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## Obama budget will kill NASA moon mission

### Newspaper claims US government is killing off manned space flight

By Sharon Gaudin | [Computerworld US](#)  
Published: 10:11 GMT, 01 February 10



Reports surfacing this week say that the White House plans to put a stop to [NASA's](#) plans to return to the moon.

The Orlando Sentinel, quoting an unnamed White House source, reported yesterday that [President Barack Obama is looking](#) to push the space agency in a new direction.

David Steitz, a spokesperson at NASA Headquarters, said he wouldn't comment on such reports until the White House budget proposal is announced. The plan is expected to be released on Monday.

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NASA has been looking to not only return astronauts to the moon, but also to build a lunar outpost there by 2020. The NASA plan includes first sending next generation robots and machines to the moon to create a landing area for spacecraft, and a base where humans can live.

NASA scientists have been preparing what the agency calls the Constellation moon landing plan, which was set forth by former President George W. Bush.

In June, NASA launched two lunar satellites as the opening act in the long term mission to send humans back to the moon. The satellites, the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter and the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite, were designed to provide them with new information about the moon.

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In an October NASA mission, the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite, known as LCROSS, slammed into the moon in an attempt to kick up what scientists believe is water ice hiding in the bottom of a permanently dark crater. Scientists have been hoping that if a human outpost is created on the moon, people there could have access to water there instead of having to haul it up from Earth.

Plans to return to the moon have been in question since the Obama administration last May called for an independent review of NASA's human space flight activities.

The Orlando Sentinel also reported yesterday that the White House budget plan appears to boost NASA's budget by some \$5.9 billion over the next five years.

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Some of that money, according to the report, would be to keep the International Space Station running. The rest would go to set up contracts with private companies to act as a sort of shuttle service, taking astronauts back and forth from the space station after NASA's space shuttle fleet is retired.

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