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DISPATCHES

Smile... Russia Successfully Launches Another...



On March 14, 2016, a Russian, civilian-operated, Earth Observation (EO) satellite, Resurs P3, blasted off at 1856 GMT (2:56 p.m. EDT) from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on a five-year mission, giving Russia a fleet of three advanced digital imaging spacecraft in orbit.

The launch was delayed due to an automatic abort that was triggered moments before ignition of the Soyuz rocket's engines that halted the countdown. Such launch scrubs late

in the countdown are rare for the nearly six ton Soyuz workhorse.

The satellite's Soyuz booster steered north from Baikonur and dropped its four, first stage engines about two minutes after liftoff. The second stage core engine and a third stage propulsion system delivered the Resurs P3 satellite to a preliminary orbit about 9 minutes, 21 seconds into the flight, according to a statement by Roscosmos, the Russian space agency. Resurs P3 will collect black-and-white imagery with a resolution of 1 meter, or 3.3 feet, and analysts will resolve objects as small as 3 to 4 meters (10 to 13 feet) across in color pictures.

Russian government agencies responsible for agriculture, the environment, emergency situations, fisheries, meteorology and cartography will be consumers of data from Resurs P3, which will join two similar

satellites—Resurs P1 and Resurs P2—launched in June 2013 and December 2014, respectively. A telephoto camera with a focal length of 4,000 millimeters will capture the highest-resolution images.

Data from the Resurs satellites will aid with disaster response, help authorities update maps, track pollution, track ice in maritime shipping lanes, and detect fields of illegal drugs, according to TsSKB Progress. The 5,730-kilogram (12,632-pound) Resurs P3 satellite hosts a suite of digital cameras.

One camera is tuned to image the Earth in 96 spectral bands, obtaining details on metrics such as crop yield, vegetation health, microbial activity in water, and assessing the impacts of invasive insects on agriculture.

The launch photo of Resurs P3 is courtesy of Roscosmos.

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The Mississippi Rumble



NASA and Aerojet Rocketdyne, a subsidiary of Aerojet Rocketdyne Holdings, Inc., test-fired the Space Launch System's first

RS-25 flight engine, E2059, for 500 seconds at NASA's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi.

The Space Launch System (SLS) is America's next-generation heavy lift launch vehicle, and it will be capable of lifting three times more payload capability than any existing launch vehicle. Aerojet Rocketdyne is the prime contractor for the RS-25 core stage engines that will be used to propel SLS on its eight-minute climb into space.

Engine E2059 is slated to fly on the bottom of the core stage of SLS on its second flight, planned for 2021. Four other flight engines will undergo stage testing by late 2017 in preparation for the inaugural Exploration Mission-1 launch in 2018.

NASA engineers at Stennis Space Center tested RS-25 engine No. 2059 on the A-1 Test Stand and this was the first flight engine for NASA's new rocket, the Space Launch System (SLS), to be tested at Stennis. Numerous other test objectives were successfully conducted, including testing of a rebuilt high pressure fuel turbopump, calibration of facility and engine flowmeters, and testing in conditions replicating flight environments.

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Enhanced Tactical Comms For British Armed Forces

General Dynamics United Kingdom Limited has been awarded £135 million contract from the UK Ministry of Defence to provide enhanced Bowman tactical communications systems to the British Armed Forces.

The BCIP5.6 contract will allow for the Bowman tactical communications equipment currently used by the UK military to receive a series of enhancements and upgrades. These include the roll-out of approximately 12,000 new data terminals and an updated version of the Battle Management System.

The contract creates 50 new jobs as well as sustaining the jobs of 20 highly-skilled engineers at the General Dynamics UK's headquarters in Oakdale, South Wales, with further roles being secured in the company's wider supply chain.

Bowman's secure radio communications, declared in service in 2004, have been used in operations since 2005. The Bowman system has been developed and integrated by General Dynamics UK into more than



15,000 British Army vehicles, together with headquarters, ships and helicopters. The enhanced equipment will be delivered, beginning in 2018, and will support an increased operational tempo.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said, "This is more evidence of what this Government's decision to grow our Defence budget can do for the UK. It will create highly skilled jobs in Wales and help our Armed Forces to keep Britain safe for years to come."

Brigadier Richard Spencer, Head of the MOD's Battlefield and Tactical Communications and Information System delivery team said, "This contract will replace the data terminals and update software across the Bowman system to ensure ease of use, more rapid and robust data services and improved interoperability. This new deal is good news for the Armed Forces and ensures that they will have access to the best possible tactical communications equipment for the foreseeable future."

Chief Operating Officer of General Dynamics UK, Steve Rowbotham, said, "This contract ensures the British Armed Forces have access to the best tactical communications. We are delighted to continue our successful partnership, which has delivered world-class secure tactical communications to the British Armed Forces, and to build on this unique UK sovereign capability."