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PROPOSED INITIAL PRESS RELEASE:

The Department of Defense will attempt to launch its first satellite from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, Pacific Missile Range late this year or early next year, it was announced today by Roy W. Johnson, Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency. This satellite is part of a series of missile and vehicle launchings designated "DISCOVERY" which will be performed under the direction of ARPA by the Ballistic Missile Division, Air Research and Development Command, Department of the Air Force.

The purpose of this series is to further the development of a number of systems and techniques which will be employed in the production and operation of space vehicles. Initial launchings will have as their primary objective the testing of the vehicle itself and of vehicle subsystems including propulsion and guidance. Later vehicles in the series will carry biomedical specimens and will seek valuable data on environmental conditions useful to the NASA/ARPA joint Man-in-Space program. Live animals will be carried aloft and their recovery attempted in certain of the flights in this series which will serve to develop the techniques involved in providing a suitable environment and in recovery.

Much of the data expected to be derived from the "DISCOVERY" series, such as the results of the biomedical flights, will be of general scientific interest and will be unclassified. Other results which will be highly significant for the development of later systems and techniques for space navigation, could be of potential significance to U. S. security and as such will be classified.

The "DISCOVERER" vehicle consists of two stages both of which were originally developed for other programs. The first stage is a Thor booster produced by Douglas Aircraft Company. The second stage is produced by the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, Missile Systems Division. They were chosen on the basis of technical and scheduling considerations and because they could be combined with a minimum of modification. The combination is believed capable of orbiting considerably heavier satellites than any previously launched by the United States. The basic vehicle will carry a number of different payloads specially designed for this series. Initial versions of the DISCOVERER will orbit for short periods of time at relatively low altitudes.

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