



## NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **NRO 2012 Launch Campaign Completed with Successful Atlas V Rocket Launch**

A National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) payload was successfully launched aboard a United Launch Alliance (ULA) Atlas V rocket from Space Launch Complex-3, Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), California, at 2:39 p.m. PST, on September 13, 2012. This is the fourth of four NRO launches for 2012.

“I am extremely proud of our dedicated, hardworking government and contractor team! Today’s launch is the culmination of years of hard work,” said Col James D. Fisher, NRO Office of Space Launch Director.

Today’s launch was dedicated to Dr. Pedro “Pete” Rustan. Throughout his career of dedicated government service, Dr. Rustan pioneered advances in national reconnaissance, both on the ground and in space, by successfully designing, prototyping, and rapidly fielding advanced intelligence collection and processing systems. This launch honors his legacy of innovation, leadership, and patriotism.

Today’s mission includes, for the first time for the NRO and for an Atlas V launch vehicle, an auxiliary payload which took advantage of rideshare possibility afforded by available volume and structural capacity of the launch vehicle.

“The auxiliary payload effort highlights strong, beneficial partnering among the NRO, ULA, the Naval Postgraduate School, NASA, and the scientific community,” Ms. Betty Sapp, Director of the NRO, said.

The NRO and ULA partnered to develop an Aft Bulkhead Carrier (ABC), which is a platform for accommodating auxiliary payloads on the Centaur second stage. Affixed to the ABC was an auxiliary payload called Operational Unique Technologies Satellite (OUTSat), which carried 11 CubeSats.

“We have long recognized that there are benefits and efficiencies to be gained through rideshare in space launch,” said Ms. Betty Sapp, Director NRO. “These benefits include opportunities to conduct scientific research, and demonstrate and apply emerging technologies through the use of small satellites.” The CubeSats will study space weather and communications, debris mitigation, maritime shipping container tracking, space flight safety, and orbit refinement.

The CubeSats were sponsored by the NRO and NASA and were developed by the Space and Missile Defense Command, The Aerospace Corporation, University of Southern California, University of Colorado, California Polytechnic State University, Morehead State University, University of California Berkley and the Lawrence Livermore National Lab.

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

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