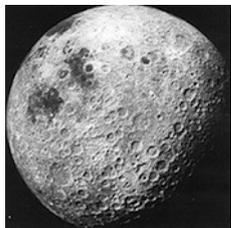


[£99 to the Moon \(and back\)](#) [1]

Written by [JP Fluor](#) [2] | Friday 18 February 2011



At the speed governments debase our currency it will perhaps be a bit more in 15 years time. But it is a distinct possibility. You will see space because somebody, out there, believes there is a profit to be made from space tourism. In fact, Richard Branson is [building the spaceship right now](#) [3].

As [James Bennett](#) [4], the President of Mach Plus Technologies LLC explained in his talk at the [Economic Policy Centre](#) [5] explained on Wednesday night, big government is being by-passed by savvy entrepreneurs, who believe that space should not be the exclusive playground of astronauts. Gone are the days of the monopolistic state space agency; the bureaucrats? steered and taxpayers? funded white elephants. Who saw no harm in putting satellites in space at ten or twenty times the cost at which the private sector could have done it ? as long as it kept the military industry rolling in the dough.

As far back as in 1964 General Electric offered to put satellites in space commercially ? and NASA blocked it. In the eighties, NASA ensured that its Space Shuttle became [?the? US launch vehicle](#) [6] for all government and private missions. Today private individuals launch rockets at a fraction of the cost and not taxpayer involvement. Competition and benefits of scale will do the rest ? the private profit motive will allow you to visit space.

And that is not all. Space exploitation can make fears over scarce resources a thing of the past: most minerals are out there for the taking on the planets or in the asteroid belt. One space shuttle of Helium 3, extracted from the Moon, can provide the energy needs of the US for an entire year. We?re not there yet ? businessmen will only take the plunge when private property rights in space are sorted.

The government can help freeing the market so you can travel in space. By negotiating a lifting of the US export ban on space technology; by introducing a non-interventionist regulatory framework to allow rocket launches from the UK; and by pressing for a free market property rights regime in space with the other space capacity countries. And when they do all that, they may even benefit from my postal vote...sent from the Moon?

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- [1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/tax-and-economy/%C2%A399-to-the-moon-and-back>
- [2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5887>
- [3] <http://www.virgingalactic.com/>
- [4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_C._Bennett
- [5] <http://www.economicpolicycentre.com/>

[6] <http://tinyurl.com/5w6dvr6>

[7] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript

[8] <http://disqus.com>