Nation's New Missile Warning Satellite Delivers First Infrared Imagery

SBIRS GEO-1 Satellite to Provide a Quantum Leap in Infrared Surveillance Capabilities

PR Newswire
DENVER

DENVER, July 7, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The first Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT)-built Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) geosynchronous (GEO-1) spacecraft beamed down its first infrared image onJune 21 to the SBIRS ground station. Following its May 7 launch, the satellite is performing as expected, and is now undergoing early orbit testing.

The U.S. Air Force's SBIRS GEO-1 spacecraft is the most technologically advanced military infrared satellite ever developed. The system will enhance the military's ability to detect 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.

The satellite includes highly sophisticated scanning and staring sensors that 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 tremendously proud of Team SBIRS for their superb efforts to initialize the Air Force’s newest, most capable infrared payload,” said Col. Mike Noble, Deputy Director of the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center’s Infrared Space Systems Directorate. “This is another important milestone for the SBIRS’ Air Force and industry team. Successful payload activation is a major step toward fielding the all-new GEO capabilities for the nation and joint warfighters.”

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. Most recently, the team opened the satellite's payload doors and activated its sophisticated infrared sensors to begin the start of early orbit calibration and testing.

"SBIRS GEO-1 is performing flawlessly thus far, and the first image sent from the satellite is outstanding," saidJeff Smith, vice president of Lockheed Martin's Overhead Persistent Infrared (OPIR) mission area. "We are focused on executing an efficient and thorough checkout of the spacecraft and ultimately delivering unprecedented infrared surveillance capabilities to our nation."

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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