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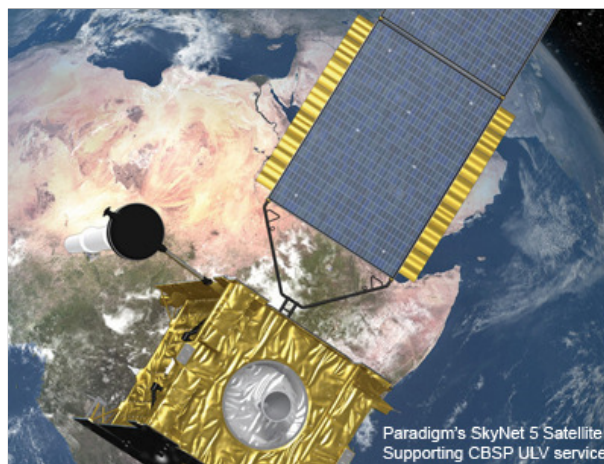
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Top Story

Intelsat General Provides a Detailed Look into the U.S. Navy's CBSP Program

On the first day of its military Commercial Broadband Satellite Program (CBSP) performance period, contract winner **Intelsat General** received an emergency task order from the **U.S. Navy** to supply connectivity support to one of its ships. It would be a small start to an ambitious and wide-ranging network upgrade, which aims to provide higher broadband data throughput speeds than the Navy's current L-band capability.

Although the **U.S. Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization** (DITCO) issued Intelsat General the \$542.7 million CBSP award in January, the program is still in its infancy due to a protest filed with the **U.S. Government Accountability Office** (GAO) over the contract from Intelsat General's competitors, which put the program on hold for over three months. The GAO dismissed the protest, allowing Intelsat General and its partners to commence initial work on the network enhancement in mid-May.



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Britt Lewis, Intelsat General's vice president of government and military business strategy, has just emerged from the formal CBSP kick-off meeting, where he has been negotiating with the Navy to work within its funding scenarios in order to meet demand.

"The Navy has established its requirements with us for the 11 regions that were part and parcel of the original CBSP campaign. Today, the Navy has a relatively limited number of ships - approximately 40 - that can access commercial satellite services. Over time, they are working to outfit up to 235 ships from patrol craft to aircraft carriers. They have a ramp in terms of ships that are rolling out with the new terminals that are being deployed to access the CBSP, and we're determining the infrastructure and elements that will be used to support CBSP long-term."

The ultimate challenge for Intelsat General is to deliver close to a gigahertz of total capacity to the Navy under DITCO's one-year indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract structure. The reward for

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meeting the CBSP challenge is four additional one-year extensions. Lewis said Intelsat's initial plan is to deliver a multi-band solution, envisioned to be more than 52 percent Ku-band, 38 percent C-band and about 10 percent X-band, to provide benefits over the Navy's current L-band BGAN capability via Inmarsat.

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"The kind of data rate you're going to get with L-band, at best, is something around 400 to 432 kilobits per second. Even that can be contended in some regions with peak demand where it's a shared resource. Using C-, Ku- or X-band, we will create commercial satcom infrastructure solutions that will provide much higher data rates to the Navy. The small-ship variant of the terminal they will carry on the patrol ships is pegged to do 881 kilobits per second of throughput. Some of the larger ships are doing 2 to 4 megabits per second today, but the Navy's vision over time is to do 20 megabits per second or higher to those types," said Lewis.

The U.S. military hopes CBSP will transition the Navy's infrastructure into an all-IP network able to support a complete set of applications from voice, video and imagery.

The CBSP's X-band requirement set includes support to the unit-level variant terminal (ULV) pipe, which also can support Ku-band to support Navy submarines with 3 megabits per second of throughput. According to Lewis, X-band will act as an augmentation, as the government already has rolled out Wideband Global Satellites (WGS), with coverage over the Pacific, Indian and Trans-Atlantic regions. "The Navy has reasonable access to WGS X-band. Given the number of WGS satellites that have been funded, with six now and eight or more that are being considered I think that the government will look to use their assets first and use commercial X-band where it makes sense to augment coverage areas. As WGS fills up, we expect the military to use the X-band capability by CBSP," said Lewis.

Intelsat will be working with a broad team of partners on CBSP, with 17 companies acting as global or regional specialists providing satellites, teleports and facilities. U.K. SkyNet operator Paradigm will provide its fleet of protected satellites. SES World Skies and SkyPerfect JSAT will provide regional space segment. Lewis highlighted one of its partners, iDirect, which is working with the operator to create a CBSP Web tool.

"The Web tool will provide situational awareness data that the military has never had before. It will have a five-second frequency of broader database and information updates. This tool wowed the military during the kickpoff meeting. Everyone is excited about this part of the broader build-out of the infrastructure, which includes the space segment, the teleport and the terrestrial connectivity. With it, we would be able to monitor the ships all the way back into the government's network itself."

Intelsat General will build the aforementioned link back to the government by creating a terrestrial facility connecting the CBSP teleports to the NCTAMS (Naval computer and telecommunications area master stations) and its high speed global ring. Lewis said the link provides a critical point of value for the government as it enables the company to optimize bandwidth allocations to ensure that they constantly exceed an 80 percent fill factor to support ships. "Over time, this will mean that where we may have two megabits allocated for a single ship and we find that there's capacity available within the 20 percent above our performance standard, we can work with the Navy to allocate that capacity so that ship may take three megabits instead of two. We can bring other ships into the same bandwidth. The goal is to establish a real performance metric against which to ensure that the Navy is constantly using the capacity and getting true value for money."

Whether CBSP hits its mark remains to be seen. Lewis is confident that Intelsat General's solution will be a valuable asset for the Navy as its demand continues to grow. "Demand has outstripped the capability of Ku-band satellite assets to meet the Navy's requirements within the more active regions such as Southwest Asia. I think the Navy was out front in terms of deciding that they're going to have to rely on commercial satcom as a primary means of communications. At Intelsat, we have invested broadly in assets on future spacecraft that will support mobile communications at sea, so virtually every future satellite that Intelsat will deploy between now and 2012 has assets that could be used for the Navy's operations. It is a direct correlation between programs, funding and our ability to make investments."

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