

3-1-1959

Space Journal Statement of Policy/Mechta and Operation Score

Rocket City Astronomical Association

Space Enterprises, Inc.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://louis.uah.edu/space-journal>



Part of the [Astrophysics and Astronomy Commons](#), [Propulsion and Power Commons](#), [Space Habitation and Life Support Commons](#), and the [Space Vehicles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rocket City Astronomical Association and Space Enterprises, Inc. (1959) "Space Journal Statement of Policy/Mechta and Operation Score," *Space Journal*: Vol. 1: No. 5, Article 3.

Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/space-journal/vol1/iss5/3>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by LOUIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Space Journal by an authorized editor of LOUIS.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The immediate and eager acceptance of SPACE Journal by scientists and technicians, business and industrial leaders, students and educators, as well as the general public, has brought into focus the wide recognition by the American people of the total challenge presented by the problem of Space exploration. Such general acceptance has placed SPACE Journal in the unique position of interpreter of ideas in all fields even remotely related to Space travel. It is the interpreter which translates the individual languages of the various specialists into a universally understood "layman's English"—this role is vital, since in this highly specialized age even the scientists are often laymen in fields other than their own.

SPACE Journal is rapidly becoming the forum wherein the exchange of ideas among industry, science, education, and the public can be made. It is bringing to view the resources of all the arts and sciences bearing on the problem of Space exploration.

Thus SPACE Journal as a universal medium of communication promotes the overall objective of the exploration of Space by helping the specialists to understand each other, the scientists, engineers, businessmen, and educators to understand each other, and the taxpaying layman to understand them all.

In such a role, so greatly expanded in scope from that of its beginning, and so vital to an uninformed public, SPACE Journal has deemed it advisable to disavow any connection with the Army, Navy, Air Force, or other military and civilian segments of the government and to terminate its affiliation with the Rocket City Astronomical Association. In pursuit of our broader aims, we announce that, beginning with the next issue, this magazine will no longer be published as an official organ of the Rocket City Astronomical Association.

We believe that this action will afford us the liberty of presenting all views without the restrictions that exist when a publication is acting as the voice of any type of organization. SPACE Journal will continue as an independent publication "dedicated to the Astro-sciences" and to the peaceful exploration of Space for the benefit of all mankind.

MECHTA AND OPERATION SCORE

The year 1958 closed with a significant advance in Space technology, but the year 1959 opened with an even more significant one. The old year closed with the successful launching of the United States Air Force's Atlas in Operation Score; and the new year began with Mechta, the spectacular Lunar probe of the Soviet Union, which is now in orbit around the Sun. However, more lies between the two events than a mere two weeks.

Both Operation Score and Mechta bring up a question about the direction in which American Space technology is advancing. While we know relatively little about the technical details of Mechta (and there is no reason to assume that we will ever know the complete details), we know at least one thing about the Atlas and Operation Score. It worked. It was successful. The magnitude of its success was made all the greater because of the faith the Air Force had in its product. In the not too remote past, there were rumors that the Atlas guided missile, still having its growing pains, would be cancelled in favor of a more "sophisticated" missile system. This attitude toward sophistication in our present missile and satellite design bears closer scrutiny. Project Vanguard is not so recently dead that one cannot remember the reason given for accepting it over the Jupiter-C was that it was more sophisticated.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines *sophisticated* as "Deprived of original simplicity; made artificial, or, more narrowly, highly complicated, refined, subtilized, etc. . . ." Surely the very definition, when applied to our present position in Space technology, begs the question: What price reliability?

Without belaboring the obvious, it does seem that there is more than a trace of *sophistry* in such views of *sophistication* when the term is used as the last word and final criterion for judging the absolute value of a guided missile or a satellite vehicle. And Mechta should make us wonder, too, just how sophisticated it and the Sputnik vehicles are.

**FORGING
THE
FUTURE
OF
SOLID
PROPELLANT
ROCKETRY...**

THIOKOL

REDSTONE

DIVISION AT HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

At the Ordnance Missile Command, Huntsville, Alabama, Thiokol's Redstone Division pioneered the first successful, large, solid propellant rocket engines. Breaking the size barrier made possible such engines as today's Sergeant, and future solid propulsion systems for missiles in the IRBM and ICBM class.

Thiokol scientists at Redstone continue to lead in the development and application of the most advanced concepts in solid propellant rocketry.

Engineers, scientists—perhaps there's a place for you in Thiokol's expanding organization. Our new projects present challenging problems and the chance for greater responsibility.

Thiokol 

CHEMICAL CORPORATION

TRENTON, N. J. • ELKTON, MD. • HUNTSVILLE, ALA.
MARSHALL, TEXAS • MOSS POINT, MISS • BRIGHAM CITY, UTAH
DENVER, N. J. • BRISTOL, PA.

®Registered trademark of the Thiokol Chemical Corporation for its liquid polymers, rocket propellants, plasticizers and other chemical products.