

# Intelsat General

by Kay Sears, President

**I**ntelsat General continued to play a key role in supporting the global reach of the U.S. military and its NATO allies in 2011, providing solutions ranging from UAV data transfer to television signals to U.S. troops around the globe. Satellite capacity provided by Intelsat General and other commercial companies continued to make up the lion's share of bandwidth used by the military for both normal operations and in the combat zones of Southwest Asia.

Intelsat General is a critical enabler for medium- and high-altitude UAV operations around the world. Manned ISR platforms are transitioning from narrow-band communications using L-band satellites to wide-band commercial and military SATCOM, creating even greater demand for high-capacity bandwidth. It is projected that ISR bandwidth demand will reach 16GHz by 2018, more than double the commercial SATCOM in use today to support operations in the Middle East. The satellite industry has been successful in supporting this recent growth due to the scale and flexibility inherent in commercial satellite fleets and the frequent technological upgrades offered by robust fleet replenishment schedules. Intelsat General today provides some 1 GHz of total wideband capacity, representing more than 50 simultaneous flights of manned/unmanned ISR missions in a number of theaters.

Intelsat General is working with satellite manufacturers on specialized payloads, some with the economic advantages of hosted payloads, for next-generation capabilities that would provide dramatic increases in overall bandwidth. In further support of military units, Intelsat General's was awarded a contract to provide comprehensive satellite connectivity to the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS), which provides multi-channel, broadcast-quality radio and TV programs to military forces and their families stationed outside of the United States and aboard Navy ships at sea. Intelsat General is now providing the satellite capacity and terrestrial infrastructure via the IntelsatONE network in support of the service, as well as additional internal information programming offered by the Department of Defense. AFRTS uses seven satellites and six data entry points to carry television and stereo audio services to over 1,000 outlets in more than 175 countries and U.S. territories and to U.S. Navy ships.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) selected Intelsat General Corp. to provide satellite connectivity to 17 field offices in Africa and the Caribbean, regions of the world where crowding, poverty and tropical weather combine to create environments ripe for the incubation and spread of communicable diseases. The Intelsat network will provide CDC field offices and research stations with real-time data to promote health throughout developing countries by disseminating disease prevention and treatment information.

The CDC, with operations in more than 50 countries, relies on a global communications network to move data about disease outbreaks and prevention measures to and from its Atlanta headquarters and field offices. The Intelsat General network will allow the CDC to allocate bandwidth to the regions where data demand is highest at any given time. IS-25, which will provide connectivity, is one of the few satellites on orbit capable of covering both Africa and Latin America.

As part of its work with U.S. government customers in 2011, Intelsat General was one of four firms awarded a U.S. Air Force contract to undertake a range of studies showing how the U.S. military can make better use of commercial satellite capabilities. The contract is further evidence that the Pentagon intends to incorporate commercial satellite capabilities into its long-range planning and to make better use of commercial assets already in orbit.

Under the award, Intelsat General is examining how hosted payloads could be used by the military on commercial satellites. The other firms are looking at how commercial firms can augment the government's Ka- and X-band capacity; whether small Ka-band terminals could be supported by commercial satellites for COTM needs and AISR; and ways of providing increased commercial support for Ka-band long track terminals, and for intra-theater low and medium altitude AISR terminals.

As part of the U.S. government's shift in how it buys commercial satellite capacity, Intelsat General was among a number of firms added to the new Future COMSATCOM Services Acquisition (FCSA) contracts for transponder services and subscription services. Intelsat General was among the first commercial satellite operators to be granted this eligibility under the new contract vehicle jointly managed by the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA). The award will permit the Department of Defense to directly acquire transponder capacity and subscription services from Intelsat General during the initial five-year term.

The collaboration of the GSA and DISA creates a central marketplace for all government customers needing commercial satellite communications capacity while at the same time making sure that satellite solutions meet the government's information assurance and security requirements. The GSA estimates that the government will save millions of dollars by being able to purchase satellite communications services directly from providers rather than through transponder capacity brokers.

