Artemis II made next image of the "full" earth shortly after the **T**rans **L**unar **I**njection (TLI):

https://www.nasa.gov/image-detail/fd02_for-pao/
https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/art002e000192.jpg

The bright spot to the lower right is Venus.

Which part of the earth do we see?

Well, next shows roughly the same (use Ctrl+click to open it in a new tab):
https://www.google.nl/maps/@7.8215362,-19.4480821,9051731a,35y,135.38h,4.39t/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQwMS4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D

To the lower left is Spain with the Strait of Gibraltar separating it from Northern Africa containing the Sahara in the left of the image. The top-down centre of the image shows the Atlantic ocean & to the right is South America with its eastern coast lying horizontally & its northern coast vertically in the image. Just behind the lower right horizon would be Colombia. It means the North Pole is (far) beyond the lower left and the South Pole (far) behind the upper right. The equator roughly goes from "ten o'clock" via the bright spot near the centre and then downwards to the right of (which is south of) and more or less parallel to South America's northern coast.

It is not a truly pole to pole image, although auroras are shown. Auroras can however span a large area, far away from either pole. And they are high in the atmosphere (100 km or so), not at Earth's surface. We can barely distinguish France near the lower left edge of the image. France's northernmost point is at 51°N, quite far away from the North Pole.

The TLI took place near the perigee, where Artemis' orbit was closest to Earth.
It started at 2026-04-02T23:49Z and lasted 05:49.

Less than a day before that, at 2026-04-02T02:11Z, it was full moon.

Perigee was roughly opposite to the direction of the moon, somewhere above the Pacific, which — after the TLI — nearly turned the moon into the apogee.

Since full moon is always at the night side of Earth, perigee was at the day side.

Certainly when still near the earth (i.e. when lunar gravitation is still negligible), it follows a long ellipse (nearly a ~~para~~hyperbola) conform Kepler's first law, so it made a curve. It's definitely not flying along a straight line through space, that's not how orbital mechanics works.

This implies that not long after the TLI (speed is roughly 40 000 km/h and Earth's diameter is 12 742 km), it passed Earth's terminator (the separation of day & night), see next image.

https://www.nasa.gov/image-detail/amf-art002e000190/

The bright area near the lower left is the reflection of the sun.

The first photo shown above must have been taken roughly an hour later (see numbers in URL).

BUT...

Isn't the thing going to the moon[1]?
Isn't it nearly full moon?
Didn't I just say the full moon is at Earth's night side?
Aren't we then looking at the **DARK** side of the earth?
How can the image be so bright?
Shouldn't we see the lights of towns etc. instead of the ocean and some land masses?

Well, we actually **DO** see those lights. There are however not so many towns in the Atlantic, nor in the Sahara... But take a close look at the Iberic peninsula (Spain & Portugal). Don't you see bright spots along the coast? See Lisbon? And the not so very coastal town named Madrid?

The question remains: **How can Earth's night side be so bright?**

Well, it isn't. And yet it is. Huh?

It's full moon, remember? If you are in a truly rural area with a really clear sky, the FM certainly suffices to read a newspaper. It's a *very bright* object. Except those who are studying the moon,

[1] please do not interpret *going to the moon* according to Dutch idiom. We say something is *to the moon* if it broke down irreparably. Let's hope the spacecraft remains intact.

astronomers more or less hate FM because it outshines all faint celestial objects,
leaving only the brightest stars to be observed.

Earth is significantly brightened by the full moon.

THAT is why we can see it so very clearly.

Moreover, if you download the image and inspect its EXIF data, you can find:

`ISOSpeedRatings: 512000`.

Long ago, when photography still included chemistry, a standard film was `ISO 100`.
Only for making indoor photos during daylight without needing a flash, I bought `ISO 200`.
The camera used for this image is **VERY** light sensitive!

The bright limb at the lower right side simply is our atmosphere.
In this bright image by this very sensitive camera, it is severely *overexposed*.

By the way, the bright area between Earth and Venus is zodiacal light[2],
clearly visible thanks to the camera's sensitivity.

When indicating the equator, I already mentioned the *bright spot*
just above the centre of the image.

This is the reflection of the full moon,
similar to the *reflection of the sun* in the 2nd image shown above.

With another less sensitive camera they made a nearly identical photograph:

https://www.nasa.gov/image-detail/amf-art002e000193/

This might *roughly* be how the astronauts saw Earth with their own eyes.

WHY DIDN'T NASA COME UP WITH THIS INFORMATION?

WOULDN'T THIS LACK OF CLARITY ENCOURAGE CONSPIRACY THINKING?

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zodiacal_light