



National Reconnaissance Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: (703) 808-5050

Release 03-19
June 3, 2019

NRO Awards Commercial Imagery Study Contracts

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) today announced the awarding of three commercial imagery study contracts to BlackSky Global (www.blacksky.com), Maxar Technologies (www.maxar.com), and Planet (www.planet.com). Dr. Troy Meink (Director, Geospatial Intelligence Directorate) announced the awards during his presentation at the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Forum 2019 GEOINT Symposium in San Antonio, TX.

“Commercial imagery is an essential part of our current and future overhead architecture and it represents a new way of doing business at the NRO,” Meink noted in his presentation. While commercial imagery has long been a staple for warfighters, Meink emphasized that given the increasingly complex and dynamic national security environment, the NRO plans to take full advantage of the U.S. commercial remote sensing market to build an even more responsive, robust, and affordable GEOINT architecture. “For close to a decade, Maxar (DigitalGlobe) has supported our national security mission,” added Meink. “And now, we are pleased to expand our commercial partnerships with the addition of BlackSky Global and Planet, both of which offer exciting new capabilities.”

The NRO will use these study contracts to assess the performance capabilities of these domestic commercial satellite imagery providers and validate their ability to satisfy U.S. government requirements into the 2023 timeframe. The results will help inform the next generation of NRO’s commercial imagery procurements, expected to commence in late 2020.

In 2017, the NRO became the primary agency responsible for commercial imagery acquisition in support of intelligence and defense missions. Then, in 2018, the EnhancedView commercial imagery contract transitioned from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency to the NRO. The awarding of these new commercial imagery study contracts signifies the latest milestone in the NRO’s commercial imagery acquisition and integration strategy.

-NRO-

The NRO is an element of the Intelligence Community and a Department of Defense agency responsible for developing, launching, and operating America’s intelligence satellites to meet the national security needs of our nation.