

THE SOCIALIST MUTAR

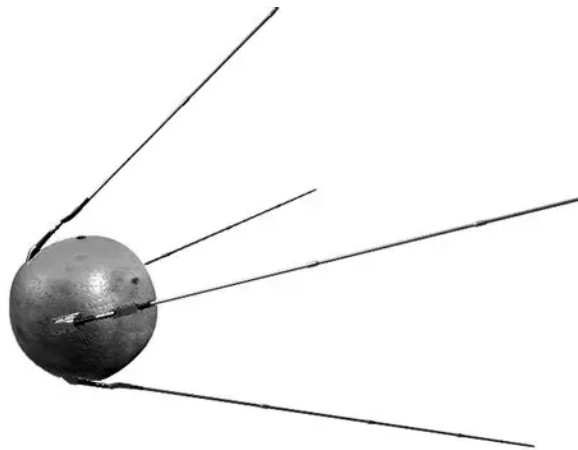
ARTICLE 1

DID YOU KNOW THE MAIN REASON BEHIND THE CREATION OF NASA?

In the 1950s, specifically on October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite in history. It was a metal sphere measuring 58 centimeters in diameter, weighing 83 kilograms, and orbiting Earth every 96 minutes. Few people could believe that the Soviets, whose cities had been devastated during World War II, had managed to beat the United States into space. At the time, USA had the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), founded in 1915, and promoted itself through the media as the world's leading technological power. It claimed that its rockets, such as Atlas and Redstone, were the most advanced in the world. However, only two months after Sputnik's success, on December 6, 1957, the United States attempted to launch the Vanguard TV-3 rocket in front of cameras from around the world during a grand public event. Instead, the rocket exploded only two seconds after liftoff and crashed onto the launch pad in a disaster broadcast live on television. American newspapers mockingly called the event "Flopnik," comparing the American failure to the Soviet success of Sputnik.

This disastrous failure was not just a technical accident; it became a huge morale boost for the Soviets to continue pushing forward in the Space Race. In the United States, President Dwight D. Eisenhower was deeply shocked. USA, which had long seen itself as the world leader, suddenly became an object of ridicule after its humiliating failure against the stunning Soviet achievement. The fear in the United States was not simply emotional. The reason was that the Soviet R-7 rocket, which carried the satellite, had originally been designed as an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with a range of 8,000 kilometers, enough to strike Washington. More importantly, it proved that the Soviets could launch from a base in Kazakhstan (Tyuratam), reach an altitude of nearly 900 kilometers, higher than any American spy plane at the time, and carry an 83-kilogram payload across intercontinental distances. In addition, the warning time for such a missile was only around 30 minutes, compared to hours for traditional bombers, meaning Washington could potentially be destroyed before the president even reached a bunker. All of this pushed Eisenhower to make a historic decision. On July 29, 1958, Eisenhower signed the law creating NASA, which replaced NACA. This was not merely a reorganization, but the beginning of a technological Cold War against the Soviets in the field of space exploration.

NASA's budget jumped from 100 million dollars in 1958 to 6 billion dollars in 1965, equivalent to more than 60 billion dollars in 2026 after adjusting for inflation. Sputnik was the direct reason behind NASA's birth. Without the Soviet satellite, America might have continued relying on its past glory, and the world might never have witnessed the dream of landing on the Moon. Most importantly, this event remained deeply rooted in American memory as the first major breakthrough in space achieved not by the United States, but by a country that was less than forty years old.



Sputnik 1