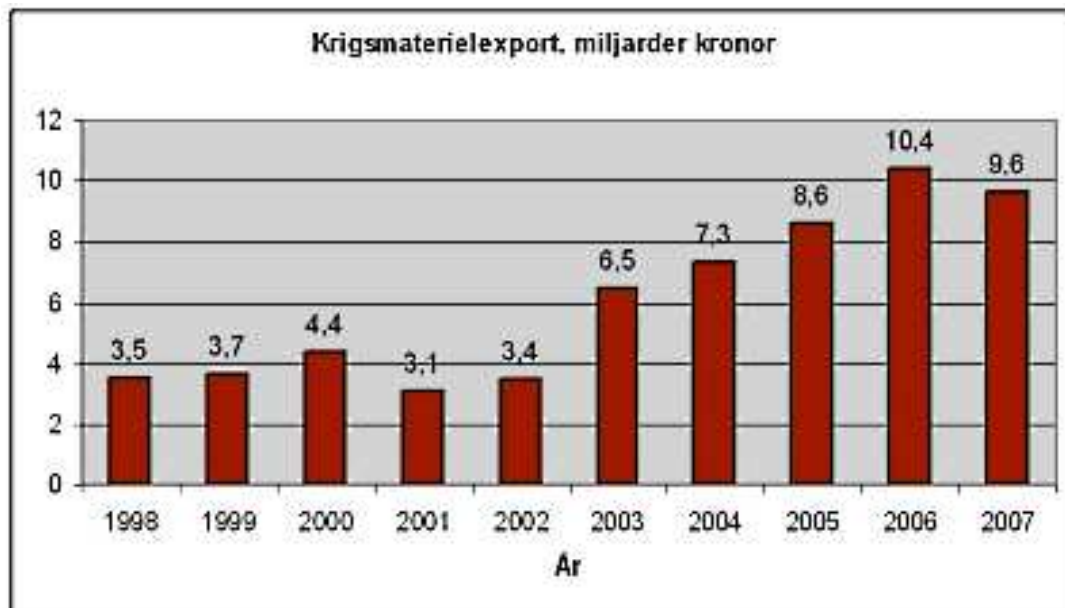


Country report from SPAS on the Swedish arms trade

Report for the ENAAT-meeting in Oslo, Norway, June 2008. Covering the time since the meeting in Italy, April 2007 until now. By Milda Normantaité, arms export working group, Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS) – www.svenskafreds.se

The Swedish arms export decreased by 8% during 2007 and amounted to 9,6 billion compared to 10,4 billion in 2006. However, this is probably not a trend-brake. Exports in 2007 were, for example, three times the value of 2001. The arms export overall has increased by 50% during the last five years. In addition, arms for as much as 1,2 billion were sold to dictatorships in 2007. “War on terror” is another major factor that is causing the rearmament. The US and United Kingdom are some large recipients of arms from Sweden. Other large buyers are South Africa, Pakistan, the Netherlands and India.



Export statistics, billions of Swedish crowns (10 SEK ~ 1 Euro)

Differences in threat perception between the Swedish Armed forces and the Ministry of Defense

Almost half of the Swedish military budget is allocated to military equipment, which is twice as much as in the US and three times the average of NATO-members. SPAS has been clear that this figure is unreasonably high and doesn't reflect the situation in our neighborhood. In fact, we have been able to show that there is some significant dissonance between the two regarding the perception of the immediate threats to Sweden. While the Ministry of Defense has declared that a large-scale invasion (from Russia) is highly unlikely, the Swedish Armed forces have, according to some confidential internal documents, identified a couple of distinct future scenarios where conventional attacks against Sweden are considered.

SPAS has argued that the material part of the defence budget is nothing less than state-subsidies to individual companies and must be stopped. Interestingly this argument has gained some support, on market-economy grounds, from the conservative-liberal government.

Arms export to dictatorships and countries involved in armed conflicts

During 2007 Sweden continued to export arms to countries that Freedom House classifies as non-democracies, e.g. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Oman. As mentioned above, arms for 1.2 billion were sold to non-democracies. Even countries that today are involved in armed conflicts, including India, the U.S, Thailand and Turkey, were customers of the Swedish military equipment during 2007.

Swedish Inspectorate for Strategic Products has given the green light for selling the military radar system *Erieye*, produced by Saab, to Colombia. Sweden has not exported any arms to Colombia the last few decades due to the fact that the country has been torn by internal military conflicts. In May 2008 the vice President of Colombia, Francisco Santos Calderón, visited Sweden and met representatives from several Swedish companies, including Saab.

SPAS has questioned the deal in the Swedish media because it violates the Swedish law, which forbids arms export to countries that are involved in military conflicts and countries that violate the human rights. Even Saudi Arabia is on Sweden's list of future customers of *Erieye*.

Information campaign against compulsory military service

SPAS is opponent of compulsory military service. According to the Swedish law, young men that refuse to do the military service can be sentenced to imprisonment. We organized an extensive information campaign on our website directed to young people that have questions about their duties and possibility not to carry weapon when doing the military service.

Minister of Foreign Affairs makes profit on the Iraq war

The Swedish press revealed in Mars 2007 that Carl Bildt, Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, earned big sums of money as a consequence of the outbreak of the Iraq war. Bildt was a member of the board of directors for the asset manager Legg Mason that had certain economic interests in the American war industry. In addition, he lobbied on the behalf of pro-American industries with relations to weapon producer Lockheed Martin.

Jas 39 Gripen to Thailand

On the 17th of October Thailand expressed some clear interest in buying military aircraft Jas Gripen from Sweden. SPAS has urged the Swedish Government not to proceed with the deal due to the critical situation in the country that is being torn by internal military conflicts and has constantly violated the human rights. Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs is, however, positive to the cooperation with Thailand, and in February 2008 a contract was signed between the Swedish and Thai government to supply six Gripen and *Erieye* radar systems.

Cluster Munitions

The last year SPAS main campaigning activities have been related to cluster munitions. SPAS initiated the Swedish Network on Cluster Munitions, which has conducted several successful events.

SPAS celebrated a historic victory when participating states, including Sweden, agreed on a legally binding instrument that prohibits cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. Sweden dropped its earlier demand to exempt its own cluster munitions Bombkapsel 90, from the agreement. However, it is still to be seen whether the Swedish government finally will sign and ratify the convention.