

DEVELOP | ACQUIRE | LAUNCH | OPERATE



NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

ABOVE AND BEYOND



MAINTAINING GLOBAL

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) is a unique agency charged with developing, acquiring, launching, and operating our Nation's spy satellites. The NRO's greatest responsibility is to protect U.S. national security interests by delivering space-based global situational awareness for national decision-makers—including the U.S. president, Congress, director of national intelligence, secretary of defense, and the warfighter.

MAINTAINING GLOBAL VIGILANCE IN PEACE AND WAR

A member of both the Intelligence Community (IC) and Department of Defense (DoD), the NRO builds and operates Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) space and ground systems that collect and process signals and imagery to discover and follow activities for a wide range of intelligence, defense, and civil applications, including:

- + Maintaining global situational awareness in great power competition;
- + Monitoring the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- + Tracking international terrorists, drug traffickers, and criminal organizations;
- + Developing highly accurate military targeting data and battle damage assessments;
- + Supporting international peacekeeping, humanitarian relief operations, and natural disaster response and mitigation.

The NRO works collaboratively with its mission partners—such as the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), National Security Agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the Military Combatant Commands and Services, including U.S. Space Command and U.S. Space Force—to ensure analysts have the most relevant, high-quality, timely data available to produce actionable intelligence products for use by warfighters and national decision makers.

VIGILANCE



OUR VISION

See it, Hear it, Sense it

OUR MISSION

Develop, acquire, launch, and operate the Nation's space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to secure and expand the U.S. Intelligence advantage

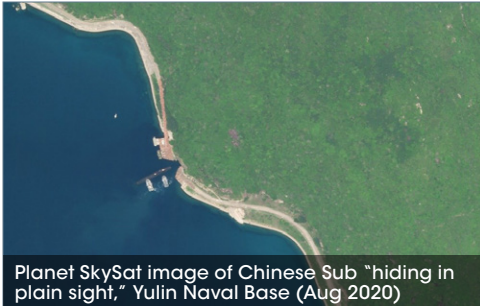
OUR VALUES

- + Personal Integrity and Accountability
- + Mission Excellence
- + Teamwork Built on Respect and Diversity

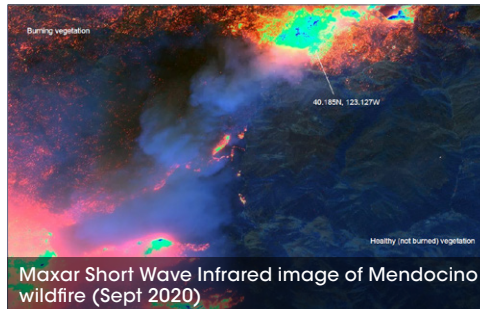
INNOVATIVE OVERHEAD



INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY



Planet SkySat image of Chinese Sub "hiding in plain sight," Yulin Naval Base (Aug 2020)



Maxar Short Wave Infrared image of Mendocino wildfire (Sept 2020)

OUR CUSTOMERS

MILITARY SUPPORT

The NRO collaborates with defense and IC organizations to provide global communications, indications and warnings, and near real-time national and commercial imagery and signals intelligence support to warfighter and intelligence analysis operations around the world. The NRO's mission partners are increasingly fusing data derived from NRO national and commercial systems to enhance the value of intelligence for U.S. and allied forces in harm's way.

CIVIL SUPPORT

Civilian agencies rely on NRO's commercial imagery contracts to respond to humanitarian crises, assess and predict climate change, assess crop production, map habitats of endangered species, track oil spills, study wetlands, and, perhaps most importantly, assess devastation from hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and other natural and manmade disasters.

As the number and capabilities of U.S. commercial remote sensing providers grow, the NRO is committed to acquiring unclassified commercial imagery to the maximum extent practical in support of national security, defense, and civil missions. As we enter the next generation of commercial imagery operational contracts, the NRO is poised to fully integrate commercial sources into the enterprise architecture with contracts that afford broad levels of shareability by a diverse user community.

