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Sojitz Corporation

Sojitz Signs Purchase Agreement with U.S.'s General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. to Provide Unmanned Aircraft System to the Japan Coast Guard

Sojitz Corporation (“Sojitz”) has signed a contract for the purchase of two MQ-9B SeaGuardian[®] aircraft (“MQ-9B”) for the Japan Coast Guard from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc., the world’s leading manufacturer of unmanned aerial systems based in the U.S.

The Japan Coast Guard patrols Japan’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which is the 6th largest in the world and covers 4.47 million sq. km, or 12 times Japan’s land area. The Japan Coast Guard therefore faces the challenge of efficient and effective surveillance to cover this expansive area. To strengthen its surveillance system for the country’s territorial waters, the Japan Coast Guard has set out to bolster its wide ocean surveillance capabilities and increase surveillance range with new technology in accordance with Policy on Strengthening the Maritime Security System which was decided at a meeting of Ministerial Council in December 2022.



[MQ-9B SeaGuardian[®]]

The MQ-9B is a medium altitude unmanned aircraft with a wingspan of 24 meters and full length of 12 meters. Equipped with multiple sensors, the MQ-9B can fly for over 24 hours and images and video footage from the imaging sensors can be sent to ground in real time. In October 2022, the Japan Coast Guard started flight operations of the first MQ-9B at the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force’s

(JMSDF) Hachinohe Air Base in Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture. In May 2023, the Japan Coast Guard added an additional two MQ-9B aircraft to their fleet. The MQ-9B aircrafts have been widely utilized since their introduction including for coastal surveillance during the G7 Summit in Hiroshima held in May 2023 as well as for search and rescue missions in the aftermath of the Noto Peninsula Earthquake that occurred in January 2024.

The two new MQ-9B aircraft to be acquired through this purchase agreement will be utilized for missions and make use of Kitakyushu Airport's operational base in Fukuoka Prefecture from FY2025.

Sojitz has supplied aircraft to the Japan Coast Guard for maritime patrol purposes in the past and aims to contribute to Japan's public safety and security. Through delivery and operational support of MQ-9B aircraft, Sojitz will continue to support the strengthening of the Japan Coast Guard's security systems.