

## Homegrown maglev emerges as dark horse

02/26/2006 07:33:10 PM EST, SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST - Feb 26

**Summary:** "...Enter the Dolphin, the so-called project of Chengdu Aircraft Industrial Group (CAIG), a subsidiary of China Aviation Industry Corp that has over the last five years invested five billion yuan in a high-speed maglev train. A CAIG official said they started construction of the train in Chengdu in September, are due to complete it in April and plan to put it into trial operation this July at Tongji University in Shanghai with speeds of up to 500km/h. The production cost would be about 10 per cent cheaper than comparable trains from Germany or France. "If the trials go well, we do not rule out exporting it." ...If the trials are successful, Beijing could choose the Dolphin over the German maglev for the Shanghai-Hangzhou route..."

### Original article

SHANGHAI: China has not made a final decision on whether to extend the maglev train link from Shanghai to Hangzhou - nor on whether it will use Chinese or German technology.

This clarification by President Hu Jintao to visiting German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Beijing ended a dramatic week in which ThyssenKrupp and Siemens thought they had won their second major contract and then learnt that a Chinese firm had developed a rival product that it might export.

The only maglev line in commercial use opened in 2003, built at a cost of US\$1.2 billion, and runs 30 kilometres from Pudong international airport to the suburbs of Shanghai. It reaches 430km/h and has carried nearly six million passengers.

On Wednesday last week, German Transport Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee said in Berlin that China had decided to extend the maglev line a further 180km to Hangzhou, using a consortium of the two German firms. "We are pleased that such a great step has been taken," said a Siemens spokesman. "The extension will be made with us."

But the next day, a National Development and Reform Commission official said that approval for the link to Hangzhou was still pending and that the government planned a second high-speed rail link between it and Shanghai.

Enter the Dolphin, the so-called project of Chengdu Aircraft Industrial Group (CAIG), a subsidiary of China Aviation Industry Corp that has over the last five years invested five billion yuan in a high-speed maglev train. A CAIG official said they started construction of the train in Chengdu in September, are due to complete it in April and plan to put it into trial operation this July at Tongji University in Shanghai with speeds of up to 500km/h. The production cost would be about 10 per cent cheaper than comparable trains from Germany or France. "If the trials go well, we do not rule out exporting it."

If the trials are successful, Beijing could choose the Dolphin over the German maglev for the Shanghai-Hangzhou route. This is bad news for ThyssenKrupp and Siemens who developed the world's fastest and most hi-tech train but have failed to convince anyone outside Shanghai to build it. The high costs and fears of environmental impact have deterred possible buyers.

"The maglev must be built in Germany now, not in 2010 or 2012," Edmund Stoiber, state premier of Bavaria, said last week. "Our technological lead over China is only a matter of a few years. If we do not act now, this technology will no longer be exported by Germany but by the Chinese. It would be a joke if a high-tech country like Germany came up with all the inventions but the Far East made all the money out of them."