

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine has reaffirmed the goal of landing humans on Mars by the 2030s, potentially as early as 2035. This accelerated timeline is linked to the success of the Artemis program, which aims to return astronauts to the Moon by 2024. Learning to live and work on the Moon is seen as a crucial step towards a Mars mission. Vice President Mike Pence emphasized that the Artemis program is a stepping stone to Mars, and the U.S. aims to lead international efforts in space exploration. Mars 2020 Rover's planned landing in 2021 is a significant milestone towards these goals. However, Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin suggests a more realistic target for a Mars mission is 2040.