U.S. Air Force Awards Lockheed Martin $1.5-Billion Contract For SBIRS Follow-On Spacecraft

The U.S. Air Force has awarded Lockheed Martina $1.5-billion contract for the third highly elliptical orbit (HEO-3) payload, the third geosynchronous orbit (GEO-3) satellite and associated ground modifications for the Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS) constellation. A contract to include a fourth HEO payload and possible fourth GEO satellite is expected to be awarded later this year.

The SBIRS program is designed to provide early warning of missile launches, and simultaneously support other missions including missile defense, technical intelligence and battlespace awareness.

"This production contract reflects the Air Force's strong commitment to providing superior missile detection and surveillance capabilities for the warfighter," said Jeff Smith, Lockheed Martin's SBIRS vice president. "The improved infrared event detection and reporting capabilities provided by SBIRS are integral to our nation's information and intelligence architecture and we look forward to achieving mission success on this vitally important program."

Currently, two HEO payloads -- the first of which is already providing certified operations for the warfighter -- are on-orbit and meeting or exceeding performance specifications. Final integrated system testing of the first two GEO satellites is progressing at Lockheed Martin's facilities in Sunnyvale, Calif. The fully-integrated GEO-1 spacecraft is being readied for the start of thermal vacuum testing and the team recently integrated the spacecraft bus with the infrared sensor payload for GEO-2.

After the extensive environmental and final integrated test phase, GEO-1 will be shipped to the Air Force in preparation for launch in 2010 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Base, Fla.

The SBIRS team is led by the Space Based Infrared Systems Wing at the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, Sunnyvale, Calif., is the SBIRS prime contractor, with Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems, Azusa, Calif., as the payload integrator. Air Force Space Command operates the SBIRS system.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 146,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2008 sales of $42.7 billion.

NOTE TO EDITORS: for low- and high-resolution JPEG image files of SBIRS, please visit our SBIRS web page at: http://www.lockheedmartin.com/sbirs/

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