



## Satellite intel router to be tested in drug interdiction role

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The U.S. and allies in the Caribbean region will be testing their ability to share video and other intelligence via an Internet router installed on a recently launched commercial communications satellite.

The Cisco-built Internet Routing in Space (IRIS) payload is a box of electronics installed on Intelsat's IS-14 communications satellite launched Nov. 23 to a station high over the Atlantic coast of French Guiana.

Over the coming months, military forces will attempt to feed video and other counter-narcotics intelligence gathered by ships and aircraft to each other and to the U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, an intelligence fusion center in Key West, Fla.

The demonstration is one of the Pentagon's Joint Technology Capability Demonstrations, which are designed to deliver innovative technologies to the field quickly. The U.S. Army's Space and Missile Defense Command Future Warfare Center will lead the official "military user assessment" of the technology.

The router could increase the number of potential video viewers by allowing anyone with an authorized Internet Protocol address to tap in, so long as the person has an IRIS-compatible modem, Intelsat said. The router also could reduce the lag time in videos by reducing the distance the signals must travel.

"IP routing in space enables users to connect via satellite communications in ways they have not been able to connect before," said Don Brown, vice president for hosted payloads at Intelsat General Corp., which sells satellite services to government customers.

Brown gave the example of a Navy ship equipped with a C-band communications system receiving video from today's ku-band- equipped Predator, Reaper and Global Hawk unmanned planes. Without IRIS, the signal must be transmitted from the aircraft to a commercial satellite and down to a ground teleport that converts it to C-band for transmission to the ship, provided the ship is in range. Sometimes the signal must be bounced up to another satellite and then back down.

"The vision of IRIS is that you have an Internet routing capability that enables those users to communicate directly via space," Brown said.

Intelsat and Cisco won the demonstration contract in 2007. "We need to be able to ensure the configuration of those ku-band systems onboard those UAVs [are] compatible with IRIS," Brown said.

— Ben Iannotta