SPACE SYSTEMS COMMAND
Media Advisory

SPACE SYSTEMS COMMAND
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Space Systems Command, SpaceX prepare to launch third Falcon Heavy with National Security Payload for the U.S. Space Force

Summary: Space Systems Command (SSC) and its industry partners plan the upcoming U.S. Space Force (USSF)-52 mission carrying the seventh mission of the X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle.

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. – The Assured Access to Space (AATS) Directorate of Space Systems Command (SSC) and SpaceX are preparing a Falcon Heavy rocket for the National Security Space Launch (NSSL) program. The mission, designated U.S. Space Force (USSF)-52, is targeted to lift off December 10, 2023, from historic Launch Complex 39A (LC-39A) at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

The Falcon Heavy rocket will be launching the seventh mission of the X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle, an experimental test program to demonstrate technologies for a reliable, reusable, unmanned space test platform for the U.S. Space Force.

The exact time and launch window will be released as the launch date approaches. USSF-52 is the fifth NSSL mission this year for the AATS launch team.

"Our national security space launches transport our most important capabilities into orbit," said Brig. Gen. Kristin Panzenhagen, Program Executive Officer for Assured Access to Space and Commander, Space Launch Delta 45. "We partner closely with our launch service providers, and the entire team is focused on executing a successful mission."

In June 2018, SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket was selected to launch USSF-52, becoming the first Falcon Heavy on contract for a NSSL mission. After contract award, a change in mission requirements provided an opportunity to use flight-proven side boosters. This will be fifth flight

for the side boosters that previously supported USSF-44, USSF-67, Hughes JUPITER 3, and NASA's Psyche mission. Those flights were in November 2022, and January, July, and October of this year, respectively.

Rapid, reusable rockets benefit all launch customers, creating cost effective access to space while providing both flexibility and additional opportunities to launch missions to orbit as building a new booster every time is not required.

"We benefit greatly from our partnerships with other government agencies and from commercially derived developments," said Dr. Walt Lauderdale, Mission Director and lead for Falcon Systems and Operations at SSC. "When we look at the upswing in the launch tempo, adapting to change is our standard operating procedure that gives us the capacity and throughput we will need to support future national security space requirements."

Space Systems Command is the U.S. Space Force's field command responsible for acquiring, developing, and delivering resilient capabilities and groundbreaking technologies to protect our nation's strategic advantage in and from space. SSC manages a $15 billion space acquisition budget for the Department of Defense and works in partnership with joint forces, industry, government agencies, academic and allied organizations to accelerate innovation. Our actions today are making the world a better space for tomorrow.

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