

China plans system to take out asteroids hurtling toward Earth

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China plans to develop a system for monitoring asteroids that pose a threat to earth, highlighting the nation's growing ambitions for its space program.

The country will also explore ways for taking out asteroids that endanger the planet, Wu Yanhua, deputy director of the China National Space

Administration, said in a TV interview, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

To test the system, China intends to send a spacecraft toward an asteroid in 2025 or 2026 to study it and then change its course, Wu added, without providing details on how that would work.

The Asian nation has pushed forward with plans for its [space program](#) in recent years. In January, Wu said Beijing signed an agreement with Russia to build a base on the moon, and last year a Chinese moon mission returned to earth with lunar samples.

China's aspirations for its space program have ramped up tensions with the U.S. The two sides have sparred over SpaceX satellites that Beijing said came dangerously close to its [space station](#), prompting the government of the Asian nation to criticize SpaceX in a memo to a United Nations committee that oversees operations in space. Earlier this month the Pentagon said China and Russia continue to deploy weapons that can attack U.S. satellites.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration already watches space for asteroids that could be on a collision course with earth. The Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System, which uses telescopes in Hawaii, Chile and South Africa, was upgraded this year so that it completes a scan of the skies once every 24 hours.

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