



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics Hearing:
*Keeping Our Sights on Mars Part 2: Structuring a Moon-Mars Program for
Success*

Wednesday, November 13, 2019

Good afternoon. I want to welcome both of our distinguished witnesses to today's hearing. Neither of you is a stranger to this Committee. We have benefited from your thoughtful perspectives and advice on multiple occasions, and I have no doubt that that will be the case again today.

Your testimony comes at a particularly significant time. This Committee will be reauthorizing NASA this Congress, and a program of human exploration beyond low Earth orbit that will ultimately take America to Mars is something we will be considering. I support a robust program of exploration that leads to Mars, but it needs to be one that is sustainable. Unfortunately, based on the limited information provided to date, the Administration's 2024 lunar landing directive appears to be neither executable nor a directive that will provide a sustainable path to Mars.

Proponents of the Administration's crash program may argue that such a deadline will instill a sense of urgency and motivation into our space program. However, an arbitrary deadline that is uninformed by technical and programmatic realities, that is unaccompanied by a credible plan, and that fails to identify the needed resources is one that sets NASA up to fail rather than enabling it to succeed. Not only does that do the hardworking men and women of NASA and its contractor team a real disservice, but it will wind up weakening American leadership in space rather than strengthening it.

That is why I am glad that Chairwoman Horn and the Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee are taking the time to strip away the rhetoric and examine what will actually be required to carry out a sustainable and effective program of human exploration leading to the first crewed landings on Mars. And I can think of no better witnesses to help us understand what will be involved than the two individuals before us today. Each of them has decades of experience in aerospace, and they speak with deep understanding of what will be needed to successfully carry out an ambitious program of human exploration. That doesn't mean that we should simply try to recreate the Apollo program—Apollo was a unique undertaking carried out during a unique time in our history. But we do need to understand the factors that made Apollo and other major spaceflight

programs successful, including a skilled management team, a hard-nosed approach to design and operations and risk, an understanding of the pros and cons of the available technological options, a commitment to testing, and a willingness to commit the necessary resources. As we embark on this generation's human exploration adventure, we face many of the same challenges as those who led Apollo faced. While we need not be bound by the past, we do need to take heed of its lessons—some of which were painfully learned.

In closing, I believe that my friends and colleagues on both sides of the aisle want a human exploration program for America that is bold and visionary and worthy of this great nation. I believe that we can have one, if we take the time to get it right. This hearing is an important step in that process, and I look forward to our discussion.

Thank you, and I yield back.