

Who's Who

China's Space Industry

Outer space has long been a priority for China. In the 1950s, the Communist Party coined the term “two bombs, one satellite” as a signpost for its scientific aspirations: develop an atomic bomb, a missile, and a satellite.

Today, China is aiming much higher, with the help of the private sector. Beijing ended its decades-long state monopoly of the space industry in 2014, since when some six hundred commercial space [firms](#) have been formed, working in tandem with state-owned enterprises and military-run launch sites. As Xi Jinping stated in a 2022 policy [document](#), “To explore the vast cosmos, develop the space industry and build China into a space power is our eternal dream.”

Many of the entrepreneurs featured on this list are motivated by a singular competitor: SpaceX. Elon Musk's company uses reusable rockets to deliver thousands of satellites into orbit at a greatly reduced cost — a capability and scale China's government sees as essential to reaching its ambitious space goals.

While the private sector races to build China's SpaceX, a series of purges have rocked the state aerospace sector. Several top Party officials with space sector backgrounds, the so-called “aerospace clique,” have been [ousted](#) for corruption or other charges, and over the past four years ten top generals have been [purged](#) from the PLA's Rocket Force.

The China National Space Administration (CNSA) has also been cleaned up and reorganized. Former heads [Xu Dazhe](#) and [Zhang Kejian](#) have been caught in the anti-corruption drive, while CNSA was [given](#) new oversight of China's commercial space sector late last year.

In this latest *Who's Who*, *The Wire* profiles the leading figures from China's state sector, private companies, and military branches who are leading the space industry today after more than a decade of intense transformation. This list joins our previous *Who's Whos* on the [robotics](#), [AI](#), and [legal](#) sectors.

We are grateful to Blaine Curcio and Brendan Mulvaney for their feedback.

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KEY ACRONYMS:

CNSA — China National Space Administration 国家航天局. The government agency responsible for the management of civil spaceflight and international space cooperation.

CASC — China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation 中国航天科技集团有限公司. A state-owned enterprise founded in 1999 responsible for the research, design, manufacture, test and launch of space products such as launch vehicles, satellites, manned spaceships, cargo spaceships, deep space explorers and space stations, as well as strategic and tactical missile systems.

CAST — China Academy of Space Technology 中国空间技术研究院. Subordinate to CASC, CAST designs and manufactures spacecraft and space-ground system solutions for global customers.



Shan Zhongde
单忠德

Shan Zhongde, born in 1970, holds multiple titles: head of the China National Space Administration, vice minister of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Party Secretary of the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry...

...for National Defense, and chairman of China's Atomic Energy Authority. As head of CNSA, he oversees China's commercial space sector. In his roles at MIIT and SASTIND, he replaced Zhang Kejian, who was removed from those roles amid anti-corruption sweeps. Shan earned a bachelor's and master's degree in engineering at Xi'an University of Technology, and a PhD in mechanical engineering from Tsinghua University in 2002.

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Li Guoping
李国平

Born in 1970, Li is the chief engineer of the China National Space Administration, making him CNSA's second-in-command behind Shan Zhongde. In his role, Li represents China's space industry internationally and serves as a liaison between...

...Chinese and other national space bodies. He graduated from Peking University with a major in Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, earned his Doctor of Engineering degree through in-service postgraduate education, and is an academician of the International Academy of Astronautics.

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Chen Mingbo
陈鸣波

Chen Mingbo, born in 1968, is the chairman and party secretary of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC [\[w\]](#)), a large state-owned defense contractor responsible for producing technology for China's space program. Chen served...

...in the Shanghai municipal government's Science and Technology Commission and as vice mayor of Chongqing before his current role. CASC also oversees China's Long March rockets and crewed Shenzhou spacecraft.

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Li Deren
李德仁

Li Deren, born in 1939, is a satellite expert who helped develop the key technologies behind China's BeiDou navigation system, an alternative to the U.S.-led Global Positioning System. He is currently honorary director of State Key Laboratory of Information Engineering...

...in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing and is the chief scientist of Wuhan Optics Valley Beidou Holding Group Company, which delivers services related to BeiDou and promotes its global adoption. He continues to actively promote BeiDou and China's satellite capabilities today. In June 2024, Li was awarded the Highest Science and Technology Award, one of China's top annual science awards. Li earned a PhD from Universitat Stuttgart in Germany.

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Zhou Jie
周劼

Zhou Jie, born in 1972, is president and deputy party secretary of CASC, second to Chen Mingbo. Before the State Council transferred him to CASC in 2025, he served as vice president of the China Academy of Engineering Physics for nearly seven years, where...

...he engaged in nuclear weapons development. He holds a doctorate in engineering.

