

On This Day — Soviet Union Launches SPUTNIK (October 4 1957) [UPDATE : Time to disband the JASON Group]

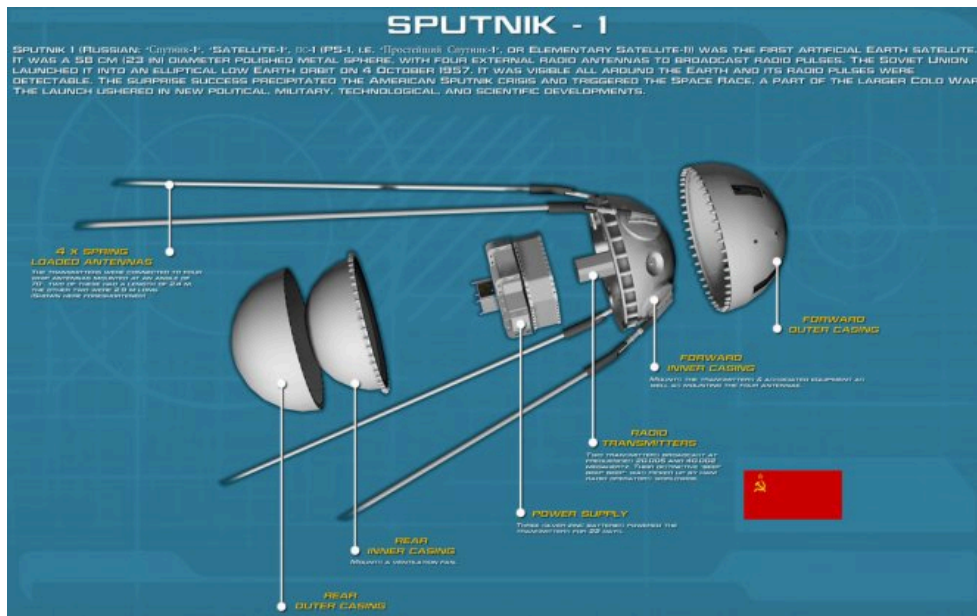
Posted on [October 4, 2021](#) by [L](#)

“On 4 October 1957, the Soviet Union successfully launched the Sputnik-1 earth satellite into space—an achievement that stunned the American public and press, but not the U.S. policy and intelligence communities. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported the advancements that led to this landmark launch to President Eisenhower, providing him with the strategic advantage to guide the U.S. response.”

CIA Website (October 4 2017)

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October 4 2020 — On October 4 1957, the Soviet Union launched SPUTNIK-1 into an elliptical low Earth orbit. It was a 58 cm (23 in) diameter polished metal sphere, with four external radio antennas to broadcast radio pulses.

Its radio signal was easily detectable even by amateurs, and the 65° inclination and duration of its orbit made its flight path cover virtually the entire inhabited Earth. This surprise success precipitated the American Sputnik crisis and triggered the Space Race, a key part of the Cold War. The launch ushered in new political, military, technological, and scientific developments. **Follow us on Twitter: @INTEL_TODAY**

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“The JASON report is not aligned with this administration’s understanding of the anomalous health incidents/Havana Syndrome.”

State Department spokesperson (October 2021)

UPDATE (October 4 2021) — The JASON group was created in the aftermath of the Sputnik launch as a way to reinvigorate the idea of having the nation's preeminent scientists help the government with defense and intelligence issues.

Over the years, JASON has conducted research projects for the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and the U.S. Intelligence Community. Most of the resulting JASON reports are classified.

In the early 1960s, JASON had about 20 members. By the end of the decade it had grown to over 40 members, with close ties to the President's Science Advisory Committee.

All of them were prestigious scientists. Some Nobel Prize-winning members of JASON are the following physicists: Donald Glaser, Val Fitch, Murray Gell-Mann, Luis Walter Alvarez, Henry Way Kendall, and Steven Weinberg.

During the Vietnam war, an internal conflict arose regarding the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

Although hawkish JASON members — such as William Happer, Edward Teller, and William Nierenberg — strongly favoured this option, the majority of the group concluded that “employment of nuclear weapons by the US would be of little use against a widely distributed opponent but disaster if copied by the opponent.”

As a result of this bitter dispute, some members left, and others directed JASON research into unclassified, non-military work on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy on problems like global warming and acid rain.

Current JASON energy research has included reports on advanced biofuel production and how to reduce the Department of Defense's carbon footprint for strategic and environmental reasons.

Amazingly, several members of JASON, including three past chairs — William Nierenberg, William Happer, and Steven Koonin — have cast doubt on climate science. These members oppose policies that would limit the use of fossil fuels.

A recently declassified 2018 report to the State Department concluded that Havana Syndrome cases were caused by crickets as opposed to microwave weapons. The report argued that a possible explanation for the reported symptoms is a psychogenic illness.

This report is utter nonsense. Let me be very clear. This report has 'corruption' stamped all over it. It stinks to high heaven. I honestly believe that the FBI should investigate the authors.

There is no doubt that some members of JASON actually work for the coal industry. As I will explain in an upcoming analysis, I suspect that the Havana Syndrome report was ‘paid for’ by the Telecom industry.

The State Department has dismissed the 2018 study, according to a spokesperson who said the report exhibits several shortcomings, including reliance on scant data and a lack of “broad access to information and effective personnel necessary to fully understand such a complex issue.”

The researchers behind the JASON report interviewed only one person who had erroneously reported symptoms commonly associated with anomalous health incidents.

The State Department no longer seeks advice from the JASON group for its ongoing Havana Syndrome investigation. In April 2019, the Department of Defense already ended its ‘special’ contract with JASON.

Perhaps, the time has come to disband JASON...

