

Country report from SPAS on the Swedish arms trade

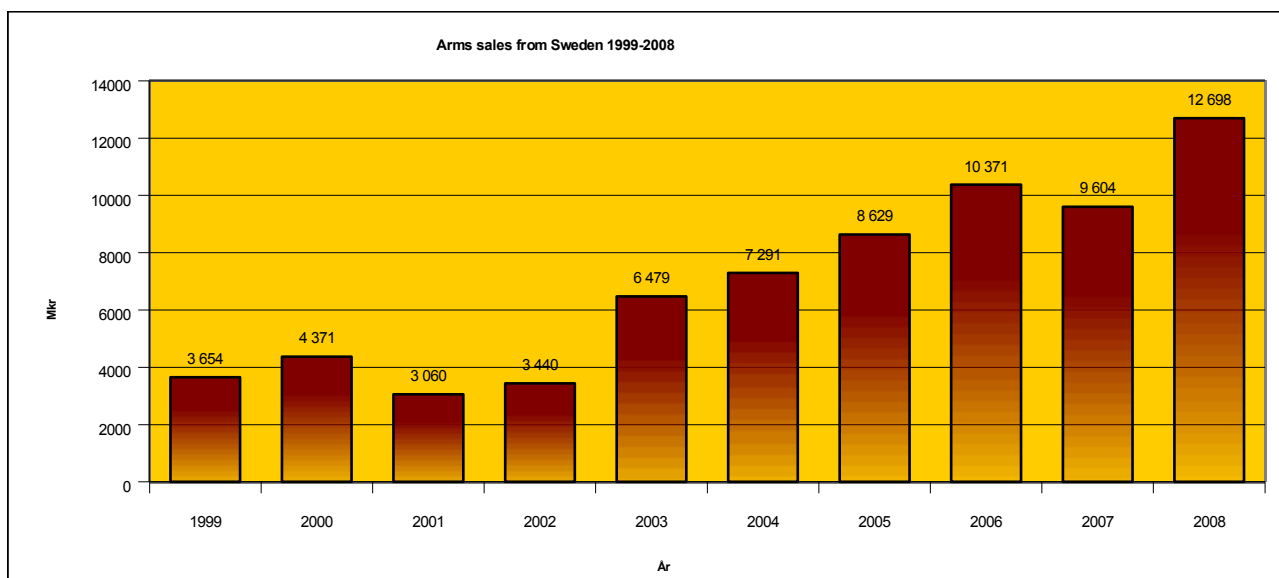
Report for the ENAAT-meeting in Barcelona, Spain, May 2009. By Rolf Lindahl, Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS).

All-time-high in arms export

The Swedish arms export continues to increase year after year. During the latest years there has been a steady increase. On average the arms exports has increased with 20% over the last ten years. Exports in 2008 were more than 30% larger than in 2007 and around 250% larger than in 1999.

Large deals with Gripen and radar systems to countries like South Africa, Pakistan and the Thailand indicates that the export will continue to be high in the coming years.

The major arms industry in Sweden is by far Saab (60-70% of all production in Sweden), producing everything from the fighter aircraft Jas 39 Gripen, to missile and radar systems and light weapons. Other companies are BAE Systems Bofors, making for example howitzers for India and the Excalibur grenade for the US, BAE Systems Hägglunds, producing combat vehicles, Kockums, producing naval systems and Volvo Aero producing military engines.



Arms export from Sweden in million Swedish crowns (SEK). 10 SEK ~ 1€.



Box 4134, 102 63 Stockholm (Svartensgatan 6). Tel: 08-702 18 30
info@svenskafreds.se www.svenskafreds.se Postgiro: 90 10 85-1

The Gripen campaign

In February 2008 a contract was signed between the Swedish and Thai government to supply six Gripen and Erieye radar systems. SPAS has been actively criticising the deal, but the minister of foreign affairs is "aggressively" positive to the deal and defend it with an unshy argument that it contributes to employment in Sweden. However, due to financial constraints the Thai government did in mid May stop the plan to buy extra Gripen aircrafts.

New efforts are now taking place to sell Gripen to Brazil, and the Swedish government is actively assisting in the promotion of the deal. Norway did finally go for the American JSF. Netherlands does not look so bright, neither does India, but Switzerland is still a hope for the company/government. The government is more and more outspoken about some of the main reasons of the sale of Gripen, which is to split the developing costs of Gripen between Sweden and other customers (i.e. reduce Swedish costs).

Colombia, new potential export destination

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 armed conflicts. In May 2008 the vice President of Colombia, Francisco Santos Calderón, visited Sweden and met representatives from several Swedish companies, including Saab.

SPAS and others 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. Petitions against the deal and parliamentary debates have therefore forced the Inspectorate to state that a deal is not on the way (for the moment...).

New export promotion authority

A new government report in mid May this year propose several changes in the Swedish armed forces and supportive authorities around it. Some of the reasons is said to increase the efficiency and diminish the overlap between different government institutions.

SPAS is of course very critical about the proposal to introduce a national arms export promotion authority, but since the proposal just recently has SPAS is just in the process of developing a campaign against this institution.

