

SIMOOM PROJECT

# Government hides plan for Saudi weapons plant

Published: tisdag 06 mars kl 10:16,



Widell/Swedish Radio

Graphic: Liv

Confidential documents show Sweden is far along in the planning stages of helping dictatorship Saudi Arabia build an advanced weapons factory, Swedish Radio News has revealed.

The project, nicknamed Simoom (the word for a high-temperature desert wind, derived from the Arabic "samm", which means "to poison"), began in 2007 and is being led by the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI), an administration subordinate to the Swedish government.

The documents, many classified as secret or top secret, show that a Swedish company created for the project has obtained the required licences for missiles and torpedoes, among other military components.

Pressed on the issue this morning, Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt told assembled media, "There is, as you know, no demand for democracy when we sign bilateral agreements."

"We presuppose that Swedish authorities follow the rules," he also said at the press conference which had originally been called for a different topic.

That has not stopped Green Party leader Gustaf Fridolin from announcing this morning, as the story broke, that he intends to report Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors to the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

The roots of the project are found in 2005, when Social Democrat Defence Minister Leni Björklund signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with her Saudi counterpart, Sultan Bin Abdulaziz.

In the intervening years, a series of meetings between government officials and Swedish companies took place with visiting Saudi delegations.

Swedes also visited the proposed location of the factory to assess whether it would be adequately protected topographically or need to be dug into the ground.

In 2008, Saudi Prince Khalid, deputy defense minister, wrote a letter to the Swedish government stating that developments were too slow.

In the notes of a Swedish Defense Department meeting dated March 17th, 2008, a point on the agenda read, "How can we repair the situation in Saudi Arabia, our entire operation in the region is at stake."

By January 2009, a private company, Swedish Security Technology and Innovation (SSTI), was founded to distance FOI, which was deemed as "legally hindered" from pursuing the project according to Swedish Radio News sources, from Simoom although employees there became high level consultants to the new enterprise.

Later that year, SSTI was granted permission to buy ammunition and components for missiles, bombs, torpedoes and other equipment used in the production of arms. The permit came from the Swedish Non-Proliferation and Export Controls Agency (ISP), a government body which makes sure military sales follow national law.

According to Swedish Radio News sources, negotiations are still underway and a Swedish visit to Riyadh is planned for the near future.

PROJECT SIMOOM

# Agency meant to be neutral facilitated government's dealings with the Saudis

Published: onsdag 07 mars kl 11:24,



Tolgfors (R) would not comment why the ISP head attended meetings about the Saudi deal. Photo: ISP, Scanpix

The Swedish Non-Proliferation and Export Controls Agency (ISP), a government body which makes sure military sales follow national law, has been involved with negotiations to help Saudi Arabia build a weapons factory, shows further investigation by Swedish Radio.

Such a move is in breach of its mandate, note several commentators.

"Our mandate is to check clearances," says ISP Deputy Director General Jan Erik Lövgren, who confirms that as public servants, they are not allowed to negotiate deals. "That would be mixing up roles."

Leaked documents from the government show that ISP did attend several negotiations. When confronted with one meeting protocol, ISP Director General Andreas Ekman Duse, said he had attended only in an advisory role to explain the Swedish rules. But the transcribed notes from the meeting show that he also evaluated different alternatives presented to him by the government.

Defense Minister Sten Tolgfors has declined to comment why Ekman Duse attended.

A vocal critic of the dealings is the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS) whose director general, Anna Ek, this morning said, "Enough is enough. This is a government authority meant to implement roles but has instead gone in to promote and legitimise these business dealings."

## PROJECT SIMOOM

# All parties informed of Saudi arms plant

Published: torsdag 08 mars kl 09:09,



PROMEMORIA

2010-04-28

Handl. Thomas Tjäder

Ex till:  
Ch UD/NIS  
A. Jato, UD/UrP  
Ch F&MIL  
ISP/KM



HEMLIG

Fråga om uppförande av anläggning för renovering och modifiering av pansarvärnsvapen till Saudiarabien inom ramen för projekt SIMOOM.

