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Mars the harbinger of human survival

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For the first time in the history, life on Earth has crossed a unique technological threshold enabling self-guided survival. Humanity, bound to an ever-shrinking Earth, needs a resolute, rigorous, and inspirational goal that will bind consciousness, ideals, and nations by putting humanity on a positive path for the future. Life has existed on Earth for eons for the simple reason that it has diversified into every niche possible. From a human perspective the Earth acts as single interconnected ecosystem that is ever threatened by both natural events and human behavior, and which, in the extreme portends our extinction. Given our tenuous understanding and control over the environment as well as our own behaviors and ever-increasing chances of social collapse, now is the time for humanity to think beyond its short term wants by enacting immediate off-world diversification and self-preservation efforts. Mars, for many reasons, is the most tenable and sustainable location in which to initiate such permanent diversification. Scientific curiosity alone will not initiate nor drive such off-world settlement and concerted public support for such an endeavor is shown to be constrained by human nature and attention-span. Lastly, the initial act of settlement uniquely serves as humanities greatest globally inspiring self-initiated endeavor, with tangible benefits capable of inspiring generations, connecting cultures and motivating and inspiring education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in a manner similar to the dawn of human space exploration.

Biography

Donald C Barker, holds Master's degrees in Physics, Mathematics, Psychology and Space Architecture, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Planetary Geology from the University of Houston. He has held several positions over the past 20 years supporting the U.S. space program at Johnson Space Center including: Biomedical Engineer, Flight Controller, Systems Engineer (ISS Robotics, Crew Health Care, GNC-Propulsion & Operations Planning) and ISS Program Scientist. He is a certified Flight Instructor and avid mountaineer (Colorado 14'ers, Mt. Fuji, Mt. Aconcagua, and Kilimanjaro). His research interests include lunar and Mars science and exploration mission design and architectures.

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