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(S//SI//REL TO USA, FVEY) Two New Collection Assets to Greatly Expand MHS Target Coverage

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(TS//SI/TK//REL) Menwith Hill Station will accept two new satellites in 2009 – an ORION spacecraft and a NEMESIS spacecraft. The arrival of these new vehicles will give MHS greater flexibility in missions, surveys, and signals development efforts and provide opportunities for collection, discovery, and sharing. will also provide the Intelligence Community with an opportunity to use Overhead in a non-traditional way for a FORNSAT SIGDEV mission.

(S//TK//REL) currently has a launch date of 13 January 2009. After launch, Alice Springs Mission Ground Station will control as it deploys and drifts westward, with MHS gaining control 59 days later.

(TS//SI/TK//REL) ’s initial mission is a survey of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) line-of-sight microwave towers and emitters. will survey the area drifting from east for approximately 30-45 days. At east, will pick up its new primary mission from: Thuraya collection and Afghanistan/Pakistan exfiltration.

(TS//SI/TK//REL) After spacecraft transfers the Thuraya mission to , will drift 0.1 degree a day west, continuing the PRC survey for approximately 200 more days. After completion of the PRC survey, will take on a new mission targeting Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, greatly expanding MHS’s target and coverage area.
Currently, [redacted] has a launch date of 11 April 2009. [redacted]’s mission will be Foreign Satellite (FORNSAT) collection from space – targeting commercial satellite uplinks not normally accessible via conventional means. [redacted] will provide the Office of FORNSAT a “site in the sky” when denied a site on the ground for collection. Ground processing equipment is being put in place at MHS that can cover both drift/dwell and sustained collection.

The arrival of [redacted] and [redacted] at MHS will open up new opportunities for discovery and will enhance collection efforts for the intelligence community into areas not previously explored.

MHS expects to have full operations on [redacted] 85 days after launch. (Click HERE for larger image.)

SIDtoday Editor’s note: This article is reposted from MHS’s Horizon newsletter, November 2008 edition.