

THE LUNA PROJECT

13 December 2011

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in care of Mitt Romney for President
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Governor Romney :

I and many other Americans are deeply disappointed, indeed taken aback, that you chose to twit your fellow candidate, Mr. Gingrich, for his support of “a lunar colony that would mine minerals from the Moon”. Lunar and space settlement, and the development of extraterrestrial resources of minerals and energy, are not fantasies, or dreams, or nice but unrealistic ideas. They are necessities for the material progress of humanity, and they are within reach now. You will find, accompanying this letter, a selection of books and documents, including both works aimed at the lay reader and NASA research reports. The descriptions of the immense wealth available from the more accessible parts of the solar system, including but not limited to Luna, and the reasonable scale of the effort required to obtain it, are not fiction or wild speculation, but the result of sober contemplation of established facts by experts in their fields.

It is clear that American leadership in the practical human uses of space is one of the greatest steps this nation could take toward real and lasting prosperity. It would be, not an expense, but an investment, returning first technological progress of a kind not seen since the days of the Apollo Program ; then a supply of energy and raw materials sufficient to feed our industries and those of the world, allowing poor countries to become wealthy, and removing one of the great causes of war ; and finally a new and permanent frontier to absorb and stimulate the highest powers of mankind. What other nation could take the lead? India and China are hungry for resources, but they lack the necessary economic and technical capacity. Without what space can provide, competition for the resources of this planet could bring them into conflict, and the military power on both sides makes that a terrifying prospect.

President Kalam of India has spoken of the importance of space for stability and growth on Earth, and forward-thinking businessmen around the world are beginning to recognize, and invest in, the immense opportunities it promises. The time has come for the politicians of this country to catch up. Spaceflight is not merely a matter of prestige, a diplomatic tool, or a way to encourage children to study science : it is the key to a treasure-chest the size of the Universe. A lunar colony means a beachhead in a new world immeasurably greater than the one Columbus found, and to make a joke of it is to make a fool of yourself. For your own sake, and for the sake of the country you hope to lead, learn wisdom.

The stars are ours!

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