

Shortly after the agreement was signed, *Al-Hamishmar* (December 29, 1981) commented: «Israeli officials claim that one of the advantages Israel will gain from the new strategic accord with the United States will be a greater role in the Third World. The leaders of pro-Western regimes in the Third World, especially those of countries that have unpopular, authoritarian regimes and a negative image in Washington, would like to make use of Israel's «American connection», according to the same source. They seem to hope that Israel will be able to help them through her influence and efforts in Washington to obtain direct U.S. political, military and economic aid and perhaps also an increase in indirect military assistance.»²⁸⁰

The United States has full knowledge of Israeli arms sales and has never objected, with a single exception, even to arms sales to Argentina (so long as they did not travel via New York) or Iran (once the hostages were released) or other violations of U.S. law which are supposed to terminate U.S. aid.²⁸¹ The single exception was a Carter administration objection to sales of advanced Kfir fighter planes with U.S. produced engines to Ecuador which introduced a new level of military technology to the region.²⁸² In December 1979, while presenting his letter of accreditation to Israeli President Yitzhak Navon, Ecuadorian Ambassador Wilson Vela Hervas announced Ecuador was ready to increase oil exports to Israel. Later the same month, Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman insisted the ban be lifted.²⁸³ Under extreme pressure, Carter caved in and allowed the sale. The Reagan administration has raised no such barriers.

In fact, the Reagan administration feels a certain envy toward the Israelis. *Time* magazine quotes an American expert based in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa: «Israel operates without the restrictions imposed on us in this part of the world. It doesn't have to explore the abuse of human rights. It

has arms to sell, and the governments in this region need them». An Israeli weapons dealer puts it more bluntly: «Just about anyone who shows any interest in buying arms from us can have them».²⁸⁴

An irony of history finds Israel working on both the left and right of the U.S. This article focuses on Israel's help to rightist regimes, too distasteful to the people of the United States for sufficient military assistance from the U.S. government. In Africa, especially prior to 1973, when distrust of the European colonial heritage made it difficult for the United States to penetrate young African regimes, Israel was welcomed and was not recognized itself as an outpost of European colonialism. It was no accident that Israel had the plans for Entebbe airport; Israelis built it. Idi Amin, Mobutu, and a long list of prominent Africans went to Israel for training.

Lest anyone rely on a Labor government to end Israel's arms sales to dictators, note that it was the previous Labor government which initiated Israel's role as an arms supplier.²⁸⁵ In fact, Israeli collaboration with right-wing and fascist forces is always justified by Zionist arguments, holding the creation and preservation of the Zionist state above all principles, political or moral. Zionism, since its inception, has correctly identified imperialism British, French or U.S. as its strategic ally.

Even today, Labor and other so-called left Zionist Israeli parties play a role for the United States in penetrating the international left, labor, and cooperative movements, especially in Latin America, and particularly in Mexico, a huge subject beyond the scope of this article. Israeli newspaper ads seek Spanish speaking Israelis for work abroad. Consider that Israeli parties have direct relations with parties in the Socialist International, that the Histadrut works actively in Latin America, and that the Israelis use their supposedly socialist kibbutzim as a basis to work with Latin American cooperatives.

Summary

Israel in the Context of the Movement against Intervention in Central America

Across the United States, a huge movement is growing to oppose U.S. intervention, in any form, in the popular uprisings of Central America. Recent Gallup polls show massive opposition to U.S. military aid to the regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. It is conceivable that this movement could succeed in diminishing or even cutting off U.S. military aid. But it is clear that the Reagan administration is prepared to follow its predecessors in using Israel, in the words of Ernesto Cardenal, minister of culture in Nicaragua, «as an intermediary to channel arms».²⁸⁶

The Reagan administration obviously has no interest in violations of the Monroe Doctrine, the 19th century U.S. declaration of hegemony over Central and South America and the Caribbean, when a close ally violates it to help preserve U.S. hegemony. Let no one delude themselves: Israel operates in the western hemisphere, in Asia, and in Africa with close U.S.

supervision and approval. The U.S. government is using Israel to circumvent U.S. popular support and congressional opinion. The *New York Times* reported: «American officials said that the Reagan administration, concerned about Congressional limitation of involvement in Central America, had encouraged the Israeli activities as a means of supplementing American security assistance to friendly governments. In addition, the officials said, *the administration wanted to establish new lines of support to Nicaraguan rebels in case Congress approved legislation that would cut off covert support for the insurgents.* (emphasis added)²⁸⁷

Israel's importance to the United States thus cannot be measured only by its invaluable role in repressing the Palestinian people and blocking revolutionary developments throughout the Arab countries. And because Israel performs its assigned tasks internationally, the United States allows the