

Ultrafast Helicopters

Sagar Meghani:

It's called the X2, and Sikorsky says it has flown faster than any other helicopter, reaching more than 250 knots in a test run nine months ago (or about 288 miles per hour), with pilot Kevin Bredenbeck at the controls.

Kevin Bredenbeck:

And I actually had something profound to say at that-that stage, you know, to the team, and something historical, but I think some people have seen the tape, it's kind of hilarious. Wow, that was nice. I mean what do you say?

Sagar Meghani:

Sikorsky brought the chopper here to the Pentagon to show off its technology, including something that sets it apart from most helicopters you're used to seeing.

Jim Kagdis:

We don't have a tail rotor. So on the back end of the aircraft, we have a high-performance pusher prop, which allows us to go really, really fast, similar to a fixed-wing aircraft.

Sagar Meghani:

Sikorsky's hoping the military can find some use for this: a mock-up of what it calls an S-97 Raider, morphing the X2 technology into a light tactical helicopter, which it says not only flies fast but can hover at more than ten thousand feet, a much higher altitude than the Pentagon's current fleet.

Sagar Meghani:

It's a long way from Igor Sikorsky's days as a helicopter innovator more than seventy years ago. As Kevin Bredenbeck reflects on his own fast flight, he's hoping somebody finds some use for the X2, saying it could be a game-changer for today's military.

Kevin Bredenbeck:

There's more to realize here with this technology and speed, and-and I can't wait till we do it, you know. I hope we don't wait twenty years, waiting for a big contract, uh, to realize what we got here.

Sagar Meghani:

Sagar Meghani, The Associated Press, the Pentagon.

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