*Bakgrund*

Grontmij Installationspartner AB (företaget) har i skrivelse den 21 april 2010 till ISP, hemställt om förhandsbesked avseende uppförande av en anläggning för renovering och modifiering av pansarvärnsvapen till Saudiarabien inom ramen för ett projekt, kallat SIMOOM.

The leaked memo mentions the factory and Saudi Arabia in the first paragraph.

Politicians from all parties were informed in 2010 about plans to help Saudi Arabia build a weapons factory, according to leaked government documents. The documents details how many and which type of factory buildings were planned, which products would be manufactured, and which types of explosives would be made.

It further states that the Defense Research Agency (FOI), an authority subordinate to the Defense Department, would provide training for the Saudis.

The documents' authors assess the project's worth at US\$ 600 million and say Sweden's involvement should stretch over a four to five year period.

On May 5th, 2010, the memo was shown to the Swedish Export Control Council, which includes members of parliament from all political parties.

"We didn't discuss it much because there was a binding agreement between our two countries," said Björn Leivik, Moderate party politician who sat on the council at the time. "That agreement was the basis for these proposals and there was no scope for us to express opinions."

This latest in a series of government documents examined by Swedish Radio also shows that FOI continued finding ways to distances itself on paper from dealings with the Saudis. A shell company, set up by a high level FOI employee allowing him and

his colleagues to become indirect consultants, was abandoned. Instead, they enlisted the services of global construction company Grontmij.

Grontmij Deputy CEO Niklas Sörensen declined to comment when contacted by Swedish Radio. "FOI has responsibility for communication, so we have no comments," he said.

The Swedish Non-Proliferation and Export Control Agency (ISP) wrote the latest memo. The agency is meant to ensure military sales are in accordance with national law.

SAUDI ARABIA

# "Swedish arms possibly used in Bahrain"

Published: torsdag 08 mars kl 19:04,



Bahraini anti-government protesters clash with riot police on Thursday. Photo: Hasan Jamali/AP/Scanpix

The Swedish Non-Proliferation and Export Controls Agency (ISP) has given the green light to a long list of weapons that different companies want to sell to Saudi Arabia. Two of these types of weapons have been used against demonstrators in Bahrain, according to secret documents that Swedish Radio news has acquired.

Peter Wezeman, a researcher with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, says that the documents name at least two kinds of arms that were used by the regime in Bahrain to crack down on demonstrators.

"Both systems have been used in Bahrain against demonstrators," says Wezeman, noting that one of the systems was used by Saudi Arabia to support the regime in Bahrain.

While the systems Wezeman describes are parts for two different kinds of combat vehicles, the list, which is posted on Swedish Radio's website, encompasses many other weapons. For example, rocket launchers, recoilless rifles, different kinds of armored fighting vehicles, and powder for ammunition.

Saudi Arabia has been strongly criticized for having helped the Bahrainian regime violently strike down a democratic uprising.

The general director of ISP, Andreas Ekman Duse, told Swedish Radio news several weeks ago that Saudi Arabia had only bought surveillance equipment from Sweden, and that it had not been used directly as a weapon against the civil population in Bahrain.

The new documents from ISP do not show which weapons have already been exported, but rather which companies have gotten the go-ahead to continue with their business plans to sell weapons and other military equipment to Saudi Arabia.

However, Peter Wezeman believes there is a reason to question the information that Swedish weapons have not been used against the civil population in Bahrain.

"Is that really true? This needs to be discussed ever more thoroughly," he says.

## PROJECT SIMOOM

# Tolgfors knew of Saudi weapons factory

Published: fredag 09 mars kl 09:09,

Swedish Defense Minister Sten Tolgfors knew in 2010 about the shell company used for dealings with Saudi Arabia to help build a weapons factory there.

Tolgfors said earlier this week that he would ask the relevant authority, the Defence Research Agency (FOI), to investigate the matter. But this morning the daily newspaper Svenska Dagbladet revealed he knew about the shell company.

A high-level FOI employee set up the private company, entitled Swedish Security Technology and Innovation (SSTI), in January 2009. According to sources speaking with Swedish Radio, who initially broke the story, this was done to distance FOI because of "legal obstacles" from the project.

