

Snafu as China space launch set to US patriotic song

September 30 2011

It was supposed to be a patriotic tribute to China's technological prowess. Instead, a video showing the launch of China's first space station module inadvertently glorified the country's biggest rival.

A video animation put together by state television to mark the highly publicised launch of Tiangong-1 -- or "Heavenly Palace" -- is set to the music of "America the Beautiful", a patriotic song about the United States.

China sees its ambitious space programme as a symbol of its global stature and Internet users who recognised the tune were surprised at the choice of music for the space launch -- a proud moment for the Asian nation.

"At the time, I was eating in a hotel with foreigners from an American company and Chinese clients and we were watching the live broadcast," posted one user on Sina's Weibo, China's answer to Twitter.

"All the Chinese there wanted to disappear," he said of the embarrassed response.

It was unclear whether the choice of song -- which includes the line "America! America! God shed His grace on thee" -- was a mistake.

The video, which is more than a minute long and can be accessed on broadcaster CCTV's English-language website, features only the music

from the song and not the lyrics
(newscontent.cctv.com/news.jsp?fileId=117772).

CCTV employees reached by telephone passed AFP from department to department, without providing any comment.

It is not the first time CCTV has embarrassed its paymasters.

In January this year, Internet users spotted that footage in a report on an air force training exercise in a national newscast was taken from the Hollywood blockbuster "Top Gun", about an elite American training academy.

The successful launch of Tiangong-1, which took off late Thursday from the Gobi desert in China's northwest, marks the country's first step towards building its own space station.

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