

Country report from SPAS, Sweden for the ENAAT - meeting March 28-29 1998 in Amsterdam

SPAS published an article reviewing what has happened during the last years with Swedish arms export policy and the conclusion is that it has become more liberal. The introduction of the new authority, the National Inspectorate of Strategic Products, who is governing the decisions on armsexport licences, and the new Minister for Trade, Leif Pagrotsky, has started this new trend.

The government have not been submitted one case of export permit since they declared that they only should be given the most important cases, NISP takes care of it mostly by itself.

The parties in the Export Control Council (members of parliament) do not have to have consensus on every deal they are submitted as was the case before.

During the period of the former Minister of Trade the Gulf states were closed for export of Swedish arms but now they have been opened up again. Arms sales to Indonesia and the Phillipines that the former Minister was against has been pulled through.

Another new thing is that arms products are being developed solely for export.

Swedish companies are now merging with for instance French companies which leads to the export of arms to countries not allowed in Swedish policy.

The former Minister of Trade was against the expression "follow-on-delivery" since it can be used very widely and give a liberal interpretation of the arms export policies. The new Minister has approved arms deliveries to Indonesia on the basis that they just were follow-on-deliveries.

The current trend is that the number of export permits that are being granted has increased.

EU Code of conduct on arms trade

Since the conference in Stockholm in November the French and the British governments has made a draft for the code. SPAS together with other Swedish organisations got hold of a copy from the British organisation Saferworld and we went to complain about it to our government. What we know now is that our government together with some others has protested against the code and asked for a better and more restrictive one. SPAS has together with other Swedish organisations sent letters to our government and to the British and French demanding them to make a much better code, and to open up for a dialog on this.

Jas Gripen to Chile

SPAS has concentrated a lot of work on trying to prevent our government from selling Jas to for instance Chile. In this work we could actually use the EU code as an argument. It is chapter 4 in the code that comes into question, it's called "Preservation of regional peace, security and stability", the last part of it reads:

"The need not to affect adversely regional stability in any significant way will also be considered. The balance of forces between neighbouring states, their relative expenditure on defence, and the need not to introduce into the region new capabilities which would be likely to lead to increased tension, will all be taken into account."

SPAS has carried through several actions against our government concerning Jas to Chile, and we have been in contact with the former president of USA Jimmy Carter, since he has been opposing the deal. It is still uncertain weather the deal will be carried trough but the Swedish government has not pulled back it's selling initiatives, eventhough the critique has been massive, and still is so.

Landmines

SPAS is continuing our work with the British organisation, MAG (Mines Advisory Gruop) aiding in the clearing of mines in Kurdistan. We are also getting into work on consultative basis with an education center, SWEDEC, who are training personel for mine-clearence.

Bofors was about to develop an artificial dognose to smell mines but they decided to close down the project since it wasn't profitable enough. But a newly started company has bought the idea and is now going to continue the work on the dognose. They have asked SPAS for help with doing this and we have decided that we will help them. As it has turned out SPAS is now the only organisation in Sweden that still is working on the problem with landmines, now when the actual work can begin.

Indonesia

Bofors applied for an export permit to Indonesia with things they labeled as follow-on-delivery but they got a rejection from the government (NISP).