Tolgfors said earlier this week that he would ask the relevant authority, the Defence Research Agency (FOI), to investigate the matter. But this morning the daily newspaper Svenska Dagbladet revealed he knew about the shell company.

The latest revelations about Tolgfors involvement come from the newspaper Svenska Dagbladet, a right-of-centre publication which in broad strokes is supportive of many of the ruling government coalition's policies.

Its editorial writer Claes Arvidsson wrote this morning that Tolgfors and Leni Björling, the Social Democrat Defense Minister who signed the original Memorandum of Understanding with Riyadh, "want to keep themselves at arm's length distance and give the impression that this deal only concerns FOI."

"That the Defense Department doesn't have a finger in this pie is about as probable as the existence of Father Christmas," he summarises.

## PROJECT SIMOOM

# Reinfeldt ordered continued Saudi cooperation

Updated: fredag 09 mars kl 13:42 (publicerades fredag 09 mars kl 13:03),



Reinfeldt chaired a meeting where Project Simoom was green lighted. File photo: Jessica Gow/Scanpix

The Swedish prime minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, chaired a 2008 meeting at which participants decided to pursue Sweden's weapons factory cooperation with Saudi Arabia, reports Swedish Radio.

Representatives of two smaller government coalition partners, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats, were also present.

All it took was to call a secretary at the government's offices. "So there was Fredrik Reinfeldt, as chair, as he usually is, then Odell, Leijonborg, Larsson, Carlgren, Hägglund, Carlsson, Borg, Malmström, Sabuni, Billström, Tolgfors och Björling."

That list of names implicates a host of top government politicians. Many of the ministers were there... finance, aid, environment, European affairs, even the minister of migration... top brass from the Liberal and Christian Democrat parties, who are government coalition parties, were also present on the 20th of November in 2008.

One person who is already stuck in the mélé is Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors, who was also present. The opposition Left Party demanded his resignation today. "He has deceived the Swedish people and the parliament," writes deputy party leader Ulla Andersson in a press release. "He has done this because he knows that dealing in weapons with one of the world's most brutal dictatorships is profoundly unethical."

The Green Party already days ago reported Tolgfors to the parliamentary committee on constitutional affairs.

This morning, the daily newspaper Svenska Dagbladet revealed that the defence minister knew all along about a shell company set up to help the Saudis.

One thing Tolgfors has said in the government's defence is that business negotiations with Saudi Arabia potentially allows Sweden to influence that country when it comes to human rights.

"If we scrapped the deal we'd signal complete disengagement," he tells Swedish Radio. "And that means we would have no scope to talk to Saudi Arabia about things that are important in Sweden, such as human rights."

But Saudi social anthropologist Madawi Al-Rasheed, a professor at King' College London whose books are banned in her home country, disagrees with that line of argument.

"There are no questions asked about human rights or freedom of expression or political reform. The military cooperation goes ahead regardless of the situation," she says. "Trade and boycotting a particular country has been used but there are question marks about how effective it is, but definitely selling arms to a dictatorship is not the right solution."

And in this particular case, she says it's a buyer's market. "As long as the Saudis are wealthy and capable of purchasing in big capacity, I don't think Sweden will have great impact on Saudi Arabia."

# Parliamentarians kept in dark about FOI company

Published: onsdag 21 mars kl 08:56,



The link between SSTI and FOI was not made clear to parliamentarians. Photo: Johan Nilsson/Scanpix

Members of the parliamentary Export Council were not aware that the company SSTI had been set up by the government's Defence Research Agency (FOI) to facilitate plans to help Saudi Arabia build a weapons factory.

"When we talk to the parliamentarians today they say they would have reacted differently if the link to SSTI had been known," says Swedish Radio reporter Bo-Göran Bodin, one of the journalists who broke the story two weeks ago.

In early 2009, FOI employees founded the company, Swedish Security Technology and Innovation, to distance FOI, which was deemed "legally hindered" from pursuing the project, to facilitate business dealings, according to Swedish Radio sources.

Later that year, SSTI was granted permission to buy ammunition and components for missiles, bombs, torpedoes and other equipment used in the production of arms. The permit came from the Swedish Non-Proliferation and Export Controls Agency (ISP), a government body that is meant to ensure that military sales follow national law.

