

Rapid HIMARS Deployment to Remote Location Demonstrates Distributed Lethality



The U.S. long-range artillery rocket system HIMARS is launched on Swedish territory. *Joel Thungren/Försvarsmakten*

GOTLAND, Sweden – Sweden and the United States conducted a recent exercise to deploy a mobile rocket launcher to a remote location and quickly engage targets.

Both Swedish and American C-130 Hercules aircraft demonstrated the ability to land on roads in a remote location on the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea Oct. 23.

A U.S. MC-130J Commando II Special Operations aircraft carried a Wisconsin Army National Guard M142 HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) long-range artillery system on board. The HIMARS was promptly unloaded and assembled for firing, then loaded onto the Swedish C-130H (designated as a TP 84 in the Swedish Air Force) and flown to another location in the northern part of the country, escorted by Swedish air force JAS 39 Gripen fighters, for a live firing event. The launch was successful.

According to the Swedish armed forces, “Within a few minutes, the system was assembled and ready to launch. It was then loaded on board the aircraft again and transported up to northern Sweden to demonstrate live firing. It was the first time this feature was fully exercised.”

“During the ongoing special forces exercise, new capabilities and weapon systems have been tested to enhance the joint operational capability in the vicinity of Sweden,” said a statement from the Swedish Ministry of Defense.

“Everything went very well. The joint exercises conducted this past weekend demonstrate how far we’ve come in our cooperation with the U.S.,” said Swedish Army Lt. Gen. Michael Claesson, Sweden’s chief of joint operations.

Gotland is Sweden’s largest island, and one of tens of thousands of islands strategically located in the Baltic Sea. Sweden is a neutral and independent country, and not a member of NATO treaty. It does, however, follow NATO military procedures and frequently participates in NATO and U.S. bilateral exercises.

The exercise demonstrates the ability to rapidly deploy lethal capabilities to remote locations, a key to the Navy and Marine Corps distributed maritime operations concept.