

Who's Protecting the Moon?

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

"Thank God men cannot fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth," - Henry David Thoreau

The moon is in trouble. And so are we.

Bruce Gagnon:

NASA is not really looking for the 'origins of life,' as it tells school children today. 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.[1]

Americans haven't awoken, despite the environmental damage these projects already inflict and the peril to Earth's future and that of other planets. That damage will dramatically escalate with the U.S. Space Force and Artemis Accords.

The moon is key to the U.S. and other countries for commercial mining, military bases to control access to Earth and space, and for launching military and commercial conquest of space. On April 6, President Trump issued an executive order directing the Secretary of State to "take all appropriate actions to encourage international support for the public and private recovery and use of resources in outer space".

"Americans should have the right to engage in commercial exploration, recovery, and use of resources in outer space, consistent with applicable law. Outer space is a legally and physically unique domain of human activity, and the United States does not view it as a global commons." [2]

The Artemis Accords are being drafted to establish legal justification for commercial space resource extraction, exploitation, and ownership [3] (reminiscent of the Bush administration memos by Yoo, Bybee, and Bradbury on torture). They would be an international pact for "like-minded nations", foregoing the United Nations treaty process.

Vice President Mike Pence:

"The United States has always been a nation of restless pioneers, from those Americans who crossed the western frontier to settle in California to those who first stepped onto the Moon. We are ever striving to explore uncharted lands, reach new horizons, and venture into the unknown.

Today, we are renewing the legacy of those courageous space pioneers and all they represent. As part of our re-engagement in human space exploration, the Trump administration's policy is to return to the moon by 2024, ensuring that the next man and the

first woman on the moon will both be American astronauts. From there, we plan to put men and women on Mars.

To accomplish this next big leap, we will develop the technologies to live on the moon for months and even years. We will learn how to make use of resources that the moon has to offer. That includes mining oxygen from the lunar surface and rocks to fuel reusable landers, extracting water from the permanently shadowed craters of the south pole, and developing a new generation of nuclear-powered spacecraft that will help us fly further and faster than ever before. [4]

Former Nazi Major General Walter Dornberger, head of Hitler's V1 and V2 program, told Congress in 1958 that America's top space priority ought to be to "conquer, occupy, keep, and utilize space between the Earth and the Moon." [5] The Apollo missions were the first phase — on-site assessments to gather samples, run experiments, and test human interaction with the lunar environment.

Since 1959, lunar missions and crashes by the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, India, Israel, and European Union have left over 413,000 pounds of debris and toxic substances on the formerly pristine lunar surface, [6] including 96 bags of bacteria-laden human excrement dumped by the Apollo missions. [7] Apollo also left a nuclear generator on the moon. [8]

Governments have intentionally hit the moon 22 times as part of experiments and conducted 17 other post-mission crashes. The U.S. did the majority — 16 post-mission crashes and 14 intentional strikes, including the 2009 LCROSS hit, equivalent to 1.5 tons of TNT, to blast 350 tons of rock and dust and create a six-mile-high cloud for data gathering and public relations. That mission cost \$49 million, and NASA's Ames Research celebrated with an all-night party. [9] In the 1950s, the U.S. even planned to drop an atomic bomb on the moon — Project A119 - but cancelled it as too risky. [10]

Why should the moon be protected? There are many reasons.

The moon

- stabilizes Earth's rotation
- has a major role in maintaining the Earth's magnetic field
- regulates the climate
- creates the tides
- affects plant cycles and likely affects all biology and human cycles in profound ways
- regulates the procreation of some creatures, including coral [11]

The light of the moon is essential for life, and the moon may well be a stabilizing force for every living being on the planet,

The moon is also a sovereign body with its own rights, and it belongs to no one. It is revered by Earth-based indigenous peoples and has been considered a living, sentient being by people worldwide throughout human history. The moon and earth's self-protective systems demonstrate far more intelligence, wisdom, and life than "civilized" society understands. [12]

None of this matters to NASA, the U.S. government, other countries, and related businesses.

Laser-focused on their mission objectives, with virtually no checks or public oversight, they wield the ultimate in “big toys.” The United States alone budgets millions of tax dollars every year to develop space technology for future outposts and has spent billions on the Artemis Program. For their space program, the overarching priorities are American supremacy, empire, and profit — the unflinching mandate of manifest destiny projected into space.

