

Re: Barack Obama Pits Space Explorers Against School Children

Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.space.policy/2007-12/msg00109.html>

- *From:* Ian Parker <ianparker2@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 5 Dec 2007 03:51:57 -0800 (PST)
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On 4 Dec, 21:11, simberg.interglo...@xxxxxxxxxx (Rand Simberg) wrote:

On Tue, 04 Dec 2007 20:51:58 GMT, in a place far, far away, simberg.interglo...@xxxxxxxxxx (Rand Simberg) made the phosphor on my monitor glow in such a way as to indicate that:

On Tue, 4 Dec 2007 12:17:46 -0800 (PST), in a place far, far away, Ian Parker <ianpark...@xxxxxxxxxx> made the phosphor on my monitor glow in such a way as to indicate that:

If you look at space from an othodox scientific/economic perspective one or two things become clear. The first of these is that there is no magic formula to lower costs. If there were someone would now be building a cheap LEO reusable vehicle.

Yes, of course. In fact we would have had it three thousand years ago.

<rest of typical Ian stupidity snipped>

I should also point out how idiotic it is to, in the same paragraph, talk about "othodox scientific/economic perspective" [sic] and "a magic formula" for launch costs.

What a loon. Ian wouldn't know a scientific perspective if it fell on his head from an apple tree.

Now this really is idiotic. To claim that we could have had a

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technology years back in the past with no antecedents. It is on a par with some feminist "science that insist that Newtons work was a rape manual.

To achieve an industrial civilization you need to go through certain stages. You first need civilization. You need a group of people living together in a city. Then you need writing. The first phonetic script was Ugaritic from Phoenicia. Then people can write down their ideas for posterity.

The ancient world achieved a fair degree of technology. The Egyptians built the pyramids (despite what Daniken says) the Romans invented concrete and built aqueducts and many impressive buildings. Recent discoveries have shown that the classical world made some quite complex machines.

Why did the Romans not have steam power? An explanation often given was that they had vast numbers of slaves. A quinquireme was rowed by slaves. However if you were to have instead of a quinquireme a "navem vaporis" with all the slaves taken out you could travel faster and use the space for catapults. Why was such a thing never built?

I think it is to do with the interplay between theoretical and engineering knowledge. James Watt when he was a technician at Glasgow university was given a Newcoman engine and told to get it to work which he duly did. He soon found out that it consumed vast quantities of coal for a very modest energy output. He went to Edinburgh to consult with James Black. Black told him that water boiled at a lower temperature when a vacuum was created, and that Watt was heating up a cooling a reservoir of water. Watt then proceeded to install valves in the engine so that the boiling water was kept at a constant pressure.

This incident speaks volumes about the relationship between pure knowledge and engineering. The Romans were expert engineers but lacked pure knowledge. This also suggests to us that there is some sort of rough order in which innovation takes place.

1421 – This is a case of economic incentive. Why is Los Angeles called Los Angeles and not New Nanjing? Why did the Spanish starting off from an inferior technological position innovate faster. The answer (probably) was that Europe had a tremendous economic incentive in the shape of the Arab stranglehold on the spice trade. We might ask questions about oil today.

Is there a low cost route to LEO. Lots of people have sought one. I recall a number of threads where a large number of ideas were banded about this very topic. The front runner seems to be a 2STO with both stages winged and completely recoverable. OK there are others there is a hypersonic plane and some ideas that are well – way out.

Instinct tells me that a 2STO is buildable but would involve a high

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development cost. This seems to be the historical conclusion. Richard Branson and Dick Rutan would have built a 2STO had they felt they could do it economically. There is, and this is why I fell you are particularly poisonous, a lack of willingness to discuss projects like Blackstar, which you claim don't exist but almost certainly do. This fails to give me, or anyone else for that matter, confidence that the proposed solution is viable.

I will again repeat what I said about NASA management. It is all very well to slag them, but they did (wrt Shuttle) exactly what they were told to do by the military. Now the military is in the process of shit shovelling. If there is a viable 2STO lets have it. Lets not have shit.

Economically the 2STO would be developed for Space Solar Power. This would be the main driver. So :-

- 1) You deny the existance of blackstar and refuse to give any details of your proposals.
- 2) You slag off NASA management when all they have done is what they have been told.
- 3) You are trying to kill off SSP which would be the main driver for 2STO. Without it what is the point?

Now anyone living in the 21st century is a lunatic. Let me explain what I mean. AI is the technology of this century. If anyone fails to take cogniscence of this fact in any scientific forum they are condeming themselves to obsolescence.

While we are on the subject of innovation there is one fact about the Middle East which is clear. For some reason only Israel innovates.

http://groups.google.co.uk/group/google-translate/browse_frm/thread/7c2e323eae1ddddb?hl=en

This has consequences throughout society. In fact the human rights record is a consequence of this failure, so "Amnesty International" is a self fulfilling prophecy. (Read the thread and this allusion will become clear).

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My main point is this. Unless we can understand why any interference has to be counterproductive. In fact Saddam Hussein's Iraq was close to innovation than the present US inspired clerically based régime. It is almost as if there is a conspiracy to deny technology to the Arab world.

– Ian Parker

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