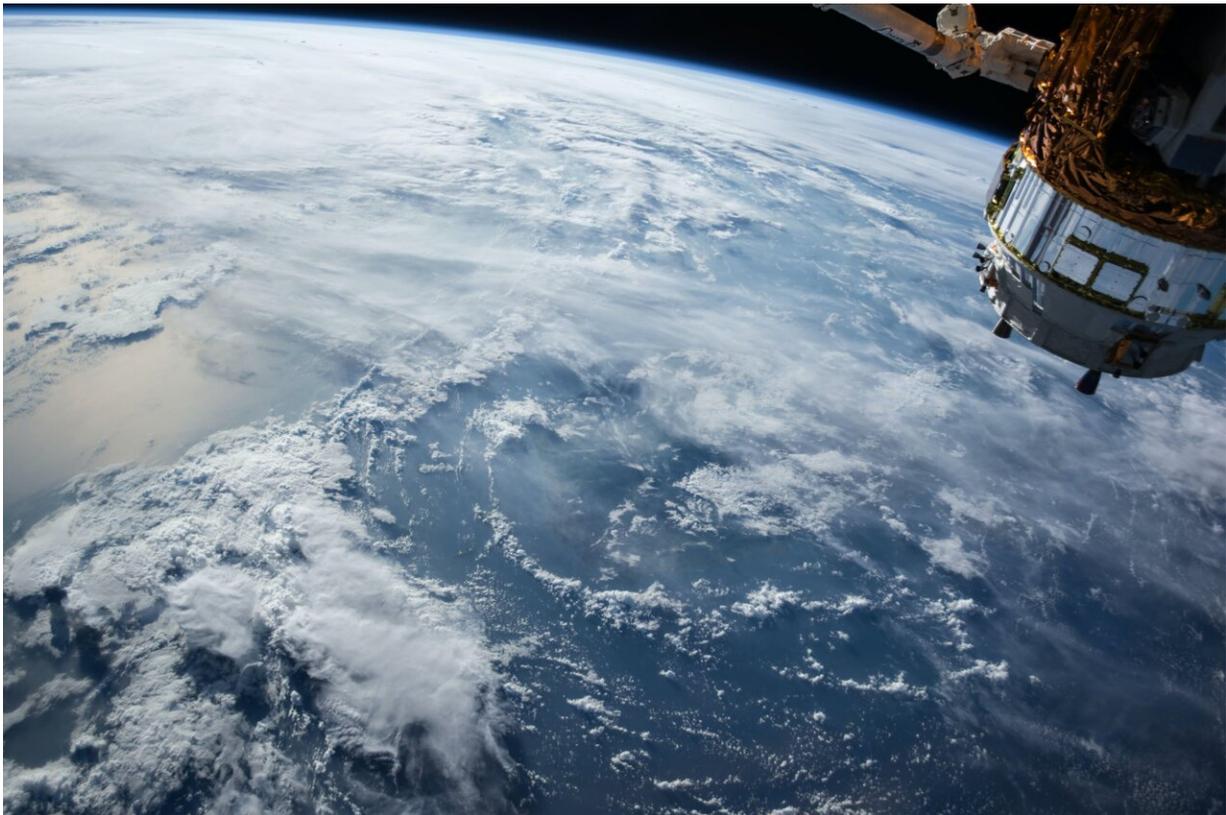


SpaceX rocket successfully launches US spy satellite

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

A US intelligence agency said Wednesday that its newest spy satellite successfully launched into orbit atop a reusable SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The rocket took off at 12:27 pm local time (2027 GMT) from the Vandenberg Air Force base in California, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), which is in charge of the US Space Force, said in a statement.

After releasing the [satellite](#), dubbed NROL-87, into orbit, the Falcon 9 rocket then landed back at the base, the agency said.

"NROL-87 is designed, built, and operated by the NRO to support its overhead reconnaissance mission," the statement said.

The NRO gave few other details about the satellite but said it will "provide a wide-range of timely intelligence information."

The NRO, a division of the US Defense Department, operates a large network of surveillance satellites, and is headquartered near Washington, in northern Virginia.

NROL-87, the first satellite launched by the NRO in 2022, is the third time the agency has used a Falcon 9 [rocket](#).

The NRO has launched 16 other satellites over the past two years.

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