

Arexis Escort Jamming Pod Begins Tests Ahead of Flight Trials – JED, May 2019

– *By Richard Scott* –

Saab's business unit EW has begun to perform ground qualification of a prototype low-band escort jamming pod. The system, which is being developed as part of its wider Arexis family of fast jet EW equipment, is being developed to meet the challenge posed by advanced Russian air defense systems.

The company's EW business unit plans to begin flight testing of the demonstrator system before the end of this year.

The Arexis jammer concept, which was originally introduced by the company in 2017, comprises a family of self-protection, escort jammer and escort jammer extended capability variants. The family of solutions leverages from technology building blocks already in development for the MFS EW self-protection suite developed for the company's JAS 39 Gripen E fighter. These building blocks include ultra wideband digital receivers and digital radio frequency memory devices (DRFMs), gallium nitride (GaN) solid-state active electronically scanned array (AESA) transmitters, interferometric direction finding systems and high speed digital signal processing architectures.

The Arexis pods will be flown in an escort role and will jam early warning radars in support of strike packages. The pod incorporates L band and S band GaN-based AESA antennas in its fore and aft sections. It also features large externally mounted VHF and UHF fin antennas. This version, weighing less than 350 kg, has been specifically designed for integration with single-engine fighters, such as the Gripen.

In 2017, Saab decided to fund the design and integration of a

prototype Arexis system at the company's Järfälla, Sweden, facility. After completing environmental testing in the coming months, the company plans to commence a ground trial phase at Järfälla later this year. Flight testing is planned to follow at the end of 2019 on a Gripen D aircraft.

According to the company, the Arexis escort pod draws less than 5 kW of power from the host aircraft. However, the company recognizes that some aircraft will be hard pressed to provide sufficient electrical capacity to power the jammer. As a result, Saab has undertaken engineering studies for a larger, self-powered pod with extended capability. This solution will also incorporate a plug insert for a ram air turbine.

In addition to the Gripen, Saab is offering the Arexis escort jammer pod for other fast jet platforms, including the Eurofighter Typhoon, which has already been identified as a key target platform. ♦

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