

Lockheed signs Vietnam satellite contract

May 12 2006

Vietnam will launch a U.S.-built telecommunications satellite in 2008 that will expand phone service to the rural countryside.

The VINASAT-1 will carry radio, telephone and television signals and will have a coverage footprint that will cover the entire country.

Vietnam Post and Telecommunications Group (VNPT) signed a contract Friday with Lockheed Martin for the nation's first satellite, which will be placed in geosynchronous orbit at 132 degrees east during the second quarter of 2008.

"VINASAT-1 will provide state-of-the-art technology that will help Vietnam enhance its role in modern world trade," said Lockheed Commercial Space Systems President Ted Gavrilis.

VINASAT-1 will be based on Lockheed's popular A2100A spacecraft, which will be equipped with C and Ku-band transponders and have a minimum service life of 15 years.

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Citation: Lockheed signs Vietnam satellite contract (2006, May 12) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-05-lockheed-vietnam-satellite.html>

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