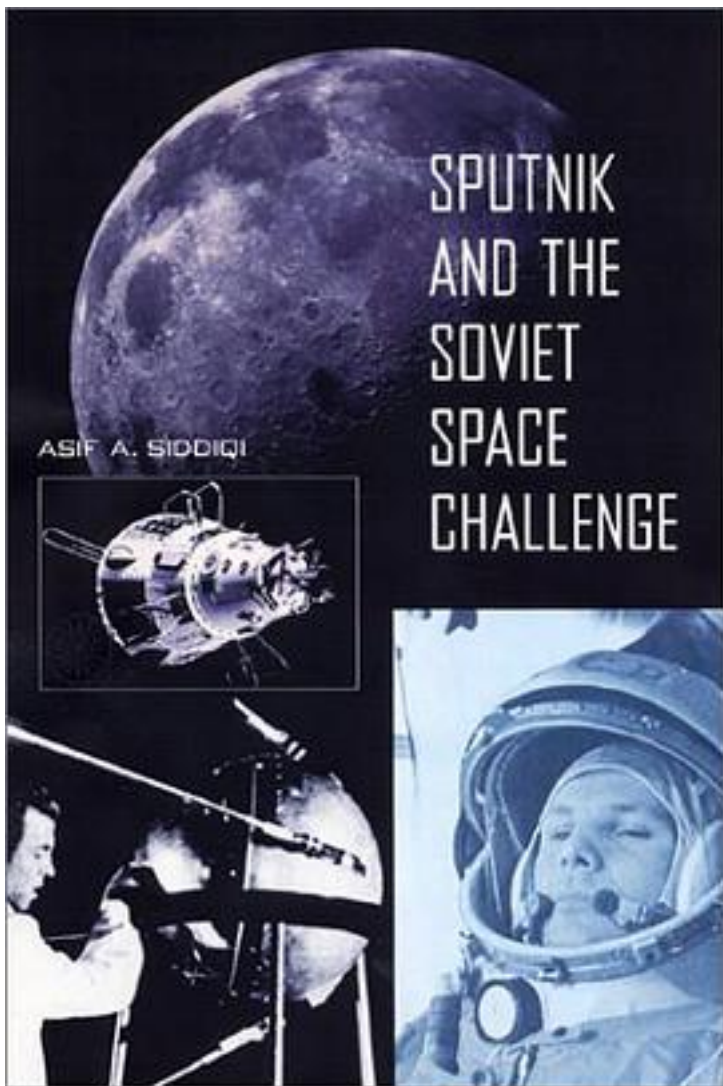


Sputnik and the Soviet Space Challenge



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著者:Siddiqi, Asif A.

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First published by NASA in 2000 as Challenge to Apollo, these two volumes are the first comprehensive history of the Soviet-manned space programs covering a period of thirty years, from the end of World War II, when the Soviets captured German rocket technology, to the collapse of their moon program in the mid-1970s. The spectacular Soviet successes of Sputnik--the first Earth satellite (1957)--and Yuri Gagarin--the first man in space (1961)--shocked U.S. leaders and prompted President John F. Kennedy to set the goal of landing a man on the moon before the end of the 1960s. The moon race culminated with the historic landing of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon in 1969 (coincidentally the first Soviet unmanned moon probe crashed on its surface while the American astronauts were at Tranquility Base). The epic story of the Soviet space program remained shrouded in secrecy until the unprecedented opening of top secret documents. Based almost entirely on these Russian-language sources and numerous interviews with veterans, Siddiqi's book breaks through the rumors, hearsay, and speculation that characterized books on the Soviet space program published during the Cold War years. Supplementing the text with dozens of previously classified photographs, he weaves together the technical, political, and personal history of the major Soviet space programs, providing the other side of the history of human space flight.

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