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## Boeing to sell drone helicopter made by Schiebel

**By Dominic Gates**

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Boeing has announced it will market an unmanned helicopter that flew at the Paris Air Show in June.

The agreement is an early move by Boeing's new Seattle-based Unmanned Airborne Systems (UAS) division to expand its product offerings.

The Austrian company Schiebel makes the drone helicopter, which is 10-feet long and weighs a little over 200 pounds when empty. It typically carries a 55-pound payload of cameras and surveillance sensors for up to 6 hours.

Hans Schiebel, director of Schiebel, said in a statement that his company hopes "to leverage Boeing's depth of experience and proven contacts to provide the S-100 [Camcopter] to U.S. government and military customers."

Boeing UAS director Vic Sweberg said Boeing will enter the S-100 to compete for an upcoming U.S. Special Operations Command expeditionary surveillance system contract.

The "agreement allows us to offer another quality unmanned airborne platform to customers who depend on the intelligence these aircraft can provide," Sweberg said in a statement.

Schiebel has already delivered more than 70 of the camcopters. The total order tally as of June was 137, including 60 for the United Arab Emirates. The French, German, Indian and Pakistani navies all have conducted trials, landing the vehicles on ships.

The camcopter is controlled from a ground station or ship with a data link range extending up to 124 miles and a ceiling of 18,000 feet.

An operator can use a joystick to manually direct the flight or the vehicle can be preprogrammed to fly autonomous missions via a point-and-click computer interface.

Boeing already has a larger unmanned helicopter called the A160 Hummingbird, which Boeing acquired in 2004 when it bought developer Frontier Systems of Irvine, Calif. The 35-foot long Hummingbird can carry payloads of 2,500 pounds and is undergoing flight tests.

Last week, Boeing received a \$500,000 contract from the U.S. Marine Corps. to demonstrate the Hummingbird's application as a military cargo delivery system.

Schiebel's Camcopter is designed for surveillance missions rather than heavy lifting.

In addition to its unmanned helicopters, Boeing's new UAS division also offers the ScanEagle and Integrator unmanned aerial systems developed by Insitu, a wholly owned Boeing subsidiary based in Bingen, Wash., on the Columbia Gorge.

Unlike the helicopter systems, which take off and land vertically, ScanEagle and Integrator are launched via catapult and caught with a skyhook upon return from a mission.

Airbus parent EADS and Boeing's U.S. defense rival Northrop Grumman also offer a large range of unmanned systems, including unmanned helicopters.

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