

SAAB PUTS MARITIME SPY KIT ON TWO NEW BOMBARDIER PLANES

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Sweden's Saab (SAABb.ST) said on Wednesday it plans to put its Swordfish maritime patrol system on two new aerial platforms as demand rises for ways to tackle maritime threats, including the proliferation of submarines.

The move to put an enhanced version of its Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) systems on new airframes in partnership with Canada's Bombardier (BBDb.TO) emerged at the Singapore Airshow as tensions escalated in the South China Sea.

Saab said the system, currently available on the out-of-production Saab 2000 turboprop airliner, would now be offered on Bombardier's Global 6000 business jet and the Q400 turboprop.

"There are several countries that are coming closer and closer to a procurement process and we are carefully working together with several of those countries," Joakim Mevius, head of the business unit for airborne ISR, told Reuters.

Spy planes are on several nations' shopping lists in a region where complex territorial disputes between China and several Southeast Asian nations are fuelling security concerns.

On Tuesday, Saab formally launched another militarized Bombardier business jet, dubbed GlobalEye, after selling the early warning and control system to the United Arab Emirates in

November.

China has deployed an advanced surface-to-air missile system to one of the disputed islands it controls in the South China Sea, Taiwan and U.S. officials said on Wednesday, ratcheting up tensions. U.S. President Barack Obama urged restraint.

On maritime surveillance duties, the Global 6000 aircraft will be able to operate for up to eight hours on patrol and fly up to 1,000 nautical miles from its home base, Mevius said.

The Q400 will be able to stay on patrol for about the same amount of time and up to 200 nautical miles away from home.

Saab predicts more than 100 submarines will be operating in the Asia Pacific region by 2020, driving the need for sub-hunting planes and other types of surveillance.

Boeing (BA.N) is promoting its P-8 converted 737 passenger jet for maritime surveillance at the airshow, Asia's largest.

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