

Will Space Exploration Stop Global Warming or World Hunger?

President Bush and NASA have announced an ambitious plan to send a man to Mars with the intention to eventually colonize the planet. The United States and other countries like China are getting ready to send their own human to Mars. And we are off and running in a new space race.

Countries will be committing hundreds of billions of dollars in financial, material and intellectual resources to this endeavor. This massive human undertaking will excite the imaginations of many and benefit a few, but how will space exploration help to stop global warming and world hunger now? This is not to say that space exploration is bad in itself, but why do we need to commit ourselves to another “space race”? Why can’t we work together towards a common goal?

The underline problem with the “space race” is the same as the fight to stop global warming or to defeat world hunger. We are so busy looking for solutions to our problems somewhere out there that we don’t realize that the solutions are all inside of ourselves.

For example, one of the stated reasons for going to Mars is to find another planet capable of supporting human life after the Earth’s resources are exhausted and the planet become uninhabitable for humans because of global warming and pollution. If the purpose of space exploration is to solve our current problems on Earth, why don’t we focus on these problems here? It’s a lot easier to find solutions by address these problems directly rather than going to Mars to find solutions.

Since most of these problems were made-made, why don’t we just work together to solve these immediate problems directly down here. There’s no need to go to Mars. That is, unless we really don’t want to solve these problems, believe these problems have nothing to do with us, or believe

that the solutions do not serve our self-interest.

The Kyoto Protocol is a protocol to the International Framework Convention on Climate Change with the objective of reducing greenhouse gases in an effort to prevent anthropogenic climate change. 182 parties including the European Union have ratified the protocol since December 11, 1997, except the United States. Although the Protocol is imperfect, it is the global community's attempt to address global warming. The United States, one of the major sources of greenhouse gases, hasn't joined the Protocol because it doesn't benefit its manufacturing base.

Until we can see how world hunger and global warming is affecting us personally, we will always be looking for solutions to our problems "somewhere out there" instead of understanding that the solution to all our problems were always right here in front of us. We can still go to Mars if we want to, but lets not use the exploration of Mars as the reason why we are not focusing on finding solutions to our problems on Earth here and now.

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