

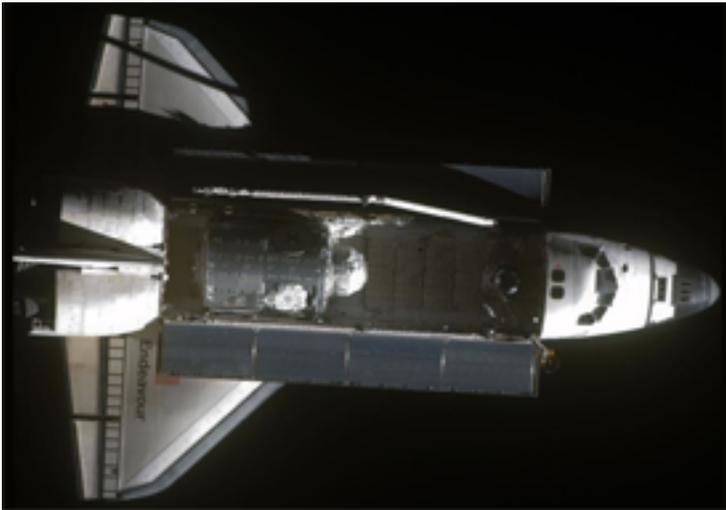
NASA and the Militarization of Space

by Bruce Gagnon

NASA is not really looking for the “origins of life,” as it tells school children. While the public was being fed the usual hype about international astronauts, high-tech feats, and rocket launch fireworks, the military took control of the space program. There has long been a military connection to NASA’s moon missions.

On January 31, 2010 NASA, launched the space shuttle Endeavour from Cape Canaveral, Florida. This launch was one more visible sign of the military takeover of the so-called “civilian” space program.

The primary purpose of Endeavour was an 11-day radar Earth topology mapping mission that provided high-resolution three-dimensional maps for 80 percent of the Earth’s surface.



The Endeavour in space on Feb. 9, 2010. With state-of-the-art high- resolution maps from the Endeavour mission, the Pentagon has increased its ability to hit targets virtually anywhere on the planet.

photo: NASA

Few in the corporate-dominated media reported on the fact that the Pentagon gave NASA over \$200 million for the shuttle flight. Most of the high-resolution maps created by the mission were classified “TOP SECRET” and were put under the control of the military.

That mission was just one more example of the steady and dramatic takeover of the space program by the Pentagon. While the public was being fed the usual hype about international astronauts, high-tech feats, and rocket launch fireworks, the military took control of the space program, with hardly a peep out of anyone. NASA

was set up as a civilian agency for “peaceful space exploration” in 1958. Space missions like Endeavour violate NASA’s charter.

With state-of-the-art high-resolution maps from the Endeavour mission, the Pentagon increased its ability to identify and hit targets virtually anywhere on the planet via space technology. Through this “global view” the Pentagon and its corporate allies ensure “global dominance,” the intention outlined in U.S. Space Command documents like “Vision for 2020.” In fact, 70 percent of the weapons used in George W. Bush’s initial “shock and awe” attack on Iraq in 2003 were directed to their targets by space satellites using these new high-resolution maps.

In a December 2006 interview from the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, Scott Horowitz, NASA’s associate administrator for exploration, said, “We’re going for a base on the Moon.”

There has long been a military connection to NASA’s moon missions. In early 1994, NASA launched the Deep Space Program Science Experiment, the first of a series of Clementine technology demonstrations jointly sponsored with the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO). The Pentagon announced that data acquired by the spacecraft showed ice in the bottom of a crater located on the Moon’s south pole — the same location NASA envisions as the site for a permanent base.

According to a Pentagon website, “The principal objective of the lunar observatory mission, though, was to space qualify lightweight sensors and component technologies for the next generation of Department of Defense spacecraft [Star Wars].”

In the end, the NASA plan to establish permanent bases on the Moon will help the military “control and dominate” access on and off our planet Earth and determine who will extract valuable resources from the Moon and other planetary bodies.



A rocket, launched from earth by the Astronomic Club, lands in the eye of the moon in the first science fiction film produced, "Voyage dans la Lune," (director Georges Melies, France, 1902)

The Moon has one resource that is getting everyone's attention. It is helium-3; many space enthusiasts say it could be used for fusion power back here on Earth. In a 1995 New York Times op-ed, science writer Lawrence Joseph asked the question: "Will the Moon become the Persian Gulf of the 21st century?" Joseph maintained that the most important technological question of our time will be "Which nation will control nuclear fusion?" He ended his piece by saying: "If we ignore the potential of this remarkable fuel, the nation could slip behind in the race for control of the global economy, and our destiny beyond."

Some scientists predict that one metric ton of helium-3 could be worth over \$3 billion. Researchers at the Princeton University Plasma Physics Laboratory have estimated that some one million tons of helium-3 could be obtained from the top layer of the Moon.

If all this turns out to be true and scientifically possible, imagine the gold rush to the Moon and the conflict that could follow in years to come. Who would police the Moon, especially when countries like the U.S. refuse to sign the Moon Treaty that restricts "ownership claims"?

The U.S. Space Command's plan, Vision for 2020, says, "Historically, military forces have evolved to protect national interests and investments — both military and economic. During the rise of sea commerce, nations built navies to protect and enhance their commercial interests.... Likewise, space forces will emerge to protect

military and commercial national interests and investment in the space medium due to their increasing importance.”

I am convinced that, by creating offensive space weapons systems, one of the major jobs of the Space Command will be to control who can get on and off planet Earth, thus controlling the “shipping lanes” to the Moon and beyond.

NASA is not really looking for the “origins of life,” as it tells school children. Instead, it is laying the groundwork for a new gold rush that will drain our national treasury and enrich the big corporations that now control our government. It is beyond time for the American people to wake up to the shell game underway.

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