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Li Daming
李大明

Li Daming, born in 1981, is a researcher who currently serves as the president and deputy party secretary of the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST), which is subordinate to CASC. CAST builds and develops spacecraft, oversees manned spaceflight and...

...lunar exploration missions, and cultivates the aerospace industry chain from commercial payloads to space tourism. It has 23 subsidiaries conducting R&D in various aerospace technology sectors. Li is also the chairman of satellite developer China Spacesat, a CAST subsidiary.

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Ye Peijian
叶培建

Ye Peijian, born in 1945, is chief commander and chief designer of the Chinese Lunar Exploration Program and a protégé of the late Yang Jiachi, a Harvard-educated aerospace engineer who developed China's first satellites. After graduating from Zhejiang...

...University, Ye began his career in satellites like his mentor, but on Yang's advice, chose to continue his education in Europe rather than the United States to avoid restrictions on sensitive majors. Ye received his doctorate from University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland in 1985, and continued building satellites until joining China's lunar exploration program in 2001. His design of a satellite communication network helped digitize



Wang Guoyu
王国语

Wang Guoyu, born in 1979, is a professor at Beijing Institute of Technology and a leading figure in the development of China's space law. He has served as a Chinese delegate to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful use of Outer Space. Wang's other areas...

...of expertise include space security, arms control in outer space, and the use of space resources. His past postings include senior fellow at the UK's Chatham House from 2014-2016 and visiting scholar at the University of Mississippi's National Center for Remote Sensing and Aerospace Law from 2011-2012. He earned a PhD in law and economics from Jilin University.



Zhou Jianping
周建平

Zhou Jianping, born in 1957, has served as the chief designer of China's Manned Space Program since 2006. The program, established in 1992, trains and supports the country's taikonauts and coordinates manned Shenzhou spacecraft launches.

Zhou earned a doctoral degree from the National University of Defense Technology in 1989. After his PhD, he taught at NUDT until transferring to the China Manned Space Engineering Office in 2000.

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the Shenzhen Stock Market. In 2019 Xi Jinping granted him the honorary title “People’s Scientist.”

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Hao Weizhong
郝卫中

Hao Weizhong, born in 1961, was appointed commander of the Space Systems Department of the Strategic Support Force of the PLA in 2023. After the SSF was divided into three separate units in 2024, Hao became commander of the Aerospace Force...

...his current role. Before the SSD, he served at the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center, a military-operated launch facility in Shanxi province. The site is primarily used for satellite launches and intercontinental ballistic missiles. Hao is a 1983 graduate of Tianjin University’s School of Precision Instruments and Opto-electronics Engineering.

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Chen Ximing
陈锡明

Chen Ximing, born in 1970, is the chairman and party secretary of China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation (CASIC), a defense contractor that also produces spacecraft and launch vehicles. Chen previously held leadership roles at the Institute of...

...Electronics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the China Electronics Technology Group Corporation. He earned his doctorate in computer applications from the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China in 2001.

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Yang Tianliang
杨天梁

Yang Tianliang, born in 1965, is the Party secretary and chairman of the state-owned Hainan International Commercial Space Launch Company, operator of China’s first commercial space launch site. He obtained a master’s degree from Beijing University of...

...Aeronautics and Astronautics and a doctorate in control theory and control engineering from Beijing University of Science and Technology. After

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Chen Dong
陈冬

Chen Dong, born in 1978, has served as commander of the PLA Astronaut corps, from which many Chinese taikonauts (astronauts) are drawn, since 2023. He studied at the PLA Air Force academy in Changchun and continued in the air force after graduating.

Chen was selected to join the second batch of Chinese astronauts in 2010, and has since been to space three times. He is the first Chinese taikonaut accumulate over 400 days in orbit.

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Zhang Qi
张琦

Zhang Qi is chairman of Shanghai Yuanxin Satellite Technology, a state-controlled commercial low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite communications operator building the Thousand Sails Constellation of satellites. SSST plans to deploy over 15,000 low-Earth orbit...

...broadband satellites for communication purposes. As of March 2026, Zhang Qi told Chinese media SSST had launched 108 satellites. He is also a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and a director of Shanghai Alliance Investment Limited, an investment fund previously led by the son of former PRC president Jiang Zemin.

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Sun Jing
孙京

Sun Jing, born in 1972, is chairman and party secretary of China Satellite Communications Group, a role he has held since 2023. China Satcom is a subsidiary of state-owned CASC, and is a publicly-listed company. It operates a network of satellites across Asia...

...Europe, and Africa, and owned 19 commercial communication and broadcasting satellites as of December 31, 2025, according to its annual report. Sun



Liang Baojun
梁宝俊

Liang Baojun, born in 1969, is general manager of the China Satellite Network Group, a state-owned satellite communications firm. He joined CSNG in February 2025 after less than two years in senior roles at the China Telecom Group Corporation.

