The Space Race; sputnik and space flight

*Sputnik I, Sputnik II, Vostok I*

Massive nuclear proliferation, satellites would lead to nuclear superiority

4th Oct 1957 – USSR launched first satellite to orbit the earth. Sputnik I. 18,000mph, circled the earth every 92 minutes. A shock announcement. Sputnik = fellow traveler

Nov 1957 – Sputnik II – 10 day orbit with Laika the dog

Great alarm in USA – convinced of USSR space technological superiority would lead to nuclear missiles against USA soon – no known defense for nuclear missile attack from space. John Lewis Gaddis – cold war closer to home, just had to look up in the night sky.

Democrats accused Eisenhower od allowing USSR to gain lad to cut cost, Sputnik undermining massive retaliation. LBJ established Senate Subcommittee for Preparedness. Fears of another Pearl Harbour. Nov 25th 1957 Eisenhower had a stroke after other bouts of illness. Approval slumped over complacency.

Sense of urgency in USA. Sept 1958 - $1 billion on technical development (nuclear weapons too)

6th Dec 1957 – Navy’s vanguard rocket crashes on takeoff from Cape Canaveral – ‘Flopnik’, ‘Kaputnik’

Jan 1958 – US satellite – Explorer I

1958 – Eisenhower established National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) – space vital to US security, control of space = global control

Soviet programme strength to strength. Ked by Sergei P Korolev

October 1959 – satellite orbit the moon

12th April 1961 – manned satellite orbit the earth, Vostok I – Yuri Gagarin became international hero.

Aug 1960 – USA Discover Satellite Programme – long range intelligence gathering left U2 flights obsolete – one capsule gathered same as 4 years of U2 flights. Revolutionised intelligence gathering

USA rapidly caught up, 1962 USA had 63 space missions and USSR only 15