



Office of the Director

NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

14675 Lee Road
Chantilly, VA 20151-1715

4 December 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR FOR INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITYSUBJECT: ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Limited Declassification of JUMPSEAT as a
Signals Collection SatelliteREFERENCE: ~~(S//REL)~~ JUMPSEAT Reconnaissance Assets - Equity
Considerations ~~(S//TK//REL)~~

~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Consistent with provisions of Executive Order 13526, Section 1.3, I am declassifying certain limited facts associated with the JUMPSEAT signals collection satellite program. I have concluded that publicly acknowledging limited facts will not cause harm to our current and future satellite systems. Additionally, acknowledging the program is consistent with our obligation to the American public to be both open and transparent where possible through declassification of historic programs.

~~(S//TK//REL)~~ JUMPSEAT was a Highly Elliptical Orbit (HEO) signals collection satellite program and was the foundational program to other HEO satellite programs. The satellites were developed by the United States Air Force (USAF) as part of the National Reconnaissance Office's (NRO) Program A. The JUMPSEAT satellites were initially launched in 1971 with the last satellites launched in 1987. The satellites performed admirably but were removed from the NRO's Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) architecture in 2006, following coordination with the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Intelligence Community.

[Redacted] Additionally, overhead collection of signals is no longer a government-only endeavor as several unclassified commercial ventures have launched signal collection systems whose capabilities are comparable if not superior to JUMPSEAT.

~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Given the long and distinguished life of JUMPSEAT satellites in support to the Nation, we will acknowledge the limited JUMPSEAT declassification through a public announcement. After limited declassification, we will evaluate the program for a more

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~~SECRET//TK//REL TO USA, FVEY~~

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complete programmatic declassification as time and resources permit. NRO will continue to coordinate with the USAF and NSA on any future declassification of the JUMPSEAT program. Declassification of JUMPSEAT would thus enable the American public to understand the value of this system to the Nation and fulfill our obligation to declassify materials that no longer have bearing upon sources and methods in current use.

~~(S//TK//REL)~~ I have declassified the following with respect to the JUMPSEAT program:

- a. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Term "JUMPSEAT" and its associated developmental program term "EARPOP";
- b. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Mission Series 7700 and associated mission numbers, 7701-7708;
- c. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that JUMPSEAT satellites were launched between 21 March 1971 and 12 February 1987;
- d. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that the USAF played a major part in the early development of JUMPSEAT and throughout the JUMPSEAT program's lifetime in support of NRO's Program A;
- e. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that the JUMPSEAT collections were initially against other adversarial countries' weapon systems capabilities;
- f. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that the NRO developed its first generation "high altitude" SIGINT (electronic surveillance) satellites in the 1960s and early 1970s;
- g. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that JUMPSEAT performed "electronic surveillance" or collected electronic emissions/signals (Electronic Intelligence, Communications Intelligence, Foreign Instrumentation SIGINT);
- h. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that JUMPSEAT operated in a transponder mode/downlinked data to NRO for initial processing;
- i. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that JUMPSEAT was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base (now known as Vandenberg Space Force Base);
- j. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that JUMPSEAT operated in a HEO;
- k. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that JUMPSEAT formed the foundation to follow-on HEO systems;
- l. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that NRO utilized JUMPSEAT satellites from 1971 to 2006;

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m. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Fact that the data collected by JUMPSEAT was provided to Mission Partners (NSA) and to national-level decision-makers/national command authorities;

n. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Release of illustrations of the early JUMPSEAT systems; and

o. ~~(S//TK//REL)~~ Release of early JUMPSEAT models for display.

(U) Should you have any questions regarding this decision, please contact Ms. Carol Krumm, Chief, Information Review and Release Group, Information Management Services Office, Communications Systems Directorate at (secure).


C.J. Scolese