

Campagne tegen Wapenhandel Press release

Slebos case reveals failure of Dutch and EU nuclear non-proliferation policies

Amsterdam, 12 September 2007. For immediate release. The case of nuclear trader Henk Slebos, which comes to the Amsterdam Appeals court on 18 September, highlights the failure of Dutch and EU nuclear proliferation policies, according to a new report released today.

Project Butter Factory: Henk Slebos and the A.Q. Khan nuclear network is a comprehensive account of how the drive for profit, competing political interests and weak regulations in the Netherlands allowed the export of dual-use nuclear components to continue over a 30 year period. The report compiles publicly available data, including materials obtained under the Dutch Freedom of Information Act, to reveal:

- * The full story of Henk Slebos's role in the A.Q Khan nuclear network. Khan is widely acknowledged to be the 'father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb', with this same network implicated in nuclear proliferation to Iran, Libya and North Korea. Slebos has been Khan's close friend and business partner for three decades.
- * The repeated failure of Dutch security services in stopping Slebos's trading in nuclear components, and the inability of Dutch authorities to prosecute these activities. The only successful prosecution thus far has resulted in a minor fine. Often action was undertaken only after foreign security services or investigative journalists revealed sensitive information.
- * The trade in nuclear technology and components originating from Dutch and multinational companies, including Philips and Urenco.

With the current ease in exporting nuclear components across European borders, the report recommends that firm action be taken at EU level to reform export controls.

"The Slebos case shows the EU and Dutch authorities' lack of urgency in tackling the trade in dual-use components that can be used to produce weapons of mass destruction" says Frank Slijper, author of the report. **"The existing nuclear powers should stop turning a blind eye to proliferation and start serious disarmament."**

<p><i>Project Butter Factory: Henk Slebos and the A.Q. Khan nuclear network</i> is published by the Transnational Institute and the Campagne tegen Wapenhandel (Campaign Against Arms Trade). The full report can be downloaded at: www.tni.org and www.stoparmstrade.org More information: Frank Slijper, Campagne tegen Wapenhandel, M: + 31 (0)6 28504778 or frank@stopwapenhandel.org</p>
