

American Bill Deals a Blow to Russian GPS Alternative

The US President, Barack Obama, has signed a bill prohibiting Russia from constructing any stations in the country that could improve the precision of GLONASS, the Russian alternative to GPS. This was announced by the leading newspaper, The New York Times.

Russia has been working on improvements to GLONASS for some time, so that it can compete effectively with the American GPS. In order to achieve this, the country would like to build some base stations with large satellite receiver dishes in the US, thus improving the quality of the service and offering a worthy alternative.

Just as GPS, GLONASS also needs to be available for both military and commercial purposes. Manufacturers of navigation systems could then also make use of it. With the introduction of the new bill, Russia may only construct the base stations if the Minister of Defence and the Head of the Intelligence Services declare to Congress that the system will not be used for espionage purposes or to improve the effectiveness of Russian weapons. As the chance of this happening is very small, there is great uncertainty about the plans for the stations.

The American decision will probably also create problems for other countries engaged in the setting up of their own Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), such as China and the European Union. In all probability, they will also be prohibited from constructing stations in the US.

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