SIGNALS, IMAGERY,



COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITES

OUR WORKFORCE

The NRO's workforce consists of personnel from the IC, DoD, and private industry. Building and operating the NRO's advanced reconnaissance systems requires a highly talented team of scientists, aerospace engineers, communications specialists, computer scientists, and acquisition managers. Through innovation, collaboration and understanding customer needs and requirements, the NRO workforce is meeting complex intelligence collection challenges and is poised to fulfill future challenges to achieve its mission.

Interested in joining the team that designs, launches, and operates America's intelligence eyes and ears in space? You can learn more about careers by visiting our website www.nro.gov.

OUR LOCATIONS

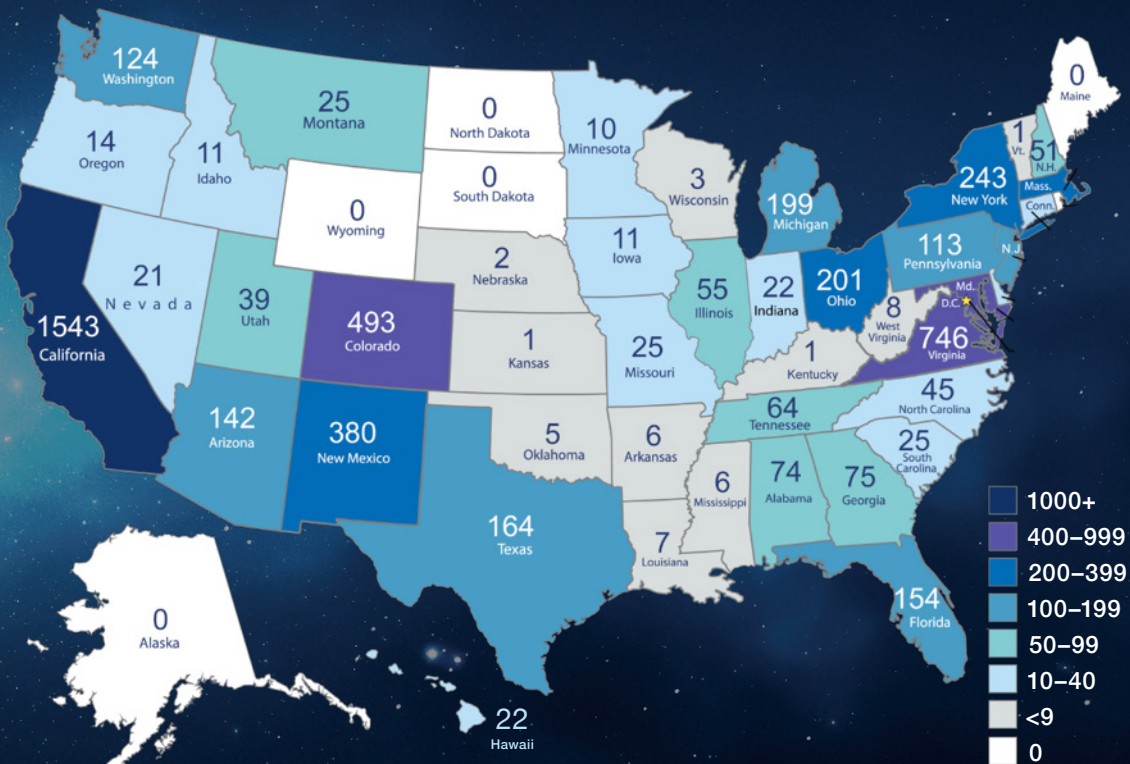
The NRO headquarters is located in Chantilly, Virginia. The NRO maintains ground stations at Buckley Space Force Base, Colorado; Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, to support worldwide defense operations and multi-agency collection, analysis, and intelligence reporting. The NRO has a presence at the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap, Australia, and the Royal Air Force Base Menwith Hill, United Kingdom, to coordinate with allies on national security issues. NRO has operating locations at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California; Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida; and Schriever Space Force Base, Colorado.



