189. Space Settlement-How Realistic in Our Near Future

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We know where humankind is now in its limited ability to venture into space, and we can envision technologies that include routine space flight and large human populations in space; the challenge is to figure out how to get from where we are now to what we can envision. Although the technical challenges of space infrastructure development will be significant, the factors most responsible for preventing us from surmounting those challenges are politics and economics. Various rationales have been proposed by other authors and are summarized, with assessment of the hurdles involved in each. In an effort, the co-authors developed a compelling rationale for building the first community in space and the infrastructure required to support it, which passes the tests of economic necessity and political appeal.