

**THE ARMING OF ISRAEL
AND ITS IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND WORLD
PEACE AND EUROPEAN DETENTE***

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I. Introduction:

The problem of ending the arms race in our age requires a radical solution. The spirit of détente has scored several gains on the continent of Europe. But the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, which may also be termed as the south of Europe, are among the best equipped regions of the world in terms of armaments. It is generally believed that all the Middle Eastern countries taken together have the same number of tanks and combat planes as all the NATO forces in Europe. It is no wonder, then, that the Middle East has experienced five wars, the situation there being explosive at present. The accumulation of stockpiles of arms in such an explosive area increases the fears of the other side, creating an atmosphere further leading to an unchecked growth of tension. Such spending on arms certainly impedes the development of the Middle Eastern countries as well.

Since the former U.S. Secretary of State Henry L. Kissinger had qualified the export of arms as a fundamental element in the overall design of American foreign policy,¹ it is no wonder that the United States plays particularly prominent role in accelerating the arms race in the Middle East. The bulk of the American arms export goes to this area. By arms deliveries, the U.S. expects to preserve her influence in this area, that is, she hopes to support the régimes favourable towards her, to keep in power friendly governments, to utilize bases and other facilities for her armed forces and her intelligence services and to control the strategic resources in the area.

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1 *Newsweek*, September 6, 1975, p. 35.

The arms build-up in the area showing signs of being out of control, the Western, and principally American, policy of providing more advanced types of weapons was criticized within the United States. Apart from Senator Edward Kennedy, Senators Church, Culver, Humphrey, Mansfield, Nelson and Roth as well as Representative Aspin voiced opposition to the acceleration of the arms race.

Israel, strategically situated in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, is a racist, military state which is not only the biggest importer of arms in the area, but also whips up the arms race in the other parts of the world. The Israeli leaders always press for a further increase in American arms deliveries. It is also well-known that some American arms are supplied free of charge. The export of arms and its technology to Israel on a grand scale places the arms race in the Middle East in a dangerous phase. Such weapons' delivery has a negative impact on talks aiming at détente as well as increases the probability of great power involvement in local wars.

Hence, the militarization of the Israeli society and the aggressive foreign policy of this racist state is of utmost importance for any consideration of regional and world peace.

II. The Militarization of Israel:

Israel has a total military budget much larger than that of its major opponents combined. The post-1967 war budget represented the first huge leap in Israeli military expenditures. According to Michael Bruno, the Hebrew University Professor of Economics, "Israeli military expenditures for 1967-1969 reached the sum of \$ 2.400 million, a total which was almost equal to the military expenditures of the preceding ten years which followed the 1956 Suez campaign and totalled \$ 2.500 million."²

² Institute for Palestine Studies, *Bulletin*, November 16, 1971, p. 391 quoted from *Maariv*, January 22, 1971. Israel's defence expenditure for 1978-79 is quoted as /LI 54.4 billion (or \$ 3.31 billion) by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (*The Military Balance: 1978-1979*, London, 1978, p.38.) and as \$ 4.27 billion by some Arab sources (*Baghdad Observer Weekly Supplement*, Vol. I, No .31 (July 3, 1979, p. 2.) In any case, Israel, per capita, has the biggest military budget. Virtually, the entire Israeli population, excluding the Arabs, is assigned to civil defence and home guard duties. Communal farms are organized for warfare with fortifications and stocks of arms. "Nahal" (Fighting Pioneering Youth) is the principal para-military force. (Trevor H. Dupuy, Grace P. Hayes and J.A.C. Andrews, *The Almanac of World Military Power*, 3rd ed., New York, R.R. Bowker Co., 1974, p. 186.

Israel's major industrial sector is the one engaged in arms production for the Israeli armed forces as well as for export. Israel has about 120 arms factories. Since 1973, the trend has been to accelerate the manufacture of Israeli-designed weapons. In 1973, close to 40 % of the total budget for research and development projects went to military research.³ In view of the increase in world consciousness of Israel's aggressiveness and expansionism, this intensification of arms production is in harmony with Israel's drive to be self-sufficient in armaments.

