PERSPECTIVES ON HELIUM-3 FUSION: YEAR 2000

HARRISON H. SCHMITT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Presented at the

Space Resources Utilization Roundtable

Colorado School of Mines, Golden CO, 27-29 October 1999



• <u>10 -12 BILLION</u> EARTHLINGS BY 2050

- >X8 INCREASE IN ENERGY DEMAND
 - X2 TO STAY EVEN WITH 2000 DEMAND
 - X4 OR MORE TO MEET ASPIRATIONS AND SLOW POPULATION GROWTH
 - X? TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

IN THE BOX SOLUTIONS

- FOSSIL FUELS
 - ACE IN THE HOLE #1
 - ->X8 INCREASE OF UNKNOWN IMPACT
 - FUTURE VALUE AS FEED STOCK
 - SUPPLY VULNERBILITY/CONFLICT

IN THE BOX SOLUTIONS

- NUCLEAR FISSION
 - ACE IN THE HOLE #2
 - POLITICALLY DIFFICULT
 - LIMITED U.S. INFLUENCE
 - WASTE DISPOSAL
 - WEAPONS PROLIFERATION

IN THE BOX SOLUTIONS

- SOLAR (TERRESTRIAL)
 - REGIONAL ACE IN THE HOLE
 - LAND USE ISSUES
 - FULLY BURDENED COST ISSUES
 - NET ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

OUT OF THE BOX SOLUTIONS

- D/T FUSION
 - LARGE PLANT SIZE
 - PROTOTYPE DEMONSTRATION
 - MATERIALS ENGINEERING
 - WASTE DISPOSAL
 - RADIOACTIVE FUEL
 - CAPITAL COST
 - ACCESS TO CAPITAL MARKETS

OUT OF THE BOX SOLUTIONS

- SOLAR (SPACE)
 - NEEDS APPLES TO APPLES

 COMPARISON WITH COMPETITORS
 - PROTOTYPE DEMONSTRATION
 - LAUNCH COSTS
 - SPACE LAW ENVIRONMENT
 - POWER BEAMING ISSUES
 - ACCESS TO CAPITAL MARKETS

OUT OF THE BOX SOLUTIONS

- LUNAR HELIUM-3 FUSION
 - NEEDS APPLES TO APPLES

 COMPARISON WITH COMPETITORS
 - PROTOTYPE DEMONSTRATION
 - LAUNCH COSTS
 - SPACE LAW ENVIRONMENT
 - ACCESS TO CAPITAL MARKETS
 - NEAR-TERM APPLICATIONS

HELIUM-3: STATUS

- >10,000 TONNES IN UPPER 3M OF TRANQUILLITATIS
- POLES AND PROCELLARUM MAY PROVIDE ADDITIONAL EARLY POTENTIAL RESOURCE
 - VERIFICATION REQUIRED
- MINING, PROCESSING, AND REFINING CONCEPTUALLY STRAIGHT FORWARD
 - MAXIMIZE AUTOMATION
- LAUNCH COSTS \$1-2000/KG
 - LONG-TERM PRODUCTION
 - MODERN TECHNOLOGY
 - CONCEPTS PROVEN

- U.S. ANNUAL ELEC. DEMAND ~= 30 TONNES HE-3/YR
- VALUE ~= \$90 BILLION
 - ADDITIONAL VALUE IN BY-PRODUCTS FOR USE IN SPACE
- IEC FUSION TECHNOLOGY
 - PROMISES LOW CAPITAL COSTS
 - NEAR-TERM APPLICATIONS
- ACCESS TO CAPITAL MARKETS
 - REQUIRES NEAR-TERM ROI