



National Reconnaissance Office Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRO delivers advanced reconnaissance capabilities with fifth launch of 2020

CHANTILLY, Va. — The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) successfully launched its NROL-44 mission aboard a United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy from Space Launch Complex-37 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station (CCSFS), Florida, at 8:09 p.m. EST on Dec. 10, 2020.

NROL-44 was the agency's fifth launch in 2020 and its 30th launch with United Launch Alliance (ULA). NROL-44 was previously indefinite on range at CCSFS after several launch delays.

"We are proud to launch NROL-44 alongside our partners at ULA, the 45th Space Wing, and the U.S. Space Force Space and Missile Systems Center," said U.S. Air Force Colonel Chad Davis, Director of the NRO's Office of Space Launch. "This launch is a testament to the resilience and expertise of our launch teams, who have worked together to troubleshoot issues to make this launch possible."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has required all of us to channel ingenuity and patience this year as we overcome new hurdles and find new ways of doing business," Davis continued. "Our NRO team members and launch partners exemplified these qualities and delivered cutting-edge reconnaissance capabilities to support our defense and intelligence partners."

The mission carried a classified national security payload designed, built and operated by the NRO in support of its overhead reconnaissance mission. Data collected by NRO's national security systems are used to provide intelligence to United States' senior policy makers, the Intelligence Community and Department of Defense, as well as U.S. allied partners. Data collected by NRO systems can also be used to assist emergency and disaster relief efforts in the U.S. and around the world.

The NRO's next launch will be NROL-108, which is scheduled to launch from Kennedy Space Center later this month.

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The NRO is the Intelligence Community element and a Department of Defense agency responsible for developing, acquiring, launching, and operating America's intelligence satellites to meet the national security needs of our nation.