Boeing Delta IV to Deliver Defense System Satellite in 2003

Boeing (NYSE:BA - news) will launch a U.S. Air Force defense satellite aboard a Delta IV rocket in 2003, company officials announced Wednesday.

A Delta IV Medium vehicle will place a Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) satellite in a near-polar, sun-synchronous orbit. The satellite -- DMSP-17 -- will be launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), Calif., and is part of a 22-launch U.S. government manifest for payloads aboard Delta IV rockets.

"This launch is a major milestone for the Delta IV program," said Tom Parkinson, division director of U.S. government sales for Boeing Delta Launch Services. "The DMSP is an important part of the U.S. defense system, and this launch continues our path toward becoming the premier launch service provider in delivering highly critical payloads for the government."

The DMSP system of satellites provides real-time meteorological data to Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corps tactical ground stations and Navy ships, enabling military weather forecasters to provide critical data to military commanders.

Circling the earth at an altitude of 450 nautical miles in a near-polar, sun-synchronous orbit, each DMSP satellite scans an area 1,600 nautical miles wide, covering the earth every 12 hours.

Beginning service in 2002, the Boeing Delta IV is the company's newest class of rockets. Designed with state-of-the-art manufacturing and assembly processes, the Delta IV family of launch vehicles consists of five Medium, Medium+ and Heavy variants. In addition to West Coast launch operations at VAFB, the Delta IV will be launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla.

Since 1971, Boeing has provided rocket booster, guidance control software, and launch vehicle support for the DMSP.

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