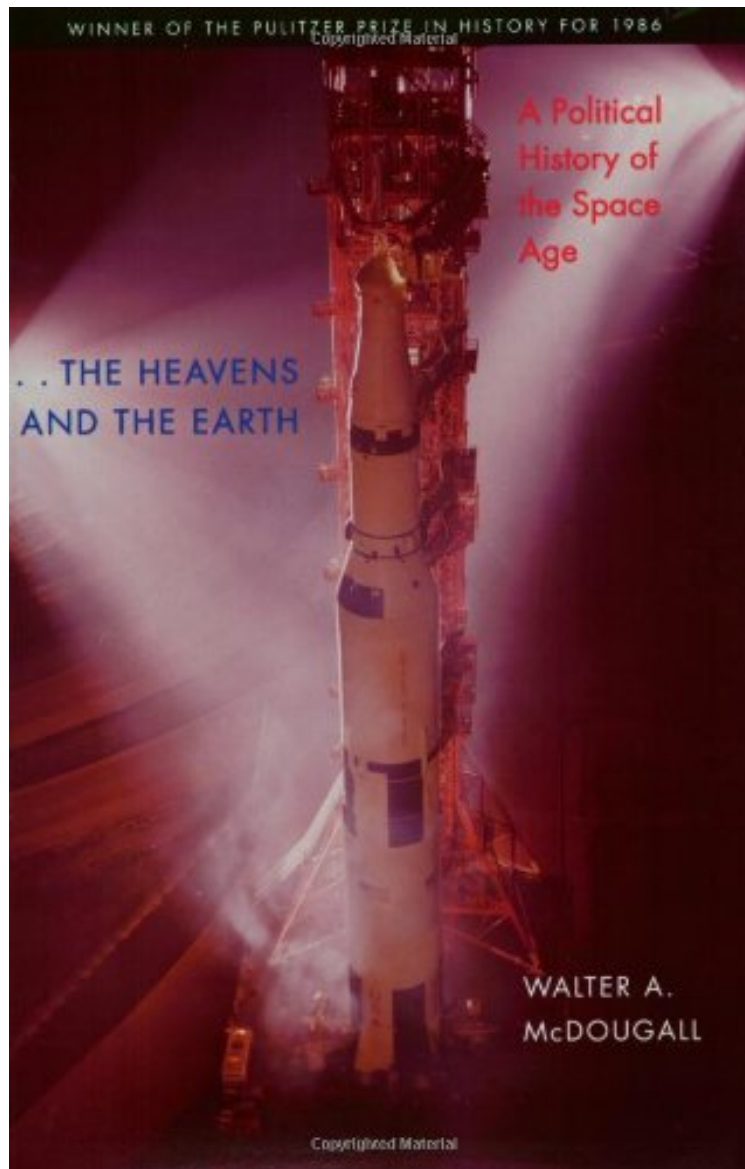


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## the Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age

Walter A. McDougall

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**Walter A. McDougall : the Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised the Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A Pulitzer Prize-winning Explanation of the Space Race By Roger D. Launius Although there were notable forerunners, spaceflight historiography came of age with the 1985 publication this book by Walter McDougall. It received Pulitzer Prize and a host of other well-deserved awards with its analysis of

the origins and conduct of the space race. This book explores the Cold War rivalry in race with the preparations for and launch of Sputnik 1 on October 4, 1957, through the race to the Moon in the 1960s. The author argues that the mandate to complete Apollo on Kennedy's schedule prompted the space program to become identified almost exclusively with high-profile, expensive, human spaceflight projects. This was because Apollo became a race against the Soviet Union for recognition as the world leader in science and technology and by extension in other fields as well. McDougall juxtaposes the American effort of Apollo with the Soviet space program and the dreams of such designers as Sergei P. Korolev to land a Soviet cosmonaut on the Moon. The author recognizes Apollo as a significant engineering achievement but concludes that it was also enormously costly both in terms of resources and the direction to be taken in state support of science and technology. In the end, NASA had to stress engineering over science, competition over cooperation, civilian over military management, and international prestige over practical applications. Not all agree with McDougall's arguments, but since the publication of "the Heavens and the Earth..." historians have been striving to equal its scintillating analysis, stellar writing, and scope of discussion.<sup>2 of 2</sup> people found the following review helpful. Gripping account of earthly greatpower rivalry played out in the stars By Dad to 2 wee nippers Possibly the best book I've had to read while studying a Masters in International Relations. So good, that I've actually read it twice (though skimmed a few bits the second time - it's long and tad bit flowery in parts). McDougall has done a fantastic job in digging into the story behind the space race, starting back in 1800s. He shows how Russia, pre-Soviet era, had a significant number of people dreaming of missions into space, which the USSR inherited. He also shows how the US realized one of the key, if not the key, benefit of satellites would be spying on others - and this required a regime that allowed satellite overflight of foreign countries. Which explains why the US chose only it's 3rd best group of rocketeers to compete to launch a satellite. Unfortunately, again as McDougall explains, the US kept this decision very, very secret and did nothing to explain this to the US public, so it badly lost the PR game when the USSR launched Sputnik. I could go on - so many interesting facts, useful to any student of great power politics and invaluable to students of space.<sup>0 of 0</sup> people found the following review helpful. Too Much By Robert Sparrenberger A very thorough look at the space race from a political viewpoint. The problem with this book is it is horribly overwritten. 461 pages of dense text that could be whittled down by at least 100 pages. Excruciating details are discussed leaving the reader with a headache from all the material. The author also wants to get deep towards the end and turn philosophical. I was so tired that my eyes glazed over reading about the origins of the universe. There is also a lot of exclamation points in this book. Lots of typos on the kindle edition as well. Plus they included the page numbers in the text which was annoying. Mediocre at best for such a highly acclaimed book. Not for the average reader who wants a review of the space race.

This highly acclaimed study approaches the space race as a problem in comparative public policy. Drawing on published literature, archival sources in both the United States and Europe, interviews with many of the key participants, and important declassified material, such as the National Security Council's first policy paper on space, McDougall examines U.S., European, and Soviet space programs and their politics. Opening with a short account of Nikolai Kibalchich, a late nineteenth-century Russian rocketry theoretician, McDougall argues that the Soviet Union made its way into space first because it was the world's first "technocracy" which he defines as "the institutionalization of technological change for state purpose." He also explores the growth of a political economy of technology in both the Soviet Union and the United States.

"Exhaustively researched, brilliantly conceived, and beautifully written." (New York Times Book Review) "A lucid and comprehensive political history of the American, European, and Russian space programs." (New Scientist) "Once every decade or so, a book comes along that stands by itself as a remarkable contribution to the literature of a field. Such a work is Walter A. McDougall's ... the Heavens and the Earth." (Technology and Culture) "[A] boldly conceived, elegantly written, and unfailingly provocative history of the new age of space." (Science) "This highly acclaimed study approaches the space race as a problem in comparative public policy." (The Astronomical Society of the Pacific) "[An] immensely readable and elegant book." (Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists) "The definitive, surprising and highly readable history of the U.S. space program. Forget visionary rhetoric about humans' need to explore the next frontier: McDougall demonstrates how NASA's moon missions grew directly from Hitler's V-2 rocket project at Peenemünde and were all about the classic military necessity of controlling the high ground? in this case the really high ground... [One of] the five best books I have read about the U.S. space program." (Mark Bowden, author of Black Hawk Down) About the Author Walter A. McDougall is Alloy-Ansin Professor of International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania, and editor of *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs*. He is also author of *France's Rhineland Diplomacy, 1914-1942: The Last Bid for a Balance of Power in Europe*.