

Funding for space
exploration
philosophy essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

July 20, 1969, Commander Neil Armstrong takes the first steps on the moon. All it took was 170 billion dollars in today's money to put a man on the moon. Mankind does not need to explore further than the moon. Neil Armstrong once said " This is one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Forget giant leaps for mankind, NASA is a giant machine for spending money. This fact is backed up by the humiliating failure of the Orbiting Carbon Observatory, a \$278 million package which blasted off from Vandenberg air force (DeGroot 2). Considering the debt that America struggles with in right now, NASA and space exploration is not the main priority. The United States government uses an excess of funds to explore outer space in an attempt to find other forms of intelligent life, they use too much tax money that can be put to better use, and many of the astronauts are at risk due to human spaceflight.

A large portion of tax-payer money goes to NASA so that they can attempt to explore the unknown of space. Much of the money that NASA wastes on space exploration could be put to a much better and productive use. The United States government needs to focus on recovering their own planet before they discover others. Money that goes to NASA causes the national debt to increase. Instead, that money should go towards paying off the debt, or even fixing problems with unemployment. Back in the 1960's, when planning to put the first man on the moon, " 58% of Americans opposed spending the estimated \$40 billion - or an average of about \$225 per person - required to send a person to the moon. Only a third supported the plan" (Nasa Funding n. pag.). Many of the United States citizens opposed the plan because they knew that it should not be our main priority and it is a very

large amount of money. The citizens were knowledgeable of how all of that money could benefit the country. In 2004, " President Bush presented Congress with a \$2. 4 trillion budget blueprint for the 2005 fiscal year" (Nasa Funding n. pag.). The budget for the 2005 year is an extreme amount and there is to explore the depth of space when humans barely know their own planet. A vast amount of the Earth remains undiscovered which gives no reason to worry about space. Given the knowledge that humans have, there could exist absolutely nothing in space besides rocks and meteors. Earth is possible the only planet that sustains intelligent life. Scientists have searched the vast emptiness of space since the first moon landing in the 1960's. Although, " in 40 years of searching, we have detected no such signal. In 1967, we thought we had one, but that turned out to be the entirely natural signal of a pulsar" (Murray 2). Assume that NASA's scientists continue searching and finally reach their goal of discovering intelligent life 200 years into the future. More than \$8 trillion will have gone toward that goal judging by the drastic increases of NASA's annual budget from the years 2003 to 2009 (Returning to the moon n. pag.). However, intelligent life may not even exist on other planets, so all the hard work and money will go to waste if NASA does not find any aliens. In December of 1993, NASA embarrassingly sent astronauts into orbit to repair the Hubble, which cost taxpayers and extra \$629 million. Due to this incident, NASA was put to blame for their incompetence and using billions in federal funds without accountability (Nasa Funding n. pag.). NASA has the ability to just soak up federal funds and tax money to fix their mindless mistakes.

The plans of the space program to send men into space may endanger their well-being. Earth is a perfect habitat for mankind, which gives humans no reason to leave. Margaret Haerens writes, “ Animals never leave a comfortable habitat for a harsh one, unless they are forced to” (Haerens 2). Haerens compares the astronauts to animals and how the astronauts should not leave Earth when they are perfectly fine where they are. Space can kill humans very rapidly without a spacesuit. Astronauts willingly put themselves into space where they know if anything goes wrong they will die instantly. Haerens also writes that, “ Our vertebrate ancestors did not come ashore hundreds of millions of years ago because they decided to boldly go where no fish had gone before” (Haerens 2). The author says that the race to the moon and outer space is foolish and just because an area has never been explored does not mean that someone should explore the area, which relates back to how in nature, animals never leave a favorable environment for a poor one. The fact that the presence in space negatively affects the human body reinforces why humans should not leave Earth. Scientists have discovered that “ prolonged weightlessness does terrible things to the bones and circulatory system. If God wanted us to live in outer space, we wouldn’t have balancing systems in our inner ears” (Haerens 2). Humans have evolved and adapted to live on Earth, if humans were meant to live in space, they would have adapted to suit the harsh conditions of space. Iain Murray writes that alien life is completely unknown to the human race and humans have no idea what aliens are capable of. Aliens could have the potential to completely wipe humans off the face of the earth (Murray 1). If aliens actually exist, no one knows what they have the ability to do. They could be very powerful and dominate humans and imperialize the planet, Earth.

Although, aliens may be able to assist humans with space travel if we ever encounter them.

However, there are many reasons that support space exploration, such as the risk of mass extinction that happens on Earth forcing humans to migrate to other planets. In the case of a mass extinction, humans must find a plan B in order to survive. Haerens talks about the possibility that the human race has to move from Earth to avoid a mass extinction. Possibly, in 500 million years, the sun may slowly boil the oceans and incinerate the Earth. Natural disasters are not the only possibility for a mass extinction, other epidemics such as climate change and overpopulation can also cause mass extinctions. Haerens also writes that the chances of an epidemic of such colossal size that it can cause a mass extinction are pretty low. However, an asteroid of sufficient size could cause the extinction of humans as it did the dinosaurs (Haerens 3). Earth may soon become over populated with humans; therefore, the human race must find other planets to make sure that mankind will live on. Jerry DeGroot notes that Stephen Hawking has argued about how the human race must colonize other planets to ensure mankind's long-term survival. The Earth is indeed doomed, but where will all the civilians go? When comparing Mars to Antarctica, Antarctica seems like a paradise (DeGroot 2). It seems logical to desire to colonize other planets since if the human race becomes extinct, all of man's achievements and accomplishments over time would be gone. Space travel has a high chance of happening, humans will eventually learn to harness the energy of space as the cavemen learned how to harness the energy of fire. Enthusiastic supporters of the space exploration argue that exploring outer space is the

next step in human evolution. Scientists believe that the colonization of other planets, beginning with the moon, should become a long-term human goal. Scientist also argue that colonizing the moon helps humans learn how to live on Mars by learning how to live with conditions of the moon first (Returning to the Moon n. pag.). One day a devastating event will happen to the Earth and change the course of life and only space colonization can save it.

Although space exploration can greatly benefit the progression of mankind, it depletes a large part America's resources and funds. Instead of humans trying to find intelligent life, they should leave them to find us. The billions of dollars that are used each year to fund space exploration could greatly improve everyday life on planet Earth. The American government funds NASA with a plethora of money in order for them to discover the unknown of the universe and much of the funds comes from tax-payers. Also, the astronauts are exposed to the outside threats of space which put them in dangerous situations. Perhaps, one day, once Earth has achieved a utopic state, humans can fund a space program that will discover extraterrestrial beings.