

The space race is a meaningless ego-trip

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This is in a [New York Times newsletter](#) this morning, and it seems entirely appropriate to share it here:

A big space mission like Artemis II can sometimes feel like a unifying moment for humanity. After all, what better than a cold, indifferent cosmos to remind us of our shared status as earthlings?

But humanity's endeavors in space have always been entangled with humanity's politics back on Earth. Today, my colleague Selam Gebrekidan, an investigative reporter focused on China's space program, is writing with a reminder about Artemis II: As awe-inspiring as it might be, it's not a mission to bring humanity together. In fact, it's part of a high-stakes space race between the U.S. and China.

I can think of no conceivable gains to humankind as a consequence of wasting so many of the world's resources blasting a few people into space to explore the dark side of the moon.

I strongly suspect that it will be claimed that there are some spin-off benefits, but the probability that these could have been found without the excesses of this programme is very likely, and there is no prospect whatsoever of human habitation of the moon, or of the exploitation of its resources to benefit people here on Earth.

It is therefore appropriate to note, as the New York Times do, that this programme is nothing more than a giant exercise in political pettiness waged between world leaders with very small, and easily bruised, egos.

Is it possible that we might ever get to the point where politicians might think about the greater good rather than meaningless point scoring?

I can live in hope.