



**April, 1983**

**Draft letter from South African Defence Minister Magnus Malan to Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens**

**Citation:**

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<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116780>

**Summary:**

South African Defence Minister Magnus Malan writes to new Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens expressing the hope that relations with Israel may be strengthened and expanded under his tenure. Malan express concern about the military trade imbalance, stating that "it is of such a proportion that my government must of needs consider alternatives."

**Credits:**

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1983 Undated April, Draft letter from South African Defence Minister Magnus Malan to Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens, South African Defence Forces Archive. Obtained and contributed by Sasha Polakow-Suransky.

UITERS GEHEIM

DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE  
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DRAFT REPLY TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE : ISRAEL

13 JUL 2006

Dear Minister

J.A.L. STEINMANN  
72563596PE WO1

<sup>1983</sup>  
I Thank you for your letter of 7th April, delivered to me in Cape Town. ~~You are, no doubt, by now fully settled in the portfolio of Defence and well versed in the problems,~~ I wish to congratulate you with your appointment as the Minister of Defence for the State of Israel. I assure you that I have full appreciation for the troubled times that faces your country from a defence point of view. I therefore wish you wisdom, courage and strength for your term of office.

There has been good co-operation and progress between our countries in the military related fields, and I wish to assure you that it is my government's policy that it should not only remain as such, but should also be strengthened and expanded wherever possible.

I have noted with appreciation from your letter, that you fully recognise the importance of pursuing reciprocal purchases with respect to mutual programmes in the military related fields, and that you actively support all efforts undertaken to this end.

The imbalance of purchases between our two countries in the military related field, is perhaps one of the biggest problems for the continuation of co-operation. During the past decade we have supported you in this field to the extend of more than 1 billion dollars, while your support to us has been for less than 10 million dollars. This imbalance reflects very seriously in the overall trade pattern between our two countries, and is of such a proportion that my government must of needs consider alternatives.

The South African military industry has developed considerably during the past decade, and if the availability of strategic raw materials and military metals are added to the product range, I am confident that your support in this field could achieve the reciprocal balance to which you refer.

UITERS GFHFIM

After numerous inspections and representations during the past few years, I trust that your staff is by now fully acquainted with the total product range.

The final negotiations for the [REDACTED] is pending the final outcome of the negotiations regarding the electronic telephone exchange. As mentioned the overall imbalance figure between our two countries caused by the defence related contracts is of such a serious nature, that my government has come to the point where it has little option but to consider alternatives.

It would be my pleasure to make your acquaintance, and I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

(Or according to the Minister's choice :

*I look forward to making your acquaintance and also to discuss matters of mutual interest. I therefore cordially invite you to visit the RSA at a convenient time in the near future.)*

Yours sincerely

DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE  
DECLASSIFIED

13 JUL 2006

J.A.L. STEINMANN  
72563596PE W01

M A DE M MALAN  
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

*The Honourable Moshé Arens,  
Minister of Defence  
Tel Aviv*