Andromeda: The Pentagon Launches the $1.8 Billion Space Area Surveillance

Published on 10/04/2026

EL SEGUNDO, California – In a context of increasing congestion and competition in Earth's orbit, the **U.S. Space Force** has taken a decisive step to secure the safety of its orbital assets. The Department of Defense has officially awarded contracts worth a total of **$1.843 billion** for the **Andromeda** program, the ambitious initiative aimed at revolutionizing American *Space Domain Awareness* (SDA).

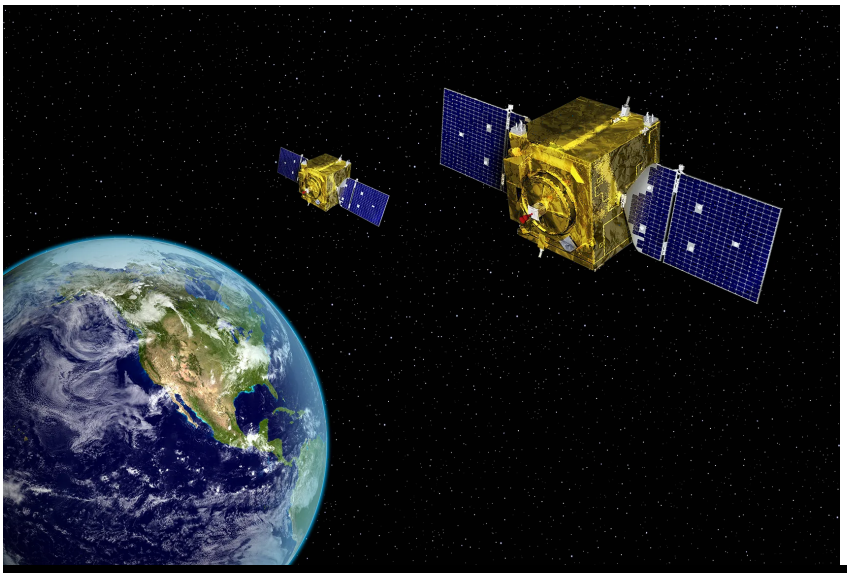
The program, previously known by the code name **RG-XX**, aims to create a network of next-generation sensors and satellites for constant monitoring of objects in orbit, acting as a true "Area Watchman" for the protection of national interests in space.

A Paradigm Shift: Farewell to GSSAP

The heart of the Andromeda mission is the gradual replacement of the **Geosynchronous Space Situational Awareness Program (GSSAP)**. Operational since 2014, the GSSAP has so far been the cornerstone of military surveillance, but the Space Force now aims for more agile, cost-effective, and technologically advanced systems.

Unlike its predecessors, the new satellites of the Andromeda program will be designed to be:

- **More maneuverable:** to approach and inspect suspicious objects.
- **Refuelable in orbit:** drastically extending the operational life of missions.
- **Resilient:** based on a distributed constellation that reduces the risk of a single point of failure.



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The 14 Protagonists: A Mix of Giants and New Space

The selection made by the **Space Systems Command (SSC)** reflects the Pentagon's new strategy: integrating the solidity of historical contractors with the innovation of "New Space" startups. Out of 32 proposals received, 14 companies secured a place in the framework agreement:

Type	Selected Companies
Defense Giants	Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, L3Harris, BAE Systems, Boeing (Millennium Space)
Innovators & Startups	Anduril Industries, True Anomaly, Turion Space, Astranis, Quantum Space
Mission Specialists	Sierra Space, Intuitive Machines, Redwire Space, General Atomics

Contract Structure and Timeline

The contract uses the **IDIQ** (*Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity*) formula, which allows the government to issue specific orders quickly as technological needs evolve, without having to call for new tenders for each phase.

- **Timeline:** Work will continue until **April 2036**.
- **Initial funding:** At the time of award, **$1.4 million** in Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) funds were committed.
- **Operational headquarters:** The program management will be based at El Segundo, California.

Why is Andromeda vital today?

Space is no longer a peaceful and empty environment. With the multiplication of space debris and the development of anti-satellite weapons by adversary nations, the ability to "see" and "characterize" every movement in geosynchronous orbit has become a national security priority.

Andromeda will not only track the position of objects but will provide real-time data on their behavior, allowing political and military decision-makers to distinguish between a normal orbital maneuver and a potential hostile threat.

News link: https://thedefensepost.com/2026/04/10/pentagon-andromeda-program/