Russians Propose Global Monitoring

April 18—"How many victims do we need?" asked Prof. Sergey Pulinets, before we decide to set up a global warning system on earthquake/tsunami activity. In fact, the Russians are already working on setting up that system, which would make the difference between life and death for countless people.

Starting in 2007, a number of Russian scientists began to organize for an International Global Monitoring Aerospace System (IGMASS), which would bring together scientists worldwide to create a system of global monitoring against natural disasters. The first working session of the group took place on Sept. 27, 2010. At present, most such precursor research is done by scientists in their private capacity—with Japan, Italy, Greece, and Russia having the most significant programs.

The concept behind IGMASS is forecasting, in order to be able to issue a "warning in quasi-real time to prevent natural and man-made disasters." Above all, it requires the commitment of governments, which would fund centers on the various continents, to process the information from a broad array of sensors, and alert the countries involved.

In an interview given to the English-language television network Russia Today April 4, the head of the Russian space agency, Anatoli Perminov, described the network as he conceives it:

"Twenty-three countries have joined this project. Each space-faring nation, you know, possesses different data, depending on the satellites they use for remote sensing and for meteorological research.

"We are proposing that these nations put their data in processing centers, and that these centers be located on different continents: in North America, South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Based on the data received in the centers, recommendations would be made to world leaders. In addition, there are small, poorer countries that do not have their own space vehicles and satellites and such things. At the same time, it is often these countries that are afflicted by floods and earthquakes. Indonesia, for example. In fact, the information would also be useful to other countries.

"All the data will be processed in the computer centers and supplied to every country in [the] form of risk warnings, saying, for example, that an earthquake hazard will be high in several places around the globe in the course of the next two weeks. In that way, mankind will be prepared for an earthquake.

"Notification may also touch upon what is happening in distant galaxies. It's possible that stars concentrated there will produce an impact on Earth. Or, in four years, some asteroid will approach the Earth within a distance of 200 kilometers. That would be a very serious threat. Precisely such information is, in fact, what governments need, rather than just telemetry from a space craft that is of no use to them. They don't even know how to decode the information. Therefore, we are proposing to create such a global monitoring system."

There is not yet a time frame for stetting up this inexpensive, life-saving system, Perminov said. So far, the U.S. has not signed on.

IGMASS

IGMASS (International Global Monitoring Aerospace System) brings together scientists from around the world to create a global monitoring system against natural disasters.