Previously, he served as the vice president of the China United Network Communications Group. Liang graduated with a masters in engineering from Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications in 1998.

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Yang Yiqiang
杨毅强

Yang Yiqiang, born in 1967, is the founder and chairman of CAS Space, which develops the Kinetica series of medium- to large-launch vehicles. Yang’s career in the space industry began in 1987 when he joined the China Academy of Launch Vehicle...

...Technology, and served as former commander-in-chief of the Long March-11 rocket project. He is a PhD supervisor at the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, chairman of the Society of Guangdong Commercial Aerospace Industry Promotion, and director of the Aerospace Flight Technology Center of the Institute of Mechanics, Chinese Academy of Sciences. He studied aircraft systems engineering at the National University of Defense Technology.

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Zhang Changwu
张昌武

Zhang Changwu, born in 1983, is the chairman, chief executive, and founder of private rocket developer LandSpace Technology. He is a pioneer in China’s private space industry, with LandSpace being the first to attempt an ultimately unsuccessful re-landing of a...

...Zhuque rocket in December 2025, and the first to land a rocket on land using landing legs in August 2026. Before LandSpace, Zhang worked at HSBC and

graduating, Yang conducted research at Tsinghua University and the Aerospace Information Research Institute, and worked in various government departments in Hainan and other regions. Hainan is being developed into an aerospace hub in China.

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Xuan Ming
宣明

Xuan Ming, born in 1956, is chairman of Chang Guang Satellite Technology, a satellite manufacturer associated with the [Chinese Academy of Sciences](#) and sanctioned by the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, and EU for providing satellite imagery to Russia after its...

...invasion of Ukraine. CGST operates China's primary earth observation satellite constellation, [Jilin-1](#), with an [estimated](#) 63 satellites currently in operation out of a planned maximum size of 300 satellites by 2027. Xuan earned his bachelor's degree at the now Changchun University of Science and Technology and his masters at the Changchun Institute of Optics, Fine Mechanics and Physics (CIOMP) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. CGST itself emerged from a 2005 CIOMP research group headed by Xuan, spinning off into a private entity in 2014 with Xuan at the helm. Xuan and his company have extensive [ties](#)  to the PLA, according to the U.S. Air Force-affiliated think tank the China Aerospace Studies Institute.

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Yao Song
姚颂

Yao Song, born in 1992, is one of the youngest entrepreneurs in China's commercial space industry. He [counts](#) Elon Musk and Star Wars among his inspirations. After receiving second place in a national physics prize, he was directly admitted to Tsinghua...

...University without needing to take the entrance exam. After graduating, Yao [founded](#) several space and AI companies, including Orienspace in 2020. Orienspace develops launch vehicles, rocket engines, and aerospace equipment. Yao departed Orienspace in 2024 and moved on to found an embodied AI company in Beijing, but still holds an 11 percent stake in the rocket company alongside his co-founder Peng Haomin.

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previously served as a director in another CASC subsidiary, the China Academy of Space Technology. His additional current roles [include](#) president of the Satellite Application Innovation Research Institute of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, and chairman of Asia Pacific Satellite Holdings Co.

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Peng Xiaobo
彭小波

Peng Xiaobo has a background in rocket design and founded Interstellar Glory Aerospace Technology Group, or iSpace, in 2016. It was the first Chinese private company to successfully launch a rocket into orbit in 2019. Peng had a childhood fascination with...

...space, and [studied](#) aircraft design at Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Like other private rocket firms, iSpace aims to emulate SpaceX and move from solid fuel, single-use to reusable, liquid-fuelled reusable rockets. It operates the Hyperbola series of rockets, the most recent of which are designed to be reusable.

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Tony Wang
王洋

Tony Wang is the founder, chief executive, and chief scientist of Geespace, a satellite manufacturer and service provider established in 2018 by Zhejiang Geely Holding group, a major automobile manufacturer. Geespace satellites provide location services to guide...

...autonomous vehicles and other communications services. Wang [began](#) his career in satellites in 2008 at the Shanghai Microsatellite Engineering Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, but pivoted to entrepreneurship after the government opened the space sector to private capital. Wang is a graduate of the Harbin Institute of Technology.

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Santander Bank. He [graduated](#) with a master's degree in business administration from Tsinghua University in 2013.

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Peng Haomin
彭昊旻

Peng Haomin is the co-founder, vice president, and majority owner of commercial firm Orienspace, which aims to develop reusable rockets. Orienspace [develops](#)  the Gravity Series vehicles to launch satellites, Force Series rocket engines, and Hongli Series...

