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The vehicles are capable of fully autonomous flight and use a common ground control system. All are compatible with NATO standards so the work needed to match Swiss UAVs' products and Saab's helicopter with the common ground system was minimal, taking only three days, Wennstrom says.

Saab and swiss UAV began their partnership in May, agreeing to collaborate on design, integration and testing of all the vehicles.

09/2009

**G-NIUS Unveils Logistics Support Guardium Vehicle**

By Brett Davis

LONDON - Using unmanned vehicles for logistics-such as replenishing supplies for forward-deployed troops-has become an area of intense military interest, and Israel-based G-NIUS hopes to tap into that market with a new variant of its Guardium unmanned ground vehicle.

The company, a joint venture of Elbit Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries, unveiled the Guardium-LS (logistics support) vehicle at the Defence Security Equipment International (DSEI) 2009 show here. Like the original Guardium, Guardium-LS is based on a Tomcar manned vehicle. However, it has two seats, instead of the Guardium's single driver seat (both can be used as either manned or unmanned vehicles). It also has a small flatbed section on the back capable of carrying up to 1,200 kilograms of supplies, armament or even wounded soldiers.

Route proving-driving along roads free of improvised explosive devices-has become a major issue for many militaries, says Noam Segal, G-NIUS' vice president of marketing and sales. With manned vehicles, the tendency is to get through a route as quickly as possible, which ironically can give insurgents more time to plant IEDs. Using UGVs such as Gardium allows "a commander to safely and calmly operate a vehicle over a long period of time," which means "you are there so the insurgents find it harder and harder to implant the IEDs. At the end of the day if you are not there, you are not there."

The vehicle can be commanded from mobile terminals or act in a "mule mode,"where it can autonomously follow a squad unit.

Guardium has been in operation with Israeli Defense Forces since early in 2008, although Segal can't reveal how many have been deployed.

Erez Peled, G-NIUS' CEO, says "the fact that our systems are operated by the Israeli Defense Forces is a major advantage, and I believe that additional customers will follow suit and select our unmanned ground vehicles."

G-NIUS has also been tapped by the IDF to develop Nashon, a next-generation UGV based on the Guardium system. Nashon will be larger and able to provide combat support, not just the security missions handled by Guardium. The development phase, led by the Israel Ministry of Defense's Administration for the Development of Weapons and the Technological Industry (MAFAT) and the Israeli Ground Forces, is scheduled to be completed by 2011.