The United States is by far the biggest threat to space and the moon.

When you don't initiate the boys, they burn down the village. — African saying

The 1979 United Nations Moon Treaty prohibits military bases and national appropriation of territory but only minimally protects the moon environmentally. It enshrines depredation “on the basis of equality” — “The Moon and its natural resources are the common heritage of mankind.” [13] Former astronaut Harrison Schmidt, who formed his own company to mine the moon, complained the treaty would “complicate private commercial efforts.”[14] He was not alone. The U.S. did not sign, and only 18 nations have ratified it.

“...the United States does not consider the Moon Agreement to be an effective or necessary instrument to guide nation states regarding the promotion of commercial participation in the long-term exploration, scientific discovery, and use of the Moon, Mars, or other celestial bodies. Accordingly, the Secretary of State shall object to any attempt by any other state or international organization to treat the Moon Agreement as reflecting or otherwise expressing customary international law.” [15]

Companies such as Bechtel and Bigelow Aerospace [16] are securing contracts from the FAA and other agencies to own land on the moon and mine the moon. Helium-3, used for nuclear fusion, may be worth \$3 billion per metric ton, and there are millions of tons of helium-3 in the moon's upper layer. This is one cause of the new gold rush to the moon.[17] Lunar water deposits are being assessed to see if they can provide drinking water for military and commercial bases there. Moon tourism is being pursued internationally.[18] A Japanese startup even wants to put billboards on the moon.[19]

There are direct and immediate impacts to Earth from these space programs. They accelerate climate change and will eventually torch the climate if allowed to continue. Each fossil-fuel-burning rocket launch not only uses toxic chemicals and causes toxic fallout. They also put particulate matter and exhaust into the atmosphere, and destroy part of the ozone layer.[20]

For example, before leaving Earth's atmosphere, each shuttle spewed thousands of pounds of metals and other chemicals into the air, including lithium, nickel, mercury [21], bismuth, manganese, aluminum, iron, and zinc. “People think of a shuttle launch as a short-term, finite event, but each launch expels a huge amount of debris into the atmosphere with the potential for long-term effects on the surrounding ecosystem. The plume contains hydrogen chloride, a strong acid. After launches, the pH of the [nearby] lagoons may plummet for a short time, rendering the water nearly as caustic as battery acid.” — John Bowden, environmental chemist at Hollings Marine Laboratory in Charleston, S.C., 2014 [22]

The Earth and its atmosphere have never experienced the sheer volume of launches planned. Dramatically worsening this are the thousands of rockets to put Wi-Fi and 5G satellites into earth orbit that began last year by Elon Musk/SpaceX and others.[23]

This is sheer insanity.

Congress continues to divert more taxpayer dollars into these extremely costly space projects — the next moon visit could cost trillions. This resource extraction from taxpayers robs cities, counties, and states of critical financial resources to solve real problems right here, especially now, while ignoring the planetary environmental cost.

Where are the environmentalists, the biologists, the ocean scientists, and consumer advocates?

We must break out of the NASA trance. Everything that is done to the moon has repercussions to Earth. “National security” is protecting Earth and the moon.

Human history with empires and invaders that subjugate and plunder is being repeated again, with an addiction to “command and control” permeating these space programs. These values and policies are opposed to life, peace, and a future. The Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space just sponsored a webinar on these plans “War in Space — Weaponising the final frontier”.[24]

The film “Independence Day” got it wrong, and Pogo got it right – the enemy is human. Tell children the truth: astronauts are not heroes.

Humans must repair Earth and themselves first with all available creativity and resources, and the COVID19 shutdown has worsened everything. If humans are incapable of fixing the dire messes they’ve created on Earth, incapable of stopping wars, incapable of living cooperatively with their neighbors, then they cannot go off planet or contaminate anything else.

The future is at stake. The moon must be defended. Shut NASA and these space ventures down.

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Notes

[1] 2006. Bruce Gagnon is co-founder of Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space

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[2]

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[12] for example, [www.cerncourier\(dot\)com/cws/article/cern/50778](http://www.cerncourier.com/cws/article/cern/50778)

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