

sci.astro.amateur: Re: Kerry on Bush Space Plan: At least he's in favor of Saving Hubble!

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On Thu, 17 Jun 2004 20:56:32 GMT, "Jon Kickerston" <none@nospam.com> wrote:

*>I have to admit probably that the Space Shuttle has helped man more than
>anything else that ever went into space, but we've lost 14(?) people. Were
>the small discoveries worth more than 14 irreplaceable lives? It's easy to
>take your position if you haven't lost anyone in such a way....*

I consider the loss acceptable based on the HST missions alone. I believe the astronauts who have died understood and freely accepted that risk. I'm not saying that I entirely support the Space Shuttle program (at least as it has operated) or the ISS. That is a different matter of policy altogether, one that I have many disagreements with (none because of the risk to human life, however).

*>No? What if I needed a certain type of cell from your body for a small,
>insignificant experiment I was conducting that may or may not produce
>useable results. The only catch is that you must expire because I can't
>take the cells from a living host. Think it's worth the risk?*

There is no "risk" if I must expire. If you mean a reasonable risk, that is, I might expire (which is the case with Shuttle missions) that is a different question. This is where it becomes a value judgment again. Would I accept a 1% risk in order to provide tissue that has a 1% chance of saving your life? Probably not. If it has a 90% chance of saving your life? Probably. If it has a 1% chance of saving my wife's life? Sure. We balance those kinds of risks all the time, and we all balance them differently. IMO the different conclusions we reach don't make us "right" or "wrong".

*>Yeah, all this money thrown away on non-important matters when we should be
>using it for things that REALLY matter.*

The problem with this argument is that we all have different ideas of what really matters. Limited public resources are juggled in such a way as to theoretically maximize benefits and satisfy the majority. Of course, nobody has ever come up with a system that does a very good job of that. I know what really matters to me; I don't know what really matters in an optimal way to an entire

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society.

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