

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of the Application of)		
)		
COMSAT GENERAL CORPORATION)		
)	File No.:	SAT-MOD-19991214-00121
For Modification of Authorization to)		
Operate Space Station in the)		
Mobile Satellite Service)		

ORDER AND AUTHORIZATION

Adopted: August 14, 2000

Released: August 16, 2000

By the Chief, Satellite and Radiocommunication Division, International Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This Order grants Comsat General Corporation (“Comsat”) authority to relocate its Marisat-F2 space station. Specifically, this Order authorizes Marisat-F2, which was not in service at its assigned 72° E.L. orbit location, to operate at 33.9° W.L. Today’s action will allow Comsat to accommodate the operational requirements of the National Science Foundation (“NSF”) for communications between NSF’s South Pole research station and the United States.

II. BACKGROUND

2. On December 14, 1999, Comsat applied for a modification of its authority to operate Marisat-F2 at 72.5° E.L. Comsat requests authority to operate at 33.9° W.L. and provide service via the satellite C/L band capacity¹ in order to meet NSF’s communications requirements.² No parties filed comments with regard to this request.

¹ The C-band refers to the 3700-4200/5925-6425 MHz frequency bands. The L-band is a general designation for frequencies from 1 to 2 GHz. The L-band frequencies Comsat proposes to use are in the "lower" L-band (i.e. 1525-1530 MHz, 1530-1544 MHz, and 1626.5-1645.5 MHz frequency bands). The "upper" L-band is comprised of the 1545-1559 MHz and 1646.5-1660.5 MHz frequency bands. The United States is the only country that distinguishes between the "upper" and "lower" L-band.

3. Comsat states that it needs to relocate the satellite to accommodate communications between NSF's South Pole research station and the United States.³ Since this communications link requires that the satellite be visible to the East Coast of the United States, the satellite must be moved from its current location over the Indian Ocean to a location over the Atlantic Ocean. Comsat proposes to use the following frequencies: 1) C-to-L band —6420-6424 MHz (Earth-to-space) and 1537-1541 MHz (space-to-Earth); and 2) L-to-C band —1638.5-1642.5 MHz (Earth-to-space) and 4195-4199 MHz (space-to-Earth).

III. DISCUSSION

4. It has been Commission policy, in order to accommodate licensees, to grant requests for relocation of a satellite if the requested location is available for reassignment and relocation will not cause unacceptable interference to adjacent satellites.⁴ The nearest operating satellite is an INTELSAT satellite at 34.5° W.L. Inmarsat has satellites with global beams operating at 15.5° W.L. and 54° W.L. Comsat states that agreement has been reached with both INTELSAT and Inmarsat regarding the placement of Marisat-F2 at 33.9° W.L.⁵ No comments were filed indicating that any other operators might consider themselves at risk of unacceptable interference from the requested relocation.

5. Marisat-F2 will only transmit when it is visible to the South Pole.⁶ This only occurs when the satellite latitude is greater than approximately nine degrees south of the equatorial plane. Marisat-F2 is operating at an inclination of approximately 12.8°. The resulting isolation due to the inclination and the greater than nine degrees separation for operation mitigate any likelihood that any other interference concerns might arise.

² See Application of Comsat General Corporation for Modification of Authorization to Operate at 33.9° W.L. (filed December 14, 1999). Comsat is now in the process of drifting Marisat-F2 to 33.9° W.L. pursuant to a grant of special temporary authority. See Letter from Thomas S. Tycz to Robert A. Mansbach granting Special Temporary Authority (February 15, 2000). (upon expiration of the grant made in the February 15 letter, we granted Comsat verbal authority to operate under another Special Temporary Authority on August 11, 2000. This Order and Authorization will supercede the existing Special Temporary Authority).

³ See Application of Comsat General Corporation for Modification of Authorization to Operate at 33.9° W.L. (filed December 14, 1999).

⁴ See DirectTV Authority to Relocate DBS-1 from 101° W.L. to 109.8° W.L., DA 99-1781 (Sept. 1, 1999); Hughes Communications Galaxy Authority to Relocate SBS-6 from 72° W.L. to 74° W.L., DA 95-1736 (Aug. 8, 1995); GE American Communications, Inc. Authority to Relocate Satcom 1R from 139° W.L. to 131° W.L., DA 90-1879 (Jan. 4, 1991).

⁵ *Written Ex Parte* from Robert A. Mansbach, attorney, Comsat, to Magalie Salas, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, August 9, 2000. *Written Ex Parte* from Robert A. Mansbach, attorney, Comsat, to Magalie Salas, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, August 10, 2000.

⁶ Letter from Robert A. Mansbach, attorney, Comsat, to Magalie Salas, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, Mar. 6, 2000.

6. We find that permitting Comsat to operate Marisat-F2 at 33.9° W.L. will serve the public interest. The 33.9° W.L. orbital location is currently unoccupied. Its use by Comsat will allow use of a heavily inclined satellite over which no traffic is currently carried to provide service to a customer with an unusually difficult site from which to obtain service.

III. ORDERING CLAUSES

7. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, that the Comsat General Corporation Request for Modification, File No. SAT-MOD-19991214-00121, IS GRANTED to the extent indicated herein.

8. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the C-to-L and L-to-C band transponders shall only be activated when the satellite is visible to the South Pole and the Marisat-F2 latitude is no less than nine degrees south of the Equator.

9. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Comsat General Corporation shall prepare the remaining information necessary for submission to the International Telecommunication Union, to the extent applicable, to initiate the advance publication, international coordination, and notification process, in accordance with the International Telecommunication Union Radio Regulations. No protection from interference caused by radio stations authorized by other Administrations is guaranteed unless coordination procedures are timely completed or, with respect to individual administrations, by successfully completing coordination agreements. Any radio stations authorization for which coordination has not been completed may be subject to additional terms and conditions as required to effect coordination of the frequency assignments of other Administrations, 47 C.F.R. § 25.111(b).

10. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the assignment of any orbital location to Comsat General Corporation is subject to change by summary order of the Commission on 30 days notice and does not confer any permanent right to use the orbit and spectrum.

11. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Comsat General Corporation is obliged to comply with the applicable laws, regulations, rules, and licensing procedures in those countries it proposes to serve.

12. Comsat General Corporation is afforded thirty days from the date of release of this order to decline this authorization. Failure to respond within this period will constitute formal acceptance of the authorization as conditioned.

13. This Order is issued pursuant to Section 0.261 of the Commission's rules on delegations of authority, 47 C.F.R. § 0.261, and is effective upon release. Petitions for reconsideration under Section 1.106 or applications for review under Section 1.115 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.106, 1.115, may be filed within 30 days of the date of the release of this order (see 47 C.F.R. § 1.4(b)(2)).

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Thomas S. Tycz
Chief
Satellite & Radiocommunication Division
International Bureau