GENERAL AVIATION

Chinook

suffers

China

setback
PHILADELPHIA

Sales of the Boeing Helicopter
Commercial Chinook look
unlikely in the short term, in
spite of a well publicised and
apparently well received two-
month demonstration tour in
China last year.
Reorganisation of the coun-
try's aviation administration
has scuppered any immediate
sales hopes, and a major
opportunity to show the heli-
copter's firefighting capability
was lost on the China tour
because of the reluctance of
Chinese authorities to allow
the machine near the
Soviet border, says Jerry Van
Sickel, Boeing's director of
sales for the Asia/Pacific
region.
The Boeing official
shrugged off suggestions that
the Soviet export sales push at
the recent Asian Aerospace
Show could provide new
competition. He says that the
rudimentary nature of Soviet
helicopters is a drawback,
particularly to civil sales.
Tourist flights over the Great
Wall of China in a Mil-8 have
been unpopular, Van Sickel
claims.

A strong sign that the
Soviets have adopted a
new hard-headed commercial
approach was the detailed
briefing given to trade visitors
on products, notably the
Antonov An-124, which they
say may be leased to a British
freight operator.
Boeing claims, however, to
have won an order for the
military CH-47 Chinook,
believed to involve up to five
aircraft, from an unnamed
customer in Asia.
"Under the terms of the
contract, we can't reveal the
customer, but they intend
to go in for heavy-lift in a
big way, and we expect
a follow-on order, perhaps
for six aircraft," says
Sickel.
A hindrance to commercial
sales may be the ready avail-
ability of several used
machines.

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The Chinese liked the Chinook, says Boeing

Aerospatiale opens maintenance base
CHANGI

Samaero has invested $4
million in a maintenance and
sales base next to Singapore's
Changi Airport to boost its
image in the potentially
highly lucrative Asian market
for civil and military heli-
copters.
Owned by Aerospatiale,
Ofema (a French equipment
export agency), and Singa-
pore's Samco (a maintenance

company), Samaero's facility
will hold $20 million of stock
and employ 80.
Asian offshore support
operations have not slumped
as badly as those elsewhere,
and continue to provide sales
prospects for civil helicopters.
The combined Asia/Pacific
region is the world's largest
market for military heli-
copters, says Samaero man-
aging director Philippe
Harache.

Beech predicts
market shift

WICHITA ~

The Pacific Rim will supplant
Europe as Beech's prime
export market within five
years, according to a senior
company official.
The difference will be that
most sales will be to govern-
ments rather than to
corporations, says sales and
marketing services vice-
president George Rodgers.
"The outstanding attributes
of the European market are
being challenged for the first
time."

Reflecting the expected
shift, Beech is demonstrating
the Beechjet in Australia this
month, at the end of a lengthy
sales tour of South East Asia.

SAR study
continues

LONDON ~

The UK Ministry of Defence
(MoD) is continuing its study
into the privatisation of
search and rescue (SAR)
services currently provided by
the Royal Air Force and Royal
Navy.
A privatisation proposal
met strong opposition in the
House of Commons recently,
but the move offers the pros-
pect of saving almost half of
the £50 million annually
spent on military SAR units,
says Bristow Helicopters.

Samaero brought local flavour to the opening ceremony

FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL, 13 February