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1,500 SPIES Meet On Beach

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The men who provide complete film coverage of America's ballistic missile and space projects began their 9th annual symposium at Miami Beach today.

Fifteen hundred members of the Society of Photo-optical Instrumentation Engineers — "SPIES" — gathered at the Deauville Hotel to hear technical papers by scientists, engineers and technicians from the government, military and industry.

Robert S. Scott, assistant director, government relations, for the Aerospace Corporation, told the group they are "contributing and will contribute — by gathering and focussing, recording and processing, these space age images — 'written with light.' "

He said photo-optical instrumentation "is challenged to earn its weight in orbit in competition with a tightly packed payload of other instruments, controls, sensors and man.

Every pound in orbit or on extended space flights must pay its own way in uniqueness, versatility and re-usability, in its essentiality to the scientific mission or to the lives of astronauts.

"Our pictures, call them data if you must, will have to tell many stories to many audiences, or tell one story very, very well."

Scott said the first pictures exposed from space could have quickly resolved the "scientific controversy" as to whether the earth was round or flat.

"The on-board cameras provided the reassuring evidence to other astronauts that if John Glenn could function under weightless conditions, and survive re-entry in safety, why, so could they.

"In these cases a picture may be worth more than a thousand words — it may be priceless," Scott added.