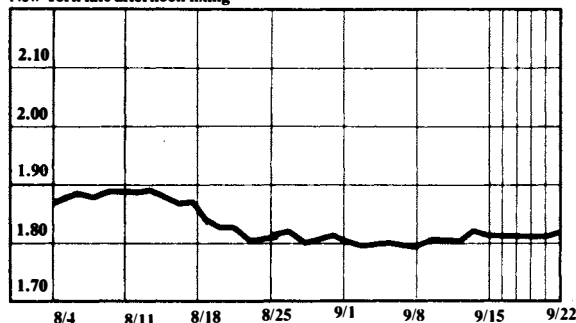


## Currency Rates

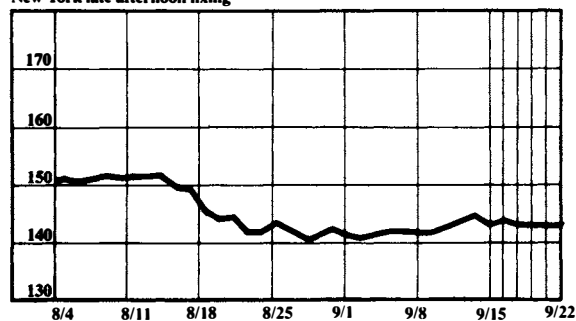
### The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



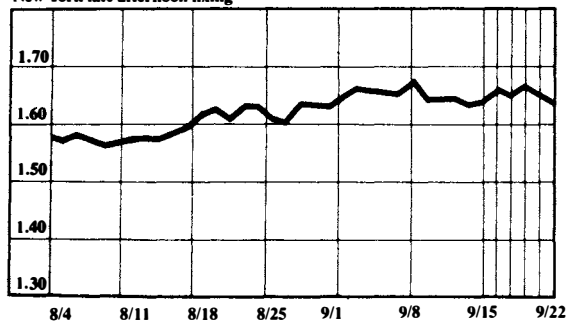
### The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



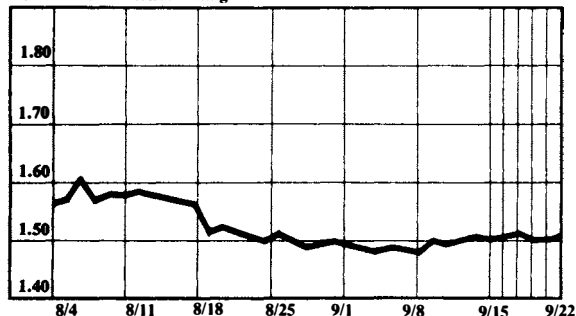
### The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



### The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing



## Ariane success puts Europe back in space

by Laurent Rosenfeld

The night of Sept. 15-16, at 00:45 GMT, the European blue-and-white rocket Ariane took off successfully from its Kourou, French Guyana launch pad. Four minutes and forty-six seconds later, the engine of the third stage, whose ignition failure had caused the two last flight failures, ignited properly.

Another 10 minutes later, the third stage had completed its combustion, and, 26 minutes after take-off time, two communications satellites, the Australian Aussat K3 and the European ECS4, were successfully placed in geostationary transfer orbit (36,056 kilometers apogee, 199.8 kilometers perigee).

This complete success was very much longed for. Since the tragic accident of the Challenger Shuttle in January 1986, and the failure of the 18th flight of Ariane four months later, the West had not been able to launch a commercial-sized satellite. Without even speaking of an increase in Western space capabilities, simple replacement of aging or failing satellites was impossible, which had started to create serious problems.

### Unappealing Soviet offers

Both the Europeans and the Americans, as well as the Japanese, were less than unenthusiastic about Soviet offers to launch Western satellites, for at least one obvious reason: Nobody in Western high-tech companies or defense establishments wished the Soviets to take a look at the sensitive electronics of Western satellites.

Thus, with the success of this 19th Ariane flight, the West recovers at least some space-launch capability, even if it is far from what the U.S. Space Shuttle could do. For Europe, the success was needed not only for the obvious commercial reasons. A meeting of the European Space Agency ministers is planned for this fall, and another failure would have had the worst possible psychological effect at a time when important decisions were to be taken.

In fact, rather than risk unfortunate decisions, many people were actually speaking of postponing this meeting in the event of an Ariane failure.