

Iridium, Qualcomm Partner for Satellite-to-Cell Service

On **January 5**, **Iridium Communications, Inc.** (Iridium) announced a partnership with **Qualcomm Technologies, Inc.** (Qualcomm) whereby satellite-compatible chips provided by Qualcomm will enable two-way messaging on Android cell phones using the Iridium satellite network, starting with emergency messaging in the second half of 2023.

SES Obtains EIB Financing for Three Satellites

On **January 11**, **SES, S.A.** announced that it secured a €300m seven-year loan from the **European Investment Bank** to finance the procurement of the **ASTRA 1P**, **ASTRA 1Q** and **SES-26** satellites, which will provide broadcast and broadband Internet services to users in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. All three satellites are currently being manufactured by **Thales Alenia Space** and scheduled to be launched in 2024.

January M&A Round-Up

January 3 – **L3 Harris Technologies, Inc.** announced that it closed its acquisition of the **Link 16 Tactical Data Links** business of **Viasat, Inc.**, concluding the \$1.96b transaction, which was originally announced in October of 2022, months earlier than expected.

January 16 – Satellite solutions provider **Gapsat Development Group Ltd.** announced that it is acquiring **QBX Limited**, a satellite solutions and consulting services company. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

January 17 – **CesiumAstro Inc.** announced that it is acquiring **TXMission Ltd.**, a UK-based developer of high-performance modems for satellites, ground stations and unmanned aerial vehicles. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

FCC to Establish Space Bureau

On **January 9**, the **U.S. Federal Communications Commission** voted in favor of an internal reorganization whereby it will dismantle its International Bureau, which currently manages programs, policies and licensing for international telecommunications and satellite operations, and create a new Space Bureau and separate Office of International Affairs.

The Space Law Review

On **January 5**, **The Law Reviews** published the USA chapter of *The Space Law Review*, authored by the Transportation and Space practice group at **Milbank LLP**. You may access it [here](#).

January Fundraising Activity

January 5 – **NorthStar Earth & Space, Inc.**, a Canada-based start-up that is developing a space-based space situational awareness service, announced that it raised \$35m in a Series C funding round led by **Cartesian Capital Group LLC**.

January 10 – **Capella Space Corp.**, a commercial provider of Earth imagery collected using synthetic aperture radar satellites, announced that it raised more than \$60m in new funding from the **U.S. Innovative Technology Fund**.

January Launch Services Performed

January 3 – **Space Exploration Technologies Corp.** (SpaceX) successfully performed the **Transporter 6** rideshare mission, launching 114 satellites using the **Falcon 9** launch vehicle and recovering the launch vehicle's first stage. Among the satellites included on the mission were 36 **SuperDove** satellites for **Planet Labs PBC**, 12 **SpaceBee** satellites for **Swarm Technologies, Inc.**, six **LEMUR** satellites for **Spire Global, Inc.** and four Earth observation satellites for **Satellogic, Inc.**

January 9 – **Virgin Orbit, LLC**'s first attempted launch mission from the United Kingdom was declared unsuccessful when an anomaly with the second stage of the **LauncherOne** rocket prevented it from reaching orbit. The mission, which was the first-ever orbital launch attempt from the UK, was procured by the **U.S. National Reconnaissance Office** and was expected to deploy nine small satellites.

January 9 – Private China-based start-up **Galactic Energy (Beijing) Space Technology Co., LTD.** successfully launched five commercial satellites on its **Ceres-1** launch vehicle.

January 9 – SpaceX successfully launched 40 satellites for **OneWeb Communications Ltd.** (OneWeb) on a **Falcon 9** launch vehicle and recovered the vehicle's first stage. Through 16 launch missions, OneWeb has now deployed over 80%, or 542 satellites, of its first-generation low Earth orbit broadband constellation that will offer high-speed, low-latency connectivity services.

January 24 – **Rocket Lab USA, Inc.** successfully performed its first mission from the United States, launching three satellites for **HawkEye360, Inc.** using the **Electron** launch vehicle.

January 19, 26, 31 – SpaceX successfully launched batches of 51, 56 and 49 **Starlink** satellites, respectively, each time using a **Falcon 9** launch vehicle and recovering the vehicle's first stage. As part of the third of these missions, SpaceX also launched the **ION SCV009 Eclectic Elena** for **D-Orbit S.p.A.**

To learn about Milbank's Space Business Practice, or view previous issues of the Space Business Review, please visit www.milbank.com.

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