



Iridium Provides Update on Satellite Constellation

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BETHESDA, Md., March 9 [PRNewswire/](#) -- Iridium is pleased to announce that on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, the company completed the replacement of the operational Iridium satellite lost in the collision three weeks ago with a non-operational Russian satellite. The unique architecture of Iridium's fully-meshed network of 66 satellites enabled the continuity of service to Iridium's customers while one of Iridium's in-orbit spares was prepared and maneuvered into the constellation.

"I am particularly proud of the Iridium and Boeing teams that manage our constellation. They moved quickly, efficiently and effectively to limit the minor service degradation caused by the collision and to return our constellation to its full configuration," said Matt Desch, chairman and chief executive officer, Iridium. "They are among the best in the business, and the speed with which they acted is testament to their ingenuity and commitment to Iridium's customers."

Iridium, along with many other commercial space operators, has been engaged for some time with the U.S. government in an effort to improve assessment and warning in venues such as the Commercial and Foreign Entities program, direct interaction with the U.S. Strategic Command and the National Space Security Office, and with industry organizations such as the Satellite Industry Association. While these have been useful efforts, Iridium believes this incident has demonstrated the need for even more aggressive action, and the company supports enhanced actions to increase the margin of safety for space operations. Some specific future activities that Iridium endorses include:

- Long-term investment to improve Space Situational Awareness (SSA) so that the space environment can be better understood and characterized. Better SSA is the key enabler for improved assessment and warning, and supports the objectives of National Space Policy Directive 49 (NSPD-49), our U.S. national space policy. Adding SSA sensors to government and commercial satellites may offer a cost effective way of improving the timeliness and accuracy of SSA data.
- Improved information sharing between industry and the U.S. government, with the objective of improving the timeliness and accuracy of conjunction assessment and warning. Iridium believes provision of satellite orbital data by commercial operators would relieve the U.S. Air Force of the necessity to devote resources to tracking the company's satellites, and could provide accuracy greater than would otherwise be commonly available. Iridium is in discussions with the U.S. Joint Space Operations Center (JSPOC) to assess the utility of providing satellite data through the STRATCOM JSPOC or other appropriate government agency in return for better conjunction warnings that can be considered and assessed over an appropriate period of time.
- Government support for policy and processes which would permit sharing of classified data as required to allow for high-accuracy assessment and warning.
- Funding and resources to support analysis, assessment, dissemination and warning on timelines and with accuracies that enable action to be taken to avoid collisions.
- Continued support for increased cooperation between the government, and U.S. and foreign commercial operators.

Improved SSA is essential to the well being of the global space community. This event certainly points to the importance of SSA to the success of the commercial space industry, including the commercial and government customers served by Iridium. Iridium is committed to healthy cooperation between government, industry and the international community to improve the capabilities of SSA and to enhance the security of the space environment for all constituents.

About Iridium Satellite LLC

Iridium Satellite LLC (www.iridium.com) is the only mobile satellite service (MSS) company offering coverage over the entire globe. The Iridium constellation of low-earth orbiting (LEO), cross-linked satellites provides critical voice and data services for areas not served by terrestrial communication networks. Iridium's subscriber growth has been driven by increasing demand for reliable, global communications. Iridium serves commercial markets through a worldwide network of hundreds of distributors, and provides services to the U.S. Department of Defense, and other U.S. and international government agencies. The company's customers represent a broad spectrum of industry, including maritime, aeronautical, government/defense, public safety, utilities, oil/gas, mining, forestry, heavy equipment and transportation. Iridium has launched a major development program for its next-generation satellite constellation, Iridium NEXT, which will result in continued and new Iridium MSS offerings. The company is headquartered in Bethesda, Md. and is currently privately held.

SOURCE: Iridium Satellite LLC

Web site: <http://www.iridium.com/>
