

Private Chinese space company places satellites in orbit

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A rocket developed by Chinese company iSpace blasted into space Wednesday carrying three miniature satellites in another milestone for the country's budding private spaceflight industry.

Reports said the SQX-1Z rocket took off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China and entered space at a suborbital

level. Two of the satellites will be released into space for testing while the third will re-enter the atmosphere and parachute down to Earth.

It was believed to be the first time a private Chinese company had carried satellites into space. Founded in 2016, iSpace is develops "high-quality, low-cost, fast-responding" commercial launchers to serve micro-satellite manufacturers, operators, research institutes and universities at home and abroad, according to a company statement.

China's space program has traditionally been run by the military, but a number of commercial satellite launchers have also sprung up in recent years, modeled on private U.S. companies such as SpaceX and Blue Origin.

In May, Beijing-based OneSpace Technologies became the first private Chinese spaceflight company to send a rocket into space, launching its relatively modest 9-meter (30-foot) OS-X for a test flight that ended with it falling back to Earth.

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