

Minister Fantino Announces the Award of a Contract to Strengthen Tactical Decision-Making and Disaster Relief Capabilities

NR-11.127 - November 2, 2011

RICHMOND, B.C. – The Honourable Julian Fantino, Associate Minister of National Defence, and Chris Alexander, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, today announced the award of a \$31.1-million contract to MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. (MDA) for the building of two Unclassified Remote-sensing Situational Awareness (URSA) systems.

"Once again, our government is giving our Canadian Forces the capabilities they need to protect our sovereignty, while supporting skilled full-time jobs in places like *Richmond*," said Minister Fantino. "Today's announcement is the latest demonstration of our action to strengthen resources for our brave men and women that ensure the success of their missions."

"Space continues to be an important part of the global security equation," said Parliamentary Secretary Alexander. "This high-resolution data strengthens the Canadian Forces' resources through access to near-real time satellite imagery for mission planning. It will also allow them to provide further support to civilian agencies' disaster relief efforts."

"The Government of Canada is committed to providing the men and women of the Canadian Forces with the equipment they need to do their jobs," said the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women. "This contract ensures that Canadian aerospace expertise will be used to assist our Canadian Forces in Canada and abroad."

"This is welcome news for Richmond because it supports approximately 23 skilled local jobs and reinforces the value of our technological expertise," said *Kerry-Lynne Findlay, Member of Parliament for Delta-Richmond East*. "Improving the Canadian Forces' equipment and focusing on the economic recovery are major commitments made by our government, and this announcement is further evidence that we are fulfilling our promises."

The Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) Policy will apply to this contract, which means that MDA will be required to re-invest into Canada 100 per cent of the contract value, further expanding the economic benefits from this procurement in regions across the country. This contract is part of over 60 major procurements subject to the IRB policy which represents over \$21 billion in IRB commitments from major defence contractors.

The awarded contract, for the implementation phase of the Joint Space Support Project (JSSP) supports approximately 23 skilled full-time jobs in British Columbia. Their work will further strengthen the Canadian Forces' mission planning, support of civilian agencies for disaster relief efforts and tactical decision-making when timing is crucial.

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For more information on the Joint Space Support Project and the URSA system, please refer to the following backgrounder: <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/news-nouvelles/news-nouvelles-eng.asp?id=3986>

Backgrounder

Joint Space Support Project – Unclassified Remote-sensing Situational Awareness System

BG-11.026 - November 2, 2011

In the Speech from the Throne on March 3, 2010, then-Governor General Michaëlle Jean noted the commitment of the Government of Canada to fueling Canadian innovation in high-tech industries, including the peaceful development of space. "Canada has been a space-faring nation for nearly 50 years," she stated. "Our Government will extend support for advanced research, development and prototyping of new space-based technologies, especially in support of Arctic sovereignty." The implementation of the Canadian Forces' Joint Space Support Project (JSSP) is one way in which Canada is furthering these goals.

The goal of the JSSP is to enhance the Canadian Forces' access to dependable, timely and accurate surveillance information within their deployed areas of interest. The initial phase of the acquisition of one of two space-related capabilities designed to meet this requirement, the Unclassified Remote-sensing Situational Awareness (URSA) system, was launched on November 2, 2011, with a \$31.1-million contract investment. The contract for the URSA system was awarded following a competitive process which concluded on October 27, 2011. Delivery of the first of two URSA systems is expected by February 2013. A contract for in-service support has not been awarded at this time.

The URSA system is a mobile, deployable system that will allow the download of satellite imagery directly from commercial satellites, including Canada's Radarsat-2, as they pass over areas of interest, providing up-to-date mapping and surveillance of operational theatres. This capability is meant to support deployed commanders in mission planning and in making tactical decisions where time is crucial. The Canadian Forces will be acquiring two URSA systems, one meant for international deployments and the other for domestic operations and training. MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates, Ltd. will be the provider of these systems.

Because the high-resolution imagery obtained by the URSA Systems will be unclassified, these images can be shared with other civilian agencies to assist in disaster relief, security, or other government activities requiring access to timely information derived from space. These images will also be timely, as the URSA systems will be capable of downloading imagery from an overhead satellite in approximately 30 minutes, allowing commanders to make decisions and plan operations with the most up-to-date information available. Moreover, the global and wide-area surveillance aspect of this capability will allow for a more cost-effective utilization of other sensor resources, such as vehicle patrols or unmanned aerial vehicles.

The JSSP will continue to work to achieve the second key capability of its mandate, space situational awareness (SSA), which will provide deployed Canadian Forces elements with information on threats posed by space objects to critical Canadian interests, and operational planning.