

## Re: Griffin on Loss of U.S. Space Leadership

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- *From:* Pat Flannery <[flanner@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:flanner@xxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Sun, 19 Feb 2006 13:08:46 -0600
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Stephen Horgan wrote:

Interesting article; however, it does seem to assume that the US is the only nation on the planet, or at least the only one interested in space. Neither is true, and allowing that the argument that the current costs of launch to LEO are a function of US government policy is weakened somewhat. If there was another much simpler and cheaper way to get mass to orbit then what is stopping everyone else?

To me the big problem seems to be here:

"What would a truly dynamist space exploration culture look like?"

Imagine, instead of launching a few government employees once every few months, daily trips into space by hundreds or thousands of private citizens by multiple vehicle types, just as our airline industry today uses Boeings and Airbuses. Some conduct research at private orbital laboratories, some head to orbital resorts, others board cruise liners for trips around the Moon. There are hotels in high inclination orbits for spectacular views of Earth, and vehicle assembly hangars in low inclination for departure to points beyond Earth orbit. There are huge radio telescopes on the far side of the Moon, protected from the incessant radio noise of our industrial planet, and at the poles are research facilities and tourist spots, using the water ice hidden in the craters there. The vast majority of the funding comes from private expenditures made by people seeking their own adventures off-planet, and NASA has little involvement, other than to take advantage of the dramatic reductions in cost and dramatic improvements in technology to do those things that only it can do, such as expeditions to the outer planets."

This assumes that if you cut the costs of space access way down, suddenly a giant demand will arise for spaceflight that do