



Being 3rd is not that bad

Third manned spaceship country

By CK Wong 2005.010.11

<http://www.ck-wong.ca/china/3rd%20is%20not%20bad%2020051011.pdf>

Introduction

China became the third manned spaceship country three years ago. Today at 9:00 p.m. of Eastern Canada time, China launched her second manned spaceship Shenzhou IV from the Jiuquan Saltellite Launch Center. The mission plans for a 5 days fully packed agenda.

Technical Challenges

The China space center is not near the equator. Rather it is situated at Xinjiang which is located northwest of the country. Due to security reason, the space center is not at Hainan where is one of the islands closest to the equator. The closer to the equator the more the centrifugal force offered by the earth the more fuel efficiency. The landing is unlike the American space shuttle, it still uses parachute for land not sea landing which is not just easier but also safer. All these draw a strong parallel to the Russian space program which is almost diminished.

According to TV news report, there is real-time broadcast of the launch which is a first. It has demonstrated the high confident of this mission.

Political Challenges

Spaceship rocket is also regarded as the equivalent of the Inter Continental Ballistic Missile less the warhead. The American always sees that as a threat to the North American security. It is also interesting to observe how cool the Russian is. With the intensive business relationship, Russian has no worry and sees no threat. With the Space Shuttle grounded until next year, this is a blow to the American's ego. How will the Congress response?

American always prides to be the leader of the Space Station. Now, there is a strong competitor. The day Chinese delivers the cargo to the Space Station will be a true equality for the Chinese on the world stage.

Economic Challenges

The space program does not only offer prestige for a country but also handsomely rewarding the country. There are only a limited number of satellite launching services. European Space Agency is still active. Russian is stopping. American is grounded. Chinese has the best success rate. The manned mission is another big boost on the proof of heavy payload.

Space missions are not 100% scientific. Many manufacturers require the zero-G environment for their new manufacturing experiment or actual productions.

Someone will have a lot of toss and turn tonight.

Resources

- [1] Second manned spacecraft successfully takes off ChinaDaily.com.cn
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-10/12/content_484256.htm
- [2] AP: Chinese crew starts space mission
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-10/12/content_484230.htm
- [3] Reuters: Astronauts blast off into space
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-10/12/content_484231.htm