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AIAA NOTES THE PASSING OF QIAN XUESEN

Father of Chinese Rocketry and First Director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory

November 2, 2009 – Reston, Va. – The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) notes the passing of Qian Xuesen, the “father” of Chinese rocketry and the first director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Qian, 97, passed away on October 31, at his home in Beijing.

AIAA president Dave Thompson stated: “AIAA notes with sadness the passing of Dr. Qian Xuesen of the People’s Republic of China. His contributions to rocket science, both at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and later in his native China, greatly assisted humanity’s space exploration endeavors.”

Qian’s early research contributed to the United States Army’s development of Jet Assisted Take-Off technology during World War II. In 1949 he became the first director of the Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Jet Propulsion Center at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif. Qian returned to China in 1955 and became head of the nascent Chinese missile program, establishing China’s first missile and rocket research institute, and developing several of China’s earliest missile and satellite systems.

Qian was Aviation Week and Space Technology magazine’s “Person of the Year” in 2007, and received an Outstanding Alumni Award from the California Institute of Technology’s in 1979.

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