

The paper focuses on the so called “space race” which lasted more than twenty years. This is a rather broad term covering competition between the two superpowers (the US and the USSR) during the cold war. Therefore, this thesis pays only minimal attention to particular projects and entirely leaves out technical details. Instead, it explores efforts to venture into space as representing the apotheosis of scientific combat. It perceives competition and collaboration in this area to be symbolic manifestations of the rivalry and collaboration taking place between the superpowers in the late 20th century. Attention is paid chiefly to the conditions and causes underlying the rivalry but also to its consequences as well as the impact made by overcoming symbolic milestone in space on the general global politics. The paper thus deals with political, economic, social and scientific conditions of space programmes and presentation of the achievements attained. It describes the process of human venturing (especially by the US and the USSR) into space from its very beginning. It chronologically looks at prior stages to end up in our contemporary era and provides an outlook for the future.