

Trump signs order allowing private companies to mine the Moon



Washington, April 10 (RHC)-- As the coronavirus is continuing its spread across the planet, claiming tens of thousands of lives and plunging the world into an economic recession, U.S. President Donald Trump has issued an executive order encouraging U.S. companies to mine the Moon and other asteroids.

"There is literally nothing valuable enough on the Moon that would justify the expense of mining and transporting it," tweeted writer and game developer Rani Baker. "This is a plan a literal child would come up with."

The economic benefit of extracting resources from the Moon would be at best limited to lunar exploration as the cost of transporting materials back to Earth is not worth it, Gizmodo's Tom McKay explained. "It is unclear whether the Moon does, in fact, have resources worth the cost of extracting in the foreseeable future," McKay said.

"It is believed to have large quantities of helium-3 of possible use in fusion reactors, though it is finite and the total amount is unclear. It also has water, which would be worthless to bring back to Earth but would be very valuable in setting up long-term human habitation."

In addition, Trump's "Executive Order on Encouraging International Support for the Recovery and Use of Space Resources" dishonors the principle that space is a "global commons" for humanity. Eighteen nations have ratified the 1979 United Nations Moon Agreement which urges countries to consider the astronomical body as neutral ground. Trump's new order officializes that his administration does not care about the treaty and pushes private companies to look for extractive opportunities 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," the order states. "Outer space is a legally and physically unique domain of human activity, and the United States does not view it as a global commons."

Trump has made Outer Space one of the priorities of his foreign policy and officially signed an order announcing the formation of the Space Force as a branch of the military in December 2019.

The Russian space agency Roscosmos decried the U.S.'s order as a pretext for future attempts at seizure of other planets. "Attempts to expropriate outer space and aggressive plans to actually seize territories of other planets hardly set the countries [on a path] for fruitful cooperation," said Roscosmos deputy head Sergey Saveliev.

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