PARTNERSHIPS AND



DIRECTOR'S INNOVATION INITIATIVE Proposal distribution ideas from across the nation



ACADEMIC OUTREACH

OUR ACADEMIC & INDUSTRY PARTNERS

In pursuit of cutting-edge technologies, the NRO works closely with universities, research institutions, and industry partners. As we continually seek to improve the capability of our nation's surveillance and reconnaissance space architecture, these partnerships are key to discovering revolutionary leaps in capability to ensure the United States remains the preeminent space power.

With an eye to the future, NRO sponsors research projects at graduate technical military service schools, military academies, and top civilian universities. We also work closely with industry partners nationwide to adapt and respond to technological trends and improve spaceborne reconnaissance systems.

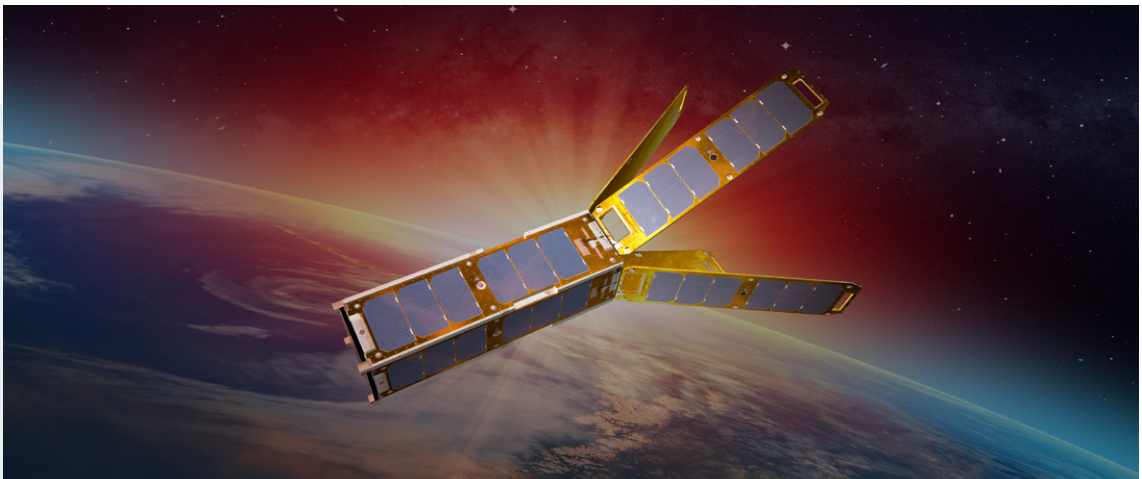
PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE INNOVATION

DIRECTOR'S INNOVATION INITIATIVE

The Director's Innovation Initiative (DII) is an NRO acquisition-related effort that offers non-traditional partners a risk-tolerant environment to explore disruptive technologies and high-payoff concepts relevant to the NRO mission. Over the past 22 years, more than 6,000 proposals have been submitted from entities across 44 states. Annually, at least 30% of the entrants have been new to DII and approximately 25% of projects continue after the first year (exceeding NRO's goal of 15%).

ARCHITECTURE OF THE FUTURE PROGRAM

The Architecture of the Future (ArchF) Program is an open Broad Area Announcement/Government Sources Sought Announcements (BAA/GSSA) program built on the Innovation with Intent framework. ArchF encompasses multiple broad areas of interest to present traditional and non-traditional developers an opportunity to participate in building the NRO of the 21st century. Innovative ideas accepted by the program have a period of performance not to exceed 12 months.





