

The disadvantages of the idea of space mining for natural resources

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Recently NASA has selected 10 companies to use and study the technology, with the incorporation of space-based resources. Parallel to the study regarding earth being uninhabitable by 2150 according to the lengthy article written by Chris Mooney of the Washington post. Many questions arise with the advancement of technology. Most of the research and development of countries go into setting up life on an entirely different planet which may be only tenatable for a certain amount of people as well as with many imperfections in comparison to the once perfect planet we live on. In this report I look into both sides of the argument.

Background

In the last 200 years the human race has consumed natural resources at a rapid pace due to industrialization , urbanization and fast growing population. Natural resources such as petroleum , gold , platinum etc. took several million years to form deep under the earth's surface . the depletion of these essential resources is causing concern as to when these necessary metals will fully run out the options available to us humans to find substitutes for these minerals or the explore beyond the earth for the same resources. Unfortunately both these options are highly expensive , involve high risk and most importantly , different countries working together.

In the recent decades advancement in medicine and technology in addition to agriculture has prevented natural and man made occurrences of major epidemics. In the process the human population has continued to grow unhindered, at the same time. Increased living standards in highly populous countries such as india, china and brazil has increased consumption of

scarce natural resources. In addition to the accelerating use of resources , our environment has been exposed to pollution with air, water and soil which are not sustainable in the long run. Changing this trend would require governments, leaders and people to be willing to alter their lifestyles and habits. This is an almost impossible request in the geopolitical situation.

According to the budget overview published by NASA . they expect to spend around \$4. 3 Billion deep space exploration , which exploring human settlement in other planets. This is approximately the gdp of the small island nation of Maldives, a country most prone to the effects of global warming due to non stop rise in sea levels. Private players like Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Richard Branson who have invested billions of Dollars to build space crafts , whose objective is to venture throughout the solar system in search of a planet with a tolerable climate for the human populus as well as safely transporting them to this said planet.

One may wonder why these Billionaires are investing in a risky and dangerous venture, they could start new projects meant for earth like advancement of agriculture and whatnot. Do they see more profit in the long run , do they just want to preserve and protect the human race , do they see a bigger picture which we cannot imagine of as we are only seeing a small portion of it? Funding directed to saving the life on Earth or exploring for life in space - both options require resources money and also the will of the people. I would like to talk about these options in greater detail from the financial, political, social and technological point of view.

Option 1 – invest in saving the earth

The biggest threats facing life on Earth today come from scarcity of life supporting elements such as fresh water, high amounts of pollutants in the air, water and soil and lastly changing climatic conditions caused by global warming. Which could result in drought, famine and floods for extended periods of time.

Afforestation will not only decrease the amount of carbon dioxide but preserve water bodies as well as helping in the increase of underground water table. We need to protect these water bodies from pollutants such as untreated sewage, industrial waste, solid waste and non biodegradable solids such as plastic. Similarly we need to find ways to reduce air pollution especially in cities and industrial areas. The solutions to these problems will require people around the world to change their lifestyles and habits , however this can happen only when are offered more eco friendly, efficient and economical alternatives. The governments are responsible for encouraging as well as educating their citizens, the dire need of the hour. By dedicating all available resources towards this cause we may still be able to save life on the only planet where it can flourish at this point of time.