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EL SEGUNDO, Calif., Jan. 15 /[PRNewswire-FirstCall](#)/ -- The Boeing Company today announced that the U.S. Air Force has authorized the Commonwealth of Australia's provision of US\$234 million for Boeing to complete production of the sixth Wideband Global SATCOM (WGS) satellite.

With this authorization, Boeing is now fully funded for the production of all three WGS Block II satellites, and is on track to deliver the first in this new series in 2011. The first of three WGS Block I satellites went into service in April, and the second is expected to launch in the first quarter of 2009.

Australia is providing funding for WGS-6 as part of a cooperative agreement between the U.S. and Australian governments. A memorandum of understanding signed by both governments in November 2007 gives the Australian Defence Force access to WGS services worldwide in exchange for funding the constellation's sixth satellite. Boeing received long-lead materials funding for WGS-6 in December 2007.

"The arrangement between the U.S. government and the Commonwealth of Australia will benefit both nations, and Boeing is very proud to be providing this vital communications service to the U.S. armed forces and our allies," said Craig Cooning, vice president and general manager of Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems. "This sixth satellite will substantially expand the constellation's overall communications capacity and operational flexibility."

The WGS Block I and II contracts, together valued at US\$1.8 billion, include six satellites, associated ground-based payload command and control systems, mission-unique software and databases, satellite simulators, logistics support and operator training. Boeing also performs final satellite processing and preparations for launch, as well as initial orbital operations and on-orbit testing.

One difference between the Block II and Block I satellites is that the Block II satellites include a radio frequency bypass capability designed to support airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms requiring additional bandwidth.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing [Integrated Defense Systems](#) is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a \$32.1 billion business with 71,000 employees worldwide.

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