

THE SPUTNIK CRISIS

The **Sputnik crisis** was a turning point of the [Cold War](#) that began on [October 4, 1957](#) when the [Soviet Union](#) launched the [Sputnik 1](#) satellite. The [USA](#) had believed itself to be the leader of space technology and thus a leader of [missile](#) development. The surprise Sputnik launch and the failure of the first two [U.S. launch attempts](#) proved it was not so. After this, the [Space Race](#) began, leading up to [Project Apollo](#) and the [moon](#) landings in [1969](#), which eventually ended the Sputnik crisis.

The Sputnik crisis spurred a whole chain of U.S. initiatives, from large to small, many of them initiated by the [Department of Defense](#).

- ? Within 2 days, calculation of the Sputnik Orbit (joint work by [UIUC](#) Astronomy Dept. and [Digital Computer Lab](#).)
- ? Entering [Space Race](#), as mentioned, including the creation of [NASA](#) in [1958](#) and [Project Mercury](#).
- ? Education programs initiated to foster a new generation of [engineers](#). One of the more remarkable and remembered things that came out of this was the concept of "[New Math](#)".
- ? Dramatically increased support for scientific research. For [1959](#), Congress increased the [National Science Foundation](#) appropriation to \$134 million, almost \$100 million higher than the year before. By 1968, the NSF budget would stand at nearly \$500 million.
- ? The [Polaris missile](#) program.
- ? [Project management](#) as an area of inquiry and an object of much scrutiny, leading up to the modern concept of [project](#) management and standardized project models such as the DoD [Program Evaluation and Review Technique](#), PERT, invented for Polaris.
- ? The decision by [President Kennedy](#), who campaigned in [1960](#) on closing the "[missile gap](#)", to deploy 1000 [Minuteman missiles](#), far more [ICBMs](#) than the Soviets had at the time.
- ? At [The Pentagon's](#) [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency](#) initiated, in [1969](#), a [computer network](#) project called [ARPANET](#), which would later turn into the [Internet](#).

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