Next Generation Missile Warning Satellite Successfully Reaches Orbit

SBIRS GEO-1 Spacecraft to Deliver Unprecedented Infrared Surveillance for the Nation

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DENVER, May 24, 2011 /PRNewswire/ **--** The first Lockheed Martin-built Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) geosynchronous (GEO-1) spacecraft has successfully reached its intended orbit and is performing as required following its successful May 7 launch from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla.

After launch, the U.S. Air Force/Lockheed Martin SBIRS ground team executed a series of six Liquid Apogee Engine (LAE) burns to propel the spacecraft to its geosynchronous orbital slot. The team then deployed the satellite's solar arrays, light shade and antenna wing assemblies in preparation for activating its sophisticated infrared sensors and the start of early orbit testing.

SBIRS GEO-1 is the most technologically advanced military infrared satellite ever developed and will enhance early warning of missile launches around the globe, support the nation's ballistic missile defense system, greatly expand technical intelligence gathering capability, and bolster situational awareness for warfighters on the battlefield.

"Successfully reaching orbit and conducting deployments is a tremendous milestone for the SBIRS GEO-1 spacecraft. Thanks to a very talented and dedicated team, this first-of-its-kind spacecraft has performed flawlessly," said Brig Gen (select) Roger W. Teague, the director of the U.S. Air Force's Infrared Space Systems Directorate. "We anticipate continued success as we progress towards payload activation in the near future."

SBIRS GEO-1 includes highly sophisticated scanning and staring sensors that will deliver improved infrared sensitivity and a reduction in area revisit times over the current constellation. The scanning sensor will provide a wide area surveillance of missile launches and natural phenomena across the earth, while the staring sensor will be used to observe smaller areas of interest with superior sensitivity.

"We are very pleased with the performance of SBIRS GEO-1 and we are looking forward to delivering unprecedented infrared surveillance capabilities for the nation," said Jeff Smith, vice president of Lockheed Martin's Overhead Persistent Infrared (OPIR) mission area.

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 126,000 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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