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Subject: Re: space program - long, condensed, and boring

Posted by [artsybrute](#) on Sun, 18 Jan 2004 15:32:22 GMT

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Hey Bill, I understand your point of view and respect it. I'm an idealist like you. Our difference lies in our respect for the competitive model paradigm in which we live. When settlers came to the New World, food was so abundant that a flock of passenger pigeons blocked the sky for days at a time. Now our world is becoming "more urbanized" which means more crowded. China is now second in oil consumption to the US. There is an unprecedented amount of population, wealth and consumption. There is more friction due to lack of *Lebenstraum* (sp?). We could argue that this tax money should be used to feed the starving, and I would agree if that would be realistic. But not that long ago the US sent huge amounts of food to India, who refused it based on the controversy surrounding GM corn. People died while food rotted. Now we are discussing lifting steel surcharges if we cut down on foreign subsidies. Bottom line: the amount that we help ourselves and other people is governed by political, not humane factors. Also, our present president has made it clear that he believes that it is important to have a national debt. My guess is he believes that other nations would be far more interested in the survival of our democratic governments if they were to lose (what they are owed) by our collapse. So budget surpluses again are politically, not economically governed. My main reason for the promotion of space exploration is as follows: Any closed system that is not perfectly efficient is subject to depletion. Only in this case, when depletion reaches a critical point, expansion will cease to be an option because we won't have the resources to invest. Mining of the moon, Mars, the main asteroid belt, etc., will no longer be open to us. I'm sure mankind would then find solutions, but I don't think that we will have the luxury of choosing humane solutions any longer at that juncture. During great economic booms (like the late 90's) many people could not imagine the economy ever returning to painful levels. It is the same here: Many people believe that we'll always have the option of expanding beyond the planet or that there will never be the need to do so. History shows cycles of poverty and prosperity, with much prosperity coming from finding new resources (and technologies). Unless we decide to choose who goes when we begin to depopulate Earth, we need some new form of Manifest Destiny. It's also a sociological issue. Instead of spending a bunch of our money and lives declaring wars, we could be laying out how each nation will gain from mining and settling space, which might generate common goals and therefore alliances without the extinction of ancient cultures. And the most important argument for space colonization, of course, is the hard vacuum that can be mined to bring back high quality vacuum tube audio to the masses.

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