

## Hilarious! Trump interrogates NASA chief, "why can't we go straight to Mars?"

by Loren Grush via gloria - The Verge *Saturday, Jul 20 2019, 12:49am*

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*During an oval office photo-op celebrating the Apollo 11 moon landing, Trump attempted to look good by repeatedly questioning NASA chief, Jim Bridenstine, over 'why America couldn't go directly to Mars,' where Trump lives or perhaps on a more distant planet? I mean really, the least the commander-of-morons (his supporters)-in-chief could do was a little research on the subject, but no, he would rather perform and make a thorough, ignorant fool of himself, as usual.*



***Retarded Dotard, Donald Trump***

On Friday, President Trump commemorated the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11 with a photo opportunity in the Oval Office, where he spent a lot of time questioning his administration's own policy for deep space human exploration. Surrounded by NASA officials, Moon walkers, and lawmakers, Trump repeatedly asked NASA's administrator, Jim Bridenstine, why astronauts couldn't go straight to Mars instead of going to the Moon first.

"To get to Mars, you have to land on the Moon, they say," Trump asked Bridenstine, according to a recording provided by [Politico](#). "Any way of going directly without landing on the Moon? Is that a possibility?"

Bridenstine, who was standing to the right of the president in the Oval Office, replied that the Moon is a "proving ground" for going to Mars, allowing NASA to test out technologies needed for keeping people alive for extended periods of time on the Red Planet.

"When we go to Mars we're going to have to be there for a long period of time, so we need to learn how to live and work on another world," said Bridenstine.

The Trump administration's stated goal for deep space human exploration is to go to the Moon.

The very first space policy directive that Trump signed in December of 2017 was to send people back to the Moon to establish a sustainable presence there.

“Beginning with missions beyond low-Earth orbit, the United States will lead the return of humans to the Moon for long-term exploration and utilization, followed by human missions to Mars and other destinations,” the directive states.

Since then, NASA has been ratcheting up its plans for a human lunar return. In April, Vice President Mike Pence challenged NASA with sending humans back to the Moon by 2024, instead of 2028 as the agency had planned.

NASA has since formed a program to meet this ambitious deadline called Artemis, which aims to send the first woman to the lunar surface and create a sustainable outpost near the Moon.

In May, the Trump administration requested an additional \$1.6 billion for NASA next year to jumpstart the Artemis program.

But as NASA has scrambled to meet Pence’s call, Trump has become more vocal about his love for Mars in recent months.

On June 7th, Trump tweeted that “NASA should NOT be talking about going to the Moon,” arguing we had already been there 50 years ago.

“They should be focused on the much bigger things we are doing, including Mars (of which the Moon is a part), Defense and Science!,” he wrote. At the time, the tweet created a lot of confusion given the administration’s love for the Moon. But Bridenstine has repeatedly claimed since then that the Artemis program is staying the same.

“The challenge is if we go direct to Mars, there’s going to be a lot of things that we haven’t yet proven out.”

Trump made his interest in Mars much clearer today, asking Bridenstine to explain NASA’s Moon plans and why they were necessary.

He asked Apollo 11 astronaut Michael Collins his thoughts, to which Collins replied, “Mars direct,” indicating NASA should go straight to Mars and bypass the Moon altogether.

“It seems to me Mars direct,” Trump replied. “I mean, who knows better than these people. They’ve been doing this stuff for a long time. What about the concept of Mars direct?”

Bridenstine explained: “The challenge is if we go direct to Mars, there’s going to be a lot of things that we haven’t yet proven out.” Bridenstine went on to explain that the lunar surface contains water ice that could be mined and turned into rocket fuel, and NASA needs to practice using resources like this on other worlds.

“So you feel that really landing on the Moon first and figuring it out and getting ready to launch — and you would like to, you really feel launching, you’re essentially launching from the Moon to Mars?” Trump asked.

“The best way to think about it is we learn how to live and work on the Moon, but we launch to Mars from a space station that we have in orbit around the Moon — a space station we call Gateway,” Bridenstine replied. Indeed, NASA has been planning to create a new space station in lunar orbit called the Gateway, an outpost for astronauts to travel to and from the surface of the Moon.

While NASA's Artemis program is more or less intact, Bridenstine and the space agency have become much more vocal about Mars since Trump's tweet. The administrator has made it increasingly clear that the ultimate goal of going to the Moon is to get to Mars. He also told The Verge last week that NASA would be releasing a Mars plan in the coming months.

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