

# Oppression and U.S. foreign policy

It appears that Likud, the right-wing party advocating a stronger stand against the Palestinian uprising, has emerged the victor in Israel's election. Though Likud performed only slightly better than its main rivals, the Labor party, the fringe groups on the right have been much more successful than those on the left.

Thus, we can expect Likud to align itself with right-wing factions and take a hard line in the West Bank: Soldiers might be given new orders on how to deal with Palestinians more forcibly, and deportations will almost certainly increase.

But Israel's actions have already caused great distress around the world. How much further might it go before U.S. citizens start to call for economic and political sanctions?

Probably as far as it chooses. There has been no outcry for such actions and there probably never will be. Just because the United States is an ally of Israel does not mean the United States supports or condones its actions. Therefore, no such sanctions to show our displeasure are necessary.

Great Britain has vast and intimate ties with our country, but that doesn't mean we like the way Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is dealing with Ireland. The Soviet Union is hardly up for membership in NATO, but the United States does maintain many political, economic and cultural links with that nation. It does not follow that we approve of their totalitarian government or the human rights abuses such a system engenders.

Why then do people call for such absolute measures against South Africa? Its particularly odious philosophy of apartheid is certainly galling. But as we've seen, the United States deals with many countries that have odious practices.

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## THE DILETTANTE

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Perhaps it is the South African image of whites persecuting blacks: We still feel guilty, with good reason, over the fact that it's only been a few decades that blacks in our own country have begun to enjoy the liberties we take for granted.

Then again, the cynical might suggest we can afford to be morally righteous with a country that is relatively insignificant on the world stage. But taking a moral stand only when our interests aren't threatened is not particularly uplifting.

Whatever your opinion on how to deal with South Africa, don't argue that we must cut off all contact because the country doesn't measure up to our high standards. We have dealings with governments every day that don't measure up.

For example, in *The New York Times* on Oct. 30, there was a front page story on Parma, Ohio, a city that a federal judge declared had been actively excluding blacks for over two decades.

At one point during the long, drawn-out court battle, the city argued that "blacks preferred to live with other blacks, whose 'natural migratory patterns' were east of the Cuyahoga River, Cleveland's informal racial dividing line." Sometime in the late seventies, a City Council president put it more succinctly by stating, "I do not want Negroes in the city of Parma."

So, not talking to countries that don't live up to basic human rights standards could get very lonely. Sometimes, we wouldn't even be able to talk to ourselves.

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