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NROL-76 Lifts Off, Ushering in a New Era

A National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) payload was successfully launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Launch Complex 39A (LC-39A), Kennedy Space Center (KSC), Florida, at 7:15 a.m. EDT, on May 1, 2017.

“Thanks to the SpaceX team for the great ride, and for the terrific teamwork and commitment they demonstrated throughout. They were an integral part of our government/industry team for this mission, and proved themselves to be a great partner,” said Betty Sapp, Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.

LC-39A, located at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center, is historical for launches dating back to the early 1960s. Originally built to host the Apollo program, LC-39A supported Apollo 4 – the first Saturn V launch, and subsequent Apollo missions including Apollo 11, in July 1969. In the late 1970s, LC-39A was modified to support Space Shuttle launches, hosting the initial shuttle mission in 1981 and concluding with the final shuttle mission in 2011.

NROL-76 is the second of five launches slated for the NRO in 2017. The next NRO launch is on schedule for August 14 from Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), California.

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The NRO is a joint Department of Defense–Intelligence Community organization responsible for developing, launching, and operating America’s intelligence satellites to meet the national security needs of our nation.