

Transcript The Common Link

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SVT "Uppdrag Granskning"

Please note that this is a rough translation that should no be quoted
verbatim.

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The Common Link

Participants

In order of appearance:

Åke Svensson, CEO Saab

Michael Treschow, Chair of Ericsson's Board

Karel Kühnl, Defence Minister of Czech Republic

Jan Kavan, former Czech Foreign Minister

Egon Kiss-Borlase

Henrik Westander, exposed the Bofors affair

John Beasant, Author

Christer van der Kwast, Chief Prosecutor

Peter Larsson, Saab

Credits

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Parti Liberal Genevois

SPEAK:

We are in Geneva's exclusive business district. Here, behind one of the facades is the link between two far-reaching Swedish scandals involving bribery.

ARCHIVE:

Saab's Annual Meeting, April 2007
Åke Svensson, CEO Saab

Our firm opinion is that our business is conducted using legal methods. Bribes have never been allowed by Saab.

SPEAK:

Through the people - that we are on our way to meet - have the large Swedish companies channelled millions of Swedish crowns to secret agents.

ARCHIVE:

Swedish Radio, Studio 1, November 2007
Michael Treschow, Chair of Ericsson's Board

In a company such as Ericsson, and many others, there are business agents in many countries, and they naturally don't have complete control of what each and every business agent does in every instant.

SPEAK:

But Saab and Ericsson do not want to answer our questions on a very special address, Route de Flourssant 4.

An address (that is a secret intermediary for large Swedish companies) they want to keep us away from.

But we will take it from the beginning...

(graphics)

SPEAK:

At the end of the nineties Oman wanted to upgrade its cellular network, an order that is worth 300 million Swedish crowns. Ericsson has hired a secret agent, the British citizen, Peter Sullivan, a businessman based in Oman with good connections in the Sultan's sphere. He will receive four percent of the transaction if it goes through. And it does. The commission - 12 million crowns - is placed in a Swiss bank account where the agent indeed stands as the account owner - but where the actual owner is someone else.

ARCHIVE:

From Swedish Radio's Ekot, 21 November 2007

Ericsson paid millions as commission to the minister in Oman. The money was placed in a secret Swiss bank account

SPEAK:

Swedish radio recently revealed that the secret bank account was actually owned by the then minister, Ahmed Suwaidan Al Balushi - the man that gave Ericsson the order.

But the responsible boss of Ericsson had a memory lapse when Ekot's reporter rang him.

TELEPHONE:

- I am completely blank
- You were the one who wrote the contract with them
- Yes,...no... I am completely blank
- No?
- No, completely blank

(graphics)

SPEAK:

What the Ericsson boss doesn't want to remember, is how Ericsson channelled money through a Panama registered company, via Switzerland, to the agent, and then to the minister in Oman. The intermediary is Middle East Services that we trace to Geneva. And the address - Route de Florissant 4. We'll return here soon

(graphics)

LIVE:

Karel Kühnl
Minister of Defence, Czech Republic, 2005
We welcome Gripen to the Czech skies!

SPEAK:

Czech Republic 2005. A day of triumph for Sweden - and Saab. The first JAS-planes are delivered. But it will become evident that Saab and the partner BAE Systems have gone a long way to win the important deal.

ARCHIVE:

From Swedish Television's Uppdrag Granskning, 27 February 2007
Hidden camera
Jan Kavan
Former Czech Foreign Minister

The fact that money changed hands was in the parliament, at least was pretty well known secret

SPEAK:

Last year Swedish Television's Uppdrag Granskning exposed the hidden side of the JAS campaign. Secret agents, promised multi-million commissions and witness stories of bribery. Czech Republic's former Foreign minister Jan Kavan explains the methods in front of our hidden camera.

ARCHIVE:

From Swedish Television's Uppdrag Granskning, 27 February 2007
Hidden camera
Jan Kavan
Former Czech Foreign minister

It went across the political spectrum

SPEAK:

One of the JAS campaigns agents was the Austrian Alfons Mensdorff-Pouilly (Poji). We can reveal the details of the secret commission contract. 81 million Swedish crowns for Czech Republic - and 80 million for Hungary, who also bought JAS.

(graphics)

But the money didn't go directly from Saab, instead it was channelled, through the British partner BAE, and among others, through a Panama registered company, via Switzerland to the agent Count Mensdorff. The intermediary is Valurex International, in Geneva. At the address - Route de Florissant 4. And this is not a coincidence.

(graphics)

(graphics)

SPEAK:

Behind Valurex International, Saab's intermediary of the JAS-affair, is this man. He is the company's director and runs the company from Geneva.

His name is Etienne Kiss-Borlase.

(graphics)

SPEAK:

Behind Middle East Services, Ericsson's intermediary in the Oman affair, is this man. He has signed the commission contract with Ericsson. He is the owner of the secret bank account, which actually belongs to the minister in Oman, where the millions landed.

His name is Egon Kiss-Borlase.

(graphics)

SPEAK:

The two Swedish bribery scandals are linked together by father and son, Kiss-Borlase. Together they run their affairs from here...
Route de Florissant 4.

