

June 17, 2010

## **Inside the Pentagon**

### **NGA Wrapping Up Bid For Next-Generation Earth-Imaging Capability**

The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency anticipates wrapping up a vendor competition by the end of summer for the EnhancedView program, part of the administration's push to double commercial imagery requirements to assist forces deployed to Afghanistan, an agency official told Inside the Pentagon.

NGA began a source selection in February but cannot reveal details about the bidding contractors or the number of proposals, according to Karyn Hayes Ryan, director of commercial imagery, data, programs and services at NGA.

These assets must be ready in the 2012-13 time frame, Ryan said, declining to discuss budget plans. The winning contractor will have to build new assets or allow NGA to tap into satellites now in orbit, she added.

GeoEye of Dulles, VA, and DigitalGlobe Inc. of Longmont, CO, are competing for the contract, said Mark Brender, spokesman for GeoEye. He is not aware of any other potential vendors. He said GeoEye submitted its bid in March, and is already working with DigitalGlobe to provide satellite imagery and services for NGA's NextView contract. NextView offers "high-resolution, high-quality, commercial satellite imagery," he noted.

Last year the Obama administration urged the "doubling of the requirements" to support unclassified commercial imagery for deployed troops, which led to a request that NGA "go off and procure two additional commercial satellites" on top of "a couple of assets on orbit already," said Ryan. This has evolved into the EnhancedView initiative, she said.

The government's overall push for increased intelligence assets is directly related to operations in Afghanistan and the need to "share with the other countries that we're partnering with," Ryan noted. Right now, the U.S. military cannot create the "mapping and visualization products that we normally do," she said. With EnhancedView's debut, NGA will be able to "map the land [and provide] terrain analysis," which requires "big, large, wide swathes of imagery," as well as help to detect enemy movement and improvised explosive devices, she said.

"Don't get me wrong," she said. "We can't detect underground IEDs with geospatial imagery, but you can find tracks and you can find trails and you can see where the enemies are, as well as the friendlies, to be honest," maintained Ryan.

The United States may be called upon to send a special forces team to "places far away," said GeoEye's Brender, "and the NGA has got to have up-to-date mapping databases everywhere."

Using this kind of technology, GeoEye is able to "not only image but map the location of an object on the surface of the globe to within a few meters of its true location," he maintained. "So

the imagery is more than just pretty pictures; it's map-accurate."

In an EnhancedView environment, the accuracy, ground details and collection capacity will be better, he said.

EnhancedView would also be used outside of wartime activities, Ryan told ITP. The two commercial satellites to which NGA now has access have assisted in post-earthquake Haiti and the British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, she added. Information can be shared with state and local governments instead of "having to declassify and downgrade imagery," she said.

For the oil spill, the agency shared commercial imagery with local governments to outline the expansion of the environmental disaster, and offered access to international imagery to show the depth of the spill, Ryan said.

With Haiti, NGA provided "a lot of overhead looks to really assess the damage, to help people figure out where folks were, to give the overall assessment to the folks on the ground who were trying to save lives or trying to rebuild," she said. -- Fawzia Sheikh

Copyright © 2010 Inside Washington Publishers. All Rights Reserved.

###