

New Missile Warning Satellite Built By Lockheed Martin Begins Major Environmental Test Phase

Lockheed Martin has begun thermal vacuum testing of the first Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) geosynchronous (GEO-1) satellite, a major program milestone that will validate spacecraft performance in a complete test-like-you-fly environment.

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

Conducted inside Lockheed Martin's Dual Entry Large Thermal Altitude (DELTA) chamber, the test will verify spacecraft functionality and performance in a vacuum environment where the satellite is stressed at the extreme hot and cold temperatures it will experience in space. The extensive test is designed to validate the overall satellite design, quality and workmanship and survivability during space vehicle launching and on-orbit operations.

"The entire team has worked extremely hard throughout our rigorous process of risk reduction and subsystem and baseline testing leading up to this critical test," said Dave Sheridan, Lockheed Martin's SBIRS GEO program director. "We look forward to executing a disciplined and thorough test and delivering this revolutionary satellite that provides vastly improved surveillance capabilities for the warfighter."

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.

The team is executing to a planned schedule that supports GEO-1 delivery and launch in the beginning of fiscal year 2011 aboard an Atlas V launch vehicle.

Lockheed Martin's SBIRS contract includes the two highly elliptical orbit (HEO) payloads now on-orbit, two geosynchronous orbit (GEO) satellites, as well as ground-based assets to receive and process the infrared data. The team was recently awarded a \$1.5-billion contract for the third HEO payload, the third GEO satellite and associated ground modifications. A contract to include a fourth HEO payload and potential fourth GEO satellite is expected to be awarded later this year.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 140,000 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.

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