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Ms. Grant/17 Jan 2012

Thank you Admiral Greenwood for that kind introduction... Thanks very much to our Canadian friends for hosting this press conference at this beautiful building at the foot of the U.S. Capitol. I would like to read my prepared remarks—

First, I would like to acknowledge and thank Australia, our “first Partner” in the Wideband Global SATCOM System (commonly referred to as WGS) for being here today, Thank you Air Commodore Brown for being supportive of our effort to expand the international Partnership.

Second, I want to thank all our international partners here today for allowing me the honor and privilege of speaking on behalf of the new Partnership.

It is our great pleasure to announce the 12 January 2012 signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding establishing a multilateral Partnership in wideband global satellite communications among Canada, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States.

This agreement builds upon a similar and hugely successful model established with Australia. Like that agreement, this new 6 country agreement was only made possible as a result of the close, trusted, proven relationships among the signatories. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of the Partners in expressing our gratitude to the dedicated, talented team members from each partner nation that propelled this important effort forward with a commitment to a “win-win” outcome.

With your indulgence, on behalf of the US Air Force, I would also like to express our gratitude to our Departmental colleagues from USSTRATCOM, the US Army, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff who were directly involved on the US team and essential to the overall success of the effort.

This 20-year agreement will enable the expansion of the WGS constellation with the future launch of a ninth satellite. It will provide immediate access to all Partners to the three satellites that are already on-orbit. Each satellite has ten times the capacity of a satellite from the legacy U.S. Defense Satellite Communications System. We all look forward to the upcoming launch of WGS-4, scheduled for later this week.

This arrangement is a clear demonstration of our continued commitment to expanding our cooperation in new mission areas and working together to increase our collective capabilities...it allows us to do more together than we could do alone. This partnership strengthens our relationships, bolsters deterrence, fortifies resiliency, provides operational flexibility and enhances our interoperability in an affordable manner. For the US, this is exactly what the 2011 National Security Space Strategy advocates. It also provides the most recent example of how we should strive to do business in the future.

Looking at the past 20 years of major military operations, we’ve found that our coalition efforts have involved 30 partner countries on average, per operation. The underlying message is that international partnerships are critical.

The current battlefield demand for information is as high as it has ever been and is increasing exponentially for the U.S. and our partners who are developing, acquiring, and using systems that rely upon satellite communications. The speed of delivery, accuracy, fidelity, ease of access and security of that information is critical.

With this arrangement, each Partner’s unique level of requirements will be accommodated corresponding to each Partner’s level of contribution. The United States’ contribution to the agreement includes the development, fielding, and operation of 8 satellites, and the launch services and operations for a ninth satellite. Our current partner, Australia, enabled the sixth satellite to be added to the constellation. The new contributions from our multilateral Partners account for up to \$620 million of the approximate \$1 billion cost to expand the WGS System with a ninth satellite. Overall the value of the agreement is approximately \$10 Billion. As a result of this Partnership, WGS is our largest space capability International Armaments Cooperation program, in terms of financial value.

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Earlier today senior military leaders successfully concluded the first multilateral meeting of the WGS Steering Committee. In continuation of these significant events, we look forward to the launch of the next satellite, WGS-4, scheduled later in the week.

This new multilateral WGS Partnership provides an example of how the US plans to continue exploring opportunities to strengthen our existing cooperative relationships and to build new partnerships. These activities will bolster our mutual trust, help to achieve further interoperability for our warfighters, and will increase the capabilities and capacity of all Partners.

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- Thank you for your time and attention.
 - These remarks as well as a summary fact sheet will be available following this press conference. The team of experts here will be happy to take questions at this time.
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