

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Arms exports facts

IN HIS ARTICLE "Israel and Arms Exports" (*HaMizrachi* Vol 4 No 1), Rav Yuval Cherlow writes, "...the arms export environment is always accompanied by moral decay. Because these transactions are often done "in the dark" because tremendous amounts of money are involved..."

I have been working in the Israeli defense industry for nearly 30 years.

Here are some publically available facts: In the late 1990s, Israel wanted to export advanced missiles and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft to China. The US became aware of the deal and forced Israel to cancel it, causing an international incident with China.

To prevent this from recurring, the Israeli Ministry of Defense (IMOD) created the Defence Export Control Agency, DECA, or, in Hebrew, API – אפי.

DECA is responsible for the marketing and export licenses required to export weapons. DECA rules with an iron hand.

As one who regularly deals with this sort of thing, DECA makes exporting weapon systems extremely difficult and often nearly impossible. Marketing and export licenses are required for even the most trivial transactions. I have found myself on the wrong side of DECA on numerous occasions because I interpreted the licensing rules more leniently than they did. I do not know one person in Israeli Defense Business Development who has not had a similar experience.

My point is that there are no "dark rooms" with "former senior officers." All transactions are performed in clear daylight under the watchful eye of DECA. When an Israeli company tried bypassing DECA only a few months ago, officials caught them and the people involved were arrested.

This is not to say that there are no *halachic* issues with arms export. As a frum Jew, I have studied these issues at length. I have gone so far as to refuse positions that I felt would be *halachically* problematic. But I suggest that *halachah* cannot be adjudicated until fact is separated from fiction.

Ari Sacher

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A powerful description

OF ALL THE Tisha B'Av edition articles, I found "On the Front Line: A

Soldier's First-Hand Account of Operation Guardian of the Walls" (*HaMizrachi* Vol 4 No 3) to be particularly moving. The IDF fought the most recent war with Hamas primarily through the air, responding to Hamas' attacks with targeted missile strikes. Given the constant barrage of rocket attacks on our towns and cities, it was easy to forget that many of our soldiers were dangerously exposed to these attacks near the Gaza border, often without secure bomb shelters nearby.

The young author honestly and powerfully described the fear he experienced as the rockets fell around him. As a mother, I am shaken by the dangers our children must endure to protect our country, but also deeply proud of the incredible young people who put their lives on the line to protect all of us. May Hashem protect all of our brave young soldiers and give them the strength and fortitude to carry on, *b'simcha*.

Tamar Nector

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(PHOTO: IDF)