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Report 2001-2002

Shareholdersmeetings

In May 2002, Forum voor Vredesactie and Netwerk Vlaanderen (ngo on ethical financing) supported for the 6th time a group of ethical shareholders in their attempt to urge at the Annual General Meeting of Barco - a Belgian high technology arms manufacturer - for an ethical policy. At this meeting, amongst other things, we got to know (by a slippery of a tongue) that Barco exported in 2002 displays for military use to Israel, although the Belgian government said that it issued a weapon embargo to Israel. An unknown company in Israel integrated the display in a for us unknown weapon system and exported it to Venezuela.

In April 2002, the Belgian Court of Appeal condemned BARCO, for not answering shareholder's questions at their Annual General Meeting in 1998. In this way the Court of Appeal agreed with the earlier verdict of the Court of Commerce. Since 1999, Barco answers most of the questions.

Exportation to Nepal, Pakistan and India

FN Herstal proudly announced that it had received an order for 5,500 machine guns. That same day the news leaked out that the weapons were destined for Nepal, a country fighting a war with Maoist guerrillas and that has been condemned by Amnesty International for violating human rights.

For these reasons, the consignment contravenes the Belgian law as well as the European code of Conduct, also signed by Belgium.

Magda Aelvoet of Agalev Flemish Ecology Party was severely criticized for her stance on the Nepalese arms dossier. The ecology party expressed great dissatisfaction at Aelvoet's failure to adopt a firmer response at the 11 July meeting of the inner cabinet when Foreign Minister Louis Michel of the MR (Reforming Movement) raised the subject of arms sales to Nepal. Aelvoet admitted that she "shared responsibility for the inner cabinet decision". She resigned as health minister in the Belgian government.

We started together with the Belgian North-South movement and with the Nepalese lawyer Gopal Siwakoti 'Chintan', a law suit at the council of state (administrative

court) to stop the arms export to Nepal. The difficulty is that for this lawsuit we need to prove that we have a personal disadvantage that can only be stopped by blocking the export licence. For Gopal Siwakoti, it's easier to prove the disadvantage, but obviously, he's risking his life by testifying.

To Pakistan and India, Belgium gave licences for maintenance contracts and parts for F16's, that can be used for 'transporting' nuclear arms. We did not start a law suit on this, because it's much more difficult to prove a juridical disadvantage.

Belgian Arms Law

Thanks to the debate on the Nepalese export, the Ecologist parties got the guarantee that the arms law can be renegotiated. Greens, social democrats and liberals say they want to integrate the EU code of conduct, which in our view is at certain points less strict than the Belgian law, and at some point even contradicts the current law. The Greens assure us that the strongest interpretation will be law when there is any contradiction.

The greens say they want more transparency and control (in beforehand), but we'r quite pessimistic that it will be incorporated, although we (together with other peace movements) stressed to all parties that this is the key stone to a better law.

Last but not least, we lobby to incorporate the right for peace movements to start legalsuits for cases dealing with the arms law.

Arms report 2001

See table.

We got more information than last year (seperation into light-semi light-heavy-others), but still not enough. We exported in 2001 to a lot of 'problem' countries: Algeria, Colombia, Fillipines, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Russia, Saoedi-Arabia, Taiwan, Turkey, Venezuela.

Bomspotting

5th of October 2002, we'll have our last largest action to abolish our (NATO) nukes in Kleine Brogel, we'll expect about 1000 people joining our direct action to jump over the fence. By breaking the law, we hope that the court starts a legalsuit against us, which we could use to question the legality of the nukes, and we hope that the political parties will work to send them back to the states.