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The Boeing Company has begun production of the latest model Chinook tandem rotor helicopter, the CH-47SD or "Super D," with rollout scheduled for Oct. 31, 1999. The production decision follows the completion of contract negotiations with an unnamed international customer for six of the new Chinooks.

The Super D Chinook is the new standard CH-47 model. It incorporates several significant system improvements as standard equipment, such as a fully integrated glass cockpit with automated flight controls, and full authority digital engine control.

Although the Super D is aimed primarily at the international market, the rotorcraft will also be available to the U.S. armed forces.

"The Super D is the premier heavy-lift helicopter for the 21st century," said James D. Waterman, CH-47SD program manager. "We are keeping all that is right about the Chinook, and adding producibility and system improvements to ensure the CH-47 remains the world's most reliable and efficient large transport rotorcraft."

The CH-47SD retains the familiar external profile of the CH-47D Chinook, but provides long-range fuel tanks with 2,068-gallon capacity, doubling the operational range of the D-model. In addition, the new Chinook will utilize the longer "radar nose," found on the MH-47E Special Operations Chinook and several international CH-47Ds, which can accommodate radar antennas.

The CH-47SD's cockpit is state of the art, with a fully integrated cockpit management system, including automated flight controls. The new Chinook also is the first model to utilize full-color digital display units. Developed by Boeing and Honeywell, instrumentation includes a complete digital GPS/INS navigation/communication suite with radar altimeter. The cockpit also has provisions for a digital map, forward-looking infrared imager, head-up display, weather radar, and data transfer system. In addition, health and usage monitoring systems are available. Airborne survivability equipment includes radar and missile warning systems and chaff/flare dispensers.

"The SD cockpit design provides full flexibility in a variety of flight conditions, including night and adverse weather, while streamlining the pilot's workload. The CH-47SD uses fully qualified components so aviators can operate with greater precision than ever to meet growing mission demands in tomorrow's military and civil flight environments," said Tim Nichols, SD program avionics manager. "Our integrated glass cockpit management system lets pilots exploit the inherent advantages of the tandem rotor configuration. No other large helicopter can match the Chinook's capacity, economy or capability to handle difficult flight conditions."

The Super D's propulsion system will feature AlliedSignal T55-L-714A engines with full authority digital engine controls. With 4,075 maximum continuous shaft horsepower (3,039 kW), these engines provide output more than eight percent greater than any CH-47D. The 714As engines provide the ability to fly at a 54,000-lb. maximum gross weight at higher density altitudes than the CH-47D.

The new Chinook will carry a three-person crew and standard seating for 37 passengers in the main cabin, although up to 55 troop seats can be installed. A variety of additional "plug-in" option kits are available to configure the Super D for operations on water or in snow, or several specialized missions such as search and rescue, fire-fighting and special operations.

The Boeing Company develops and produces military rotorcraft in services worldwide. Among its products are the CH-47 Chinook, the AH-64D Apache Longbow, the RAH-66 Comanche, and the V-22 Osprey.

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