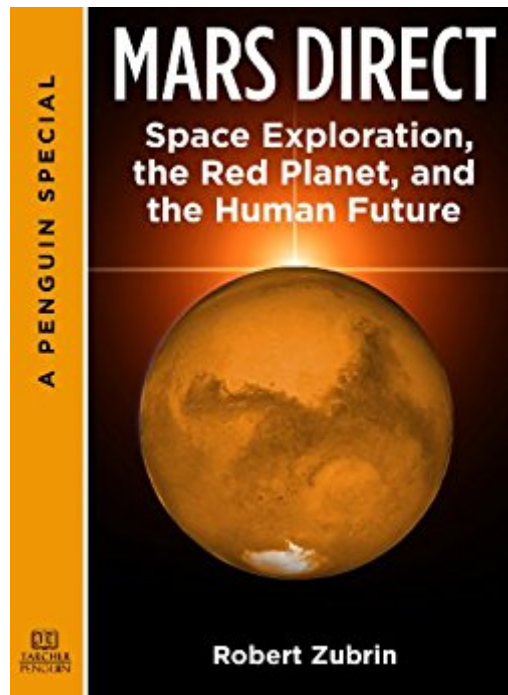


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Mars Direct: Space Exploration, The Red Planet, And The Human Future: A Special From Tarcher/ Penguin



Synopsis

“Bob Zubrin really, nearly alone, changed our thinking on this issue.” —Carl Sagan, *The Denver Post* “If you ever daydream about space travel and human space flight” or hope to one day rove the Red Planet alongside Curiosity “then MARS DIRECT will teach you how we can get there. The human race is at a crossroads. In the coming decades, we will make decisions regarding our human spaceflight program that will lead to one of two familiar futures: the open universe of *Star Trek*, where we allow ourselves the opportunity to spread our wings and attempt to flourish as an interplanetary species” or the closed, dystopian, and ultimately self-destructive world of *Soylent Green*, constantly at war with one another over humanity’s limited resources. If we plan to survive ourselves and one day travel to the stars, the human race’s next stepping-stone must be a manned mission to and the eventual colonization of Mars. In this four-part e-special, Mars Society founder Dr. Robert Zubrin details the challenges of a manned Earth-to-Mars mission. Challenges which, according to Zubrin, we are technologically more prepared to overcome than the obstacles of the missions to the moon of the sixties and seventies. Dr. Zubrin’s relatively simple plan, called Mars Direct, could feasibly have humans on the surface of Mars within a decade. Zubrin also discusses the current predicament of NASA, the promise of privatized space flight from companies like SpaceX, and the larger implication behind the absolute necessity to open the final frontier and transform from a planetary society into an interplanetary society. Our future as a species requires us to take baby steps away from the cradle that is planet Earth or, ultimately, perish here.

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Customer Reviews

I've read Robert Zubrin's previous works concerning Mars exploration and colonization, and the need for a robust plan for achieving both, and I approve both of the ideal and of the Mars Direct plan. In this work, I enjoyed the updates as to what's happened with Mars missions so far and what's yet to be done. But speaking of the reasons for the lack of progress in Mars exploration, he pins the blame - in a rather hysterical tone - on the American left, not merely considering them to be interfering with the missions themselves but apparently believing their very worldview to be antithetical to the development of a realistic manned space program. A thoughtful work on this subject could have done without that kind of blanket accusation, particularly since I don't at all believe that an obsession with unrealistic standards of safety is restricted to the left.

There was some interesting and thoughtful ideas about travel to mars along with insight about how a base camp can be set up. However, the vast majority of the book is just never-ending criticism of the Obama administration and a critique of the failures of government and NASA. I'm sure there is another side to the story, and I certainly don't profess to know the truth but if you want to learn more about mars and traveling to mars, this is not a very good read. It can best be described as a bitch-session. If you hate Obama then this will reinforce what you already think.

This is more than a condensed version of The Case for Mars, and contains an insightful critique of shortcomings at NASA. I've been "on board" with Dr. Zubrin's approach of a somewhat minimalist journey to Mars, coupled with a year and half stay as a precursor to building a continuous human presence on the Red Planet. His description and comments regarding the Mars sample return mission proposed by NASA are incisive, and point out the dangers associated with allowing a bureaucratic approach to space exploration. The complicated and very expensive mission panders to all the different groups within the space agency, and is highly reminiscent of the ill-fated GHW Bush "90 day plan," for a human mission to Mars. This is a very useful book when discussing travel to Mars. I gave it 5 stars, only because there wasn't a 6 star rating possible.

I completely disagree with the review that said this is merely a condensed version of Robert's classic book, "Case For Mars". On the contrary, it shows that Robert can still weave his magic without merely rehashing old topics. True, the first of four parts of this book does summarize the Mars Direct Plan, but the rest is completely new material, material that would fit nicely into an updated Case For Mars edition. A few examples of the new material in this book covered with perfect Zubrin flair:-> How concerns for human safety have mired NASA, and how they compare with a rational, engineering risk analysis.-> An augmented plan, dubbed "Mars Indirect", showing how we could get to Mars using existing crafts from the SpaceX corporation.-> How the latest political onslaught has killed off the last bits of NASA in the recent 2010-2012 time frame. I think the timing was perfect for this publication to counter Buzz Aldrin's proposals, which make some interesting points, but seem hopelessly naive in their desire to work from within current politics. Warning - what is revealed about what the Obama administration has done to the remaining functional projects at NASA will infuriate you. It saddens me that we as a country have no issue launching a protest to save the Internet against SOPA, yet we won't do something similar to protect the 1% of NASA's budget that actually gets results. P. S. , Robert, PLEASE create a Kindle version of "Entering Space" - I view this as your best work, and it's my favorite book.

This very short book presents the best case I've read thus far regarding how and why we should go to Mars now. I far preferred it to the collection of short papers by a number of authors (including Zubrin) "Colonizing Mars-The Human Mission to the Red Planet" and I look forward to reading another of Zubrin's books "The Case for Mars", which I recently obtained directly from the author while at the National Space Society's 2013 annual conference.

Dr. Zubrin's words reawakened a child-like passion for Human Spaceflight that I had long forgotten. This book is a short and concise primer on the talking points of why a manned mission to Mars today is not only possible but plausible and not being executed by the current National Aeronautics and Space Administration. I would highly recommend anyone to add this to your library. But you don't have to take my word for it, buy it and find out for yourself!

I like how Zubrin has hope for the future. I think we should have already gone to Mars. By not going we are saying we are scared to try. America never backs down from a challenge. At least not when we have good, sane leadership. Maybe we'll get lucky and get another Kennedy type who takes us to Mars and uses Zubrin's plan. Anyone who thinks we shouldn't is not worth listening to. We would

learn so much from it and inspire ten times more innovation. We might even find some really important minerals on Mars that will further humanity. Let's do it no more excuses.

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