

## SPACE SYSTEMS COMMAND Media Release



**SPACE SYSTEMS COMMAND**  
Office of Public Affairs (SSC/PA)  
483 N. Aviation Blvd.  
El Segundo, Calif. 90245-2808

Date: April 9, 2024  
Contact: Media Relations Division  
Telephone: (310) 653-1131  
[sscpa.media@spaceforce.mil](mailto:sscpa.media@spaceforce.mil)

### **Space Systems Command, United Launch Alliance successfully launch final Delta IV Heavy, delivering National Reconnaissance Office mission NROL-70 to orbit**

**EL SEGUNDO, Calif.** – The U.S. Space Force’s Space Systems Command (SSC) and its mission partners successfully launched and delivered on orbit a National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) payload today, NROL-70, onboard United Launch Alliance (ULA)’s final Delta IV Heavy rocket at 12:53 p.m. EDT (9:53 a.m. PDT) from Space Launch Complex 37 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station (CCSFS), on the central coast of Florida.

“We had another successful launch for the NRO today and are thrilled to successfully complete the historic final launch of the extremely reliable and capable Delta IV rocket. Most importantly, the payload we’ve put into space adds to the unique capability the NRO provides to keep us safe and out in front of the pacing challenges posed by our Nation’s competitors,” said Col. Jim Horne, SSC’s senior materiel leader for the Launch Execution Delta. “Our national security launches are truly complex, with pre-launch handling, testing, and flight performance requirements that call for detail-oriented planning and great care. Today’s team, comprised of the NRO, U. S. Space Force, and United Launch Alliance did an immense amount of work behind the scenes to ensure these specialized national assets are delivered to orbit.”

The Delta IV Heavy has launched the NRO's most critical satellites for more than 15 years, providing our leaders and warfighters vital data to help protect our nation and allies. Following the retirement of the Delta family of space launch vehicles, ULA's Vulcan will lift the next generation of national security and commercial satellites into space transforming launch with more affordable and higher performance capability.

Assured Access to Space (AATS) is the program executive office within Space Systems Command that is responsible for delivering next-generation launch and on-orbit capabilities in support of the warfighter, combatant commands, intelligence agencies, civil services, allied nations and the commercial space industry. AATS is also responsible for range sustainment programs supporting launch and test customers. Innovation focus areas include sub-orbital rapid strategic mobility, on-orbit servicing and maneuvering, mission lifecycle management and tactically responsive space.

In addition to working closely with industry to develop the next generation of space access capabilities and key technologies, AATS is leading the way to develop, maintain, integrate, and implement space mobility plans, policy, requirements, and capabilities to rapidly launch, sustain and reconstitute U.S. Space Force space assets. AATS manages 10,000+ personnel across two services, nine operating locations, two space and launch ranges and three tracking sites, supporting 100+ mission partner organizations.

Space Systems Command is the U.S. Space Force's field command responsible for acquiring, developing, and delivering resilient capabilities to protect our nation's strategic advantage in, from, and to space. SSC manages a \$15.6 billion space acquisition budget for the Department of Defense and works in partnership with joint forces, industry, government

agencies, academic and allied organizations to outpace emerging threats. Our actions today are making the world a better space for tomorrow.

-30-

Interested media representatives may submit questions regarding this topic by sending an e-mail to [sscpa.media@spaceforce.mil](mailto:sscpa.media@spaceforce.mil)



The Delta program, spanning 60 years, came to a close with the launch of the final Delta IV Heavy rocket by United Launch Alliance (ULA) on April 9 at 12:53 p.m. EDT from Space Launch Complex-37 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida. The rocket, carrying the NROL-70 mission for the National Reconnaissance Office, marks the end of the Delta era and initiates the future of heavy lift on ULA's next generation Vulcan rocket. (Courtesy Photo: United Launch Alliance)