

South America

Israeli arms exporters sell to every South American country except Brazil, which produces and exports its own arms. The Israeli military attache in Buenos Aires coordinates the activities of more than twenty Israeli arms merchants, one-third of the entire overseas staff, who traffic in weapons in Latin America.¹⁵⁸ *Davar* estimated Israeli arms exports to South America, mostly to Argentina and Peru, at \$150 million in 1982.¹⁵⁹ However, in 1980, Argentina and El Salvador accounted for 35 percent of \$1.2 billion in Israeli arms exports, or \$420 million.¹⁶⁰ Ecuador's twelve Kfirs cost \$196 million and the U.S. Government Accounting Office estimates a possible \$800 million in Latin American sales for Israeli aircraft alone.¹⁶¹

As in Malawi, Africa, the Israelis have helped set up military youth movements like the Nahal in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, El Salvador, Panama, and elsewhere.¹⁶²

Argentina

Argentina is Israel's second largest customer worldwide,¹⁶³ accounting for about 29 percent of Israeli sales in the seventies;¹⁶⁴ its air force bought fifty supersonic jet fighters before 1982, making Argentina the single largest purchaser of Israeli combat fighters.¹⁶⁵ During Argentina's 1978 dispute with Chile over the Beagle Channel, Israeli arms salesmen, supposedly neutral, shuttled back and forth selling both sides as much as they wanted in planes, boats, and missiles, such as the Shafrir which was sold to both sides and contains components made in the U.S.¹⁶⁶ General Mordechai Mota Gur, former head of the Israeli armed forces, told General Pinochet, «the Chilean army is accustomed to victories and hungry for more». Gur went on to Argentina where he sold \$250 million in the form of 26 Nesher fighter-bombers (Nesher is the Hebrew word for «dagger»; the Nesher is a Mirage), four Dabur patrol boats, and 18 sea-to-sea Gabriel MK missiles and arranged for delivery of \$1.5 million in antiaircraft shells.¹⁶⁷ To satisfy their neutrality, the Israelis sent the deputy defense minister to Santiago. Pinochet bought spare parts and service for his C-130 transport planes and 150 Shafrir infrared missiles. The U.S. had refused to sell Chile the U.S. missiles after which the Shafrir is designed.¹⁶⁸

Israel had done the same during the 1969 Honduras-El Salvador soccer war.¹⁶⁹ During the Malvinas/Falklands War, when the U.S. stopped its own shipments to Argentina, Israel got into hot water by illegally shipping arms to Argentina via New York.¹⁷⁰ The Israelis sold Argentina 32 rebuilt aircraft from the Israeli air force, Gabriel and Shafrir missiles, and spare parts for Argentinian Mirages and Skyhawks during the war.¹⁷¹ Since the Malvinas/Falklands War,¹⁷² Israel has sold the Argentinian junta 22 U.S.-made A-4 Skyhawks and has agreed to ship 22 more Kfir fighters.¹⁷³

A CIA report, captured in the U.S. embassy in Teheran, states that the Israeli secret service, the Mossad, has close

links with the Argentine army. The document asserts that Mossad officers, based in Rio de Janeiro and responsible for operations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay went to Uruguay to «train the Argentinians. Based on these contacts, the Israelis have recommended the development of joint antiterrorist operations».¹⁷⁴ Israeli arms business with Argentina sharply increased after the military seized power in 1976. The anti-Semitic practices of Argentina's military junta, documented by the U.S. House of Representatives, the Catholic church, and the American Jewish Committee, are well-known. Jacobo Kovadloff, the AJC representative in Argentina, was forced to flee the country because of threats to his life. Yet Nazi war criminals like Edward Roschmann, the «Butcher of Riga», get official protection.¹⁷⁵ In December 1982, in Buenos Aires, Israeli Foreign Minister Itzhak Shamir expressed concern to Argentina's president and foreign minister about one thousand Jewish-Argentinian disappeareds from the the five-year reign of terror. Then, in the same meeting, he went on to discuss further arms sales.¹⁷⁶

Chile

In Chile Israeli arms are used to assassinate those who resist the Pinochet regime. A special agency of the Israeli ministry of defense, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, aids the Chilean junta in counterinsurgency. Chile has also bought a radar system and two patrol boats. Many such transactions are shrouded in secrecy. In 1982, the Chilean popular resistance denounced the secret unloading of a shipment of Israeli arms at the port of Talcahuano, near Concepcion. In 1977 Chile bought 150 Shafrir missiles.¹⁷⁷ Then chief of the Israeli Air Force, General David Ivri, visited Chile in late 1982, presumably to induce them to buy aircraft.¹⁷⁸ In January 1983 the general director for Latin American affairs of the Israeli foreign ministry declared in Santiago that his country will increase relations with Chile «in all ways». When asked about the sale of arms, he stated, «It would be much nicer for us to sell textile products. But we are forced to produce arms for reasons of security and defense».¹⁷⁹

Another close ally of the Israelis is the Duvalier regime in Haiti.¹⁸⁰ Perhaps the most outrageous Israeli sales in South America are those to Paraguay, unrepentant haven for Nazi war criminals.¹⁸¹ Richard Arens, the older brother of the Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens, says he broke with his brother when he was working to stop the extermination of indigenous peoples in Paraguay. The elder Arens asked his brother to try to stop Israeli arms sales to Paraguay. Moshe responded that he wasn't interested.¹⁸²

Central America

In the seventies, Israel became «the major source of arms for the conflicts in Central America», according to the *Los Angeles Times*.¹⁸³ Joav Karni, of the progovernment *Yediot*