Lockheed Martin Delivers Second Critical Payload For Nation's Space-Based Missile Warning System

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Lockheed Martin today announced the successful delivery of its second Highly Elliptical Orbit (HEO 2) payload, a critical element of the nation's next-generation missile warning system, known at the Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS) program.

The payload ultimately will be integrated with a host satellite and launched into a highly elliptical orbit to globally scan for, detect and report missile launches and other infrared events of military interest. Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Sunnyvale, Calif., the SBIRS prime contractor, and its subcontractor Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems, Azusa, Calif., built the two HEO payloads for the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base. The first payload was delivered to the Air Force in August 2004.

In addition to providing early warning of missile launches, SBIRS will support other missions simultaneously, including missile defense, technical intelligence and battlespace characterization. SBIRS will augment missile defense by providing the earliest possible warning of ballistic and theatre missile attacks and accurate information to effectively cue other ballistic missile defense system elements to support intercept and negation of the threat. Improved capabilities for technical intelligence will enable combat commanders the flexibility to gain valuable insight into an adversary's battlespace and provide both tactical and strategic missile warning around the globe.

"This critical milestone is the result of our relentless focus and commitment to successfully executing the SBIRS program," said Joanne Maguire, vice president and deputy, Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "This payload will deliver faster, more accurate data to the warfighter, and serve as an essential component of a successful missile defense architecture. We look forward to our continued positive momentum on SBIRS and achieving mission success for our customer."

Col. Randy Weidenheimer, the U.S. Air Force's SBIRS program manager, said, "the Air Force sees the delivery of the HEO 2 payload, which has better technical performance than its predecessor, as another major milestone for the SBIRS program, and tangible evidence that the program has turned the corner on several developmental issues that hampered completion of the payloads. This next-generation sensor will deliver state-of-the art, multi-mission capability to a myriad of defense and intelligence users for many years to come, setting a new operational standard for global surveillance, tracking, and targeting support."

When fully operational, SBIRS High will comprise two payloads in highly elliptical orbit, four satellites in geosynchronous orbit, as well as fixed and mobile ground-based assets to receive and process the infrared data. The team is progressing on the first of the SBIRS High geosynchronous orbit (GEO) satellites and is on track to begin final integration and test of the first GEO satellite later this year in preparation for launch in fiscal year 2008.

"Northrop Grumman remains committed to delivering this critical capability to support our nation's missile defense needs," said Bob Iorizzo, president, Northrop Grumman's Electronic Systems sector. "The delivery of HEO 2 shows our continuing dedication to meeting performance and schedule goals for SBIRS High."

SBIRS High already is providing the nation enhanced worldwide missile detection and tracking capabilities, battlefield data, and technical intelligence through its consolidated ground segment operations at Air Force Space Command, Buckley Air Force Base, Colo.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

CONTACT: Steve Tatum of Lockheed Martin, +1-408-742-7531, or Stephen.o.tatum@lmco.com.

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