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GRIPEN INTERNATIONAL AWARDED CONTRACT FOR HUNGARIAN AIR FORCE FIGHTERS

FMV (The Swedish Defence Materiel Administration) has awarded Gripen International, owned jointly by Saab of Sweden and the United Kingdom's BAE SYSTEMS, a contract for the adaptation and support of Swedish Air Force Gripen swing-role fighters designated for use by the Hungarian Air Force.

Gripen International will manage the contract as prime contractor and award a number of sub-contracts to ensure the Hungarian requirements are met. The main sub-contract will be to Saab AB (approx 1 billion SEK) to adapt the aircraft to Hungarian needs and support the aircraft over the 10 year service period.

The company will be responsible for adapting Swedish Gripen aircraft to the specification required by the government of Hungary for the modernization of its air force to meet national and NATO defense needs. The contractual agreement was signed in Stockholm today.

It follows completion of the 10 year lease contract for 14 Gripen fighters, signed in Budapest, by Mr Ferenc Bese, ASIB in the Hungarian Ministry of Defence and Major General Staffan Näsström, FMV

"Swedish Air Force variants of Gripen have already operated successfully with aircraft from NATO forces in PFP exercises. Our work will ensure that Hungarian Air Force Gripen fighters are fully NATO compatible and interoperable and will allow the Hungarian Air Force to maximize its contribution for NATO's collective defense," said Ian McNamee, managing director, Gripen International.

Under the government-to-government lease agreement, 14 Gripen fighters will be delivered to Hungary from Sweden in batches, beginning late 2004. The Hungarian Air Force's Gripen squadron will become fully operational during 2005.

Initial training of pilots and technicians will be carried out in Sweden, while UK Government support will provide Hungarian aircrew and other personnel with English language training and experience of NATO operations, as required.

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Notes to editors:

Gripen is designed to meet the demands of all current and future threats, while at the same time meeting strict peace-time requirements for flight safety, reliability, training efficiency and low operating costs.

Already in service with the Swedish Air Force, which has ordered 204 aircraft (including 28 two-seaters), Gripen has also been ordered by the South African Air Force (28 aircraft) and has also been selected to meet the national, NATO and European defense needs of the Czech Republic which has a requirement for 24.

Gripen International has begun negotiations with the Polish government, which is looking to procure up to 60 new fighters. An offer has been submitted to the Brazilian government based on the supply of 24 new Gripen and a response to the Austrian governments RFP (Request for Proposals) for 30 new multi-role fighters will be submitted in January next year.

Pictures of Gripen and archived news is available from www.gripen.com