

OTHER PRIORITIES: ANOTHER LAUNCH TODAY - BLUE ORIGIN REUSABLE ROCKET

Hurry, we're less than three minutes from launch, all systems go. I'll add more remarks in a moment.

11:20 a.m. EDT – Wow. What a picture-perfect launch and landing. This is the most excitement out of West Texas since some lousy bird hunter shot his friend in the face a few years back. Today's mission by Blue Origin, an aerospace company founded by Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, had several objectives. The reusable rocket's fourth mission included testing of backup and safety systems intended for future manned flights as well as multiple scientific project payloads. At least one project required the microgravity conditions (video) this mission would realize as the ship approached, reached, and left apogee at 331,501 feet (roughly shy of 63 miles above earth).

I've replaced the live feed of the mission with a video summary of the same New Shepherd rocket's third flight from April this year. Compare and contrast with Elon Musk's SpaceX's recent reusable rocket launches; I am completely in awe of SpaceX's attempts to stick a landing repeatedly on a puny drone raft at sea. (Video embedded here is from SpaceX launch last Wednesday carrying Eutelsat/ABS telecommunications satellites.)

If we have to endure gross inequality and a siphoning plutocracy, this space race is the kind of crazy oligarchs' spending I love to see. Granted, Bezos is probably checking out future warehousing for Amazon facilities in space, crewed by robots – there's no rent in space, right? But the opportunities for aerospace development and accessibility to the public have

increased greatly with these two companies working fast and hard on this implicit competition. They also offer opportunities for us to save costs on government-funded missions – SpaceX has already won contracts formerly awarded to companies with an oligopolistic hold on launches.

I still want NASA to do all this and more as well; space shouldn't be the domain of corporations after all. But if NASA has to work with fewer resources thanks to anti-science GOP-led Congress, at least they have a much larger hiring pool of experts to draw from when they look for aerospace folks to add to their team, thanks to Blue Origin and SpaceX.

Explaining his refusal to serve in the military, that aforementioned sloppy hunter who shot his friend in the face said he had other priorities. It's amazing in contrast what other rich guys do with their other priorities.

Jeff Bezos had one helluva Father's Day already. Hope yours is just as exciting.