

GA-ASI Adds SAAB Airborne Early Warning Capability to MQ-9B



New Capability Will Transform Airborne Early Warning Access and Affordability for MQ-9B Customers

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SAN DIEGO – 15 June 2025 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) is partnering with Saab to develop Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) capability for its line of MQ-9B Remotely Piloted Aircraft, which includes the SkyGuardian and SeaGuardian models, the United Kingdom’s Protector, and the new MQ-9B STOL (Short Takeoff and Landing) model currently in development. GA-ASI plans to fly AEW on MQ-9B in 2026.

“High and low-tech air threats both pose major challenges to global air forces,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “We’re developing an affordable AEW solution in cooperation with Saab, the leading provider of AEW&C systems, that will

transform our customers' operations against both sophisticated cruise missiles and simple but dangerous drone swarms. We're also making AEW capability possible in areas it doesn't exist today, such as from some navy warships at sea."

GA-ASI will pair Saab's AEW sensors with the world's longest-range, highest-endurance unmanned aircraft system (UAS), the MQ-9B. At sea or over land, the AEW mission package on MQ-9B will put air dominance within reach at a lower cost than legacy platforms.

The MQ-9B AEW solution will offer critical aloft sensing to defend against tactical air, guided missiles, drones, and other threats at a fraction of the cost of manned platforms. Operational availability for medium-altitude long-endurance UAS is the highest of any military aircraft, and as an unmanned platform, its aircrew are not put into harm's way. AEW for MQ-9B will augment existing AEW fleets by extending their effective ranges. It also gives air forces that need AEW, but lack legacy platforms, a powerful and affordable means to counter threats.

GA-ASI and Saab's AEW offering will span a wide range of applications, including early detection and warning; long-range detection and tracking; simultaneous target tracking and flexible combat system integration, all over line-of-sight and SATCOM connectivity.

MQ-9B is the world's most advanced medium-altitude, long-endurance UAS. GA-ASI has MQ-9B orders from the United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada, Poland, Japan, Taiwan, India, and the U.S. Air Force in support of the Special Operations Command. MQ-9B has also supported various U.S. Navy exercises, including Northern Edge, Integrated Battle Problem, RIMPAC, and Group Sail.