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PRESS INFORMATION

Handläggare *Handled by*

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Datum *Date*

6 September, 2002

Referens *Reference*

CU 02-51E

Saab delivers latest Gripen, the first JAS 39C for Sweden

At a ceremony in Linköping today, Saab handed over the first JAS 39C Gripen to Sweden's Defense Materiel Administration (FMV). This latest JAS 39C version adds a host of new capabilities to the Gripen, and is almost identical to the aircraft intended for export.

Åke Svensson, Chairman of the JAS Industry Group and Managing Director of Saab Aerospace, handed over aircraft 39.208 to Birgitta Böhlin, Director General of the Swedish Defense Material Administration (FMV). The ceremony was followed by an air display for about 300 specially invited guests.

"The introduction of the JAS 39C shows that Sweden is on the absolute cutting edge of technology. In addition, we have undertaken a cost-effective development effort that has benefited both the Swedish and export Gripen programmes. This is a milestone in the history of the Gripen," said Åke Svensson, in his address.

In addition to in-flight refueling and onboard oxygen generators, the latest version of the Gripen has large screen, full color displays in the cockpit, a strengthened wing structure, the ability to carry new types of pylons and new software in its computers. This combination of advanced technology and increased capabilities, brings a step change in the operational effectiveness of the aircraft over a wide range of missions.

"It was natural for the industry, the Swedish Defense Material Administration and the Armed Forces to seek the greatest possible commonality between the developed JAS 39C for Sweden, and the export version. This means that we have obtained a further improved version of the Gripen earlier than was originally planned," said Birgitta Böhlin, as she accepted the first aircraft.

The initial version of the Gripen, the JAS 39A, was delivered in 1993. Three years later came the first two-seat version, the JAS 39B. The arrival of the JAS 39C will facilitate the manufacture of all the remaining Gripens for the Swedish Air Force, since they will be almost identical to the aircraft produced for export customers.

"Today's delivery of the JAS 39C, and its introduction into the Air Force, will increase our capability for technical and operational participation in the international arena," said Major General Mats Nilsson, the Inspector General of the Swedish Air Force, in his address.

Saab is one of the world's leading high-technology companies, with its main operations focusing on defense, aviation and space. The group covers a broad spectrum of competence and capability in systems integration.

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For further information on the Gripen: www.gripen.com, www.mil.se/flyg, www.fmv.se

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