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Today

## Turkey using drones in N. Iraq with help of Israeli crews

By: Yossi Melman on: 27.12.2007 [10:36 ] (152 reads)

(1879 bytes) [c]

Turkey using drones in N. Iraq with help of Israeli crews

By Yossi Melman, Haaretz Correspondent

Tags: Israel. Turkey, Heron, UAVs

Personnel from Israel's Aerospace Industries are assisting the Turkish army in activating Israeli-made unmanned aircrafts for use in military operations in Kurdish northern Iraq, Turkish sources were quoted as saying in a report to be published Thursday in the Turkish Daily News.

Ten days ago, Turkish television reported that Turkey had begun using the Heron Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), which Israel leased to the Turkish army in a 2004 deal.

The Turkish News Daily quoted a Turkish army source saying that because of a shipment delay on the part of Israeli companies, the Turkish Air Force has been prevented from acquiring crucial intelligence abilities.

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Turkey has accused the Israeli companies of not following through with their end of the deal regarding the sale of the UAVs. According to the report, the Israeli companies have decided to supply Turkey with the UAVs as a temporary solution under a \$10 million lease.

In 2004, the Israeli Aerospace Industries and Elbit Systems won a tender to supply Turkey with the Heron UAVs, a tactical drone that is already in operational use in the Israel Defense Forces, beating out competition from the United States and France.

According to the deal, the Aerospace Industries was to supply the UAVs, while Elbit was to provide the ground stations and communications systems for the drone.

The first shipment was initially set for October 2007, but has been postponed until the spring of 2008.

A source in the Aerospace Industries said in response to the report that the delay is not the fault of the Industries, and vowed that it would fulfill all obligations to which it signed.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/938721.html>