Boeing Inertial Upper Stage Places U.S. Air Force DSP Satellite into Orbit

A Defense Support Program (DSP) satellite for the U.S. Air Force and Department of Defense was successfully deployed into orbit today by a Boeing [NYSE: BA] Inertial Upper Stage (IUS) following launch aboard a Titan IV rocket.

The Lockheed Martin Titan IV booster lifted off at 12:01 p.m. EDT from Space Launch Complex 40. Approximately nine minutes into flight, the IUS and DSP satellite were deployed.

"Today's launch was the seventh DSP mission for IUS and the 22nd mission completed since its inaugural flight in 1982," said Paul Bay, Boeing IUS program manager. "There are three launches remaining in the contract with the Air Force, with the last mission scheduled for 2002," he noted. "Boeing is committed to providing support to this important national security program."

DSP satellites are part of a national security system that protects the United States and its allies by detecting missile launches, space launches and nuclear detonations.

For six hours and 45 minutes after separating from the Titan IV booster, the IUS autonomously performed all functions to place the spacecraft into its proper orbit approximately 22,000 miles above the Earth. In addition to firing its two stages, the IUS also performed "rotisserie-like" roll maneuvers to protect the satellite from damage due to extreme heat or cold prior to spacecraft separation.

The mission follows the successful deployment of the Chandra X-Ray Observatory for NASA last July 23.

Compatible with both the Space Shuttle and the Titan IV rocket, the IUS is a two-stage booster that delivers spacecraft into a wide range of Earth orbits beyond Titan IV or Shuttle's capabilities. The IUS can boost up to 5,300 pounds to geosynchronous orbit, and 8,000 pounds out of Earth's gravitational field, and features fully redundant avionics for guidance, navigation and communications.

Boeing assembles and tests the IUS for the U.S. Air Force and NASA at its Kent, Wash., facility, and is responsible for spacecraft integration and checkout, ground operations and launch preparation at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., and launch and mission control operations.

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