Colombia Takes Delivery Of First S-70i™ BLACK HAWK Helicopters With Terrain Awareness And Warning Capability

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida - Sikorsky Aircraft, a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (NYSE:UTX), has delivered to the Colombian Army two S-70i™ BLACK HAWK helicopters incorporating a Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning System (HTAWS) as standard equipment. Colombia is the first country to field S-70i helicopters equipped with HTAWS, which Sikorsky has customized for the unique requirements of the combat assault and utility missions.

“HTAWS will give military operators 360-degree situational awareness in low visibility, day or night, and at altitudes as low as 75 feet,” said Jennifer Caruso, Sikorsky Vice President of Army and Air Force Programs. “As a new baseline capability for all S-70i BLACK HAWK aircraft, this high resolution system will enable aircrews to perform their demanding missions with greater safety and effectiveness.”

Sikorsky delivered the two HTAWS-equipped S-70i helicopters to Colombian Army officials August 13 during a ceremony at the company’s Florida Assembly and Flight Operations facility in West Palm Beach. Colombian aircrew then flew the two aircraft to the Army Special Operation Aviation Military base in Tolemaida, a distance of almost 3,000 nautical miles. The aircraft arrived August 29 after approximately 30 hours of flight.

Colombia is the first South American country to buy the S-70i BLACK HAWK helicopter variant, which Sikorsky first delivered to an international military customer in 2010. These two aircraft will join five other S-70i helicopters in Colombia acquired in January.

Developed in collaboration with Sandel Avionics, the military HTAWS consists of a dedicated sunlight-readable display compatible with night vision goggles located in the center of the S-70i aircraft’s instrument panel. Integrated with the aircraft’s dual GPS/INS system and digital map, radar altimeter, heading system and air data computer, the system displays the GPS location, along with terrain, roads, obstacles and transmission lines. Audible warnings via the aircraft’s internal communications system alert the pilots to obstacles. Pilots can adjust the system to one of four sensitivity modes — Normal, Low, Tactical, and Obstacles Only — designed to reduce false alerts when missions call for flight operations at increasingly closer proximity to the ground.

In addition to HTAWS, the Colombian S-70i aircraft also come equipped with a rescue hoist, an Integrated Vehicle Health Management System that will monitor the aircrafts’ engines, transmission and rotors, as well as additional radios and other unique mission equipment. The contract includes ground support equipment, spares and technical training.

“The delivery of these two S-70i helicopters will help Colombia,” said Col. Felipe Sandoval. “These aircraft are not simply machines, they are the hope of our soldiers, families, and our country. I express my most sincere gratitude and thanks to your team that made this delivery possible.”

Sold directly by Sikorsky to international militaries and government agencies, the S-70i helicopter delivers the same power and lift performance as S-70M BLACK HAWK aircraft. The S-70i model can be customized easily by Sikorsky to specific mission needs, to include radar, ballistic protection, medical litters, extended range fuel tanks, an external rescue hoist, and cargo hook among other features.

Colombia is one of the world’s largest operators of BLACK HAWK helicopters. In addition to the seven S-70i aircraft acquired this year by the Colombian Army, the country’s National Police, Air Force and Army also operate 96 UH-60L BLACK HAWK helicopters.

Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., based in Stratford, Conn., USA, is a world leader in helicopter design, manufacture, and service. United Technologies Corp., based in Hartford, Conn., USA, provides a broad range of high technology products and support services to the aerospace and building systems industries.

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