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SBIRS GEO-1 Successfully Launched, Ushering the Dawn of a New Era in Overhead Surveillance

Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla. (May 7, 2011) – The Air Force's Space Based Infrared Systems GEO-1 payload is launched aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket from Space Launch Complex-41 here at 2:10 p.m. EDT. SBIRS is designed to provide global, overhead, persistent, infrared surveillance capability to meet 21st century demands in mission areas including missile warning, missile defense, technical intelligence and battlespace awareness. (Courtesy photo by Pat Corkery, United Launch Alliance)

Release Number: 030511

5/7/2011 - **U.S. AIR FORCE SPACE AND MISSILESYSTEMS CENTER, EL SEGUNDO, Calif. and CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION, Fla.** -- The U.S. Air Force successfully launched the first Space Based Infrared System geosynchronous satellite aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V launch vehicle on Saturday, May 7, at 2:10 p.m. EDT (11:10 p.m. PDT).

The Atlas V lifted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station's Space Launch Complex-41 on a beautiful sun-filled afternoon sky. "The SBIRS team stands tall today," said Brig. Gen. (s) Roger Teague, director of SMC's Infrared Space Systems Directorate. "This launch success represents years of dedication and hard work by a broad team of government and industry professionals. We look forward to GEO-1 soon joining our constellation of overhead persistent infrared satellites and providing critical national security space capabilities."

Spacecraft separation from the booster occurred approximately 43 minutes after launch. Following separation, the spacecraft began a series of orbit maneuvers to propel it to geosynchronous orbit. Once on-orbit, engineers will deploy the satellite's solar arrays and antennas, then complete checkout and tests in preparation for operational use.

"The successful launch of the SBIRS mission today was a significant accomplishment for our nation," said Col. Ron Fortson, Mission Director and Chief of Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle Generation and Operations Division. "I am extremely proud of the integrated government and contractor team for the hard work and dedication put forth in achieving this success."

The launch of SBIRS GEO-1 represents the dawn of a new era in overhead surveillance, and GEO-1 will deliver unprecedented global, persistent and taskable infrared surveillance protecting the nation and allies for years to come.

"This day is a proud moment for our team," Col. Scott Larrimore, SBIRS Space Systems Division Chief, said. "Our mission is just beginning, and we look forward to developing new capabilities that will expand the overhead persistent infrared missions to meet global emerging threats."

Saturday's launch featured an Atlas V 401 configured rocket, which was the 26th launch of the Atlas V. The 401 configuration consists of a 4-meter payload fairing and a single-engine Centaur upper stage. The Atlas V is one of the two rockets developed as part of the United States Air Force's EELV program.

SBIRS GEO-1 employs staring and scanning sensors, supporting revolutionary simultaneous strategic and theater surveillance. "We understand the importance of the SBIRS mission and are proud to partner with the U.S. Air Force on this critical program," said Jeff Smith, Lockheed Martin's vice president and SBIRS program director. "Throughout the development of this first-of-its-kind satellite, the SBIRS team has demonstrated an

unwavering commitment to operational excellence."

GEO-1 will provide missile warning, missile defense, battlespace awareness and technical intelligence products to deployed warfighters, national leadership, and U.S. allies.

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