

# GA-ASI FLIGHT TESTS LEO SATCOM ON MQ-9A



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*Capability Provides Global Coverage That Enables Operations Anywhere in the World*

SAN DIEGO – 02 February 2023 – On Dec. 22, 2022, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) and the Air National Guard (ANG), with joint support from the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) and U.S. Air Force (USAF), flight tested an MQ-9A remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) equipped with a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite communications (SATCOM) Command and Control system. This groundbreaking capability provides global coverage and connectivity that will enable pole-to-pole operations for GA-ASI's family of RPA – including models such as the MQ-9B SkyGuardian®/SeaGuardian®, MQ-9A Reaper, and Gray Eagle 25M.

"This is truly game-changing for our platforms," said GA-ASI

President David R. Alexander. "Using LEO SATCOM not only keeps GA-ASI aircraft connected from the North Pole to the South Pole to allow operations in the most austere environments, but it will also provide resilient connectivity that allows operators to pass much more data to and from the aircraft."

Early testing indicates LEO SATCOM significantly reduces latency and can be used in all phases of flight. For customers across the MQ-9 family of systems, LEO SATCOM should decrease operational costs, and the smaller hardware footprint will ultimately increase flexibility and reduce future payload integration costs.

The MQ-9A flight test was based out of GA-ASI's Gray Butte Flight Operations Facility near Palmdale, Calif., and followed several weeks of ground testing.