

SOUTH AFRICA SELECTS SAAB AND BRITISH AEROSPACE

Gripen and Hawk win preferred bid negotiations

The Government of South Africa today announced the selection of Saab and British Aerospace as the preferred bidders to supply multi-role defence and training aircraft to the South African Air Force (SAAF).

This first export success for the Saab - British Aerospace joint venture - which was announced at the Paris Air Show in 1995 - is also a major milestone for Gripen, the world's first fourth generation, highly agile, multi-role aircraft in operational service. It is now in service in the Swedish Air Force and currently under consideration by a number of air forces in Eastern Europe, South America and Asia Pacific.

British Aerospace has offered Hawk, the world's most successful jet trainer, as the ideal combination with Gripen for the capability, versatility and reliability demanded by the South African Air Force.

Hawk, recently selected by Australia and Canada, will give the South African Air Force an advanced jet trainer to match the outstanding performance of the Gripen. Hawk is the most cost-effective fast jet trainer available and over 750 aircraft have been ordered or selected by 17 customers worldwide.

British Aerospace Chief Executive John Weston said in a statement today : "This important development in the bid to supply a recognized front-line air force with the best equipment package available reconfirms our belief in the benefits of partnerships and is a valuable endorsement by a very sophisticated international customer.

"With the South African Government we will now develop our earlier discussions on industrial participation which will bring added advantages to our companies as suppliers of solutions to the most demanding customers, and to South Africa as an emerging high technology industrial partner.

"British Aerospace and Saab are both confident that detailed contract negotiations will also begin in the very near future."

"This very welcome confirmation by the South African Government comes after one of the most sophisticated, detailed and exhaustive tendering processes we have experienced. We look forward to a long and successful partnership with South Africa."

Saab Chief Executive, Bengt Halse, said: "This is a significant package which supports the South African government's ambition to boost trade and investment, revitalize South Africa's economy and create thousands of jobs."

"It is my understanding that this is the most comprehensive single trade and investment package ever proposed to South Africa coupled with the provision of an appropriate and cost-effective defence solution."

Press kit and photos are also available on www.gripen.saab.se. For further information, please contact:

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