

Expert: China lags in space technology

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A Chinese space expert said China is unlikely to catch up with the United States in space technology within a decade, contradicting an earlier assessment.

Luan Enjie, commander in chief of the country's lunar probe program, followed an optimistic forecast by another senior scientist who said China would be able to narrow the gap within 10 years.

Luan told the South China Morning Post the prediction was "ridiculous," saying that China still lags far behind the United States and Russia in space technology.

Luan is former director of the aerospace administration and heads an advisory committee at the State Council's Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.

Despite progress in high-tech applications in recent years, Luan said China still faces constraints in materials research and infrastructure.

However, he said, the country's lunar exploration program was proceeding as planned, with the first lunar orbit mission expected to be launched in April next year.

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