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Draft Legislation for Mars Exploration Act

Whereas the planet Mars, being in its youth a twin of the early Earth, could potentially have served as the birthplace for a second genesis of life; and

Whereas only human explorers operating on the surface of Mars can discover and properly characterize such life, thereby revealing the truth about the potential prevalence and diversity of life in the universe, questions that thinking men and women have pondered for thousands of years; and

Whereas the United States now has in operation or in an advanced state of development the heavy lift launch vehicles necessary to enable the human exploration of Mars; and

Whereas when coupled with the heavy lander necessary to enable human Mars mission, such a transportation system could be used to enable precursor robotic scouting expeditions to Mars with a hundred times the capability offered by our current automated probes; and

Whereas youth loves adventure, a bold human Mars exploration program would be a bracing challenge to the young people of our nation, inviting them to develop their scientific talent to take part, thereby gifting America with a vastly expanded new generation of scientists, engineers, inventors, doctors, medical researchers, and technological entrepreneurs, who would advance our prosperity, health, and national defense in innumerable ways; and

Whereas the United States now has a dynamic entrepreneurial space industrial sector which can be called upon to drastically reduce the cost of a human Mars exploration program, which in turn will greatly accelerate the further development of that sector and its capabilities; and

Whereas the technological capabilities that would be developed by a human Mars exploration program would give America and its allies critical military and economic advantages; and,

Whereas just as during the 1960s, the Free World is now being challenged by an autocratic axis which claims that tyranny is the path for the human future, and this claim can and must be decisively refuted by a bold space program that once again astonishes the world by showing what free people can do; and

Whereas overall the United States is far better technologically prepared to send humans to Mars today than we were to send men to the Moon when President Kennedy committed us to that goal in 1961, and therefore to shrink from such a challenge would represent an unacceptable concession to the notion that we have become less than the people we used to be;

Be it resolved that the US Congress requires the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to draw up for its consideration within six months a plan to enable a sustained and effective program of human Mars exploration, with the first unpiloted landing of the required heavy payload delivery system occurring no later than eight years from program start, and the first human landing on the Red Planet accomplished within a decade.