



National Reconnaissance Office Release

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NRO declassifies early ELINT satellite program *Announcement at Naval Research Lab Centennial celebrates historic partnership*

CHANTILLY, Va. – The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) today announced the declassification of PARCAE, an electronic intelligence satellite program that was developed in the 1970s by the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL). The announcement was made at a ceremony at the Pentagon celebrating the lab’s 100th anniversary, in recognition of the historic partnership between the NRO and NRL.

“PARCAE is an example of how the NRO uses advanced technologies developed by the NRL to confront some of the nation’s most daunting national security challenges,” said Dr. Troy Meink, principal deputy director of the NRO.

In 1976, the NRO launched the first satellite under the PARCAE program. Its electronic intelligence system collected information on the Soviet Union’s naval fleet and other foreign entities. Flying in low-earth orbits, PARCAE satellites transmitted data to ground processing facilities at selected ground stations around the world.

“This provided critical information that helped the United States and allied nations win the Cold War,” Dr. Meink said.

The final satellite in the PARCAE program was launched in 1996, and the program continued to enhance U.S. national security through the war on terror. The final PARCAE satellite operated until 2008.

“With 100 years of history, the Naval Research Lab has been advancing science and national security long before we were able to leverage space,” Dr. Meink said. “Today’s centennial offers an opportunity to talk about how the lab’s many innovations, including PARCAE, have helped the NRO use the vantage point of space to make America safer and stronger.”

A full fact sheet on PARCAE is available [here](#).

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NRO is the leader in developing, acquiring, launching, and operating the nation’s intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance satellites to secure and expand America’s advantage in space. We are building a diversified and resilient architecture of spacecraft and ground systems designed to meet the challenges of a changing space environment by accelerating innovation and leveraging strategic partnerships, backed by a diverse and highly skilled workforce. Learn more at NRO.gov.