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GA-ASI announced that it will conduct maritime surveillance flight demonstrations from May 2018 onward using the GA-ASI manufactured MQ-9 Guardian RPA

It was announced on 17th of April that GA-ASI is planning a demonstration test of the use of unmanned aircraft based on Iki airport and it will take about three weeks during May if approved by the government.

The Guardian will collect data on the assumption of support such as weather, disaster, ocean observation and salvage rescue. Hirokazu Shirakawa, the mayor of Iki City, who was present at the interview in Tokyo, said, "I heard that it is safe for peaceful use, it is significant for revitalizing Iki."

The unmanned aerial vehicle General Atomics Aeronautical Systems (GA-ASI) company is planning to demonstrate is "the first demonstration flight of a drone capable of long-range cruising". According to the company, the model used is the "Guardian" developed for maritime reconnaissance (length of both wings 24 meters, total length 11 meters). It is remotely controlled from the ground and can cruise up to 40 hours. Terry Kraft, Vice President, said the Guardian is "effective in Japan where the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is wide and the coastline is long, it is useful for monitoring illegal operations and illegal entry, 4 ~ 6 aircraft can cover all of Japan."

One aircraft will be used and 10 flights are planned for about 5 hours each time. Shirakawa-mayor said, "Iki gained worldwide attention in the first attempt in Japan, leading to an increase in exchange population."

The aircraft may also be introduced in the Indian Navy. Regarding future military use, Kraft vice president said, "It will be decided by the Japanese government."