



GLOBAL HAWK READIES FOR NEW PAYLOAD TESTS

News / Manufacturer



Northrop Grumman has scheduled **flight tests** of three **new payloads** for the **RQ-4B Global Hawk** fleet next year.

The tests are made possible by the development of a universal payload adaptor jointly funded by Northrop and the US Air Force.

In its original form, the RQ-4B lacked the payload attach points to fit two sensors carried by the Lockheed Martin U-2S, the reconnaissance aircraft the Global Hawk is scheduled to replace after Fiscal 2019.

The optical bar camera is used to monitor the Sinai peninsula in Egypt, fulfilling US treaty obligations.

The senior year electro-optical reconnaissance system (SYERS-2) payload is used by the U-2 to collect multi-spectral images, a product that proved useful in the last decade for detecting improvised explosive devices recently buried in the ground.

Both sensors will be demonstrated on board the RQ-4 during 2016, says Mike Lyons, a Northrop business development director. The 544kg (1,200lb) UPA was observed fitted to an RQ-4B on a tour of Northrop's Global Hawk assembly line in Palmdale, California on 10 December.

The SYERS-2 flight test will be performed as a demonstration, Lyons says. The air force plans to install an upgraded version of the sensor, called the MS-177, for operational service.

The MS-177 includes modernized optronics and a gimbaled rotation device, increasing the field of view of the sensor by 20° without needing to change the flight path of the aircraft, Lyons says.

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