NOV 21, 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (R&D)
The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (R&D)
The Director Research and Development, Department of the Army

SUBJECT: Policy, Missile and Space Vehicle Flight Safety

REFERENCE: SACE Memo of 8 Jan 60, Subject: "Policy, Range and Space Ground Support"

The missile and space vehicle flight safety policy contained herein is promulgated as a preliminary policy letter until the provisions outlined in the referenced memo. The purpose of this memorandum is to define the responsibilities of the National Range Commanders over the in-flight safety function at the Nike-Sparta, Missile, and White Sands Missile Ranges. It is recognized that this memorandum may be in conflict with certain Services-to-Service Agreements now in force. Separate actions are underway to determine appropriate modifications or cancellation of such agreements. Any comments or questions concerning this policy should be brought to the attention of the Office of R&D as soon as practicable.

National Range Commanders are responsible for ensuring in-flight flight safety consistent with operational requirements for all missiles and space vehicles launched from facilities under their respective commands. They are also responsible for in-flight safety of missiles and space vehicles launched into the National Range from ranges adjacent to such facilities, or from adjacent DOD facilities such as Edwards Air Force Base. The responsibility includes determination of the policies governing safety aspects of missile and space vehicle flights, and establishment of allowable limits of flight trajectories, acceptable locations for booster fall-out and terminal impact areas.

The Range Commander is responsible for ensuring provision of instrumentation for obtaining information on in-flight position of missiles to burn-out and space vehicles to final orbital position or escape velocity, sufficient to indicate malfunction or give assurance that the flight is progressing within predetermined safety limitations. The Range Commander will further be responsible for cessation of destructive devices or thrust termination, if necessary, to confine the flight within these limiting conditions.

The Range Commander is responsible for coordination of any necessary safety procedures with private or governmental agencies. He will promulgate any notices required within the United States and/or to foreign
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governments (through appropriate channels) in connection with anticipated
hazards from launchings of missiles or space vehicles included within his
respective area of in-flight safety responsibilities.

The release of public information regarding the safety aspects of
missile and space vehicle operations requires special attention. The pos-
sible hazards and margins of safety are matters of public concern. It is
essential, therefore, that such information be released to the public by
the single source that is most familiar with it. In order to ensure a con-
sistent DOD position, the Range Commander will be solely responsible for
any public statements concerning in-flight safety practices, policies,
procedures and margins of safety. The public affairs plan for any launch
will be coordinated with the Range Commander for proposed statements
involving in-flight safety. In the event of in-flight incidents involving
safety, the Range Commander will be solely responsible for reporting any
amplifying information beyond that contained in the pre-planned statements
in the public affairs plan for that launch.

Ranges were not responsible for providing to the ranges the perform-
ance characteristics of their vehicles and contemplated flight trajectories
in the detail and format, and on the time schedule required by the ranges.

Safety plans for test or training launch conducted within National
Range areas of responsibility for in-flight activities not falling within the
definitions of paragraph 2, above (such as Roosevelt Radio), will be coordi-
nated with the National Range Commander to ensure consistency of safety
policy and practices as they may affect relationships and agreements of
the National Ranges with other federal agencies and foreign governments.

/s/ D. H. Isten

FCC: Herbert F. York