

Re: I Dream of Jeanne

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Paul F. Dietz (dietz@dls.net) wrote:

: Eric Chomko wrote:

: > Well the definition of investment states that you must spend money in
: > order to make money. I don't want the government investing per se. Do you
: > want the government to be capitalistic like a business?

: I want the government to not spend money on things that have insufficient
: return of some kind. The manned space program has manifestly failed
: to have sufficient return.

As compared to? NASA has outperformed virually every other aspect of
manned spaceflight except for Mir. Also, right now without a means to get
to ISS the Russians are providing a service we cannot.

You speak of NASA's waste but have no metric to support your claim.

I can say that IBM's PCs were a waste because the clone market proved it.
You have no "clone market" equivalent to claim that NASA is like IBM in
that regard. Until you can support your claim, you remain full of crap!

: > : Look, the fact that money is wasted elsewhere in the budget doesn't
: > : give every dollar sucking leach a free ride in my bank account, mister.
: >
: > No kidding. But you act like space exploration hasn't given us anything.

: Manned space exploration, particularly with the shuttle, and even more
: so the station, *hasn't* given us very much. So, yes, there's a reason
: I'm acting like that's true — it *is* true.

Progress is slow. You seem to expect breakthroughs with each and every
flight. You're holding NASA to a standard that you cannot define. Your
metric remains your opinion. I'd love to see a better alternative, but
right now there is really only one game in town.

: > Are you against space exploration or just the way NASA does it? I don't
: > get you for one of the "if man was supposed to fly, then God would have
: > given him wings" types.

: I'm not against it in principle. However, I've seen no good evidence that
: anyone else would have done it any better.

Okay, so what then? Do nothing until something magically comes along that
makes spaceflight profitable? For all we know spaceflight might be akin
to Thomas Edison's prototypes for the light bulb. Should we stop trying?

: Let me turn this around: are you for space exploration regardless of its
: effectiveness? What exactly would be sufficient to convince you that it
: wasn't worthwhile? How high would the cost have to be?

Well since we do have spaceflight and we have benefited from it, I'd say
that we must always strive forward. ("Immer grate aus" – as the
Germans say). Spaceflight is not scientific theory like it was 100+ years
ago with Konstantin Tsiolkovsky. We're in space now. Why stop? I mean if
there was world-wide famine and true Armageddon I could see a point to at
least put the whole thing on hold. But we are not so poor a world where we
cannot have manned spaceflight. Further, by going backward, and abandoning
manned spaceflight, would actually MAKE us poorer. That's why I support
manned spaceflight in all its forms including the commercial sector.

: > : The unmanned segment is delivering clear value, as indicated by customers
: > : willing to pay for it (both in and out of government). I am referring to
: > : military, weather, and commercial satellites here.
: >
: > Earth Science? Science in general?

: If space and planetary science had to go up against other fields in the NSF,
: instead of having been placed in a privileged position with their own
: separate budget, it's not at all clear the scientific community would
: have chosen to spend money there.

Depends on the science and the benefits. Can you tell me how Earth Science
benefits better than by remote sensing? Is there a telescope anywhere on
earth that outperforms Hubble?

: The government doesn't spend money on science just for the science, though.
: Maintaining a cadre of scientists and engineers who can build (unmanned)
: spacecraft is clearly militarily useful.

Yes and no. I agree that the government doesn't do science for just
science sake. But, it makes sense for government to allow the scientists
to do their thing for the benefit of the government (and people), and not
JUST the military. Despite special interests that may oppose, we really
DO want to know how fast the ozone layer is getting destroyed, how fast
cities are expanding and the change in watershed areas due to erosion.
Likewise, NOAA, being under the Dept. of Commerce is no accident.

: > : Why do you expect a Chinese manned space program to be any less of
: > : a boondoggle than the US government's manned space program?
: >

: > Better goals, maybe? I think the notion of "endeavor" escapes you.

: But what goals? No plausible ones have been promulgated (and, no, I don't
: consider the latest reshuffling to cut it). That's NASA's big problem,
: actually --- after Apollo they had no raison d'etre. All the
: pathologies of the shuttle and station flow from that sad fact.

No, what many (you?) thought after Apollo was that we'd find a commercial
use of space. Certainly the film "2001", with hotels and communications
companies in space wetted our appetites for the future. It is 2004 and
nothing looks further from the truth.

There is no direct economic reason to go into space. Space is like a
national park at best right now. The problem is that it is so vast there
is no reason why it shouldn't be exploited for commercial means. You seem
to blame NASA for why the latter hasn't occurred. It might takes several
more decades. Do you think we should simply stop exploring space because
of the time factor?

: > : Observation that a certain negative outcome may occur is not evidence
: > : that that outcome is desired, your slanderous and stupid accusation notwithstanding.
: >
: > I'm entitled to my opinion, despite what you think of it.

: Of course you're entitled to your opinions, even if they are utterly wrong,
: slanderous, and stupid. I'm also free to hold you up to ridicule for them.

To call anything in this thread "slanderous" shows how thin-skinned you
are. As to the rest, it is simply a matter of difference of opinion.

: > : But, hey, continue to ignore reality, you're quite evidently very good at that.
: >
: > The only thing real is your irrational dislike of manned spaceflight.

: Buddy, it's a *rational* dislike. I, rationally, don't like governments taking
: my tax dollars and flushing them down the toilet. It's your attachment to it,
: in the face of all evidence, that's irrational.

Again, you should be so critical of war. Why does the DOD get a pass in
your mind? Medicare? Social Security? Geez, you act like NASA's \$15.5
billion budget is anything close to others in the US Govt. You should be
so concerned about the national debt.

: > There is always a risk when launching any rocket be it a shuttle or any
: > other type.

: Yes --- and the shuttle is one such risk away from being museumware. So don't feed
: us this obvious bullshit about how we're going to fly it until there's a replacement.
: There's an good chance that the program won't last that long.

sci.space.policy: Re: I Dream of Jeanne

There are three left. I figure all three will fly at least another dozen times. Hopefully, by then we'll get a cheaper replacement.

Eric

: Paul