



AIPAC MEMORANDUM

500 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.W. • SUITE 300 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001 • (202) 638-2256

ISRAEL TAKES STEPS AGAINST PRETORIA

On March 18, 1987 the Government of Israel announced two significant steps to limit its ties to South Africa. It banned all new sales contracts with South Africa and has set up a committee to re-evaluate its government's policies and recommend further steps to distance Jerusalem from Pretoria. In making this announcement, Foreign Minister Peres reiterated Israel's "uncompromising condemnation" of apartheid.

The announcement met with praise from the Executive Branch and Capitol Hill. Members of Congress said they plan to continue to work with Israel to influence South Africa to rid itself of apartheid policies. A State Department spokesperson called it a "welcome development."

The decision to curtail relations follows a healthy debate in Israel on the future of Israeli-South African relations.

Israel has unequivocally condemned apartheid in both public forums such as the United Nations and in private conversations with officials of the Pretoria government. Israel's relationship with South Africa grew out of real national security issues it faced as many nations refused to trade with the Jewish state.

With the exception of Egypt, Arab states have refused to openly recognize, negotiate or trade with Israel and have threatened and pressured non-Arab companies to boycott Israel as well. Additionally, Israel's Arab neighbors continue to expand their arsenals and threaten Israel's existence.

One reason Israel opposes imposing sanctions on South Africa is because Israel has continually been subject to military boycotts itself, even by the United States and Western industrial democracies. This prompted Israel to develop its own military industry.

In putting Israel's relationship with South Africa in perspective, the following factors are significant:

- * Western democracies have contributed to South Africa's defense in violation of the United Nations arms embargo of 1977. While today South Africa's military is largely self-sufficient, Great Britain, France, West Germany and others have been suppliers of technology and vital components necessary for the functioning of South Africa's military. The *Christian Science Monitor* (3/20/87) states that Israel "reportedly lags behind the United States, European nations, and South America in total value of arms purchased. South African defense imports from Israel are far lower than such transfers from other Western nations."

* Israel's relationship with South Africa did not emerge in isolation. Instead, it was part of a Western strategy which sought to protect the vital shipping lanes of the Cape of Good Hope and the strategic minerals which, aside from the Soviet Union, are not available elsewhere in any measurable quantity.

* South Africa's major commercial trading partners include the United States, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union. Israel represents less than 1% of Pretoria's total trade. In fact, Israel's trade with South Africa has decreased in the past three years.

* The United States itself has reportedly been in violation of the arms embargo including supplying computer technology for use in the military infrastructure, navigational equipment, encoding devices, and technical data, according to DMS Market Intelligence Reports.

* Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait are the main suppliers of oil to South Africa's military. South Africa imported approximately \$10 billion worth of oil from these Persian/Arabian Gulf countries from 1980 to the present.

* Forty-six of the 52 members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) have some commercial, financial or trade links with South Africa. Black African countries' official trade amounts to over \$500 million annually.