The Export Council has members from all political parties who were told of the plans in 2010.

"SSTI is described very briefly if you compare to how other companies are presented in the briefs," says Bodin. "I don't know how we should assess the parliamentarians' own responsibility in finding information about the company."

The documents showed to the Export Council details how many and which type of factory buildings were planned, which products would be manufactured, and which types of explosives would be made.

The project, nicknamed Simoom (the word for a high-temperature desert wind, derived from the Arabic "samm", which means "to poison"), began in 2007.

The revelations caused a political cross-fire here with parties blaming each other for not abandoning the negotiations. The Green Party reported Defense Minister Sten Tolgfors to the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Affairs to investigate his role in the project.

## PROJECT SIMOOM

# Crimes suspected in Saudi weapons project

Published: torsdag 22 mars kl 11:05,



Photo montage: Sveriges Radio/Scanpix.

Swedish prosecutors suspect crimes may have been committed by employees at the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI), which devised secret plans to help construct a weapons factory in the dictatorship of Saudi Arabia.

Two weeks ago, Swedish radio news revealed that former FOI employees founded a front company called SSTI in 2009 to deal specifically with the weapons factory project.

Swedish prosecutors announced on Thursday a preliminary investigation into FOI's dealings with the project, which was referred to as "Simoom" internally.

Information that surfaced during an internal investigation at FOI led Jan-Olof Lind, the director general, to report his own agency to the prosecutors.

"I take the reports that have come to my knowledge very seriously. They are the reason I am reporting FOI," Jan-Olof Lind says in a press release.

The Prosecution Authority would not specify what crimes are suspected on Thursday.

"That FOI has found grounds to report itself to judicial authorities is noteworthy. It shows that it was important to ask FOI to investigate the issue further," defence minister Sten Tolgfors said in a written statement to Swedish Radio news.

Dick Sträng, the former FOI employee who registered SSTI as a company, told Swedish news agency TT on Wednesday that he had not been made aware of any suspicions against him.

The Office of the Chancellor of Justice is currently considering whether to launch its own preliminary investigation into breaches of secrecy by FOI employees.

Several confidential documents were leaked to Swedish Radio News. As public workers, FOI's employees are constitutionally protected when reporting to the media.

The chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution, Peter Eriksson of the Green Party, said that it is unusual for a public agency to report itself to the prosecutors.

"But it's an odd order for employees of a public agency to found a company in absence of a government decision," Eriksson told TT.

In the coming months, the government is expected to order an inquiry into stricter requirements for exporting weapons to non-democracies.

## PROJECT SIMOOM

# Military intelligence cash used for front company

Published: tisdag 27 mars kl 09:13,



head of the Defence Research Agency (FOI).

Jan-Olof Lind, the

The government's Defense Research Agency (FOI) borrowed cash from military intelligence services to set up a front company, SSTI, to facilitate dealings with Saudi Arabia for building a weapons factory there, a new Swedish Radio report reveals.

Erik Lagersten, press secretary at Swedish military headquarters, confirms that the internal intelligence services, Must, transferred money to FOI on several occasions but says no one there knows if it was used to set up SSTI.

"Our job is to help FOI and work together, so there is cooperation, but I can't tell you more because this is confidential," he says.

Sources tell Swedish Radio that SSTI had to be set up with cash, for unknown reasons but possibly to avoid a paper trail, and that is when FOI contacted Must for help.

The sources say the money was later repaid.

"Whether FOI have used the funds in an incorrect manner is a matter for the ongoing inquiry," Erik Lagersten adds.

# Minister "lost all joy" in his work

Published: torsdag 29 mars kl 11:27,



Fredrik Reinfeldt. Photo: Fredrik Sandberg/Scanpix.

Sten Tolgfors and

Defense minister Sten Tolgfors resigned Thursday after weeks of controversy over revelations Sweden planned to help Saudi Arabia build an arms factory.

Infrastructure Minister Catharina Elmsäter-Svärd will take over the defense portfolio temporarily.

At a press conference on Thursday the Defense Minister and Prime Minister put Tolgfors' personal well-being at the centre of their presentation.

