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## **18123 Elon Musk: we must colonise Mars to preserve our species in a third world war**

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Humans must prioritise the colonisation of Mars so the species can be conserved in the event of a third world war, SpaceX and Tesla founder Elon Musk said on Sunday amid rising nuclear tension. “It’s important to get a self-sustaining base on Mars because it’s far enough away from Earth that [in the event of a war] it’s more likely to survive than a moon base,” Musk said— just days after Donald Trump announced plans to meet the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, in an attempt to defuse rising nuclear tension. “If there’s a third world war we want to make sure there’s enough of a seed of human civilisation somewhere else to bring it back and shorten the length of the dark ages,” Musk said, responding to questions from his friend Jonah Nolan, co-creator of TV show Westworld.

SpaceX is working on a vehicle that will take humans to Mars, a 100-metre ship codenamed the BFR (Big Fucking Rocket).

He also countered the suggestion that Mars might be “some escape hatch for rich people” by highlighting the risks of the mission: “It will be like Shackleton’s ad for Antarctic explorers: ‘Difficult, dangerous, a good chance you’ll die, excitement for those who survive.’ That kind of thing. “There’s not many people who will want to go in the beginning,” he said, adding that over time the Red Planet colony would be hospitable and have “great bars.”

The BFR will fly for the first time in the first half of 2019, Musk said, acknowledging that his “timelines historically have been optimistic”. The production of the Tesla Model 3 electric car, for example, has been plagued by delays.

Musk said he initially gave SpaceX and Tesla an estimated likelihood of success of just 10%. “I wouldn’t let my friends invest because I didn’t want them to lose their money,” he said of SpaceX. Instead he funneled his own money, from the sale of PayPal, into the businesses.

Musk said he was now kept awake at night by the threat posed by unregulated artificial intelligence, which he has previously warned could lead humanity into a third world war – another reason to go to Mars.

He suggested a public regulatory body would need “insight and oversight” to confirm that everyone was developing AI safely and in a way that is “symbiotic with humanity”.