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GAO: NASA Space Station Late

From: RSchatte@aol.com
Date: Wed, 11 Jun 1997 23:00:43 -0400 (EDT)
Fwd Date: Thu, 12 Jun 1997 01:20:36 -0400
Subject: GAO: NASA Space Station Late

Forwarded message:
Subj: GAO: NASA Space Station Late
Date: 97-06-11 22:49:48 EDT
From: AOL News

WASHINGTON (AP) - Delays in construction of an international space station being built by Russia and the United States have resulted in \$291 million in cost overruns, congressional auditors say.

The cost to get construction back on schedule has escalated to \$129 million - or nearly 50 percent over previous estimates, according to a report by the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative and auditing arm.

Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., who requested the analysis, said the report confirms his belief that the station is ``hemorrhaging red ink.''

``We don't need to search outer space for black holes,' he said in a statement. ``We have one right here on Earth. It's called the International Space Station.''

Last month, NASA delayed the start of construction for the station because of Russian funding problems with the service module, a chamber containing life-support systems for anyone living on the station. Construction is now expected to begin June 1998.

The GAO report suggested Congress step in and review the program - and determine whether it merits continued U.S. financial support - if cost overruns and Russia's financial problems continue or worsen.

The report also singled out the station's prime contractor, Boeing, for steadily driving up costs since April 1996.

``The station prime contractor's cost and schedule performance, which showed signs of deterioration last year, has continued to decline virtually unabated,' it said.

NASA has said that despite the initial delays, it plans to finish building the station in mid-2002.

AP-NY-06-11-97 2241EDT
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