

# 38 COMPANIES REPORTING CURRENT BOYCOTT BIDS NAMED AT LAST

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- The names of 38 American firms which have filed reports of being approached to participate in the Arab boycott were made public on October 18 by the Commerce Department.

President Ford ordered the disclosures on October 7, one day after he promised to do so during his foreign policy debate with Democratic nominee Jimmie Carter. But the President did not make his order retroactive to cover firms which reported prior to October 7 because there was an "understanding" that the information would remain confidential.

The Commerce Department has said that there is no federal law which forbids American firms from complying with "economic types" of boycotts but that discriminatory actions in such compliance, involving race, religion or sex of Americans, in international trade, are prohibited.

Firms had been required, under the Export Administration Act, to report approaches for compliance but the Act had no penalties for compliance. That act no longer applies because an extension of it, with specific anti-boycott amendments, was blocked in the final days of the 94th Congress, by efforts of Sen. John Tower, (R. Tex.). The Commerce Department is now operating under Ford's executive order which is based on the Trading with the Enemy Act. Commerce Department officials were unable to explain how that act would be used against

companies which violate any federal law.

The White House has promised to investigate reports that the federal Agency for International Development has placed boycott-related questions in a form used to seek bids from American construction firms seeking contracts from Arab countries, according to a Cox newspaper chain report. The report said AID complied with Kuwait demands for inclusion in the forms of these questions: "Have you undertaken...any consultation works in or for Israel, and, if so, when? Are you still undertaking such works? Do you have any associations with any consulting office in Israel and do you think it is likely you will have such an association in the future?" J. David McVoy, an AID official, was reported to have admitted that the form was sent to architectural and engineering firms around the world.

Secretary of Commerce Elliot Richardson testified before a Congressional subcommittee on October 20 that he no longer regarded public disclosure of the names of American firms

complying with the boycott as "counter-productive" and said he would "consider" government sanctions against complying American firms.

He gave that view to the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs at a hearing called by its chairman, Rep. Benjamin Rosenthal, (D. NY). Richardson said that, in a memorandum to Ford last spring, he had recommended Administration approval of the provisions of the Stevenson - Williams amendments to the Senate bill extending the Export Administration Act. Those provisions would have required disclosure.

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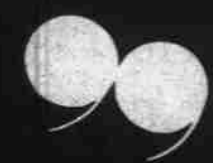
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