

**OUR MAN
IN HAIFA**



CARL ALPERT

The Uzi Symbol

HAIFA -- The sub-machine gun known as the Uzi, designed and produced in Israel, has become almost a trade mark of Israel's armament industry. It is quite common to find in pictures from many countries that police officers, guards and military personnel are shown holding the familiar weapon. Not long ago it was revealed that Israel has sold 1,350,000 of the guns to 42 countries.

Israel's exports of military merchandise are not limited to Uzis, however. The list ranges all the way from howitzer artillery, mortars and bombs, to a broad range of sophisticated military electronic apparatus, as well as non-battle items like steel helmets and field kitchens. In 1981, the value of such exports exceeded 800 million dollars, reflecting a growth rate of 20 - 30% per year, which is expected to continue into 1982 and 1983.

Israel did not go into the munitions business by design. It all came about in the gradual development of circumstances. As far back as the 1950s, this country overhauled and reconditioned some of its old planes, which had been withdrawn from service and discovered there was a market for them in countries like Burma, in the Far East, and in Latin America. Indeed, the Israel Aircraft Industries made its first big money reconditioning planes, and went so far as to buy discarded "junk" from other countries, which it turned into first class flying craft for which there was a market.

In that same decade Ben-Gurion agreed to sell arms to Germany. India, no lover of Israel, purchased supplies here for use in its war against Pakistan.

The principal customer for domestic arms production was of course our own military forces. Indeed, the uncertainties of overseas supply made it necessary for us to become as self-sufficient as possible in these matters. The wars which Israel has endured, and the threats of war, ensured a local market for the wide range of products. In time of peace, the defense establishment was able to stockpile its needs. But there is a limit even to stockpiling, and the several large industrial plants, together with their subsidiary firms, faced a serious problem. Some could shift over to production of civilian consumer goods, and hold their military production lines in readiness in case of need. To close down completely was out of the question, not only because of the thousands of jobs involved, but also because industrial activities like these are not easily restarted, at the push of a button, should national need arise.

Thus it was that markets were sought, and

found, overseas for the principal items which Israel was willing to share with the world. Needless to say, there are some things which remain exclusive here.

Israel has not always been happy about its customers. When Idi Amin asked us to sell him fighter planes, and we refused, he broke off all contact with us. Some idealists at home have recommended that Israel draw a line and refuse to sell to nations that violate human rights. Who is to be the judge? There is hardly a country in the world that is not accused by another bloc of countries, of violating human rights. Israel, which has been the target of international lynching parties in the U.N., knows how much value can be attached to decisions of that august body. Furthermore, some two thirds of the world is closed to trade with Israel under any circumstances. The number of potential customers is limited, and many of these today buy from Israel only on condition that the business relationship be kept completely secret.

Now it can be revealed, of course, that Iran under the Shah, was a major customer. In 1978, for example, one Israel company alone, Soltam, sold more than \$50,000,000 worth of military merchandise to the Shah. The closing of that market caused a severe jolt to the Israel economy.

More recently, the New York Times has published reports claiming that last year Israel sold \$70,000,000 worth of munitions to Ayatollah Khomeini's government in Iran. There have been reports that controversial governments in Latin America equip their armies with Israel's products.

An opprobrium has always been attached to the very concept of munitions makers. How ironic that little Israel, which so ardently yearns for peace, has by circumstances been propelled into that very occupation.

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- President Reagan has signed a resolution proclaiming April 4 a National Day of Reflection in honor of the 80th birthday of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe. A resolution proclaiming the day was adopted by both Houses of Congress.

BOMB INJURES WEST BANK LEADER

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- A booby trap device exploded as a West Bank leader who cooperated with Israel opened his car door. He suffered minor injuries and was reported in "satisfactory" condition at Hebron Hospital following surgery.

Kamal Fatafta, Mayor of Tarkoumiya village in the Hebron hills, was the third victim of violence against West Bank Arabs who associate with the Village Leagues, an organization set up and financed by Israel to counter Palestine Liberation Organization influence in the territory.

In the latter part of 1980, the Village League leader in the Ramallah area and his son were fatally shot

in a highway ambush, apparently by Palestinian terrorists.

Since that incident, the Israeli authorities have armed Village League members. Mustafa Doudin, who heads the league in the Hebron district, promised increased security for members. He blamed Jordan for inciting the West Bank population against the Leagues. The Jordanian government announced just recently that Village Leagues' members would be tried for treason in absentia and executed.

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