MilsatMagazine January 2017

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DISPATCHES

Japan's SDF Launches MHI-Built X-Band Defense Satellite

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd., have launched an X-band defense communications satellite aboard an H-2A Launch Vehicle No.32 from JAXA's Tanegashima Space Center in Japan's southwestern Kagoshima prefecture.

The Kirameki-2 satellite is the first communication satellite for the Japanese Ministry of Defense, which shoulders the mission to upgrade the Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) communications network.

The Kirameki-2 satellite, operating with X-band technology, is one of three defense communications satellites that will replace three civilian satellites that are presently used by the Self-Defense Forces.

The new satellites will facilitate direct communication among units of the Ground, Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces through a high-speed and high-capacity network and serve as a communication infrastructure, local media quoted Defense Ministry officials as saying on the day of the launch.



The JAXA launch of the Kirameki-2 satellite.

The Kirameki-2 is designed to operate over the Indian Ocean and to serve the SDF personnel taking part in U.N. peacekeeping operations in South Sudan and the anti-piracy mission in waters off Somalia, said the officials.

In 2008, Japan's Diet approved a law on general principles for the use of space, allowing non-aggressive defense use of space and overturning a decades-old policy of limiting space development to peaceful uses.

Under the law, the use and exploitation of space should be conducted to serve the security of Japan, relaxing the principle of non-military use based on a parliamentary resolution in 1969 under the war-renouncing Constitution.

The new law changes Japan's policy of space use to "non-aggression" from "non-military" and would allow Japan's defense ministry to launch its own satellites, including surveillance satellites and an earlywarning satellite.

global.jaxa.jp

h2a.mhi.co.jp/en/

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MilsatMagazine is published 11 times a year by Satnews Publishers, 800 Siesta Way, Sonoma, CA, 95476, USA Phone: (707) 939-9306, Fax: (707) 939-9235 © 2017 Satnews Publishers

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