

On Government Funding of Science

Neil deGrasse Tyson was on the Joe Rogan podcast recently. Therein he defended the need for government to fund scientific advancement. His argument was that many frontiers are neither accessible nor profitable for free enterprise until government paves the way. He's probably not wrong, but that hardly constitutes a justification for government funding sourced by coercion. So what if we never discovered certain technologies like mechanical flight or GPS? At one point he even said that without World War II and the need for innovating communication, we would not have discovered microwaves, and thus the microwave oven. I guess we have Hitler to thank for Hot Pockets? New technology does not justify plunder. Personally, I'm not sure most new technologies we enjoy today have really made our lives fundamentally better. Convenience, excitement, wonder, quite possibly, but those things fade as we become accustomed to them. They are temporary and fleeting. Are we happier? Are we mentally and physically healthier? Are we more peaceful? Ends can't justify means, and coercion is rotten means. And that's today's two cents.