The Israeli Aircraft Industries (I. A. I.), which was started in 1953, is the largest military enterprise in that country. It has more than a dozen departments specialized in the manufacture of spare parts, missiles, guns, radar equipment or aeronautic parts. The Beit Shemesh Engine Plant, erected in collaboration with the French, is the second largest plant in Israel. It manufactures turbines and spare parts for jets. There are about forty plants specializing in spare parts and ammunitions only. The "Mavlan" manufactures aircraft bombs, the "Ossim" hand grenades and ammunition for artillery, the "Takas" mortars and mines and the "Ranyok" ammunition and spare parts for light weapons.

The "Tadiran", established in 1961, is one of the better-known electronic equipment factories. It manufactures telecommunication systems, to be carried by infantry or installed in tanks. The "Elta", established in 1960, is the second largest enterprise, remanufacturing electronics equipment of American and European origin. It produces radars, installed in Phantoms, Skyhawks and the Mirage as well as low-altitude flying planes. The "Elron", established in 1956, is the third largest Israeli electronics company, specializing in nuclear equipment. It has several branches of affiliated companies, such as the "C.D.S.", which manufactures huge electronic computers for the Nuclear Power Agency and the Weizmann Institute or the "Elscint", which produces sophisticated nuclear research equipment. The "Motorola" is the fourth largest Israeli company, 37 % of its shares owned by the American Motorola.

The following are some of the outstanding Israeli-manufactured weapons:⁴ The "Uzi" sub-machine gun is a developed

3 *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1973, p. 78.

4 Riad Ashkar and Ahmed Khalidi, *Weapons and Equipment of the Israeli Armed Forces*, Beirut, the Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971.

model of the Czechoslovakian ZK-476; it was mass produced in the mid-fifties. The "Galil" rifle, throwing two kinds of anti-tank grenades, was exhibited for the first time at the Israeli military parade in 1973. The "Fal" rifle is Belgian in origin. The 90 mm. anti-tank gun is a modification of the French one on the A.M.-L. tank. The 106 mm. anti-tank recoilless rifle is manufactured by license from the U.S. The 155 mm. "Howitzer" is developed from the French 50-M. The "Katusha" ballistic missiles were manufactured after their capture during the 1967 war. The "Zeev", electronically guided, was revealed in 1974. The SS-11 anti-tank guided missiles are French in origin. The "Tow" missiles were obtained from the U.S. and developed after 1973. The "Jericho" ground-to-ground missile is a modification of the French MD-660 built for Israel by the SASSAULT Company. It can carry nuclear warheads. The "Hawk" ground-to-air missiles are American in origin. The "Sheffer" air-to-air missiles, introduced in 1973, carry highly explosive warheads. The "Luz-1" air-to-ground missiles are a modification of the U.S. Maverick. The "Gabriel" ship-to-ship missile is a modification of the West German Corvaite. Several types of landing ships are built in Israel, the most outstanding in the "Ash" class being the "Ashlod", "Ashkelon" and "Aohziv"; there is also the "LC" type. The "Reohev" light missile boats were made public in 1973. The "Dabur" patrol boats are similar to the American "Swift". The "Super Sherman M-4" is an adaptation of the British Sherman tank. The "Patton M-48" is considered to equal the American M-60. The "Centurion" tanks replaced the American Continental. The "Merkava" tanks are a joint U.S.-Israeli project. The building of the "Arava 201" aircraft, began in 1967. The improved "Arava 202" was shown at the 1977 Paris air exhibition. The "Kfir" aircraft, started in 1970, was designed after the French Mirage-3. Able to carry nuclear bombs, the Kfir is among the major nuclear deliverers in Israel. The "Iryee" is designed to match the U.S. F-16.

