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SBC

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This month marks the 25th anniversary of an important event that continues to shape our civilization and will impact future generations in some ways that we don't yet even know. In April 1990, our species placed the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit. As with many important and expensive scientific endeavors, there were plenty of cries of "why are we spending money up there when we have all these problems down here?" from those that fail to see the bigger picture. We live in an era of immediacy and quarterly reports. Projects like the Hubble and its upcoming successor, the Webb, serve to remind us of the importance of the long view and the resulting dividends paid over long periods of time (not just economic dividends).

Current technologies that we enjoy, that save our lives, and that drive the bulk of the economy were born because of investments made in science many decades ago. The aim of the Apollo missions wasn't to help people with kidney problems, but countless lives have been improved by the dialysis techniques derived from going to the moon. The Shuttle program's purpose wasn't to make our planes and cars better, but it gave us flame-resistant materials, better fuel efficiency, and vehicles that are less likely to kill us when something goes wrong. Hubble didn't set out to create better ways to detect and image that cancer which otherwise would have gone unnoticed until it was too late, and it didn't have the goal of making your smartphones more useful and pictures clearer - but it did that anyways.

Who knows what kinds of amazing things will be derived from the Webb, from missions to asteroids, from delving into the nature of quantum mechanics and higher-dimensional theories? I sure don't. But I sure would like to find out. Invest now in the things that will drive our economy in 50 years. That's what will help future generations and allow your children to have rewarding careers and a better quality of life.