

## A Soldier's Perspective

I am not a scientist, nor do I believe that I am a brilliant man. I am however, a simple soldier, a family man and would like to think of myself as a good husband, father and honest man. My thoughts and words are not spoken often but when spoken or written they are filled with my passion for something better, for all of us.

While reading Jim McLane and Nancy Atkinson's thoughts on Space Colonization, I started to realize that we 'ALL' have lost our way. We have become so consumed by petty differences and dislikes of others that we all have forgotten our pre destiny of something better. We above all other living organisms on this planet were given the tools to advance and to expand our thoughts past simple reproduction and survival. What will we ultimately do with that destiny? Will we falter at a hint of death or danger? Or will we do now what so many in 'ALL' of the world's history has done before us. NASA of all thinking societies should understand this. Would there even be an America or NASA if a man named Columbus had not pursued a dangerous and possibly deadly voyage to a new world? He certainly had to consider whether or not he would ever return home to see all those he loved so dearly. But what of those aboard his ships, those that left Spain knowing that they would never return. Those few that willingly risked all for the chance at a new world and a new future, could they have possibly known what effects they would have had on the future due to their sacrifices? Now can we have enough vision to see our destiny, can we, for a moment, see past our petty differences of race and religion to see...peace, prosperity and possibly a new world.

So, can we survive on a new world? Can we build a new colony somewhere off of this planet? History teaches us that the human species has been pre destined to succeed. I for one will risk all to see this vision realized. Now, I am a military man, baptized by fire for over 15 years, since the young age of 17. So I am no fool and I am no stranger to what some might call high risks. Hundred of thousands of fighting men and woman from around this world have walked, rode, swam and even jumped into what some would call a high risk situation. Some where even considered suicide missions, ones with low probability of success. And why, what did they risk all for? Each and every one of us, even those throughout this earth that has made that choice, risk all for what we believed would make our world better. Some ideas and actions throughout history and the present have cost the human race dearly. Here is an 'Out of the box idea', let the hero's of 'All' our countries, for once, risk the ultimate sacrifice for something greater than one man's idea. Maybe once let these men and woman that rise every morning and say 'today I will stand for something' and say 'evil will not prevail, not on my watch'. For once let them volunteer for us all, you never know, mankind, the human race. It might just catch on if we let it.

Now, what do I think about manned, one way missions to another planet? I fully agree with NASA and others that it is completely dangerous and potentially deadly for anyone who sets out on this voyage. But since when has that ever stopped anyone? A one way trip is the way to go about this, it is a proven fact of human history that when the human species is thrown into a no alternative situation, that they will prevail and survive. I know first hand about loss and the ultimate rule of Murphy's Law, that whatever could go wrong, will go wrong. In the military we never send someone out alone,

not for the reason of loneliness, because we have accepted the fact that something will go wrong. Simply, any mission should have three to four smaller vessels, with four to six crew members each. The history of space exploration puts less than 50% of all missions to other planets as unsuccessful. It would stand to reason, that we should send more than one ship, this increases the percentage of success on the first flight. Consider this a scouting party made up of the world's finest Astronaut pilots, reconnaissance specialist and out of the box thinkers we have to offer. Preferably military men and woman from all nations, with one purpose 'find a suitable location for colonists to settle'. Now I do realize, to some, sending Soldiers into space would seem more like an invasion or occupation than exploration. To those who share this concern, consider this for a moment and ask yourself, who else? Who else has the mentality to volunteer to face certain danger and possibly death, thousands of miles away from their homes? I could think of a few hundred thousand that do it everyday across this planet. Many of which already posses much of the training and experience required to complete a mission of this type. It does bring up the scenario of how a crew might look. Today in many armies, Air Force pilots fly ground troops into and out of there objective areas. So why would this be any different. Astronauts still fly the vessels with crews of ground personnel with the knowledge and experience to make something out of nothing. Getting the worlds militaries involved with something other than making War with each other seems to me like something many would want. Also, it would bring to bear unknown technologies, years of experience, not to mention money that rivals some countries entire annual budgets.

Could there be a place for private companies? Absolutely! Once there are established outpost with reliable reports on living conditions and resources available, it would then fall to the private companies and scientific organizations to asses the next step in colonization. There was mention of couples on these missions. I can not express the importance of having that strong support partner next to you when you face the challenges during flight and once on the new world. Take me and my wife, for example, my wife served over 16 years in the military and over 10 years in the medical field. Finding suitable individuals is one thing, but finding a suitable couple is exactly what this mission would require.

I wonder who will be the first to extend the hand of complete partnership, representing the whole human species. Could this be the answer that so many have searched for? Could this one thing unite humanity in a new era of global cooperation and a new planetary respect for human life, unlike we know it today? My answers... ask me again when I've reached the new world!

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