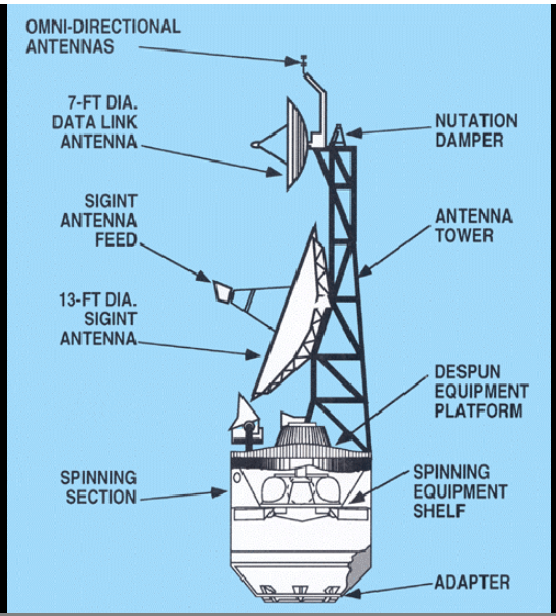
JUMPSEAT

AMERICA'S EARS IN SPACE



JUMPSEAT SATELLITE

In the mid-1960s, due to an increasing level of worldwide threats during the Cold War and the advancements in satellite capabilities, the United States sought to expand on the existing U.S. electronic surveillance satellites (GRAB/POPPY/PARCAE), which operated in low-earth orbit.

NRO's Program A, a joint USAF-NRO program, was tasked with developing a high-altitude orbiting surveillance satellite under "Project EARPOP." The satellite, JUMPSEAT, was a highly elliptical orbit (HEO) signals collection satellite program that had a core mission focus of monitoring adversarial offensive and defensive weapon system development.

JUMPSEAT collected electronic emissions and signals, communication intelligence, as well as foreign instrumentation intelligence, and was the foundational program to other HEO satellite programs.

JUMPSEAT was the first-generation, high-altitude electronic intelligence collection system that downlinked collected data to ground processing facilities within the United States. Once received, the data was provided to the selected Department of Defense elements and the National Security Agency for processing and reporting to U.S. policymakers.

Launched from 1971 to 1987, under mission numbers 7701 to 7708, JUMPSEAT was successfully operated by the NRO until 2006, when it was decommissioned following coordination with the stakeholder elements from within the Intelligence Community.

In December 2025, the NRO director declassified the **fact of the existence** of the JUMPSEAT satellites in addition to **limited details** about their purpose and to recognize the program's long and distinguished life in support of the nation's security.

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