

Re: MSNBC – How a 'safe haven' could help save Hubble

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From: Tom Kent (*teeks99_at_community.nospam*)

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"Explorer" <Explorer8939@yahoo.com> wrote in
news:1102533606.393854.250020@f14g2000cwb.googlegroups.com:

- > *The reason why saving Hubble is such a big deal is that NASA rarely*
- > *ever carries out most new programs through flight status. So, if HST is*
- > *not saved, its possible that replacement would be cancelled, leaving*
- > *the science community with nothing.*
- >
- > *Your comment is indicative of precisely why new projects are often*
- > *cancelled before flight – let's say that someone proposes the New Great*
- > *Telescope, and NASA funds the program. After a couple of years,*
- > *technology advances and the New Great Telescope is now just the Just OK*
- > *Telescope, albeit at the same price as before, if not higher. So, the*
- > *Better becomes the Enemy of the Good Enough, the new telescope is*
- > *cancelled in favor of the Next Really Great Telescope, and so on.*
- >
- > *Better to hold onto existing hardware until the replacement is on*
- > *orbit. So, we really need that robot to save Hubble!*
- >

I don't know of a lot of science missions that are cancelled. Hubble made it, Gravity Probe B made it, even though the basic reason it was developed was obsolete thirty years ago. We have all sorts of satellites and telescopes orbiting the earth, most of which never had to seriously fight for funding. If NASA has plans to build a new telescope, they'll get there . Which is disappointing. Why is NASA in the telescope building buisness? Or the monitoring of greenhouse gases buisness for that matter?

It seems that its becoming more and more that just because the platform is based in space, it is NASA's juristiction. Why don't we leave it up to the EPA to put satellites in space to monitor greenhouse gases?

Telescopes are a bit of a different monster. They're still about space exploration, just from a distance. If you include that mission in NASA's goals, then NASA should be maintaing ground based telescopes too.

My view is NASA should step away from its emphasis on science. NASA should be developing technology to move out into our universe. It bothers me when people make the statement that we could get more science done on mars by sending probes then sending people. That's debatable...however, I don't think the reason that we should send people to mars is to get science out of them. I think a goal of seeing if people can establish a permanent base on mars is a far greater goal than seeing if life once existed on mars.

If you share my view that its not all about acquiring knowledge, then you'd understand why it's no big deal if the Hubble happens to fall. However, if your view is that we need to understand as much as possible as quickly as possible about our universe then you'd want to say screw the danger of not having a safe haven and get a shuttle up to the Hubble ASAP, and I respect that.

Tom Kent