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Contact: Jennifer Hillings
Tel.: (202) 366-4570

Statement by
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
Commercial Space News Briefing
August 18, 1986

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As we worked to implement the President's instructions, we asked some tough questions: Does the potential indeed exist for a viable U.S. ELV industry? Can a private sector U.S. ELV industry compete in the global market against subsidized foreign providers of launch services? How would the development of such an industry affect America's space program? What will be required for industry to make the necessary investment and put its talents and experience to work in creating a viable and competitive commercial launch capability?

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Now, more than ever, private firms are essential for flying off the backlog and adding new capacity for future commercial satellite launches. Ariane is fully booked and has only a limited ability to increase its capacity. The Japanese are six to seven years from providing launch services; the Chinese launch programs are just emerging and -- though they may offer attractive pricing -- they represent considerable risk for satellite companies who need to get their payloads in orbit. None of the potential competitors can match America's track record.

Representatives of the ELV industry have stated that they are ready, willing and able to enter the commercial launch market if the Government provides concrete assurances that it will no longer compete for routine, commercial satellites.

The great news in Friday's announcement is that the private sector got that green light. As the President said, NASA and our shuttles cannot be committing their scarce resources to things which can be done better and cheaper by the private sector. Rather, we must rely on a diversity of vehicles to provide assured access to space. By eliminating the government monopoly in space transportation, we can expand America's fleet of launchers at no cost to the taxpayer.

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