One reason for the Israeli offensives in Southern Lebanon is to test the new weapons. On March 15, 1978, Israel, under the pretext of protecting "Israeli security", had launched a savage attack against Lebanon. The so-called "clearing operation", declared to last one single day only, resulted in the fifth Arab-Israeli

war, during which the Zionist aggressors used all kinds of U.S. and Israeli-designed weapons. However, in the wake of the dispatch of U.N. forces to the area and the immense pressure of world public opinion, Israel had to revise her direct occupation policy. The Israelis have opted for puppets to carry out their deeds. Not withdrawing from all their positions, as stipulated by Resolution 425 of the U.N. Security Council, the Israeli forces handed over advanced positions to a group of Lebanese officers led by a certain Saad Haddad. Israel not only arms, trains and finances Haddad's troops, but also systematically steps up its subversion of Lebanon in several ways, including the resort to force.

Moreover, the arms production in Israel far exceeds the demands of her armed forces or her "security". The correctness of this assertion may be proved by a reference to the fact that about one-third of the armament factories in that country is oriented towards export. The Israeli arms exports in 1976 reached \$ 320 million from \$ 70 million in 1973.⁵ The export of the Arava aircraft started after the 1973 War. It was sold to Mexico, Nicaragua, Equador, Uruguay, Salvador and Bolivia. An Arava plant with Israeli and Mexican capital was erected in Mexico. Since the Kfir engine is U.S. made, Israel has been seeking American consent to sell this type of aircraft to Brazil, Equador, Peru and Venezuela in Latin America as well as to South Africa and the Philippines. Since 1977, Rechev boats are being delivered to South Africa. Dabur boats are built in South African docks with Israeli assistance. Orders were placed by Argentina, Formosa, Malaysia, South Africa, Singapore and Thailand for the Gabriel missiles. Chile, Formosa and South Africa have ordered the Shefrers. 106 mm. recoilless anti-tank cannons have been delivered to Thailand and the Howitzers to South Africa. The Uzi sub-machine gun has been purchased by the U.S., Federal Republic of Germany, Iran and South Africa and the Galil rifle by Britain and Thailand. The Israeli companies for electronic equipment have established branches in countries like the U.S., F.R.G., France, Canada, Argentina and some African states.

5 Ghassan Al-Atiyah *et al.*, *A Study of Zionist Conventional and Nuclear Armament*, Baghdad, Center for Palestine Studies, 1978, p. 25.

III. Foreign Military Aid to Israel:

Although Israel strives to be as independent as possible in weapons and military equipment, she is still dependent on her Western supporters, mainly the U.S. for all sophisticated weapons. Israel has been mainly armed by the U.S. (principally since the 1967 War), Britain (pre-1954) and France (1954-1967).

American military aid to Israel may be classified into two categories, namely, conventional weapons and nuclear arms. The U.S. provided Israel with Skyhawk and Phantom planes mainly before the 1973 War. The F-15 and F-16 aircraft came as American contribution for the implementation of the Second Interim Agreement (September 1975) on Sinai. By 1980, Israel will have operational some 300 American "Lance" surface-to-surface missiles.⁶ Israel has advanced "Eagle" fighters, which permits her to maintain air superiority in the region. The U.S. has provided Israel with a large number of laser-guided bombs, even more sophisticated electro-optical weapons like the "Maverick". The U.S. demonstrated in the 1973 War that she will provide Israel with whatever military support the latter professes to need. The following comment of a leading military analyst shows that U.S. aid has built up Israel into a state able to wage aggressive wars: "... Israel is no longer a small state surrounded on all sides by neighbours with large forces; it is a militaristic state whose military build-up has gone far beyond the requirements of defence".⁷

In 1978, the foreign military sales program approved by U.S. Congress was \$ 2,1 billion, \$ 1 billion of which was earmarked for Israel.⁸ Payment for weapons is facilitated by an export economy augmented by substantial U.S. economic aid, sale of Bonds for Israel in the U.S. and West German reparations.

