

Editorial

Fund the Mars colony project now

For reasons to be made clear in the Spring 1987 edition of *EIR's Quarterly Economic Report*, it is not only probable that the United States will begin a permanent, significantly self-sustaining colony on Mars by approximately 2027 A.D. It is also probable that this successor to the 1960s Apollo Project will be a central driving force for general and sustained U.S. economic recovery.

This is not "music of the future." Despite the current budget crisis, the first significant phases of the project could begin even before the November 1988 elections.

The Mars-colonization project will require the mobilization of every leading technology currently in the process of development. Even during the early phases of this 50-year project, major technological revolutions will spill over from the project's research and development work, rejuvenating more and more sectors of our civilian economy. Industries of which most citizens have not even dreamed, should begin to emerge as key employers as early as the 1990s.

One of the reasons for the project's growing, if still limited popularity, is that the idea of colonizing Mars captures the imagination of many young people. It lifts our young people out of the depressing doom and gloom around us today; it says to them, "You and your children have a brilliant future ahead of you." That is one of the reasons, that work on the yet-to-be-funded, although otherwise approved project should begin fairly soon.

The second motive for pushing the project ahead now, is economic. A U.S. economy painfully aware of its vanishing power to compete in world markets, needs a major technological rejuvenation, like that we gained during the early 1960s phase of the Apollo project.

Off-the-shelf technology available today, is not sufficient to bring us ahead of our principal competitors. We must make the kind of leaps which only a new Apollo-style program can spill over into our civilian production sector. The Mars-colonization project is the best available among the several kinds of Apollo-style programs we might choose.

As in the case of the Strategic Defense Initiative, this project is a brainchild of Lyndon LaRouche. Speaking to an international conference on morality and economics in Lima, Peru, on April 4, LaRouche said: "About two years ago, my wife invited me to speak at an international conference in memory of a dear friend of ours, the space scientist Krafft Ehrlicke. Krafft had spent most of his life on reaching and industrializing the Moon, and had seen the development of the Moon as an indispensable stepping-stone to the colonization of the planet Mars. I thought that the best way to honor Krafft was to present a policy for the colonization of Mars by some definite, practicable date. About a year later, a similar program for colonization of Mars was adopted by the U.S. Space Commission.

"I worked through, step by step, every step we must take, beginning during the 1980s, to establish a permanent colony on Mars. On that basis, I proposed: let us commit ourselves to begin that permanent colony during the year 2027. I chose that date, because it is a schedule I know we could achieve, on the basis of the scientific knowledge we have today."

LaRouche promised his Peruvian audience that provided a new just world economic order is achieved, their children and grandchildren might be among the first to travel to Mars.

President Ronald Reagan has already endorsed the idea, as presented to him last year by the U.S. Space Commission. Despite important technological shortcomings in parts of the U.S. Space Commission's design, the Commission's schedule is "within the ballpark."

There is no technical reason not to begin funding the project now, and the President has good political, as well as urgent economic reasons, to get the project under way months earlier than the next presidential election. He has the best motives for leaving something really good and memorable to future generations from his administration; he would deserve our support and praise, should he choose this as one of those memorable accomplishments.