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## Africa Review

Supplement  
8 June 1981

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AFRICA REVIEW (H)

SUPPLEMENT

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South Africa - Israel: Status of Relations (S) . . . 1

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Relations between South Africa and Israel have in recent years expanded to include extensive economic dealings and close political ties--and appear to be strong enough to overcome their inherent drawbacks. (S)

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SOUTH AFRICA - ISRAEL: STATUS OF RELATIONS (U)

Ties between South Africa and Israel, once heavily military and highly secretive, have opened up in recent years to include extensive economic dealings, a growing tourist trade, and a close political relationship. This trend was fostered by former Prime Minister Vorster's visit to Israel in 1976. The connection has mutual political drawbacks and potential pitfalls--chiefly for Israel, which is trying to establish diplomatic relations with several black African states--but the foundation of South African - Israeli relations is strong enough to overcome most obstacles. (U)

Affinities and Frictions

One of the keys to the relationship has always been found in South Africa's influential Jewish community. The approximately 120,000 Jews in South Africa are strong Zionists and have extensive family ties in Israel. They have contributed more per capita to Zionist funds than any other Jewish community and stand second only to American Jews in total annual contributions.\* (U)

A number of other cultural and psychological affinities underlie the relationship. The Afrikaners and Israelis both see themselves as "chosen people" and as the embodiment of Old Testament values. They both resisted British colonial rule with eventual success. Moreover, Israel and South Africa are virtual pariahs in the international community, and within their respective regions both are isolated and surrounded by actual or potential enemies.\*\* (U)

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in the construction of a nuclear-powered submarine in Durban are without basis in fact. The list of weapons of Israeli origin in the South African arsenal, however, is extensive--a testimony to past large-scale arms trade between the two sides. Included in Pretoria's inventory are Reshef-class patrol boats, Gabriel surface-to-surface missiles, Galil rifles, and Uzi submachineguns.

(S)

Israel's decision to interpret the UN arms embargo against South Africa in 1977 as only covering future dealings has contributed to the arms sales controversy. Although the deal involving the Reshef patrol boats and their accompanying Gabriel missiles was concluded in 1975, delivery of the boats and missiles continued through 1978. South Africa in fact is still building the boats under Israeli license. (S)

Delayed deliveries, coupled with South African use of Israeli middlemen to gain access to commercial international arms dealers, complicate our understanding of current arms trading between the two countries. Despite

[REDACTED] occasional secondhand and thirdhand accounts that Israel has made clandestine arms deliveries to South Africa, there is no hard evidence refuting Tel Aviv's official denials that it has concluded arms deals with South Africa since 1977 or is otherwise violating the UN arms embargo as it interprets it. (S)

#### Nuclear Ties

Speculation about South African - Israeli collaboration in producing nuclear weapons has been rife since 1963, when Pretoria sold Tel Aviv 10 tons of nominally safeguarded uranium. Prime Minister Vorster's proposal in 1976 for a series of scientific and technical exchanges and the reports linking South Africa and Israel to the September 1979 "event" in the South Atlantic have raised such speculation to new heights.

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