

Chinese scientists planning jumbo launched rocket

A new solid fuel rocket, launchable from the Yun-20 transport plane is being developed by Chinese scientists, reports China Central Television (CCTV).

The Y-20, or Transport-20 is China's first domestically made jumbo air freighter, designed to be used as a workhorse by the Chinese air force. It's capable of carrying out various long-distance air transportation tasks involving both cargo and passengers. 47-meter in length, 15 meters high, and with a 50-meter wingspan, the Y-20 has maximum take-off weight of over 200 tons and a maximum payload of 66 tons.

In addition to being used as a transport plane, the Chinese air force makes it available as a test platform for new technology. According to experts at the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALVT), they are developing a new solid fuel rocket which could be launched by the Yun-20 in flight, sending a 100-kg load into near-earth orbit. Military expert, Wang Mingliang, says it's also possible the Yun-20 will be used to carry drones in the future.

It's anticipated that the Yun-20 could be refitted as refueling plane carrying over 90 tons of fuel, as well as airborne early warning aircraft with larger radar and a cabin for passengers.