Israel has become a nuclear-weapon state with foreign assistance. It was disclosed in 1960 that the "textile" factory at Dimano in the Negev Desert was in reality a nuclear fission plant, built with French aid. It is estimated that Israel possesses at le-

6 The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey: 1975*, London, 1976, p. 79.

7 Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Arab - Israeli Balance: How Much is Too Much?" *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1977, p. 33.

8 *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, May 30, 1977, p. 20.

ast a dozen nuclear weapons. She has at least two reactor centers, one being the Nahal Soreq Research Center near the Weizmann Institute, south of Tel Aviv. The other is near Dimona. The second is capable of producing the fissionable plutonium of sufficient purity necessary for the manufacture of nuclear bombs. Uranium was discovered in the Negev Desert by Ernest David Bergmann, who headed in 1962 the Israeli Nuclear Commission. That country is trying to increase her production of uranium in Negev and the Dead Sea from ten to fifty tons. Agreements were made with France, South Africa and some other African states for the purchase of uranium. In 1968, the German freighter *Sherbourg*, seemingly destined for Italy, handed over to an Israeli ship in the middle of the Mediterranean 200 tons of uranium. Israel is one of the seven states which refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons. The *Mirage*, *Skyhawk* and *Phantom* aircrafts can deliver nuclear bombs. Israel also possesses missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. In the 1960's, the French Marcel Dassault Corporation had developed the MD-660 nuclear-capable missiles and delivered them to Israel. The present Jericho missile was later developed on that model,

IV. Israel and Africa:

Zionism is a racial ideology, and Israel is a racist state. The Israeli society, subservient to American interests, discriminates not only between the Jews and the Arabs, but also between the Western, Oriental and Black Jews. The Palestinian Arabs, who are the original inhabitants of the land, are imprisoned, their property confiscated and their houses blown-up. Israel's role as a racist state is evident not only as an occupier of Palestine and as responsible for racist laws against some of the inhabitants, but also in her entire foreign policy no less than relations with the other racist states.

Israel is not backing Africa against the racist régimes in the south of the continent. Following the deterioration of relations between herself and most African states, Israel has been able to retain official relations on the African continent only with South Africa, Rhodesia, Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland.

One may remember in this connection that Israel has voted against Algerian independence in 1956, against the U.N. program of holding elections in the Cameroun in 1959 and against condemning the French nuclear tests in the Sahara. She has abstained in 1960 when the independence of Burundi, Rwanda and Tanganyika was voted upon.

For years, Israel has played a relatively invisible, but strategically important role in activities to subvert the independence of several African states.⁹ Israel aims to serve the same objectives that the U.S. seems to promote through its "aid" program. Israeli assistance has been concentrated in strategically important areas, particularly in specialized military training with counter-insurgency applications. The U.S. and her allies have been financing programs by means of semi-covered "third country techniques". Israel is an example of the third country technique, by means of which imperialism hopes to penetrate into the newly-independent states.¹⁰ Integrated with the C.I.A.'s labour strategy, the Histadrut, or the General Trade Unions of Israel, has sought to divert workers' struggle from class interests. Israel has pursued a parallel training approach in agriculture.

Israel provides its most effective service to imperialist interests in the area of counter-insurgency. Israel has worked closely with the U.S. in developing counter-guerilla in Imperial Ethiopia. Israeli advisors have served in the Chad Army against the National Liberation Movement in Chad. The Late Kwame Nkrumah had also charged Israel for having played a pro-Western intelligence role in the overthrow of his government in Ghana. Israel was also active in the Congo of 1960-61. General Mobutu was one of the 243 Congolese paratroopers who had training in Israel. Israeli advisors had taken part in fighting the guerillas in Angola. Israel helped the separatists of the Ibo tribe in Nigeria to establish the Biafra state where oil resources existed. She also aided the separatist movement in Southern Sudan.