"At the centre of this is a human being with feelings and a family" said Reinfeldt. Tolgfors said that he had "lost all joy in his work", which had become "too heavy" for him, after four-and-a-half years at the post.

Swedish media have reported a series of revelations on a Swedish-Saudi arms deal in the last few weeks, but Sten Tolgfors says that this plays little role in his decision to resign, apart from the impact that the media climate has had on his family.

The minister says that he was already planning to leave in a few months, after having finished with planned reforms of the Swedish military, and that now a compromise on soldiers' welfare has been reached with the opposition Social Democrats, "all the pieces of the puzzle are there", and he can leave the job.

He says that the toughest part of his job is dealing with Swedish soldiers injured or killed in the field.

# Opposition welcomes Defense Minister resignation

Published: torsdag 29 mars kl 10:51,



Defense Minister Sten Tolgfors at a press conference on the Saudi arms deal. Photo: Tomas Oneborg/SvD/Scanpix

The Swedish defense minister, Sten Tolgfors, resigned on Thursday.

Sten Tolgfors is facing an investigation over his part in an arms deal with Saudi Arabia. The leader of the Left Party, which had called for the minister's resignation, spoke to Swedish Radio after the announcement.

"We are happy that Tolgfors is assuming political responsibility" says Jonas Sjöstedt.

The Green Party had reported the minister to the Constitutional Committee, and their spokesman Gustav Fridolin writes that his party has "lost confidence in Sten Tolgfors" and that the minister has clearly considered how much confidence the Swedish people have in him when deciding to resign.

The Social Democrats' foreign affairs spokesman, Urban Ahlin, says that, despite the resignation, it is still important to "get to the bottom of the whole affair" and continue with the Constitutional Committee's investigation.

Political scientist Ulf Bjereld, who sympathizes with the Social Democrats, says to news agency TT that the minister's resignation may come as a relief, not just for Tolgfors personally, but for the whole centre-right government.

Sten Tolgfors and Prime Minister Reinfeldt held a press conference at 11:00 where the newly resigned minister said that he was not stepping down because of the scandal but due to pressure on his family and he had always planned to step down within a few months.

# Säpo investigating breach of trust in Saudi deal

Published: fredag 30 mars kl 13:19,



Thomas Lindstrand is investigating the FOI. Photo: Pontus Lundahl & Johan Nilsson/Scanpix.

The prosecutor investigating a possible crime in the Saudi arms deal has confirmed that they suspect a breach of trust has taken place.

This crime carries a penalty of up to six months and, in serious cases, of up to six years.

Prosecutor Thomas Lindstrand says to Swedish Radio News that a breach of trust implies that a client has suffered losses, due to its faith being abused.

The Defence Research Institute (FOI) set up a company in order to build a weapons factory in Saudi Arabia. The money was paid, in cash, by the Swedish military intelligence service, Must.

The Swedish intelligence service, Säpo, will be leading the investigation, since it may uncover details that are classified.

# Parallel investigations into the Saudi deal may clash

Published: fredag 30 mars kl 10:12,

The police investigation into the Swedish defense research institute (FOI), over the Saudi arms deal, may delay Parliament's own inquiry into how the government handled the affair.

Green Party politician Peter Eriksson is the head of the Parliament's constitutional committee (Konstitutionsutskottet, or KU).

He says to Swedish Radio News that he is unsure exactly what the police are looking into. The FOI reported themselves to the police last week, and the head of the FOI has refused to answer the defense minister's questions, due to the ongoing police investigation.

Peter Eriksson says that, so far there is no conflict between the two investigations, but if the police's work takes a long time, it may delay the KU inquiry.

He says that so far the KU has been gathering in all the media's reporting on the Saudi deal, and will then be contacting state authorities and government departments.

FOI

# Costly PR advice for handling Saudi weapons affair

Published: söndag 17 juni kl 11:10,



Jan-Olof Lind, the head of the Defense Research Agency (FOI) was criticized at the time for not speaking to the media.

The Swedish Defense Research Agency spent over \$43,000 dollars of tax payers money on receiving crisis management advice from a PR agency on its involvement in the Saudi weapons factory affair.

