. Even officials connected with the investigation, and the deputy prime minister in charge of reforming the entire trouble-plagued Russian space industry, joined in the chorus that they were indeed 'considering' the chance that a US radar had lobotomized the probe soon after its launch.
3. Supposedly, a powerful US radar on Kwajalein Island was observing a passing asteroid at the moment the Russian probe first passed over.
4. So far I've seen no information that such a radar actually exists on that island [other space tracking radars have been there for 50+ years] or that any radar there was taking part in the asteroid tracking exercise.
5. A conspiracy-minded person might wonder if the noise was all intentional misdirection from the embarrassing confusion about where the probe actually crashed to Earth Sunday.
6. It's now been established that the 'official' Russian claim of a crash in the Pacific off the Chile coast was a GUESS. No tracking data of any kind exists to support it.
7. Other analysts remain open to the possibility the probe stayed in orbit a few more minutes and then fell over Chile, Argentina or Brazil.
8. The European Space Agency promised yesterday to have their own analysis published 'shortly'. So far, nothing.
9. The REAL DANGER of the Russian nonsense about finding US at fault for the crash is that it deflects from a proper investigation, and gets in the way of a reliable 'fix'. That raises the danger to everybody whose lives depend on Russian spacecraft, and that now includes US and other astronauts.
10. The 'blame foreigners' reflex has been particularly evident in the last few years with Russian space accidents mounting. It is NOT a good sign.

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I posted this comment on AP's story:

This is dismaying almost beyond words. But it fits a lamentable recent new pattern, an echo of the Soviet era of mythological saboteurs and wreckers who could be blamed for failures of the Leader's plans. To see it inside the space program, where every self-induced malfunction is blamed [in the case of the space station] on 'bad American electricity', or for other satellites, on American wonder-weapons

or [in this case] stupid blundering, is alarming. The safety of our own astronauts depends on the Russians correctly diagnosing problems and rationally choosing prescriptions for improvement, not conjuring up convenient excuses [in the case of an August rocket failure, a 'magic clog' that came from nowhere, did its dirty deed, then vanished without a trace, or any parallel in other rockets]. Rationality needs to be encouraged, or the lack of it seen as a warning to find alternatives as soon as possible.

### **Russia asks if US radar ruined space probe**

By SOFIA JAVED | Associated Press JAN17/1248GMT

<http://news.yahoo.com/russia-asks-us-radar-ruined-space-probe-105327082.html>

### **Did U.S. radar fry Russian Mars probe?**

By *Kathy Lally*, Tuesday, January 17, 6:59 AM [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/did-us-radar-fry-russian-mars-probe/2012/01/17/gIQAFQxH5P\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/did-us-radar-fry-russian-mars-probe/2012/01/17/gIQAFQxH5P_story.html)

Russia Today: **Did US radar down Russian Mars probe?**

Published: 17 January, 2012, 15:58 [1158 gmt]

<http://rt.com/politics/russia-mars-probe-accident-us-radar-967/>

**Russia blames US for Mars failure** // 2012-01-17 12:26 //

<http://www.news24.com/SciTech/News/Russia-blames-US-for-Mars-failure-20120117>

**Russia's Phobos-Ground could be downed with US radar** == [Pravda.Ru](http://www.pravda.ru)

17.01.2012 | [http://english.pravda.ru/news/russia/17-01-2012/120252-phobos\\_ground-0/](http://english.pravda.ru/news/russia/17-01-2012/120252-phobos_ground-0/)

05:19 17/01/2012 // <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/317667.html>

**TASS: US radar could unintentionally trigger Phobos failure - daily**

Russian newspaper article that sparked latest flap:

Газета "Коммерсантъ", №6 (4791), 17.01.2012 // Иван Сафронов-мл

**В деле о смерти "Фобоса" высветился радар** -- Российские эксперты подозревают, что аппарат мог случайно пострадать от американского излучения

<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1852670>

US radar may have caused Mars probe failure - Russian deputy premier

Moscow [Zvezda Television](http://www.zvezda-tv.ru) in Russian 0900 GMT 17 Jan 12

Text of report by Russian Defence Ministry-controlled Zvezda TV on 17 January [Presenter] Immediately after the meeting [on implementing the state defence order], while answering journalists' questions concerning the investigation into the failure of the Phobos-Grunt interplanetary station, Dmitriy Rogozin did not rule out that American radars could have had a negative effect on the Russian spacecraft. The deputy prime

minister said that this theory has the right to exist and a thorough investigation will be carried out.

[Rogozin] There indeed is information from our experts which says that the frequent failures of our space technology are happening in the part of the flight which is not visible and which is beyond the control of Roskosmos's [Federal Space Agency] Russian equipment. It will, of course, be investigated. This theory has the right to exist. I hope that this is not the case, but if it is, then, of course, the necessary conclusions will be made, about which it is still too early to speak. In any case, I want to say that I will take all necessary measures [cut off mid-sentence].

[Presenter] Theories about external influences on the station appeared in the press today. News agency RIA Novosti, quoting the head of the interdepartmental commission for investigating the causes of the failures, Yuriy Koptev, reported that information about the effect of American radar waves on Phobos-Grunt will be verified using an experiment on the ground.

BUT ALSO:

**Russian Scientists Mock U.S. Radar Theory on Mars Probe**

15:42 [11:42gmt] 17/01/2012 // <http://en.ria.ru/world/20120117/170802615.html>

MOSCOW, January 17 (RIA Novosti)

AND FLASHBACK --

**USA intentionally killed Russia's Phobos-Ground?**

Svetlana Smetanina // 30.11.2011

[http://english.pravda.ru/russia/economics/30-11-2011/119787-phobos\\_ground-0/](http://english.pravda.ru/russia/economics/30-11-2011/119787-phobos_ground-0/)