



NEWS RELEASE

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IRAQI AIR FORCE TO RECEIVE EIGHT ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The Iraqi air force’s 70th Squadron will take possession of the first two SAMA CH2000 light air surveillance aircraft, Oct. 29, in Basrah, as the first delivery of an eight – and possibly 16 aircraft – addition to the force.

In standing up the balance of the aircraft, the Iraqi air force will receive two CH2000 airplanes per month – deliveries kicking off in December – with final deliveries completing the \$5.8 million acquisition at the end of March 2005.

The SAMA CH2000 is a two-seat single engine-prop airplane equipped with forward looking infrared – a multi sensor imager offering high performance, precision, and high level imaging . The aircraft will also be equipped with state-of-the art communications systems guaranteeing continuous and secure air and land communications using various band widths. The craft are capable of day and nighttime missions

“This is the second stage of building the air force,” Iraqi Air Force Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Kamal Al-Barzanjy said. “There will be many stages in the future.”

The first stage began a month ago in Basrah with solo Iraqi air force operations commencing with two previously acquired Australian-made SB7L-360 SEEKER Reconnaissance Aircraft. The additions to the SEEKER force will enhance the surveillance capacity to cover the entire country as Iraqi air force missions continue to concentrate on infrastructure and border security.

“We will cover all lands in Iraq from two flight circles based in Basrah and Kirkuk and reaching down to Baghdad,” Al-Barzanjy said. “With these airplanes we can cover pipelines, electrical facilities, and our borders.”

The special imaging capabilities of the new aircraft complement the similarly equipped SEEKER aircraft. Operations will continue out of Basrah with the 70th Squadron crews and will be supported from Kirkuk when a second squadron stands up early next year.

The air force will also continue to coordinate flight missions with Iraqi and Multinational forces on the ground.

Both squadrons are due to be fully operational by Sept. 2005.

“These planes,” Al-Barzanjy said, “will enable us to fly reconnaissance day or night.”

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