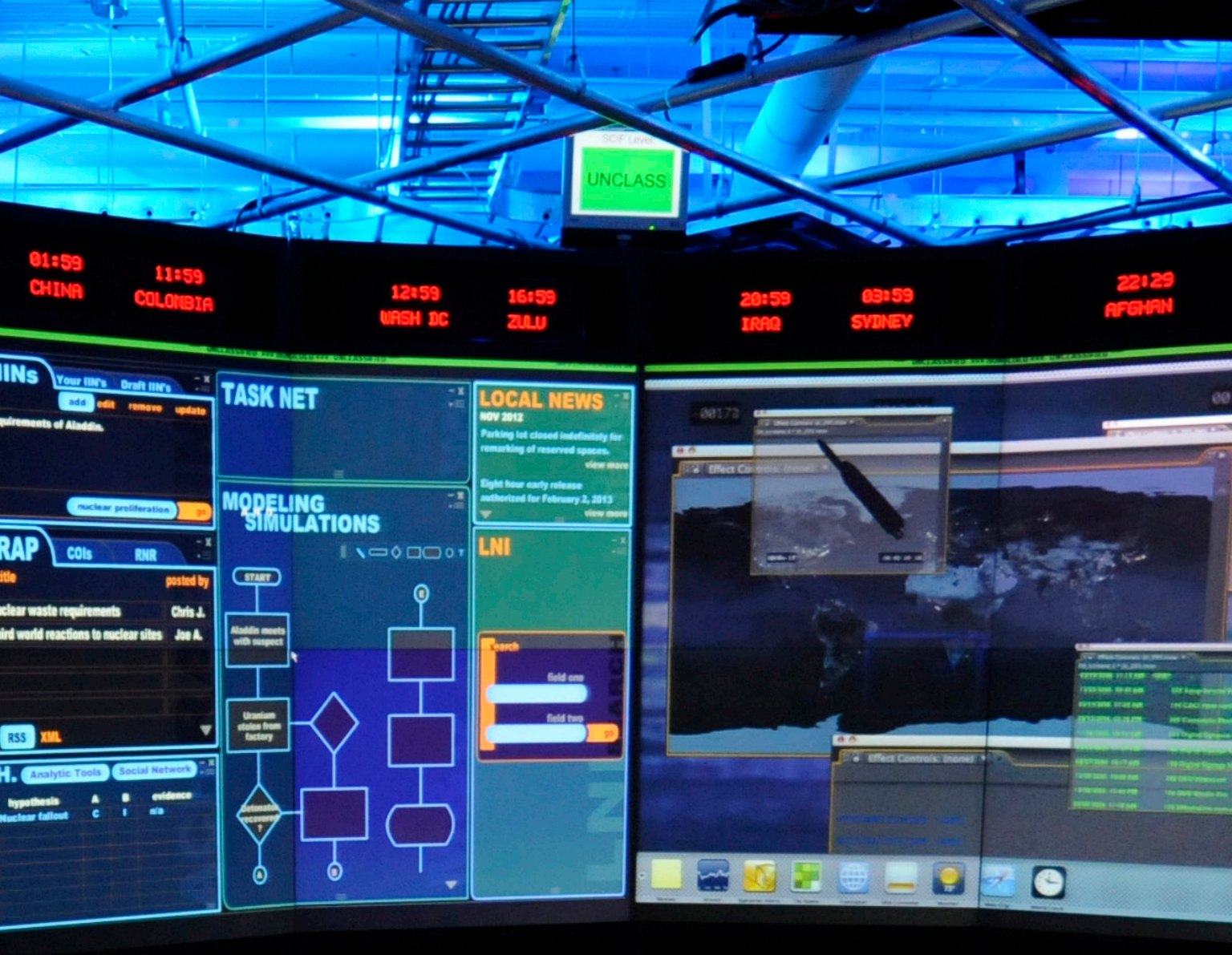
NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

SUPRA ET ULTRA



MAINTAINING GLOBAL

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) is a joint Department of Defense (DoD)-Intelligence Community (IC) organization responsible for developing, launching, and operating America's signals, imagery, and communications satellites. Using NRO data, the National Security Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and other NRO mission partners produce intelligence products for the President, Congress, national policymakers, warfighters, and civil users.

