



SWEDISH PEACE AND ARBITRATION SOCIETY

Country report from SPAS on the Swedish arms trade

To the ENAAT meeting in Brussels, Belgium, December 2001. Covering the time since the Nyköping meeting May 2001 until now.

Clean investments

As we have written in earlier reports we did last fall conduct a small campaign for clean investments regarding the pension funds. This summer the major fund administrator, the state owned 7 AP-fund did reveal their new ethical principles. Companies that in some ways broke against major international conventions are to be banned. Spas then gone through their holdings and came to the conclusion that they invested in the seven biggest arms producing companies in the world (14 of the 20 biggest). We wrote an article about it and later on with a meeting with them we propose that they, at least, do not invest in companies that produce nuclear weapons or systems for those weapons...

Constitutional committee

The Committee on the Constitution scrutinises the work of the Government and its ministers. Every year since at least 1990 the committee have dealt with issues that concerns arms trade. This year two reports for examination were sent in to the committee. The first was as a response to a report from Spas regarding Swedish arms export to ten countries that conduct severe human rights abuses. The second was a response to the easing up of the EU embargo towards Afghanistan as I wrote about on the ENAAT list.

Some questionable deals

One of the biggest news papers in Sweden have written several longer articles about the Swedish arms export this fall which has created some debate. One major thing is that Boforsdefence has got the political acceptance to deliver up to 3000 new versions of the howitzers (worth some 1,2 billion €) originally exported to India in the late 80's. The original deal was about some 400 howitzers so the debate has been if this really can be seen as covered by the original deal. Another discussion is how long the term "follow-on deliveries" is to be stretched since the new howitzers is an upgraded version. If the deal comes to a closing, which is far from decided, most of the howitzers will probably be produced on license basis in India.

Another affair is that Saab Bofors Dynamics has got acceptance to export some 100 Robot 70 to Bahrain. There has been some interesting debate going on after this reveal. The affair originates in the 80's. Spas did report Bofors for smuggling Robot 70 through Singapore to Bahrain in 1984. Eventually the directors of Bofors got fined in court 1990. In the mid 90's a new law was introduced which said that follow-on deliveries to weapons that earlier had been smuggled should not be allowed. So, the proposal is now instead to replace the weapons that has been smuggled with "new" and start it all over from the beginning, so to say...

Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society – www.svenska-freds.se

Address: Box 4134, 102 63 Stockholm, Sweden **Phone:** + 46 (0)8 - 702 18 30

Fax: + 46 (0)8 - 702 18 46 **E-mail:** info@svenska-freds.se

The Gripen campaign

“Unfortunately” Saab/BAE did not succeed to sell Gripen to Chile as they have hoped for. They chose F-16 instead. However Saab/BAE is now interested in selling the plane to Brazil instead. Other countries they are working on is Czech republic, Poland and Austria. Hungary has this November decided to lease some 14 planes from the Swedish defence, which have realized that they have ordered too many. They will lease them from 2004 for a period of 10 years with an opportunity to buy them afterwards.

The Framework agreement

As we suspected the Framework agreement will be a ground for future similar agreements with other countries. One example of that is the agreement from June 9 this year between Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. The agreement will be decided in the Swedish parliament December 5. The agreement is in general a copy of the Framework agreement (Lol).

The Lol-agreement is not only spreading in to other countries but also to other areas. One example is the agreement between the six Lol countries regarding further development of war plane development, the so called ETAP-programme, that was signed November 19.

Revision of rules

Beside this quite negative report we have one possibly positive development. The government are right now preparing a revision of the Swedish regulations regarding arms exports. According to the responsible official it will be a broad revision that will cover most issues regarding Swedish arms trade and its regulations. The first assumption is probably that they want to harmonize the Swedish regulations with other major EU countries, i.e. make the Swedish regulations more “liberal”. However the foreign affairs committee has stated that they want this revision to consider including a democracy criteria in the Swedish guidelines, a proposal that Spas has argued for for quite some time now.

Small arms

Finally, we are not only opposing the government, we are also somewhat collaborating with them. This is specially the case regarding Small arms. The Swedish Network on Small Arms (SANSA) has had frequent dialogue with officials regarding the Swedish position in this area. SANSA is now asked to come with concrete proposals on what Sweden shall prioritise in the future in the area of Small Arms.

Mines

Just for your information, although it's not really an ENAAT-matter: SPAS in the main actor in Sweden when it comes to issues concerning mines. We are the only Swedish group with regular connections to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, ICBL.

Rolf Lindahl, December 2001