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In Ukraine, the launch of the Crew Dragon ship to the ISS is mostly perceived with malice — now Roscosmos has a powerful competitor, the author writes. At the same time, he notes that if Ukraine does not join the space race today, it will forever remain a world outsider.

A week ago, we enthusiastically watched the launch of Elon Musk's rocket, and thus, thanks to the Internet, we witnessed the first day of a new historical era.

Of course, we primarily enjoyed the aspect of changing the era, having the opportunity to gloat over our neighbor-aggressor: the successful annexation of a small Peninsula cost him in the end not only Parmesan, but nothing less than the end of an entire era of Russian space. The era that began with Gagarin's "let's Go!" ended with the words of Elon Musk: "The trampoline is working!"

It would seem that the point is set and there is nothing to add here, but Putin's postmodern parody of the USSR managed to add the last grotesque touch — now in the new Russian elevators at the beginning of the movement will include a tape recording of the voice of Yuri Gagarin, and the "space" path from the first floor to the third or ninth will be accompanied by the same "let's go". Well, here we are.

Against this background of absolutely legitimate Schadenfreude, we paid much less attention directly to the new era, the opportunities it opens, and did not begin to think about our place in the new world that is being born before our eyes. Meanwhile, this is surprisingly more than the "world in space without Muscovites", this is a qualitatively new era of human development — more precisely, the part of humanity that is able to see this new world and invest in it in time.

The launch of Crew Dragon means not only the end of Roscosmos — it is primarily the end of the state's monopoly as an institution for the development of near-earth space. Indeed, NASA is the customer for this launch — but the executor of this order is already 100% a private company, and just like from NASA, it will accept a flight order from any other company. Private business is entering space for the first time, which means that now its development will accelerate exponentially, and in our memory people will land on Mars and other planets, and the resources of the moon and asteroids will become an important part of the economy.

This has happened before in history. In the 16th and 17th centuries, countries were divided into those that assisted their entrepreneurs in equipping ships to India and the newly discovered New World, and those that dug in their garden and missed such "exotic" opportunities, considering them "searchlights". The consequences of that choice almost completely determine the picture of the modern world —with just a couple of exceptions, it is those countries that risked betting on the "exotic", now in the twenty-first century are world leaders, or the "Golden billion".

And inside they also have a richer and more successful than others, and if you look closely, those are the countries where the absorption of "India" was farmed out to private investors, although with the active assistance of the state, and the relative outsiders — the country in which the monarchy held a monopoly on foreign expansion and had "crown", not a merchant "lower layer". Does it remind you of anything?

Now Elon Musk has the same role as Christopher Columbus - to become the first to open a fundamentally new window of opportunity for first hundreds, then thousands, and very soon millions of other people. The parallel with Columbus seems to be specially reinforced by the details of the biography-Musk, who is destined to become a symbol of the cosmic greatness of America, was born in South Africa, as well as Columbus, who led to the world greatness of Spain, was born in Italy.

It is not for the sake of historical curiosities that I focus on this parallel — the point is that all potential "columbs" and "masks" in the modern world have the ability to easily leave those countries that are not sufficiently ambitious and modern, and will go to open their "Indies" from the shores of those countries that will be ready to provide a platform for their start — and will develop and enrich these countries.