

China denies making space junk set to crash into Moon

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China on Monday denied responsibility for a rocket set to slam into the Moon, after experts said the piece of space junk likely came from Beijing's lunar exploration programme.

Astronomers initially thought the wayward object was a chunk of a SpaceX [rocket](#) that blasted off seven years ago and was abandoned in space after completing its mission.

But it is now believed to be the booster for the Chang'e 5-T1, launched in 2014 as part of the Chinese space agency's lunar exploration programme.

The rocket is expected to crash into the [far side of the moon](#) on March 4.

But China's [foreign ministry](#) rejected the claim Monday, saying the booster in question had "safely entered the Earth's atmosphere and was completely incinerated".

Beijing "conscientiously upholds the long-term sustainability of activities in [outer space](#)", spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a regular press briefing.

China has set its sights on becoming a space superpower and took a landmark step last year with the launch of the longest crewed mission to its new space station.

The world's second-largest economy has ploughed billions into its military-run space programme and hopes to eventually send humans to the Moon.

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