LIVE:

Egon Kiss-Borlase

- Hello! I am from Swedish Television.
- Yes?
- Can I speak to you?
- Hmm?
- Can I speak to you?
- Please, can you turn it off. What is your name?
- Terje Carlsson, I am from Swedish Television.
- We don't need Swedish Television. Thank you very much.
- I want to ask you some questions.
- Don't ask me.
- In the Gripen campaign Valurex. In the Ericsson...
- Don't ask me!
- You are the link!
- I am not the link! I'll call the police!

SYNC:

Henrik Westander

Exposed the Bofors affair

It is incredibly interesting that Saab and Ericsson have used the same shadowy actors in Switzerland to pay out commissions, so they can then be later paid as bribes in these deals. There is an attempt to hide this arrangement via intermediaries, secret bank accounts, secret off-shore companies, so that it is incredibly complicated.

SPEAK:

And our investigation shows that behind Saab and Ericsson's intermediaries in Geneva, there are larger and more powerful interests.

SPEAK:

This is Timothy Landon. As a young officer in the British army he was stationed in Oman and became a key person when the sultan, Qabbos bin Said, overthrew his father in a coup in 1970.

After he became one of the Sultans closest men, and was known as the WHITE Sultan of Oman. Landon's responsibility was to upgrade the country's military

SYNC:

John Beasant

Author

Timothy Landon realized that he could rely upon the sultan to enrich him to a really quite astonishing degree. The genesis was arms deals in Oman and he expanded that to other countries.

SPEAK:

John Beasant knows what he is talking about. He lived in Oman for 11 years, he worked as an advisor to one of the country's most powerful businessmen and as Press secretary to several ministers in the Middle East. He is one of the leading experts on Oman, but after he wrote a book at the end of the nineties, which describes among other things Landon, he was forced to leave the country.

The white sultan, Timothy Landon, moved his operations to London in the beginning of the eighties. When he died last summer, 64-years-old, he was one of UK's richest people, with an estimated fortune of over 6 billion Swedish crowns.

But he was as anonymous, as his weapon and oil affairs were secret.

SYNC:

John Beasant
Author

If one goes to companies' house, where the companies in the UK are registered, in directors you will never find Landon's name on any of them. So obviously he needed a cast list of people to do these things for him.

SPEAK:

One of them who fronted Landon's business was the Ericsson intermediary - Egon Kiss-Borlase.

SYNC:

John Beasant
Author

He was pointed out to me as being one of Landon's lieutenants meaning someone that did things for him.

SPEAK:

The connection was confirmed when we checked Landon's properties in the UK. One of the main companies has its base in Geneva. In the Swiss archives we find the representatives - Egon and Etienne Kiss-Borlase.

It was also Landon who was actually one of the owners behind Valurex, Saab's intermediary in the bribery scandal, where Etienne Kiss-Borlase is the front person.

LIVE:

- What is your connection to Tim Landon?
- Go away please!
- Go away!
- Go away!

SPEAK:

Our visit to the key address in Geneva is not well received.

And the question is, if there are more large Swedish companies involved?

SYNC:

John Beasant
Author

Quaboos of Oman got it into his head that his security would be enhanced if his yacht was kitted out with the Bofors guns. He wanted the Bofors guns and the government in Sweden objected to this deal, and this is where Landon and his associates always came into play. If something was denied them by diplomatic channels they would take the scenic route.

SPEAK:

What he describes is part of the Bofors affair.

ARCHIVE:

From Swedish Television's Rapport, 11 August 1987

Yes, a new extensive preliminary inquiry of Bofors for suspected weapon smuggling began today.

SPEAK:

The new details that Timothy Landon's involvement in the Bofors affair in the eighties is supported by a source (that then worked) for Oman's defence department. According to the source, it was Landon's task to acquire the weapons that the Sultan wanted.

SYNC:

John Beasant
Author

- Are you sure that Landon played a part?
- Yes, in Oman itself it was commonplace. Qaboos couldn't get these guns for his yacht but in the event of course he got them and Landon played a pivotal role in seeing that that came to pass.

SYNC:

Henrik Westander
exposed the Bofors affair

Yes, but then one sees a pattern, that if it is the same person who 20 years ago helped Bofors smuggle weapons into the Middle East, that now helps both Ericsson and Saab in bribery affairs, then one wonders, how many Swedish companies, have used the same intermediaries, the same channels, for their illegal deals.

SPEAK:

The investigation shows a secret network of agents, intermediaries, and large Swedish companies.
That have operated under cover.

SYNC:

Christer van der Kwast
Chief Prosecutor

It is clear that it is interesting from an investigation perspective.
Exactly what I plan to do, or not do, I obviously can not explain here, but the details as such, seem sufficiently interesting that something will come out of them, from my point of view. One can say that it raises the question, on what grounds are they recruiting their consultants?

TELEPHONE:

Peter Larsson
Saab

We refuse to comment on your information and as you also know, we are the focus of an investigation in Sweden by a prosecutor and therefore have chosen not to take part in an interview.

SYNC:

Henrik Westander
exposed the Bofors affair

Politicians, the Swedish government, have been a part of launching and selling JAS, it is their responsibility, now it is time for a political inquiry that should dig deep, and extract all the facts, and lay them on the table, on Saab's bribery affair with JAS.

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