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# *Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission*

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## **Dwight D. Eisenhower and Science & Technology**

*Eisenhower left to the nation few greater legacies as president than his abiding faith in science as an indispensable partner with the government in preserving the nation's security.*

-- Philip Taubman, **Secret Empire: Eisenhower, the CIA and the Hidden Story of America's Space Espionage** (2003)

Eisenhower's active support of science directly or indirectly resulted in numerous advances in 20<sup>th</sup> century society. Many innovations still in use today—in the fields of space technology, transportation, and computer technology—can be traced to Eisenhower's sponsorship.

- **President Eisenhower named MIT President James Killian the first Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology** in 1957, elevating the influence of scientists within the U.S. government to the very highest level.
- **President Eisenhower established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** in 1958. NASA centralized and intensified work in space exploration and research and in 1969 sent the first man to the moon. Eisenhower fought to ensure that NASA would be distinctly civilian, not military, maintaining a large role for peaceful applications in space science.
- **President Eisenhower emphasized the teaching of science and mathematics in the American school curriculum** through his strong support of the National Defense Education Act (1958).
- **In 1958, President Eisenhower authorized the formation of what became the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).** DARPA, still in existence today, forms and executes research and development projects to expand the frontiers of technology and science far beyond immediate military requirements. DARPA played a crucial role in developing several key innovations including the Internet, stealth aircraft and ICBMs.

- **President Eisenhower made the commercial nuclear power industry possible** by supporting key amendments to the Atomic Energy Act in 1954. The U.S. now relies on nuclear power for twenty percent of the American electrical grid.
- **Eisenhower’s vision for nuclear technology helped highlight its peaceful scientific uses.** In his “Atoms for Peace” address to the United Nations in 1953, he declared that “the United States would seek more than the mere reduction or elimination of atomic materials for military purposes.” Atomic technology, he said, “must be put into the hands of those who will...adapt it to the arts of peace.”

