

# Re: Another space race: China & Russia vs. the USA

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- *From:* "frédéric haessig" <[fhaessig@xxxxxxxx](mailto:fhaessig@xxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Sun, 17 Sep 2006 22:12:26 +0200
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"Rand Simberg" <[simberg.interglobal@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:simberg.interglobal@xxxxxxxxxx)> a écrit dans le message de news: 450e9d90.18276530@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

On Fri, 15 Sep 2006 07:43:22 +0200, in a place far, far away,  
"frédéric haessig" <[fhaessig@xxxxxxxx](mailto:fhaessig@xxxxxxxx)> made the phosphor on my monitor glow in such a way as to indicate that:

Provided Falcon 9 ever flies successfully ( it's not a trivial matter to go from Falcon-1 to Falcon-9 in a few years ), it will have the capability to launch people in orbit, with a lot to spare. Then, it will need to design a manned capsule ( again not impossible but not trivial ) and convince people it is safe, which will depend on history of previous falcons.

The capsule prototype has already been built.

Which one? I'm not aware of this. Can you tell me more or provide a link?

<http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=SpaceX+Dragon&ei=UTF-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&fr=moz2>

Thanks for the links, but unless I missed something this actually detracts from your arguments on two points.

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1) It's been developed to a NASA contract, not on private funds so it's actually a program triggered by a 'socialist bureaucracy'.

2) This is currently a development contract. I didn't see anything like your statement that the prototype has already been built. Did I miss something?  
( NB to me a prototype is a 1:1 scale with all functionalities active )

Lastly, but this is a minor point, this capsule is designed to dock on the US side of the ISS. Which access is totally controlled by NASA. Not really a place for space tourism. But I grant you the design change to go to a Bigelow space hotel isn't a huge one.

Currently, I'd  
much rather go up in a Soyuz, thank you.  
You can send the luggage and  
food  
( and hotel ) with a Falcon-9. Not to mention  
that Soyuz is less than  
half  
the foreseen price for Falcon 9, so you'd  
need to set at least 7 people  
on  
your Falcon to make it worthwhile ( provided  
no price change )

Where do you get these numbers? How do you know what  
the ultimate  
price will be for the Falcon, and what are you using for  
Soyuz?

Announced price for Falcon-9 : 78 million\$ according to Space X documents.

I suspect that there's a lot of margin to reduce that, if there's  
enough business.

Funny, I suspect the reverse. Call me pessimist, but I have seen too many  
executive summaries for future projects that promised the Moon and failed to  
deliver that I never take these as anything but non-binding advertisement.  
For me this price is intended to get customers' attention. I wouldn't be  
surprised if final price is 25% or more above this.

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Price for Soyouz ( based upon the Soyouz at Kourou agreement ) : just below 40 million, all inclusive ( including CSG fee ). I expect a baikonour or plesetsk launch to be cheaper.

We'll see if it ever actually launches out of Kourou, and what they actually end up charging.

Indeed we will and soon. Given that the work is in progress on the launch pad, that the HW is already flying and that the price ( for government agencies, at least, but I don't see how they could ask for more from commercial customers ) is already fixed by legally binding contracts, I think the risk isn't too great.