Lockheed Martin SBIRS Team Passes Major Flight Operations Test Milestone On Path To GEO-1 Launch

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SUNNYVALE, Calif., Jan. 31, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The U.S. Air Force/Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT)-led Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) team has successfully completed a major space to ground interface and functional system test for the first geosynchronous (GEO-1) satellite. The milestone, known as the 5001.4 test, verifies the spacecraft's performance and interface with the ground segment and represents one of the program's most significant milestones to date on the path to launch.

The first SBIRS geosynchronous spacecraft, with its highly sophisticated scanning and staring sensors, will provide the nation with significantly improved missile warning capabilities and support other critical missions simultaneously including missile defense, technical intelligence and battlespace awareness.

The successful 5001.4 test demonstrated the capability to transmit data between the spacecraft and flight control facilities, and the ability of the SBIRS GEO-1 integrated ground and space system to perform critical operations.

"SBIRS GEO-1 has successfully completed all system environmental tests, its Final Integrated System Test, and now with the completion of the 5001.4 test, we have the utmost confidence that this first-of-its-kind spacecraft will fulfill its mission requirements. We are on-track to meet our scheduled spring 2011 launch date," said Col. Roger Teague, the U.S. Air Force's Director of the Infrared Space Systems Directorate. "The SBIRS mission is critical to the safety and security of our nation, and the entire government/industry team is dedicated to achieving mission success."

On the path to delivery, the SBIRS team will perform final spacecraft component installations and conduct a final factory confidence test on GEO-1, as well as complete final updates to ground software and command products. Qualification of the satellite's flight software, designed to provide highly reliable command and control operations, is also progressing steadily, and is on track for completion in February.

"The completion of this highly successful space-to-ground interface and functional system test is the final step in a comprehensive test program in preparation for launch," said Jeff Smith, Lockheed Martin's SBIRS vice president and program director. "We understand the importance of the SBIRS mission and are laser focused on preparing this cutting-edge spacecraft for delivery to the U.S. Air Force."

The SBIRS team is led by the Infrared Space Systems Directorate at the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center. Lockheed Martin is the SBIRS prime contractor, with Northrop Grumman, as the payload integrator. Air Force Space Command operates the SBIRS system.

Lockheed Martin's original SBIRS contract includes HEO payloads, two geosynchronous orbit (GEO) satellites, as well as ground-based assets to receive and process the infrared data. The team is also under a follow-on production contract to deliver additional HEO payloads and the third and fourth GEO satellites, and associated ground modifications.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 132,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's 2010 sales from continuing operations were $45.8 billion.

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