

EXPLORERS ARE MADE, NOT BORN

By Mark Pari

Foreword

On January 8th in the year 1610 an Italian astronomer used his homemade telescope and discovered four moons circling around the planet Jupiter. His name, Galileo Galilei, and his discovery, at that time, proved that Earth was not the center of the universe. His discovery had another, long-lasting effect, it created curiosity in others, not just in the world around them, but in the expanses of the universe. The Galilean Moons, Ganymede, Callisto, Io, and Europa, inspire scientist more today than ever before, but mostly Europa.

Why would this one moon of Jupiter draw such attention, but since Galileo's discovery, Europa has been observed more frequently each year by ever advancing telescopes, including the Hubble Space Telescope, Europa has also been observed by robotic spacecraft, six to date including Pioneer 10, Pioneer 11, Voyager 1, Voyager 2, Galileo Mission (including the extended Galileo Europa Mission (GEM)), and the Cassini-Huygens Mission. It is mentioned in science fiction novels, television programs, and in movies as are some of the missions to catch a glimpse of it.

But that curiosity has not wavered, two more missions are in progress to capture more images and data from this admired moon. In 2023 ESA (European Space Agency) launched the JUICE Mission, Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer which will reach its destination in 2031. However, the Europa Clipper launched by NASA in 2024 will reach Europa in early 2030.

It is late 2029, the people in most democratic societies have been fighting over which faction, team, or political party wins power in those countries. These societies mostly share the same common enemies which in the past have stood alone, each wanting to dominate the world in their own way. What if they found a way? What if they are working together, in secret, to achieve their domination. What if their alliance began long before their show of solidarity in late 2025, where China stood with Russia, North Korea, and India, amongst a few smaller nations.

The people of Earth have placed great value on certain resources in the past, crops, precious metals, iron and steel, titanium, but today the items of real value are mostly intangible, communications,

internet, and digital assets. But all these intangible items have a basis in tangible resources, the items that make them all possible, uranium for power, lithium for long lasting batteries, and rare earth minerals for technology.

Technology is the current high priority, but we fight over who has control over decision-making, rather than what will lead us into the future. To that end, the United States, like many other countries have had successes and failures regarding Quantum Computers, AI technology, robotics, and countless failed attempts at launching new and improved vessels into space to search for the item we need to advance into the future.

But who controls those precious rare earth minerals today; China and Russia are the first to come to mind. Both countries are looking in sacred places in their own countries, seizing portions of other countries, and even strip mining the ocean floors to locate more of these technological treasures, but why?

Have all those failed launches into space actually failed? It is true some created spectacular explosions, but what about the others that made it beyond our atmosphere and drifted aimlessly? It's rumored that China has a moon base on the dark side of the moon, if so, when did that happen and for what purpose? Speculation predicts there are more space craft and satellites observing Europa, probably just conspiracy theory. Or is it?

What kind of world would we have if we were no longer a technology leader? Where would we be without computers and cell phones? Without those items, would nuclear weapons or any of our current weaponry be functional?