Earlier this year, Swedish Radio broke the story that FOI had set up a dummy company to help in a secret project to build a weapons factory in Saudi Arabia.

Swedish Radio News revealed that the dummy company, SSTI, would provide know-how and expertise in the weapons project and the set-up would hide Sweden's assistance in developing a weapons factory in the Saudi desert.

News Agency TT revealed on Sunday the cost of FOI's handling of the crisis in the media.

FOI spokesperson Ann-Sofi Carlsson told the newspaper;

"It is really rather common to take in expert advice from outside."

FOI paid the public relations firm Gullers Group to provide advice.

PROJECT SIMOOM

# Start-up money for Saudi weapons factory: a plastic bag full of cash

Published: måndag 24 september kl 10:05,



FOI, the Swedish Defence Research Agency. Photo: Johan Nilsson / Scanpix

A former employee of the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) says he got the start-up capital to create a front company for FOI, intended to manage plans to build a weapons factory in Saudi Arabia, in the form of a plastic bag filled with bundles of cash.

"It was an economic transaction that wouldn't be traceable. That was the idea," Dick Sträng, who used to work for FOI, tells Swedish Radio news, adding, "This was a hidden operation."

FOI funneled taxpayer money totaling a quarter million Swedish kroner, the equivalent of about US\$ 38,000, in cash, into the start-up of the front company, SSTI, according to Swedish Radio news.

On Friday, prosecutors decided not to file any charges against FOI, following the scandal surrounding the Swedish weapons deal with Saudi Arabia. Prosecutors said there was no evidence that a "breach of trust" had occurred, even though there was proof that the money came from FOI.

## SAUDI WEAPONS PLANT

# Swedish Army bought military info from Russian expert

Published: torsdag 04 oktober kl 08:39,



Russian expert 500 000 SEK for information. Photo: Scanpix/Montage Sveriges Radio.

FOI paid a

The Swedish Armed Forces' research institute secretly bought specialized military information from a Russian specialist, reveals Swedish Radio news. The information contributed to the study that was handed over to Saudi Arabia regarding the weapons plant the Swedish Armed Forces had planned on building there.

According to the results of an investigation on the Saudi weapons case carried out by intelligence service Säpo, the Armed Forces, through the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) and MUST (the military's secret service) contacted the Russian expert in 2007 to help provide technical information to Saudi Arabia that they were lacking.

The information would contribute to plans to help the dictatorship in Saudi Arabia build a weapons plant.

According to Säpo's investigation, the Russian specialist was paid half a million SEK in cash for his services.

The specialist is said to have links with the Russian government, and Swedish Radio news reports that the Armed Forces' cooperation with the specialist was both done in stealth and informally. The recent information could affect Russian-Swedish diplomatic relations.

Swedish Radio sought out the Armed Forces' research institutions involved in the case, but was unable to attain a comment.

## PROJECT SIMOOM

# Head of government agency knew about Saudi weapons deal

Published: tisdag 09 oktober kl 10:41,



Photo montage of the FOI logo and the current defense minister Karin Enström, who replaced Sten Tolgfors. Photo: Scanpix/Montage Sveriges Radio.

Swedish Radio News reports the government gave false information about how much the director of the Swedish Defense Research Agency, FOI, knew concerning plans to build a weapons components factory in Saudi Arabia.

Previously secret hearings from the Swedish Intelligence Service, Säpo, reveal the Agency's director general was involved with the arrangements for the shell company, SSTI, that would handle the creation of the weapons factory.

This spring, Swedish Radio News revealed that the agency worked in secret to start the company used as a front which would then lead the sensitive project to construct a weapons factory in Saudi Arabia, considered by some to be a dictatorship.

However, the agency itself is not allowed to start companies.

Former defense minister Sten Tolgfors had maintained that the agency's director-general had not understood that the shell company was being operated by some of his closest colleagues at the agency.

In March, while still in the role of defense minister, Tolgfors said at a press conference that the agency's director-general first learned about the connection in March 2010, and then closed it down.

But referring to the Säpo hearings, Swedish Radio news reveals that what Tolgfors said was not the truth.

