



# SWEDISH PEACE AND ARBITRATION SOCIETY

## Country report from SPAS on the Swedish arms trade

To the ENAAT-meeting in Amsterdam, Netherlands, June 2003. Covering the time since the meeting in Barcelona, September 2002 until now. By Rolf Lindahl.

### War on Iraq

The war on Iraq was our main topic during this year. When the war broke out (and some weeks before that) SPAS managed to make the call for a Swedish arms embargo towards UK and US one of the main issues in the debate. The campaign was of course a failure in terms of achieving our demands, but on other aspects a success.

During this campaign we had an interesting opportunity to argue according to the Swedish arms regulations. Before the war we called for a freeze of all new deals according to the guidelines. During the war we called for a complete stop of all deliveries.

UK and US are some of the largest recipients of Swedish arms and we could show that Swedish companies with the authorities blessing signed new contracts with these countries before and during the war. We could also point out several Swedish-made weapons that were used during the war.

SPAS spoke on several of the large peace demonstrations and on all of them we called for a arms export stop, a demand which was widely applauded. On the contrary the migration minister was loudly booed-at for the arms export policy of the government during his speech on the main anti-war demonstration.

We launched a petition to stop selling arms to UK and US, which eventually was signed by some 3700 persons (quite a lot in the Swedish context).

We wrote three op-ed articles in the three biggest papers in Sweden. In the first we used statements by the foreign minister as evidence that the continuing of arms to these countries would violate the Swedish foreign policy.

In the other article, published on the very day the Export control council discussed the issue, we succeeded in gathering several "side associations" of the parties which did not want to stop the export. Together with them we also held a special demonstration against the Swedish export.

The "arms trade minister", Gunnar Lund, debated in the major TV-debate-shows in Sweden with SPAS former chair, Lars Ångström, now parliamentarian for the Greens. The prime minister agreed in the most prominent radio interview shows that he had bad conscious for the arms export to US and UK during the present war but stated that Swedish security reasons called for a continuation of the deliveries.

Almost all the politicians and officials that have any influence on the arms export have had to defend the policy of continuing selling arms although it is in contradiction with the foreign policy (the foreign minister, the defence minister, the prime minister, the "arms trade minister" and the director of the licensing body). It has also been discussed in the parliament.

The debate has however not stopped here. Both the licensing authority and the government is now being prosecuted in the highest possible levels:

During one of the demonstrations SPAS filed a complaint towards the licensing authority to the Chancellor of Justice. The matter is now being investigated. The Chancellor of Justice is a non-political civil servant, who has really high status. Also here we used a legal base: The licensing authority is according to the law obliged to deliver the decision of arms export to the government when the decision is a matter of principles. The authority has however not bothered about that, what so ever.

Besides that, we have also pushed for a complaint to the Constitutional committee, which is watching that the government is acting according to the constitution. A complaint that is based on our proposal has now been put forwarded by the left party regarding how the government handled the arms export during the Iraq war.

There were also several actions against the companies themselves. On April 8 the Swedish section of Attac had an action-day where several blockades other types of actions took part all over Sweden. Several actions has also been committed against many of those Swedish shipping agents which (without any need for licensing what so ever) delivered British and American troops and material to the region.

### **Arms law investigation**

For quite some time now, there has been discussions in the government on launching a general investigation about the Swedish arms export regulations. SPAS has followed this process quite intensively and has written proposals and has had meetings with officials and the minister about the issue. It now seems that it will be decided before the summer vacation. SPAS will probably make a parallel shadow investigation. Although the results may not be what we hope for we are however happy to see that it will be a broad investigation that will cover many of our demands. For example: follow-on deliveries, review of the present criteria's such as the human rights criteria, potential new export criteria such as a democracy-criteria and arms import regulations. The debate that arose during the Iraq war will also be highlighted in the investigation. However, the main issue is to oversee the regulations in the context of the harmonisation process in the EU. We are quite pessimistic and our high goal is to make sure that it at least does not become a lot worse than it is today...

### **Peace, Love & Rock'n'roll**

Everything of our work is not just boring legal aspects. To emphasise this SPAS did for the second year in a row participate in the Hultsfred festival. It is the biggest music festival in Sweden. This year SPAS and the organiser agreed on promoting "peace" as the theme for the festival. A special petition was written by SPAS and during the festival SPAS volunteers gathered 4000 signatories. One of the three demands was that countries in the "rich part of the world" should stop to contribute to war and poverty in developing countries through its arms export.