9 S.R. Salman, *Israel and Counter-Insurgency in Africa*, Beirut, Center for Palestine Studies, 1974.

10 Arnold Rivkin, "Arms for Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. XXXVIII (October 1959), pp. 84-94. Also see by the same author: *Africa and the West*, New York, Praeger, 1962.

V. Israeli-South African Alliance:

At a time when international diplomatic isolation of the *apartheid* state of South Africa was growing, there was one state that strengthened its ties with unusual speed—Israel. One would say that a state of Jews would, at least in theory, be in opposition to racialism. After all, many of the Israeli leaders were still of the concentration camp generation. On the other hand, many statesmen of South Africa were Nazi sympathizers during the Second World War. Vorster, later to become Prime Minister, for instance, was interned by the South African Government because of his pro-Nazi views and activities. In spite of all that can be said of the South African régime labeling it a racist and a fascist state, Israel has broken all United Nations resolutions calling for complete boycott of South Africa. Israel has even provided assistance to that régime by actively participating in advising the South African armed forces in insurgency.

Zionist relations with South Africa have always been cordial. The two racist régimes have ideological and historical roots. General Jan Smuts, who was a member of the Imperial War Council in 1917, the year the Balfour Declaration on the Jewish homeland on Palestine was announced, had close relations with Zionism.¹¹ He was one of the supporters of the said declaration.¹² General J.B.M. Hertzog's Nationalist-Labour coalition government also supported the same idea. South Africa lobbied in favour of the partition of Palestine. South Africa became the seventh state to extend formal *de jure* recognition. Dr. D.F. Malan was not only the first Prime Minister in the British Commonwealth to visit Israel, but also permitted South African Jewish reserve officers to serve in that country and funds be transferred to Israel.

Since 1949 Israel has maintained a Legation in Pretoria and a Consulate-General in Johannesburg. The over-all strengthening of relations between the two racist régimes after the 1967 War led to the general upgrading of Israel's level of representation. In 1969 Israel appointed a Chargé d'Affaires with the per-

11 Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz, *The Jews in South Africa*, London, Oxford U.P., 1955, pp. 281 f.

12 Richard P. Stevens, *Weizmann and Smuts: A Study in Zionist-South African Cooperation*, Beirut, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1975.

sonal rank of Ambassador, and in 1973, Israel elevated her diplomatic mission to an Embassy. In 1975, South Africa opened an Embassy in Tel Aviv. Under the circumstances, the following remark of General Hendrick Van den Bergh, the chief of South Africa's Bureau of State Security who visited Israel, is no surprise: "I went to Israel recently, and enjoyed every moment there. I told the Prime Minister when I got back that as long as Israel exists we have a hope. If Israel should, God forbid, be destroyed, then South Africa would be in danger of extinction."¹³

While there is a community of interest between Israel and South Africa which is now a constituent part of the foreign policy decision-making system of both régimes, the United Nations has been expressing, in recent years, increasing concern over the intensification of political, economic, military and other relations between Israel and South Africa. Among several states in which the Zionist movement carries on legal activity, South Africa comes fifth on the list in terms of the movement's effectiveness. The United States heads the list, followed by Britain, France and Canada. The South African Jewish community has a Zionist character.¹⁴ The South African Zionist Federation, founded in 1895, and the South African Board of Deputies, founded in 1919, are the two main bodies through which the Zionist movement operates there. The South African Jewish ruling circles have supported the acts of the *apartheid* government. They have not withdrawn their support even after such events as the 1960 Sharpeville massacre.

