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Pleiades Business Development

> Can you remind us what the Pleiades programme is all about?

The two Pleiades satellites, the first to be orbited late 2009 and the second 18 months after, will enable us to better serve the requirements of European civil and military users. Pleiades will complement SPOT, offering great agility and a very high acquisition capacity. The two satellites will deliver images with a ground resolution of 50 centimetres and location accuracy better than 10 metres. Another unique feature of the Pleiades satellites is their ability to systematically acquire images combining panchromatic and multispectral viewing modes. The constellation will also provide daily revisits of any point on the globe. Pleiades is there-

fore a key programme that will allow Spot Image to sustain its commercial success and serve very-high-resolution imagery markets.

> What other main technological leap forward will Pleiades bring?

To increase the system's responsiveness, the Pleiades satellites' work plan will be updated three times a day. That is a significant improvement over SPOT, which today only supports uploading of one work plan a day. With three tasking periods, we will be able to reduce the latency between users' programming requests and image acquisition via the three stations on the Kerguelen Islands (for morning passes, the best time to upload tasking commands for Europe, Africa and the Middle East), in Sweden (for midday orbits and coverage of North and South America) and in Toulouse (for evening passes over Asia and Oceania).

> How is the project to set up a civil user centre at Spot Image headquarters in Toulouse coming along?

This user centre will be up and running in 2008 and a Pleiades antenna will be mounted on Spot Image's facility next spring. Teams are already working on Pleiades, but we will certainly be ramping up and mobilizing more personnel when the time comes. The centre will handle everything from image reception to online distribution of new imagery products. It will also integrate the civil operator's management and service tools.

> As a dual-use (civil/military) programme, will Pleiades impose a lot of constraints?

Ninety percent of Pleiades' capacity will serve civil and commercial applications. We are also working with the French space agency CNES and French defence users to establish an operational structure that will enable us to guarantee security of supply to our main customers. ■

"The Pleiades satellite constellation will provide daily revisits to any point on the globe."

D. Letourmy / EMM



ASTROTERRA TO COMPLEMENT PLEIADES

■ Astrium and Spot Image have engaged the first phase of development of the future Astroterra satellite to succeed SPOT 5. Scheduled for launch in 2011, Astroterra will combine SPOT's acquisition capacity and Pleiades' agility, offering the same spectral bands, image formats and image processing infrastructure as Pleiades, only with a resolution of two metres and a wider imaging swath (60 km x 60 km). Astroterra looks set to provide an excellent complement to Pleiades for commercial applications.