### **No Jas for Lula**

Saab has for quite some time now turned lots of their market efforts towards South America. After the bitter no from Chile they have focused on Brazil. Following the new Swedish policy that the authorities shall give an "active and structured support" to major arms industry export efforts the prime minister has several times visited the country with the fighter aircraft in his pocket...

When the new president Lula was elected early this year, prime minister Persson was there again. This time he got a disappointing message though: Lula stated that Brazil

should postpone the buy of a new aircraft to put the money on poverty-reducing management instead.

SPAS happily received this information and did one of our rice/rose campaigns on this topic. Lula got a couple of hundred rose-cards and Persson the same number rice-cards.

### **Gripen out of the air**

On October 11 SPAS did, together with Swedish fellowship of reconciliation (SweFOR) and a big christian aid organisation, Diakonia, arrange a seminar on the export of Jas to South Africa and other countries in the South. The seminar was a following of a report on the subject, which the three organisations had published. We are arguing for coherence in all aspects of the Swedish foreign policy – including the arms export policy. This has been quite lively debated after a government report, which suggest more coherence in the foreign policy.

We have now launched a one-year campaign, which demands that Sweden shall not claim compensation if South Africa decides not to buy the last 19 Gripen fighters. They have until spring next year to cancel this part of the original deal. In South Africa there is a quite strong lobby against the arms deal.

### **Clean investments**

In December 2002 we launched a report where we investigated all Swedish municipalities investments in arms industry. The report got a huge media coverage both in national and in local media. Probably it was one of the biggest news events for SPAS in several years. It seems that the combination of arms, money and local government was especially attractive for journalists, politicians and the public. The report triggered lots of local work among journalists, citizens and politicians to study the local situation. The report showed that 70 percent of the municipalities that invested in stocks also invested in arms industry. Many of them had none or bad ethical guidelines for their investments. We are now happy to notice that several municipalities have sold out many of the biggest arms producers and discussed how to sharpen and implement their ethical guidelines.

### **Small arms**

Sweden has had a progressive approach towards regulation of the flow of small arms. Since a couple of years the officials are also almost proud to say that Sweden is a minor producer of small arms. However, we are now seeing that Saab is establishing itself as a major small arms producer and several big deals of light anti-armour weapons have been accomplished during the last year.

SPAS was one of the founders of SANSAs – Swedish Action Network on Small Arms, a network who regularly meets and discuss joint actions when it comes to small arms.

In co-operation with SweFOR SPAS arranged a seminar on the problems of legal export of military small arms from Sweden during the IANSA action week in the beginning of June. Among the speakers were representatives from the foreign ministry, the licensing authority, the industry and NGO's such as Small Arms Survey and International Alert.

## Land mines

Just for your information, although it's not really an ENAAT-matter: SPAS is 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, and writes the Swedish section in the report. SPAS newly elected chair, Frida Blom, also wrote a chapter on land mines to the 2003 Sipri Yearbook.

## Some statistics

Governmental figures for 2002 shows that the export rose from 2001 by 12% and that the number of countries Sweden exported arms to was continuously high – 51.

The transparency level has increased a little bit once again by the introduction of revealing of the denials during the year (country and which EU-criteria which was used).

## Government figures of some of the recipients (Millions of Swedish crowns):

	<b>2000 Total</b>	<b>2001 Total</b>	<b>2002 Total</b>	<b>2000-2002 Position</b>
Norway	1 151,8	357,3	167,8	1
USA	397,6	433,2	460,8	2
Singapore	454,7	176,2	419,8	3
Germany	279,9	235,7	217,6	4
France	82,1	86,9	479,3	5
Mexico	231,8	55,0	256,3	6
Schweiz	94,0	64,2	361,1	7
Brazil	248,4	221,0	39,2	8
Denmark	44,1	334,8	87,5	9
Venezuela	329,2	41,0	-	10
Indien	120,9	126,1	6,6	14
Malaysia	80,8	136,1	27,3	15
Thailand	22,6	1,9	23,3	25
Tunisia	20,2	4,9	2	29
United Arab Emirates	0,3	0,9	25,1	30
Bahrain	1,1	24,6	0,2	31
Pakistan	0,3	15,6	1,3	33
Saudi Arabia	0,2	2,2	1,2	41
Indonesia	-	2,3	0,9	42
Oman	0,4	1,7	0,3	43
<b>All countries</b>	<b>4 371</b>	<b>3 060</b>	<b>3 440</b>	