

Shijian-21

What public evidence establishes

A briefing can distinguish an announced purpose, a reported operation and an observer's interpretation without turning any of them into a claim about current intent.

THREE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE LAYERS



Original source chronology. Not an orbit reconstruction; spacing is not to scale.

WHAT CAN GO INTO A BRIEFING

- S1 Announced purpose**
Xinhua reported launch from Xichang on 24 October 2021 and a principal purpose of testing space-debris mitigation technologies. This describes the launch announcement, not the full mission set.
- S2 Historical operation, attributed**
Lin reports the January 2022 transfer. His original analysis concerns earlier target rotation. The evidence distinction matters: the paper is not a standalone 2022 trajectory reconstruction.
- S3 Observation and competing explanations**
COMSPOC reports optical inseparability on 2 July 2025, retaining docking and very tight formation as alternatives. Confirmed refuelling is not established by this account.

A source is not a verdict

Checking what the manuscript actually demonstrates

Lin's transfer statement appears on page 1. Pages 1-2 describe 2010-2019 photometry and rotation modelling; page 5 says SJ-21 confirmed the predictions. The manuscript presents the transfer as the author's account, rather than attaching it to an identified transfer-report citation. Reference 2, on page 14, supports the comparison with the Mission Extension Vehicle.

Our assessment: retain the author attribution. This review does not independently verify the transfer trajectory or reproduce the underlying numerical analysis.

UNRESOLVED BY THESE SELECTED SOURCES

Current tasking. Current controlling ground station.
Complete mission portfolio. Confirmed refuelling.

SOURCE LEDGER

- S1

Xinhua / 24 October 2021

Full article body: opening paragraph and principal-purpose statement.
[Open launch announcement](#)
- S2

Hou-Yuan Lin / arXiv:2204.09258v2 / 25 April 2022

PDF pp. 1-2, 5 and 14. Methods and extended tables consulted; no raw-data replication.
[Open manuscript \(22 pages\)](#)
- S3

COMSPOC / 29 July 2025

Published description, first sentence. Provider account reviewed; underlying tracking data not examined.
[Open observer account](#)

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