NRO HISTORY AND HERITAGE



FOUNDING THE NRO

In the 1950s, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved reconnaissance systems that included high-altitude balloons, airplanes, and satellites to collect strategic intelligence on the Soviet Union, China, and other potential threats to the United States. On Aug. 31, 1960, Secretary of the Air Force Dudley C. Sharp established the Office of Missile and Satellite Systems to direct the Air Force satellite reconnaissance program. On Sept. 6, 1961, the Central Intelligence Agency and Department of Defense officially signed the first NRO charter which established management arrangements for the National Reconnaissance Program. These provisions consolidated many of America's national space and aerial reconnaissance projects under a covert, highly-compartmented National Reconnaissance Office. Decades later, on Sept. 17, 1992, the U.S. government declassified the "fact of" the NRO.

NOTABLE RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS

GRAB AND POPPY

On Aug. 24, 1959, President Eisenhower authorized the Naval Research Laboratory to develop the GRAB (Galactic Radiation and Background) experimental satellite to collect Soviet air-defense radar emissions. Ten months later, GRAB-1, America's first signals intelligence satellite, launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida. GRAB operated from 1960-1962; its successor, POPPY, operated from 1962-1977.

CORONA

On Aug. 18, 1960, the United States launched the first CORONA imagery intelligence satellite that successfully returned a photo from space. A cooperative venture between the CIA and U.S. Air Force, CORONA photographed "denied territories" and returned the exposed film to earth in capsules, which Air Force planes recovered in mid-air over the Pacific Ocean. The CORONA program flew 145 missions and produced more than 800,000 images. When the program ended in 1972, it boasted a significant list of firsts in space history:

- + First man-made object retrieved from space
- + First mid-air recovery of an object from space
- + First photoreconnaissance image taken from space
- + First mapping of the Earth from space
- + First recovery of an intelligence payload from orbit
- + First use of multiple reentry vehicles

GAMBIT

Developed in the 1960s, the GAMBIT and HEXAGON film-return satellites provided imagery of Soviet and Chinese nuclear installations, missile sites, and other activities in "denied territories." Between July 1963 and June 1967, the NRO carried out 38 missions of the first-generation GAMBIT system with a KH-7 camera system. Each GAMBIT-1 mission lasted just under seven days, on average, carrying about 3,000 linear feet of film, with resolution improving from four to two feet. Between July 1966 and April 1984, the NRO carried out 54 missions of the second-generation GAMBIT-3 system with its improved KH-8 camera system. The GAMBIT-3 missions averaged 31 days on orbit, and carried more than 12,000 linear feet of film with better than a two-foot resolution.

HEXAGON

Between June 1971 and April 1986, the NRO launched the HEXAGON search satellite 20 times, with its KH-9 camera system to replace the CORONA system. HEXAGON carried nearly 60 linear miles of film, with missions averaging about four months and resolution better than two feet. Twelve HEXAGON missions included a mapping camera that obtained imagery with resolution between 30- and 20-feet for use by the U.S. Geological Survey and Defense Mapping Agency for mapping and digital terrain elevation data.

QUILL

In addition to film-return systems, in 1964 the NRO successfully launched a radar imagery experimental satellite known as QUILL. The QUILL satellite demonstrated radar imagery could be obtained from space and further established the NRO's reputation for innovative and successful intelligence collection from space.

ADVANCED RECONNAISSANCE: KENNEN (KH-11)

On Dec. 19, 1976, the NRO launched the KENNEN (KH-11) near real-time electro-optical satellite, which transmitted its images to Earth via a relay satellite. As demand for satellite reconnaissance grew, the NRO developed increasingly sophisticated technology to collect signals and imagery intelligence from space. These systems contributed to the verification of arms control treaties, global transparency, and the end of the Cold War.

NRO EMPLOYMENT/BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

To learn more about NRO employment opportunities, please visit www.nro.gov.

For information on starting a business relationship with the NRO, visit the

Acquisition Research Center's unclassified website at <https://acq.westfields.net>.

Those with NMIS, CWAN, Intelink, or JWICS accounts can access <https://arc.nro.ic.gov>.

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