

# Did NASA ships indirectly bombard other planets?

The suicide dive of the NASA spacecraft named DART caused such a strong impact that our neighboring planet also 'suffered the blow'.

A new analysis has revealed that some rocks from the asteroid Dimorphos that NASA's DART spacecraft crashed into in 2022 may be on a collision course with our neighboring planet Mars, according to *Science Alert*.



DART was the spacecraft used in the Twin Asteroid Redirection Test (DART), in which the smaller of the Didymos - Dimorphos near-Earth pair was slammed into by DART.

This is a test with a hypothetical scenario that Dimorphos is capable of impacting Earth, in preparation for real threats in the future.

Since then, NASA and partner space agencies have always monitored this impact.

The research team led by astronomer Marco Fenucci from the European Space Agency (ESA) and Albino Carbognani from the Italian National Institute of Astrophysics pointed out the possibility of Mars "taking a hit" in a recently published report. Published in the scientific journal *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*.

Their investigation focused on numerical simulations of the impact, revealing impacts from now up to 20,000 years from now, with a particular focus on 37 rocks identified by the Hubble Space Telescope, Measures from 4-7 m.

You will feel relieved to know that the Earth is fine. Some rocks come close, but close enough to pose a threat.

But four of the rocks will come close enough to Mars to crash straight into the surface – two within 6,000 years from now and two in 15,000 years.

If those small rocks crashed into Earth, they would quickly be burned up by the atmosphere and could disappear long before reaching the surface. But Mars is not protected by as good an atmospheric cushion as Earth.

According to calculations, they can create small craters with a diameter of up to 300 m on our neighboring planet.

That doesn't seem like a big deal at the moment, because there's no one on Mars right now.

But if space agencies launch missions targeting Mars in the future, they will need to consider the risk to spacecraft at the moment these rocks intersect the orbit of Mars.

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