PS — The name of the group is a reference to the ancient Greek mythological hero who led the Argonauts in their quest for the Golden Fleece, a symbol of authority and kingship. As a result of breaking his vow, Jason lost his favor with the Gods. The once influential captain died lonely and unhappy. Jason was asleep under the stern of his once-glorious ship Argo when a rotten beam fell down and crushed him into oblivion. Jason never saw that one coming...

END of UPDATE

“And it was because of the flaws and shortcomings in prior studies including this [JASON] one, that we have focused on sharing information across departments and agencies and making all of that data available to the intelligence community’s expert panel.”

State Department spokesperson (October 2021)

Pride in Moscow

The satellite was a success not just in terms of scientific advancement but in terms of providing a propaganda opportunity for the socialist state.

On Soviet radio, various scientists, such as jet propulsion expert Professor Kirill Stanyukovich, called it “a great victory not only for Soviet science but also for the Soviet order”.

“I think that the very fact that this has been achieved in our socialist country must not be regarded as mere chance,” another academic told listeners.

“That we are not as rich as America is no secret to us. Why then has it happened that we have been capable of solving these most advanced and difficult scientific and technical problems ahead of Americans?”

Several digs at America made their way into reports.

“For 40 years they closed their eyes to the enormous successes of Soviet industry and agriculture,” one radio broadcast said. “Now the most reactionary personalities in the USA are trying to raise some doubts about the tremendous value and great significance of this new success of Soviet science.” [\[BBC\]](#)

CIA Declassified Files (2017)

On October 4 2017, the CIA issued the following message and released a collection of previously classified documents on the Sputnik program.

On 4 October 1957, the Soviet Union successfully launched the Sputnik-1 earth satellite into space—an achievement that stunned the American public and press, but not the U.S. policy and intelligence communities. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported the advancements that led to this landmark launch to President Eisenhower, providing him with the strategic advantage to guide the U.S. response.

Today, on the 60th anniversary of Sputnik’s first launch, the CIA released a collection of previously classified documents on the Sputnik program. The collection includes CIA’s intelligence and analysis of Sputniks-1, -2, and -3 and the Soviet ballistic missile program from 1955 to the early 1960s. Encompassing 59 documents and 440 pages, the release provides new information to the public, to

include memoranda and reports the CIA provided to President Eisenhower, on the Soviet Union's early space and missile programs.

The entire collection is available here

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/intelligence-warning-1957-launch-sputnik> and joins previous CIA releases that address the arms race during the Cold War, which are available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/what-was-missile-gap> and <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/original-wizards-langley>.

In addition, to commemorate CIA's strategic warning contributions about Sputnik, Studies in Intelligence, part of the Center for the Study of Intelligence, published an article, Sputnik and U.S. Intelligence: The Warning Record, available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-61-no-3/sputnik-the-warning-record.html>.

In his public remarks today at the fourth annual National Security Conference co-hosted by CIA and George Washington University, CIA Director Mike Pompeo summarized it all by highlighting the release of the Sputnik collection and the fitting theme of the conference, "Achieving Strategic Advantage," stating, "The timing couldn't be more fitting, as exactly 60 years ago today, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik-1 into space, stunning the public, but not America's leaders."

A sense of urgency in the US: The Berkeley Physics Course

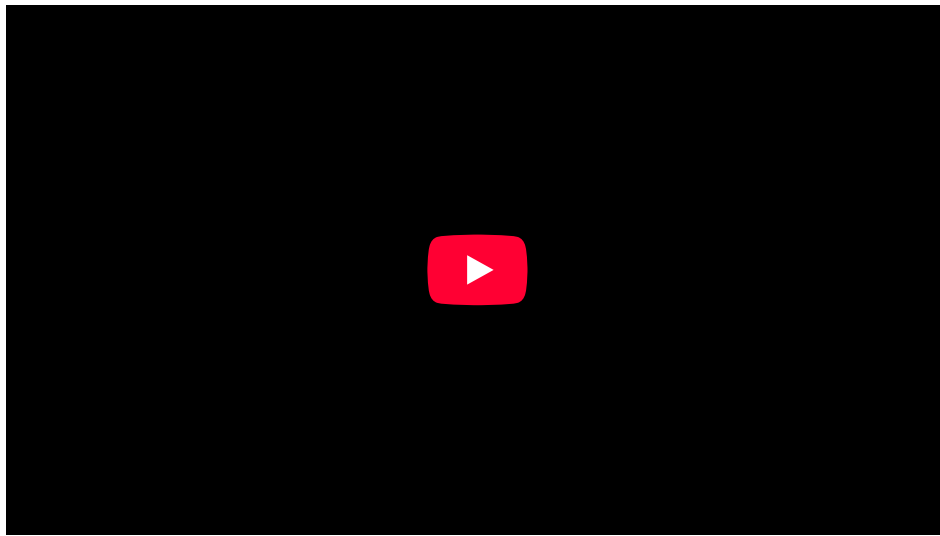
The [Berkeley Physics Course](#) is a series of college-level physics textbooks written mostly by UC Berkeley professors.

A Sputnik-era project funded by a National Science Foundation grant, the course arose from discussions between Philip Morrison (then at Cornell University) and Charles Kittel (Berkeley) in 1961, and was published by McGraw-Hill starting in 1965.

The Berkeley course was contemporary with [The Feynman Lectures on Physics](#), a college course at a similar mathematical level.

These physics courses were developed in the atmosphere of urgency about science education created in the West by Sputnik.

1957 – First Satellite in Space (Sputnik)



REFERENCES

[Sputnik: 60 Years Later, CIA Releases Declassified Documents](#) – CIA Website

[Sputnik: How the Soviet Union spun the satellite launch](#) – BBC

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