ANNIVERSARIES: PAST, PRESENT, AND ON THE WAY

Remarks by

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Good morning and welcome to COMSTAC.

And welcome to our new COMSTAC members, Timothy Hughes, General Counsel at Space X; Tracey Knutson of Knutson & Associates, and; Charles Precourt, Vice President of Strategy and Business Development at ATK Launch Systems.

We are meeting today on the eve of some historic anniversaries.

This weekend marks the 80th Anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's solo flight from New York to Paris.

But this weekend we also recognize the anniversary of a flight milestone of a different kind.

On May 21, 1963 … the same day in May that Lindbergh landed in Paris … President Kennedy honored astronaut Gordon Cooper at the White House for Cooper's 22 orbits in his spacecraft, Faith Seven. For all practical purposes, that ceremony marked the end of the Mercury program.

So here we are, at the outset of the 21st century, the commercial space beneficiaries of both Charles Lindbergh and the Mercury astronauts.

- **<u>Privately</u> financed Lindbergh opened the Atlantic skies to private fliers.**

- **<u>Government</u>-funded Mercury opened the doors to space.**

- **And, today, private entrepreneurs are opening <u>*space*</u> to <u>private citizens</u>.**

It's taken so long to get this far, but there can be no question that we are on our way into a new age of space flight.

As President Kennedy said to Gordon Cooper that day at the White House, "there are great frontiers still to be crossed."

We will be reminded of that same fact again by today's program.

We will hear from Dan Collins of the United Launch Alliance about what the future holds. Bill Gerstenmaier, Mark Timm and Doug Comstock will give us a look inside the world of NASA and the Commercial Launch Arena.

Beth King will tell us about the Commercial GEO Orbit Launch Demand Model, and AST's own John Sloan will present the forecast for Non-Geosynchronous orbits. We will hear from Bret Alexander of the Personal Spaceflight Federation and conclude with the reports of the COMSTAC Working Groups.

You know, sometimes when you're actually crossing the great frontiers that President Kennedy mentioned, you're more aware of the work than you are of its significance. And that's not surprising because the work isn't easy, but it is certainly underway. Consider this.

Since December there have been two launches from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport. Congratulations to COMSTAC member Billie Reed for all that hard work paying off. You can look at Billie and see that this is a man who feels really good!

AST has issued three launch permits, two for Armadillo and one for Blue Origin, that have produced a total of eight permitted launches – five for Armadillo and three for Blue Origin.

Charles Simonyi has traveled to the International Space Station, a journey made possible by Space Adventures.

In February, the FAA held it Tenth Annual Commercial Space Transportation Conference. It was a stunning event. The assembled talent covered a full range of issues ranging from space weather to when is a vehicle ready to launch, and the emphasis on safe operations in all areas of commercial space was unmistakable.

In April the FAA and the Air Force hosted the Second Annual Summit for Private Entrepreneurial Launch Vehicle developers with lots of Air Force stars in the room.

Just a month ago, Peter Diamandis and I conducted a real-time, on-line conversation for The Wall Street Journal. That alone, I think, says something about increased interest in private space flight since the Journal came to us and asked us to do this.

And just two days after Stephen Hawking went weightless on a Zero-G flight, so did Cesare Massano. Mr. Massano is 93.

Since our last COMSTAC meeting SpaceX conducted its second launch of Falcon I and has declared the vehicle operational.

And, of course, we were reminded at the end of January with the Sea Launch incident, that no matter how carefully and conscientiously you prepare, rockets sometimes don't work.

So a lot has taken place. But forgive me if I temporarily put aside modesty to say this.

***The* two most significant events since COMSTAC last met happened on December 15, 2006 and on April 6, 2007. On the December date, the FAA issued the final rule for Private Human Space Flight Requirements for Crew and Space Flight participants. On April 6, 2007 the FAA issued final regulations for Experimental Permits for Reusable Suborbital Rockets. Huge thanks to AST's Ken Wong and Randy Repcheck for leading these efforts.**

When we look back at this time in the history of private human space flight, these regulations … as products of congressional decisions, so much hard work inside the FAA and so much cooperation from the industry … these regulations will stand out among the landmarks of progress.

Now the regulations are finished, but "finished" in much the same way that the Mercury program came to an end. Let me explain it this way.

Early this year, a book came out called Too Far From Home by Chris Jones. It's the story of the International Space Station crew at the time of the Columbia accident. I want to read you just this one sentence from the book.

"The most important journeys and dreams are those without end."

That's been the history of America in space. We finish one thing, but that's not the end. It becomes a part of the unfolding, ongoing story of where we will go next and who will go there. So we finish the regulations and go on. We test a vehicle and go on. We license a launch and go on.

We – the collective we – are always on the move.

A key reason for that is right here in this room, the people of COMSTAC. We cannot thank you enough for all you do, for all your ideas, for all your work that helps keep America on the move in space. And as a current example, I would just point to yesterday's working group meetings that were the best ever. Thank you.

Now please let me also take this moment to say a special thanks to one person in particular.

This is the last COMSTAC meeting with John Vinter as the presiding officer and COMSTAC Chairman. The first meeting he chaired was October 30, 2003. Now after these years of exceptional service, he's stepping down as chair. I'm pleased to say John has graciously agreed to stay on as a COMSTAC member.

All of us know by now the time and devotion he has given us. And I think we all know his work as chairman of International Space Brokers. He is a man deeply familiar with both the risk and the promise ahead for commercial space and private human space flight.

There is so much for which to thank him. Of course, we thank him for the experience he brings to all he does in this industry, as a veteran of the Communications Satellite Corporation, as a former director at Satellite Business Systems, and as a thoughtful leader at International Technology Underwriters.

He has built a career of distinction. But let me say thank you for something else.

John Vinter is a gentleman. He has given me wise counsel on many occasions.

He has brought us grace and civility and proved to be the perfect fit as a genuine professional for an organization of professionals and forward-looking people who are the membership of COMSTAC.

So, on behalf of your COMSTAC colleagues, all your friends, colleagues and admirers, please accept this token of our respect and appreciation, John, for a job well done.

Let me now extend a special welcome to Will Trafton who will be taking over the chairmanship of COMSTAC.

We know that as Executive Vice President for Rockeptlane Kistler, Will and all the people at RpK are extremely busy with their exciting … and demanding … COTS plans. Even so, when Will was approached, he was both gracious and enthusiastic in agreeing to take on the leadership of the Committee. It is another reminder of his devotion to this industry and I want to thank him and wish him the very best in his new role.

Will … your meeting.