In the hearing, the agency's director general Jan-Olof Lind admits that he understood the company was being run by several of his closest colleagues, something he had known even before he started in his role as acting director-general.

That means that the agency - and its director-general - planned for a least a year to let the company lead the weapons factory project.

When the plans were stopped a year later, in 2010, the reason was not the close connection between the agency and the shell company, it is believed, but rather that the company was too small and did not have enough money.

In the hearing Lind says that at the time, he realized the project was too big for the company.

The chair of the parliamentary Constitutional Committee, Peter Eriksson, of the Greens, who is now investigating the government's role in the Saudi weapons affair, finds the information worrying.

"It's obvious that Tolgfors and others in the government wanted to push this as far away from themselves as possible, and it is naturally not good at all for confidence in the government and Parliament if we have leaders who don't tell the truth in such important situations," says Eriksson.

It is unclear what Sten Tolgfors knew at the time, Swedish Radio News has tried to reach him for a comment, but has as yet been unsuccessful.

## PROJECT SIMOOM

# Minister cannot explain why arms deal document removed

Published: onsdag 21 november kl 09:01,



Defence Minister Karin Enström can't explain the missing e-mail, her predecessor Sten Tolgfors denied knowledge of the deal. Montage: Sveriges Radio

An e-mail that would have revealed that the government has lied has disappeared from the official archives, Swedish Radio News reports.

The government has confirmed that the Ministry of Defense deleted the email from the Swedish Defense Research Agency. It contained information about the Agency's front company, which was set up with the intention of funding the building of a weapons factory in Saudi Arabia. At the time, the government denied all knowledge of what the public agency had done in secret.

Last March Swedish Radio News reported that the Swedish Defense Research Agency broke the rules when they secretly set up the front company.

**The Kingdom is regarded as a dictatorship** in Sweden, and its treatment of women is particularly criticized here. The idea of helping the Saudis make weapons was not popular, and the whole project is now the subject of an inquiry by parliament's Committee on the Constitution.

At the time, the government denied all knowledge of what the public agency had done in secret. But that didn't prevent Defense Minister Sten Tolgfors being forced to resign. He was replaced by Karin Enström.

**Now Swedish Radio reporters have found an e-mail** from the agency, sent in 2010, telling the Ministry of Defense about the deal. But the letter is no longer in the archives, and according to the government offices, it never existed.

The e-mail was sent by Lars Höstbeck at the Defense Research Agency:

"Did I send a message like that," he asks Swedish Radio News? "I don't remember."

The recipient of the e-mail was reportedly Per Andersson at the Ministry of Defense. The reporters called him up. But after a friendly greeting, he tells them to talk to the ministry's press secretary.

**All such e-mails are supposed to be logged** into the official archives. But the letter from the defense agency to the ministry isn't there. In fact, the government says it was never there because it never existed. That according to government lawyer Erik Brandel, who also talked to the Swedish Radio reporters:

"If I've written that it doesn't exist, it doesn't," he says. "I haven't lied."

**Finally the journalists turned to Defense Minister Karin Enström**, and showed her a copy of the missing e-mail. They asked why it wasn't in the archives. Her reply was "You're sticking this paper in my face...I can't answer that question...I am assuming we are following the rules"...before her press secretary breaks up the interview.

The Swedish Parliament's Committee on the Constitution is holding an inquiry into the Saudi affair. The committee's chair, Peter Eriksson, tells Swedish Radio News they have requested all the relevant documents, but this apparently very important file has not been turned over to them. Peter Eriksson says the failure is very serious and risks damaging the entire system.'

## ARMS DEAL

# "No jail time" for hiding Saudi email

Published: torsdag 22 november kl 16:23,



Swedish Radio reporters have found documents linking public agencies with setting up the arms plant

An email linked to the government's secret plans to build a Saudi weapon's factory was removed from a journal that should be open to the public. The email would have shown that the government knew about plans to help Saudi Arabia build a weapons facility. The removal of the email could go against Sweden's Principle of Public Access, protected in the constitution. Radio Sweden talked to Per Hultengård, a legal expert and the CEO of the Swedish Newspaper's Publishers Association. He says that hiding documents is a very serious matter - but that no one is likely to go to jail for it.