MAINTAINING GLOBAL VIGILANCE

Every day NRO systems provide critical, life-saving national security data to policymakers and warfighters worldwide to:

- Monitor the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- Track international terrorists, drug traffickers, and criminal organizations;
- Develop highly accurate military targeting data and battle damage assessments;
- Support international peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations; and
- Assess the impact of natural disasters.

IN PEACE AND WAR

The NRO continues to develop *innovative overhead intelligence systems for national security.* It supports national and tactical customers with economical, enhanced collection and processing capabilities. Based on core values that include personal integrity and accountability, mission excellence, and teamwork built on respect and diversity, the NRO is defining the phrase "assured access to space."

VIGILANCE

OUR VISION

Supra Et Ultra

OUR MISSION

Innovative Overhead Intelligence Systems for National Security

OUR CORE VALUES

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

INNOVATIVE OVERHEAD

INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

OUR CUSTOMERS

MILITARY SUPPORT

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

CIVIL SUPPORT

Civilian agencies use NRO overhead systems to assess and predict climate change, assess crop production, map habitats of endangered species, track oil spills, study wetlands, and assess devastation from hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. The development of high-definition television, wide-bandwidth communications, high-resolution pixel arrays, and high-speed data switching flourished from emerging NRO technologies.

SIGNALS, IMAGERY,

COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITES

OUR WORKFORCE

The NRO's workforce consists of personnel from the Department of Defense (DoD), Intelligence Community, and private industry. The government civilian and military population includes personnel from the NRO DoD cadre, Central Intelligence Agency, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Navy. The NRO's advanced reconnaissance systems require a highly talented cadre of scientists, aerospace engineers, communications specialists, computer scientists, and acquisition managers. By collaborating 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. Individuals who are interested in belonging to the team that designs, launches, and operates the nation's most unique and innovative overhead reconnaissance systems may apply for NRO government civilian assignments through their organization or agency, or by visiting www.usajobs.gov, www.cia.gov, or www.icjointduty.gov. Additionally, U.S. Air Force military personnel may send a resume to FSS-CareerDevelopment@nro.mil. U.S. Navy military personnel who are interested in working at the NRO may request information by emailing navy-admin@nro.mil.

OUR LOCATIONS

The NRO headquarters is located in Chantilly, Virginia. The NRO maintains ground stations at Buckley Air 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 in Vandenberg AFB, California; Cape Canaveral AFS, Florida; and Schriever AFB, Colorado.

NRO HISTORY

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 August 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 September 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 September 18, 1992, the U.S. government declassified the "fact of" the NRO.

AND HERITAGE

NOTABLE RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS

GRAB AND POPPY

On August 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 August 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 photograph taken from space
- First recovery of an intelligence payload from orbit
- First mid-air recovery of an object from space
- First mapping of the Earth from space
- First use of multiple reentry vehicles

NRO HISTORY

TRANSPARENCY

The NRO is committed to providing suitable transparency to enrich the public's understanding of its mission, consistent with maintaining national security. In addition to responsiveness for information submitted under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and Executive Order (EO) 13526, the NRO engages in the review of information for potential declassification and public release on a discretionary basis. In 2015, the NRO reviewed and released a large collection of documents associated with the 1960's-era Manned Orbiting Laboratory and its formerly covert intelligence collection component, codenamed DORIAN. With the initiation of three discretionary programs, the NRO released documents of significant public interest with historical context; information related to the operations and activities of the NRO; and documents previously released under FOIA or EO 13526. Through these discretionary efforts, the NRO released thousands of pages of material. The NRO is collaborating with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Intelligence Community to more proactively make information available to the public, while protecting intelligence sources and methods.

AND HERITAGE

NOTABLE RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS

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 December 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, www.usajobs.gov, www.cia.gov, or www.icjointduty.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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