

Experts' Report Gives Reason Why U.S. Lost Race In Space

Editor's Note: How did Russia beat the United States in the race for space? Why were we left behind in developing the intercontinental missile? The United Press at the question to its London Bureau and to its experts in Washington. This is the dispatch giving their replies.

By ROBERT MUSEL

United Press Staff Correspondent LONDON (UPI)—Aesop wrote a fable about a hare and a tortoise. It was true 2,500 years ago and is just as true today. There are two satellites whirling around in space to prove it.

The United States is the hare of this story, Russia the tortoise. In 1947 the Rand Corporation produced for the U.S. Defense Department a brilliant study of the possibility of breaking into space. Outside of the dreams of German rocket pioneers, this was the first scientific verdict anywhere in the world that the age of space travel was at hand.

A year later, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal announced what he called "The Earth Satellite Vehicle Program." Mark the date well—Dec. 30, 1948.

In the opinion of the world's most authoritative rocket experts from East and West, gathered last month in Barcelona, Spain, at the International Astronautical Congress, the United States should have been able to breach the skies and have launched a satellite by 1955—or even a year or two earlier.

It is highly likely that the Soviet Union started at about the same time on a rocket program of its own and may have had available much of the same information—both nations leaning heavily on a nucleus of former German rocket men.

The odds at that time were all on America. Russia had hardly recovered from a war that killed millions and devastated her land. The United States had available an efficient military-scientific organization which had accomplished world-shaking feats in nuclear fields.

But one thing Russia had to herself—single-mindedness of purpose. There were two things Russia was vitally interested in in 1947—a hydrogen bomb and rockets.

Because it was a dictatorship, the Soviet was able to order concentration on those two programs and shunt aside the demand for consumer goods. It assembled an advisory board of scientists to which the actual workers and planners of the two projects could apply for help and advice.

Experts in West Germany say that the Russians rounded up the amazing total of 6,000 German workers on rocket projects at the V1 and V2 base at Peenemuende and elsewhere. They moved them all to Russia with their families—20,000 persons in all.

For the next five years, young Soviet scientists worked daily beside them in the laboratories, picking German brains of all information. Then the Russians went on from there.

In the meantime there was a sorry story to tell in the United States as I heard it from famous scientists at Barcelona before silence was clamped on.

When the war ended, Maj. Gen. Holger Toftey of Redstone arsenal then a colonel, tried to round up as many German rocket scientists as possible for the United States. He received permission to bring back only about 100 because of strong anti-Nazi feeling.

But most of them were top men and, with German guidance, the Army began a missile program. By September 1954 they were able to inform superiors that they could orbit a satellite in less than a year. Still gathering dust in an Alabama warehouse are the satellites they thought would be, by now, circling the earth.

Instead of a go-ahead, the Army got a committee. It considered the satellite programs of the Army and Navy and—to the astonishment of rocket experts worldwide—awarded the International Geophysical Year satellite program to the Navy which, in 1955, began on this new project.

Americans at Barcelona sold top levels in the United States took the view that there was no hurry, no race and when we launched a satellite it was to be

a real, gleaming, gadget-crammed, hundred per cent scientific vehicle. Said one scientist: "It was just as if Columbus had said he wouldn't sail in that little boat—he wanted the Queen Mary."

So while the Russian tortoise crawled along, the American rabbit was floundering in a quagmire of inter-service rivalry and industrial feuds. A dozen electronics and engineering firms lobbied for their own ideas with the Army,

Navy and Air Force. Meanwhile, the Russians passed us. Apparently we didn't even know it, although we should have. For example, in September the United Press Bureau in Moscow reported the launching of a Rus-

sian satellite was imminent. It is now known that Soviet scientific organs were printing specific instructions then to amateur astronomers and ham radio operators on how to sight and contact Sputnik.

Are there greater incentives in Russia for scientists? Comparatively, yes. A British scientist recently returned from the Soviet said they were "privileged in every way including, in my experience, freedom of opinion, at least in private."

He is Prof. H. W. B. Skinner and he also had this to say: "We do not want to copy Russian political methods. But we ought to look closely at how they achieve their successes. The formula seems to be simple: to train scientists and engineers in large numbers and to employ them on reasonable projects, to support them in every way and not to waste them by splitting up their efforts among too many parallel lines of work."

In the opinion of every authority to whom I spoke at Barcelona, in London and elsewhere in Europe—this was the major reason the United States was beaten—its effort was split up among too many people, too many industrial firms and military segments. It lacked at the top the firm hand that might have drawn all of these into one compact program.

There is no other reason. Russia wields no magic wand except the wand of efficiency and single-mindedness of purpose.

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By UNITED PRESS
San Francisco Bay Region: Partly cloudy through Friday; slightly warmer tonight; high today near 64; low tonight 53 downtown San Francisco and Oakland and 45 elsewhere; gentle variable winds; chance of rain 10 per cent today and 20 per cent tonight and Friday.

Northern California: Variable cloudiness through Friday; occasional light rain near coast from Fort Bragg northward this afternoon spreading to vicinity of Ukiah and Red Bluff tonight and early Friday; warmer north portion tonight; coastal winds southerly 10-20 m.p.h. north portion and variable 7-14 m.p.h. on central coast.

Sierra Nevada: Partly cloudy through Friday with a few snow flurries tonight and Friday north of Lake Tahoe; warmer north portion tonight.

Sacramento Valley: Partly cloudy through Friday with occasional light rain vicinity of Red Bluff tonight and early Friday; warmer tonight; high both days 60-67; low tonight 42-50; gentle variable winds.

Northwestern California: Cloudy through Friday; occasional rain near coast from Fort Bragg northward this afternoon and from Ukiah northward tonight and early Friday; warmer tonight; high today and low tonight Ukiah 67-45, Santa Rosa 65-40, Napa 68-45; southerly winds 10-20 m.p.h. near coast.

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