

Transcript Gripen – The South African deal

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SVT "Uppdrag Granskning"

Please note that this is a rough translation that should not be quoted verbatim.

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The South African deal

Participants

In order of appearance:

Johan Lehander, CEO Gripen International, Saab

Åke Svensson, CEO Saab

Jacob Zuma, vicepresident South Africa 2003

Johan Lehander, Gripen International, Saab (obs han var inte vd då) from SVT Östnytt November 2003

David Leigh, journalist The Guardian

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TV-arkivet SVT
Saab, Gripen International

Bilder: Roll Out ceremony in Linköping

Johan Lehander
vd Gripen International Saab

"On behalf of SAAB AB, Bae systems and Gripen International I'd like to Welcome you all to the very proud and historic occasion. The Roll out of our very first Gripen to our very first Gripen export customer - Rep of SA!

SPEAK:

South Africa - the largest and most important affair in the history of the JAS project. At last, years of efforts have come to an end, and the CEO of Saab Åke Svensson is very satisfied when the first Gripen for South Africa is rolled out in Linköping in October 2005.

Åke Svensson, ceo Saab

"I think this achievement is a success to all of us"

SPEAK:

For decades of apartheid South Africa was under sanctions. When the new born democracy was about to arm, the world's armproducers gathered, and got support from Tony Blair of Britain and Göran Persson of Sweden, both whom visited South Africa to help their countries armproducers.

In 1999 the huge arms affair was a fact. It resulted in South Africa buying helicopters, navyships, submarines, and not least fighter jets. Saab's Gripen and BAE's Hawk counted for almost half the affair's value. The 28 Gripen alone cost South Africa over 15 billion Swedish crowns.

The deal was done, despite South Africa experts said the country was not under any military threat, and the politicians were heavily criticised for not prioritising the millions of AIDS victims of South Africa.

When the vice president Jacob Zuma visited Saab in Linköping in 2003 he defended the purchase of the fighter jets.

Jacob Zuma (SVT 2003)
vicepresident Sydafrika 2003

- We are looking forward to them to help the country for peacekeeping purposes. And I think we would be in a better position to deal with peacekeeping once we are equipped with this type of aircraft.

SPEAK:

Today Jacob Zuma might face prosecution for taking bribes from the French armsproducer Thales. His advisor was recently sentenced to 15 years in jail for taking bribes from the very same company. Almost every part of the huge arms deal is today under allegations of corruption.

The German consortium Thyssen-Krupp, owners of (Swedish) Kockums and Karlskrona shipyard, which won the bid for the four frigates is suspected by German prosecutors for payments of 175 million Swedish crowns in commissions to a person close to the then Minister of Defence.

But the fighterplane deal with Swedish JAS Gripen and Brittish Hawk is the affair where the alleged payments is by far the biggest. And the suspicions are not new. Back in 2003 Saab had to defend the company.

Johan Lehander

Gripen International Saab

From local TV Östnytt November 2003

- These are not new allegations, we have heard it from South Africa before.
- Q: Are you guilty?
- No, absolutely not! We know our deals and we are very serious in our business.

SPEAK:

But now Brittish investigators have traced huge payments to Saabs and BAE:s agnets in South Africa. Secret payments of more 1 billion Swedish crones. It is revealed in a report from the Brittish authority Serious Fraud Office, SFO, which sent a request for juridicial assistance to South African authorities.

3D - Graphic

SPEAK:

It shows that the source of the payments is the very same one as we have revealed in the Gripendeals in the Czech Republic and Hungary: BAE:s secret unit HQ Marketing and the offshore company Red Diamond.

Graphics

From the SFO report

"between 2000 and 2005, South African agents received over £70-million through Red Diamond and over £6-million and \$4-million through HQ Marketing accounts".

SPEAK:

The money, more than one billion Swedish crones, has according to the SFO been paid to eight named agents. Among them the lawyer Fana Hlongwane.

David Leigh

journalist The Guardian

- Hlongwane is a very interesting person because he was an advisor to Joe Modise, the defense minister. He had influence over the defense minister. Maybe that's the way Modise got a pay off.

SPEAK:

Another person who, according to the SFO, received large payments for the Gripendeal in SA is the armsdealer and the multimillionaire John Bredenkamp.

David Leigh

journalist The Guardian

- John Bredencamp is quite a sinister figure. He has been involved in arms deals for many many years, in the past he was involved in sanctions busting in Rhodesia, in the old days.
- He has a big house in, in England. He has a big ranch in Zimbabwe, hes very close to Mugabe... the president of Zimbabwe...
- F: Mugabe?
- Yes. He is close to dictators like Mugabe, it is quite extraordinary, really. He was the agent for BAE and Saab in southern Africa.

SPEAK:

SFO raided the office and home of Bredenkamp in England.

David Leigh

journalist The Guardian

- They've taken away a lot of documents they tried to get access to his bank accounts. Yeah.

- They found evidence that Bredenkamp had received a lot payments from BAE in relation to southern Africa deals.

Q: And where did that money go on from Brenkamp?

- Well, we don't know. It would be very interesting to find out.

SPEAK:

So far neither the South African or British police has been able to track down where the paid billion ended up. The SFO inquiry of Saab and BAE is on its fourth year and in the report SFO sum up the analysis of over one billion documents and transactions: The SFO conclusion on BAE and BAE's management:

Graphics

From the SFO report:

"there is reasonable cause to believe that all the above-named persons and company have committed offences of corruption".

ENDPICTURE: ZA/SE flag from Rollout ceremoni in Linköping 2005

End comment

A spokesperson for Mr Bredenkamp says to us that the SFO request is not an official document. They have not seen it, and can for that reason not comment on the allegations in it.

None of the other persons being criticised in the reportage wanted to give any comment, or was not able to reach for a comment.

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Gripen International, Saab

Footage "Roll Out Ceremony" in Linköping first Southafrican Gripen.

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