

China seeks space station access

June 29 2006

China has allowed reporters inside its space launch control room at Aerospace City near Beijing as part of an effort to join in the world's space projects.

The rare visit by foreign reporters occurred as China seeks access to the International Space Station, as well to assuage fears its space program is driven by military needs, The Independent reported Thursday.

China's next manned launch -- to involve three astronauts -- is planned for next year, as is the nation's first satellite launch.

China has said it wants to explore the moon and build a space station within 15 years and wants to have the technology for a space walk and space docking by 2012, the newspaper said.

Although senior Chinese scientists insist their nation's space program is a peaceful one, Western nations are uneasy about the program's military applications, such as spy satellites.

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