More importantly, military cooperation between Israel and South Africa dates back to the creation of the State of Israel. South African volunteers have participated in the 1948 War, during which the *apartheid* régime has sent supplies to Israel.¹⁵ South Africa lent material support to the Israeli war effort in 1967. A special fund was raised by the South African Zionist Federation, and volunteers served in Israel once again. South Africa has played an even more direct role in the 1973 War. Egypt

13 Peter Hellyer, *Israel and South Africa: Development of Relations, 1967-1974*, London, Palestine Action, 1975, p. 23.

14 Richard P. Stevens, *Zionism, South Africa and Apartheid: the Paradoxical Triangle*, Beirut, P.L.O. Research Center, 1969, pp. 32 f.

15 Antoine J. Bullier, "Les relations entre l'Afrique du Sud et Israël," *Revue française d'études politiques africaines*, No. 119 (Nov. 1975).

had announced that a South African jet fighter had been brought down on the Suez front during the war.

The two régimes cooperate in the use of sophisticated weapons, supply of military equipment and training in counter-insurgency techniques. The Uzi gun of Israeli design is now the standard weapon in the South African Army. The *apartheid* régime is interested in the Israeli-manufactured Kfir and Arava, the last-mentioned suiting especially counter-insurgency operations. Israel has sold gun -boats and Gabriel missiles to the South African Navy, and South Africa has exported tanks to Israel.¹⁶

A South African military mission flew to Israel to study the tactics of the six-day war in 1967, and the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Air Force visited South Africa to explain the lessons of the war to the military. Senior Israeli officers regularly lecture South African officers on modern warfare. Hundreds of Israeli soldiers are attached to the South African Army as instructors.

In view of these developments, the U.N. General Assembly, in Resolution 3151 G (XXVIII) of December 14, 1973, condemned "the unholy alliance between... South African racism... and Israeli imperialism." And as well-known, in resolutions 3324 E (XXIX) of December 16, 1974, and 3411 G (XXX) of December 10, 1975, the General Assembly condemned all relations between the two. The Special Committee against *apartheid* is closely following the development of relations of the two racist régimes.

Both forced into increasing isolation and both weakened by the gains of the liberation movement, the two have sought closer collaboration. Politically, their cooperation aims at linking South Africa and the Middle East as a common strategic concern for the West as well as undermining African unity and driving a wedge between the Africans and the Arabs. Economically, South Africa has been using Israel to evade international boycott, and Israel has been receiving raw materials vital for her economy. They have been making joint investments complementing the two economies. Cultural activities have promoted closer ideological identification. And militarily, they have

¹⁶ George J. Tomeh, *Israel and South Africa: the Unholy Alliance*, New York, New World Press, 1973, p. 26.

provided each other with additional source of arms supplies and technological know-how. Their collaboration reached a new stage after Prime Minister Vorster, who visited Israel in April 1976, concluded new agreements on economic, scientific, industrial and military cooperation.

VI. Conclusion:

The arms build-up in the Middle East, especially the militarization of the Israeli society, is fraught with dangers to regional and world peace. The situation has deteriorated since the conclusion of the separate Egyptian - Israeli agreement. A "peace" built on a pyramid of arms cannot be stable. The arms build-up in the Middle East is a source of profits for the monopolies and helps imperialism to strengthen its positions in the strategically important areas. In the light of the "Pax Americana" plan for the Middle East, the militarization of Israel and the encouragement given to her by the U.S. are easy to understand. Israel is to get another 75 F-16 combat planes, tanks, armoured carriers, artillery and missiles. \$ 800 million have been allocated for the construction of two new air bases. Egypt too has been promised sizable U. S. military aid. Since the Egyptian-Israeli agreement and the Iranian Revolution, Cairo may be set to take Teheran's place. In any case, Israel now enjoys a military and technological preponderance enabling her to wage war for several months, even without American support. Some Israeli leaders are already hearing the thunder of another war, which smells oil. The recent (June 22, 1979) American announcement in connection with the setting up of a special military unit comprising 110,000 men for intervention in Third World countries brings to mind the possibility of the U.S. Army stepping in as a "peacemaker". Such developments are fraught with dangers making détente meaningless.