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1961, THE CNES' CREATION AND THE BIRTH OF THE FRENCH SPACE POLICY

Abstract

Fifty years ago, in December 1961, the decision taken by General de Gaulle and the French Government which has marked the entrance of France in the space activities, with the realization of a national launcher, christened Diamant, and the creation of Centre national d'études spatiales (CNES) with the mission to coordinate all French activities in relation with space. In the first part of the paper we propose to recall the national circumstances and the conditions which have conducted the Government to commit itself in this field of high technology. Then, in a second part, we will examine the birth of the French space policy and the first years of activities which have conducted, in 1965, to the launches of A1 and FR1 the first French satellites; two successes which have placed France among the world space powers, after the Soviet Union and United States. We will limit our paper in the beginning of 1966, when the French space policy change to enter into a new phase taking account the development of the space applications.