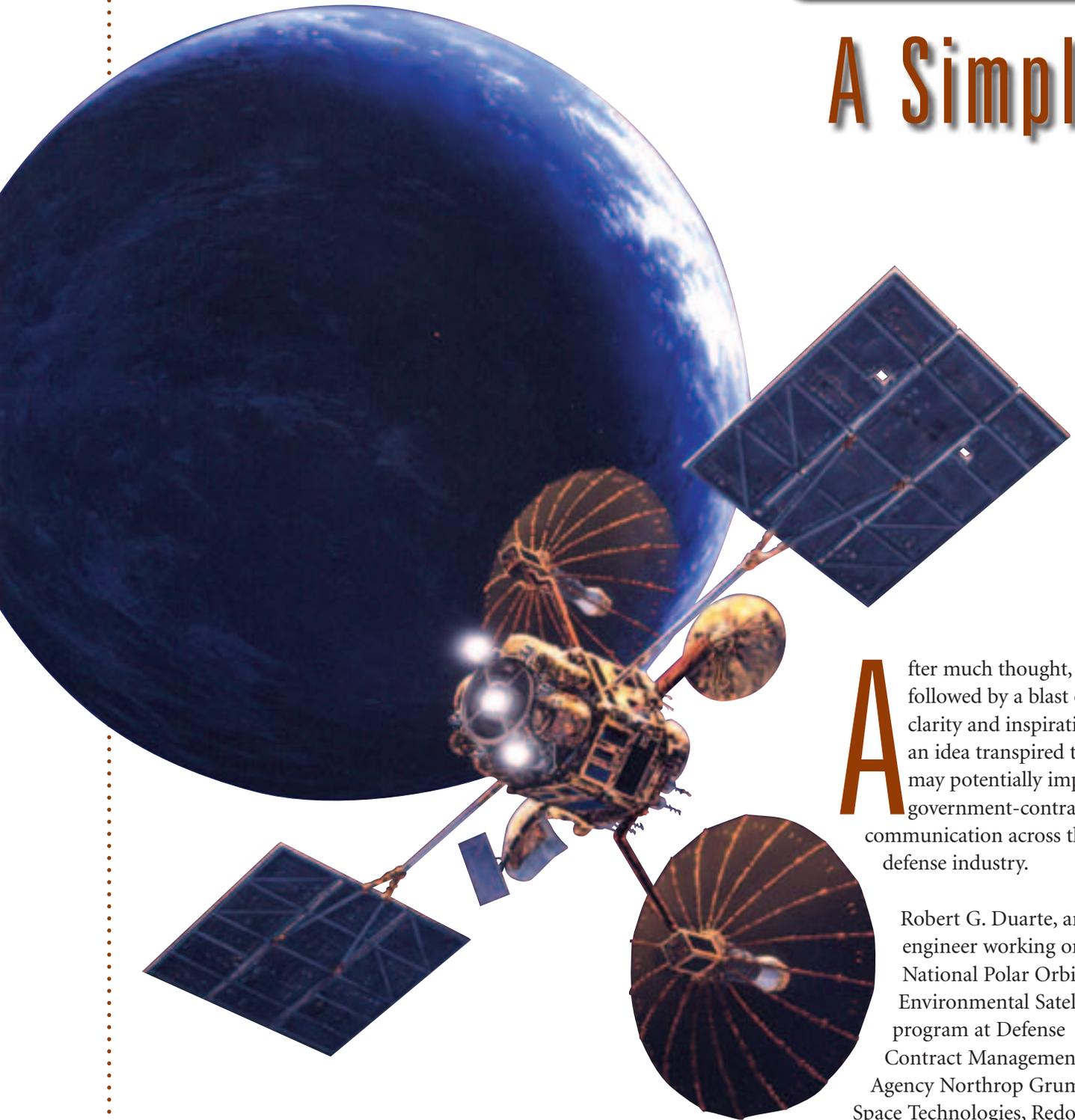




A Simple Id



After much thought, followed by a blast of clarity and inspiration, an idea transpired that may potentially improve government-contractor communication across the defense industry.

Robert G. Duarte, an engineer working on the National Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellite program at Defense Contract Management Agency Northrop Grumman Space Technologies, Redondo Beach, Calif., conceived the idea. "On virtually any major defense contract, the contractor will conduct regularly scheduled briefings explaining the basic status of the program," he said. "Usually these meetings are called

Northrop Grumman Corporation and the Defense Department are working toward developing the country's Space Tracking and Surveillance System. (Image courtesy of Northrop Grumman Corporation)

Idea for Strengthening Partnerships

By Sam Rousso
DCMA Public Affairs

Duarte continued by posing this as his central idea: when DCMA, the customer, and the contractor convene for the PMR, it should be mandated that the government representative ask the contractor representative, "What can we do to make your job easier?"

'program review meetings' or 'program management review meetings.' They may be held twice a year, quarterly or monthly, depending upon the need."

Duarte continued by posing this as his central idea: when DCMA, the customer, and the contractor convene for the PMR, it should be mandated that the government representative ask the contractor representative, "What can we do to make your job easier?" He argues that, over time, the relationship between the contractor and government often evolves into a partnership. "Both parties must perform for success to be achieved," stated Duarte. Sometimes, he added, real issues are not getting necessary exposure.

Duarte's continuous improvement opportunity submission offers specific contractor requirements. "Each contractor presenter, after going through their series of slides, should add one more slide containing a list of items

that their particular group has submitted to the government for action concurrence or approval," he stated. "This may be a test plan requiring government concurrence, or a Class I Engineering Change Request or similar items."

In addition, he specifies that each item should state both its government submission date and a due date. The items should also include a short description of the contractor action that is pending while awaiting a government response. This may include a test that is awaiting initialization or a pending material purchase.

Duarte emphasized that because of the government program management's presence, the PMR is the ideal place to present issues. Presenting them in the PMR could avoid possible delays, especially for those programs that require prompt action by the government. Even small delays on major programs can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

"If we use this forum to present specific information, it will point out directly what the government can do to help the contractor do their job better. It must be remembered that there is a partnership the government now has with its contractors," Duarte said. "It is this partnership that must be acknowledged. The best way for the government to acknowledge this partnership is to perform their share of the work expeditiously."

Since Duarte's suggestion, his idea has become a reality — contractors adopted the suggestion, and implementation began in January. 



Robert G. Duarte, an engineer working on the National Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellite program at DCMA Northrop Grumman Space Technologies, had an idea for improving government contractor communication across the defense industry.