Disarmament conference in India

SPAS did, together with two Indian organisations – Control Arms Foundation of India and FEDINA (a development organisation in south India) – organise a disarmament conference in Bangalore in February 2009 (www.disarmamentconference.org). The conference was organised at the same time as the big arms fair – Aero India was held in the city, which attracted more than 600 arms companies. Among the companies was Swedish Saab, actively involved in the race to sell fighter jets to India. Beside the conference, we organised a rally outside the arms fair with more than 200 activists.

SPAS and CAFI now hopes to jointly organise another similar event during the huge DefExpo arms fair in Delhi next year.

Arms export and development

Since December 2003 Sweden has a new "policy for global development". The policy is binding to all different aspects of Swedish policy - foreign, trade, defence etc. According to the policy every sector of Swedish politics needs to be coherent, for example it is explicitly stated that Swedish arms export must not be contradictive to the policy of global development.

In a special project SPAS has examined this policy and the result has been presented in a new report. Notwithstanding the new policy we can see that Swedish arms export to developing countries has not decreased since the new policy, but rather increased. In fact it has sky rocketed. Every fourth weapon which is sold from Sweden is going to poor countries and in a global perspective Sweden is the fourth largest arms supplier to developing nations.

Disarmament actions

Since 2007 there has been an increase in the anti-arms trade activism in Sweden. The reason is mainly because the activist network "Ofog", which previously have been involved in anti-nuclear actions in Britain, now is more directly campaigning against Swedish arms exports. In 2007 and 2008 there were action camps in the city of Karlskoga where the company Bofors has its location and several actions have been conducted. There has also been some actions towards the company Aimpoint, which are producing rifle-sights to the American army.

In a spectacular action activist did a coordinated disarmament action at Saab and Bofors locations in two cities. In the city of Karlskoga some Bofors guns were disarmed and in the city of Eskilstuna some 20 Carl Gustaf recoilless rifles. And finally in March this year an action were conducted with the aim to disarm Jas Gripen fighter jets. Some of the activists got conducted to 6 months in prison. SPAS has supported the actions in various ways.

IKEA-Gripen

Finally a funny thing happened last September when the (criticized) art exhibition "Entropa" was presented in Brussels by the Czech presidency. Funnily the artist did present the typical Sweden-image with an IKEA box concealing a Gripen fighter jet...



Major Swedish arms export destinations

Millions of Swedish Crowns (SEK). 10 SEK ~1 €.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
1 South Africa	632,9	1 200,0	1 862,0	1 333,5	1 901,0	6 929,4
2 Netherlands	64,4	578,6	1 018,7	1 143,4	1 817,4	4 622,5
3 USA	770,1	745,3	953,1	858,5	820,6	4 147,6
4 Finland	972,7	825,5	927,1	706,2	406,2	3 837,7
5 Schweiz	1 794,0	1 370,6	83,0	24,6	55,0	3 327,2
6 Pakistan	25,3	21,6	1 201,5	679,2	846,4	2 774,0
7 Denmark	53,1	91,1	95,4	747,9	1 767,0	2 754,5
8 France	370,3	662,0	739,4	343,3	546,4	2 661,4
9 Germany	251,1	443,2	704,7	669,8	572,4	2 641,2
10 Singapore	103,5	149,0	521,5	639,7	601,8	2 015,5
11 Greece	169,6	592,2	89,0	82,2	1 071,0	2 004,0
12 India	401,7	211,8	366,0	310,5	506,2	1 796,2
13 United Kingdom	521,5	353,4	156,1	263,3	422,5	1 716,8
14 Norway	231,9	231,1	337,9	310,1	316,2	1 427,2
15 Australia	102,6	380,8	353,9	288,8	114,0	1 240,1
16 Italy	6,5	219,4	194,3	237,5	212,6	870,3
17 Czech Republic	2,2	50,9	265,1	231	9,8	559,0
18 Canada	19,7	51,0	116,6	167,3	106,0	460,6
19 Japan	120,9	126,9	21,9	107,9	19,0	396,6
20 South Korea	1,5	–	83,6	71	108,5	264,6
21 Mexiko	174,6	19,6	0,6	22,5	12,9	230,2
22 Latvia	5,8	0,8	35,6	152,8	32,4	227,4
23 United Arab Emirates	90,3	65,1	3,2	5,1	47,8	211,5
24 Poland	93,2	3,3	56,7	9,7	33,0	195,9
25 Spain	26,5	34,3	11,8	16,5	81,2	170,3
26 Ireland	49,9	39,1	5,2	39,4	4,9	138,5
27 Austria	47,6	40,5	11,2	14,2	10,3	123,8
28 Malaysia	54,0	12,7	16,1	24,4	12,2	119,4
29 Chile	29,0	19,6	7,9	0,07	33,6	90,2
30 Thailand	13,9	15,4	27,8	3,6	12,6	73,3
<i>Part sum</i>	<i>7 200</i>	<i>8 555</i>	<i>10 267</i>	<i>9 504</i>	<i>12 501</i>	<i>48 027</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>566</i>
Total	7 291	8 629	10 371	9 604	12 698	48 593