

ISRAEL'S 27TH
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Katzir said he was convinced the nation would accept any burden that was required to bring it closer to peace.

The Independence Day festivities came after a day of memorials for the soldier and civilian victims of Israel's four wars. President Katzir kindled a memorial light at the Western Wall where bereaved families assembled. Chief of Staff Gen. Mordechai Gur told them that Israel had not "wasted" the past year, that it was stronger now in weapons and spirit than ever and prepared to "face the political and military tests to which we may be put in the coming year."

The Memorial Day was ushered in with air raid sirens and all cafes and places of entertainment closed. Memorial services were held at all military cemeteries. Premier Yitzhak Rabin, at the Mt. Herzl ceremony, eulogized the fallen youth of Israel "who did not look forward to military conquests but knew how to hit the enemy deep in its territory." The day of mourning ended with sirens which also officially began Independence Day.

ISRAEL HAS OWN JET FIGHTER

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- Israel has unveiled a home-produced jet fighter plane, the "Kfir" (Lion Cub).

The delta-winged single-seat aircraft with a reported speed of Mach 2.2 (2.2 times the speed of sound) and an operation ceiling of 50,000 feet was manufactured by Israel Aircraft Industries. The plane was described as combination of the French Mirage, powered by the same jet engine that drives the faster American Phantoms. Israeli officials said the plane will reinforce the Air Force's strength, providing an intermediate generation of fighter planes to fill the gap between the American F-14 Phantoms, now the backbone of the Israel Air Force, until Israel acquires the more advanced American F-15 or F-16 jets.

Meanwhile Defense Minister Shimon Peres said in Independence Day newspaper interviews that about

30 percent of the equipment and weaponry used by the Israeli army is manufactured locally.

Peres also said that the armed forces were in better shape than ever. He said the young men coming into the army today are "the best the State has ever known." Peres said the lessons of the Yom Kippur War had been studied carefully and, he hoped, all the shortcomings had been remedied. Peres acknowledged that Israeli cities were in the range of Soviet made "Scud" missiles in the possession of Syria and Egypt.

But he said Israel can retaliate for any harm it suffers and the Red Cross was aware that Israel is ready to agree to a pledge, on a mutual basis, to refrain from hitting civilian areas.

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US JEWS MARK ISRAEL'S 27TH ANNIVERSARY

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Jewish leaders in the United States marked Israel's 27th anniversary with expressions of solidarity with the Jewish State, awareness of Israel's problems and confidence in her ability to cope with them.

In New York, some 3000 persons attended the American Zionist Federation's annual anniversary celebration. They heard Yosef Tekoah, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, declare that if Israel had yielded to Egypt's demands in the recent negotiations conducted by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger "it would have opened the Middle East to a process of Vietnamization." He said the negotiations broke down because "Egypt was not ready to make the first step in the direction of peace. Egypt wanted territory but was not prepared to abandon the path of war and to begin to construct peace together with Israel."

Mrs. Faye Schenk, AZF president, said, "We, the Zionists of the United States, pledge our continued support to the State of Israel." She said that "We will use all our resourcefulness to enable the public to discern facts from fiction, and in this way, develop an appreciation of the need for a strong and secure Israel."

David Rivlin, Israel's Consul General in New York, and other speakers noted that the celebration of Israel's independence is tempered with sorrow over the 10,000 Israelis who lost their

lives in Israel's four wars. "We are a generation steeped with suffering and tears and blood," Rivlin said.

Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin in a filmed message to the AZF celebration said "your assembly is in itself a celebration of our Jewish unity." Rabin declared that "to be a Jew means to want peace, to work endlessly to achieve peace and to take risks, if necessary, to advance its coming. For the past 27 years this has been the aspiration and objective of Israel."

Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, stressed that only with a strong Israel can peace be achieved in the Middle East. He said the Ford Administration must take this "assessment" into account in its "re-assessment" of American Mideast policy.

In Washington, the ambassadors of at least 40 countries and other public figures attended a reception at the Israeli Embassy hosted by Ambassador and Mrs. Simcha Dinitz.

In San Francisco, 500 persons attended an Independence Day celebration honoring the American Veterans of Israel sponsored by the American Veterans of Israel.

Several Jewish leaders issued Independence Day messages. Sam Rothberg, general chairman of the Israel Bond Organization, noted the inter-

sified Arab economic warfare against Israel and that the Jewish State is still staggering from the financial effects of the Yom Kippur War which has been aggravated by an unprecedented defense budget and a very high rate of inflation.

Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson, chairman of the World Zionist Organization's American Section, declared, "Never has American Jewry been so united in support of Israel as it is today. The Jewish community in the United States fully understands the problems Israel faces..."

Melvin Dubinsky, chairman, and Irving Kessler, executive vice-chairman of the United Israel Appeal, noted that Israel's long search for peace "depends to a large extent on the inner strength of Israel's people. We, the Jewish community of the United States, share in strengthening them."

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