...aerospace equipment. Peng [studied](#) physics at Tsinghua University and computational biology at Stanford University. She worked in Silicon Valley and later at a venture capital fund, before returning to China and co-founding Orienspace with Yao Song. She is also the daughter of Peng Kunya, chief designer of the Long March 11 carrier rocket.

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Xu Ming
徐鸣

Xu Ming, born in 1978, is the founder and chief executive of GalaxySpace, a Beijing-based satellite manufacturer. After graduating with a master's from the Harbin Institute of Technology in 2002, he co-founded mobile internet company Cheetah Mobile...

...in 2008. The company listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 2014. In 2022, the U.S. SEC filed [charges](#) against Xu and Cheetah's chief executive for insider trading, and both paid civil penalties. By then Xu was already four years into leading GalaxySpace, which [specializes](#) in low-earth orbit communications and remote sensing satellites, and has [launched](#) over 40 satellites as of June 2026.

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Liu Baiqi
刘百奇

Liu Baiqi, born in 1978, founded rocket company Galactic Energy in 2018. The company operates the Ceres and Pallas rockets and is recognized as one of China's "Little Giants" — a small enterprise in a niche market supported by the Chinese government.

The company's major goal is to develop reusable rockets to carry satellites; its Pallas series is intended to be reusable while Ceres rockets are not. Before founding Galactic Energy, Liu worked at the state-owned China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. He holds a PhD from the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics and has won an array of awards, including 2024's Science and Technology Person of the Year.

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Kang Yonglai
康永来

Kang Yonglai, born in 1978, is the executive director and founder of Space Pioneer, a Beijing-based reusable rocket technology developer established in 2015. It operates Tianhuo engines, for use in liquid-fueled launch vehicles, and the Tianlong liquid fuel rocket...

...series. Kang previously worked at LandSpace and in launch vehicle technology research at the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, including projects involving hypersonic missiles and Long March rockets. He is also an expert of the PLA Rocket Force, a scientist of a 973 National Key Basic Research Program project, a recognized "Advanced Individual" within China's Rocket Force, and a recipient of the China Space Foundation Award.

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Huo Liang
霍亮

Huo Liang, born in 1982, is chief executive and founder of rocket company Deep Blue Aerospace, which focuses on the development of reusable launch vehicles that run on liquid fuel. The company is branching into commercial space tourism, aiming to...

...launch a manned suborbital flight in 2027. He graduated with a PhD from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Tsinghua University in 2011.

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Gao Enyu
高恩宇

Gao is the founder and chairman of Minospace, a Beijing-based satellite manufacturer that also handles launches, mission control, and manufacture of ground station products. Minospace has launched 36 satellites as of June 2026, according to its website and has the...

...capacity to produce 150 per year. Gao previously worked at the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology and the China Academy of Space Technology, leaving to found Minospace in 2017. He graduated from Beijing Institute of Technology and Pennsylvania State University, earning a PhD in aerospace engineering. In June 2026, he was awarded the title of Beijing Outstanding Communist Party Member.

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Yang Feng
杨峰

Yang Feng, born in 1982, is the founder, chairman, and chief executive of Spacety, a Hunan-based remote sensing and imaging satellite manufacturer sanctioned by the U.S., EU, Taiwan, and Japan for allegedly supplying satellite images to Russia. He is also an...

...adjunct professor at Beijing Information Technology University. He is a representative of the Changsha Municipal People's Congress, and was selected as one of Fortune's "40 Under 40 Business Leaders in China" in 2020 and one of Fast Company's "100 Most Creative People in Chinese Business" in 2017. Yang graduated from Beihang University.

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Zhao Lei
赵磊

Zhao Lei is chairman of Emposat, a Beijing-based satellite ground-station services provider offering services such as satellite tracking and management. He founded the company in 2016 when he was 35 years old. As of 2023, the company had already provided...

...services for over 220 satellites and rockets. Zhao was also a member of the drafting group for China's Space Law, and worked at the China Academy of Space Technology for 15 years before founding Emposat. He graduated from Tianjin University's School of Mechanical Engineering in 2003.

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Peng Yuanyuan
彭媛媛

Peng Yuanyuan is founder, chief executive, and chairwoman of Ubinexus, a satellite communication payload systems and products developer established in 2021. So far, Ubinexus has completed five rounds of financing from government guided funds and other...

...investment institutions. She is also co-founder and former president of Beijing Commsat, a leading private commercial satellite technology company in China since 2015.

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Lü Qiang
吕强

Lü Qiang is the chairman of Beijing Guodian Gaoke Technology, a commercial satellite developer constructing China's first low earth orbit Internet of Things satellite constellation, called Tianqi 天启. The first Tianqi satellite was launched in October 2018...

...and the constellation currently has at least 38 satellites. He formerly worked at the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

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