

SCIENCE

Elon Musk spoke at the World Government Summit in Dubai on Monday to answer questions about the future of artificial intelligence, self-driving cars, interstellar travel, and everything else the technology industry is obsessing over these days. Naturally, the CEO of SpaceX was pushed into a small discussion about the possibility of extraterrestrial life, and he expressed a belief that when it comes to

aliens, “maybe they’re among us.”

“One view is artificial intelligence will end humanity,” the interviewer begins in a new line of questioning at around the 38:30 mark. “There is another school of thought that artificial intelligence [will benefit] humanity. Which one is it?”

“I think it’s both,” Musk responded. He likened the idea of a digital super-intelligence, which Musk believes may occur within the next ten to 20 years, to “being visited by super-intelligent aliens ... digital super-intelligence will be like living with aliens on Earth in ten years.”

Asked whether he believed in the existence of life outside of Earth, Musk answered that it was probable.

“I think this is one of the great questions in physics and philosophy,” he said. “Where are the aliens? Maybe they are among us. I don’t know. Some people think I’m an alien. I’m not, but of course I’d say that, wouldn’t I?”

Indeed, the notion that Musk is an alien has not gone unexplored, but then again, he might simply just be a weird dude trying to live out a Tony Stark-esque life that his wealth can afford him. Who wouldn’t?

In any case, Musk went further: “If there are super intelligent aliens out there, then they probably are observing us. That would seem quite likely, and we are just not smart enough to realize it.” He predicted through “back-of-an-envelope calculations” that another advanced civilization in the Milky Way only interested in interstellar travel could develop the ability to travel at around ten percent the speed

of light and populate the entire galaxy in just about ten million years or so.



That's a *long-ass time*, but it's the equivalent of days or a week or two in the context of the age of the universe. An intelligent species would almost certainly be interested in traveling to other worlds and venturing beyond its home planet.

That is exactly what Musk has in mind for humans, given SpaceX's ultimate ambition of turning the human race into an interplanetary species. "We're all going to die someday," he told the audience, "and if you're going to pick some place to die, then why not Mars? If we are born on Earth, why not die on Mars? Seems like maybe it'd be quite exciting."

That's quite the sales pitch, isn't it?

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