

TERRORIST CARNAGE

37 ISRAELI CIVILIANS DEAD; 82 INJURED; CURFEW IMPOSED ON TEL AVIV AREA

Begin Says Outrage Will Not Affect Mideast Peace Prospects
White House To Announce New Date For Carter-Begin Talks

ATTACK ORIGINATED FROM TERRORIST BASES IN LEBANON

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 12 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin confirmed this afternoon that he and Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan have postponed their visit to Washington for a week as a result of yesterday's terrorist massacre. He affirmed that the outrage need not affect the current Middle East peace process. He said the White House would announce shortly a new date for his meetings with President Carter that were to have begun this Tuesday.

At a press conference after today's Cabinet meeting, Begin said that 11 terrorists were believed to have carried out the attack which was sea-borne from bases in Lebanon, that six were killed, two captured and three unaccounted for and believed to be at large somewhere in central Israel. He said the curfew imposed on the greater Tel Aviv area to protect the civilian population would remain in effect until all terrorists were rounded up. The dawn-to-dusk curfew affects some 300,000 persons. It was lifted from 2-5 p.m. local time today to enable people to go shopping.

Begin said that 37 Israeli civilians died in the terrorist assault and 76 were injured, including nine policemen, some of them critically. A later report put the number of injured at 82 and indicated that there may be additional fatalities. An army spokesman said this morning that 29 of the injured have been discharged from hospitals.

Begin stressed that the killers came from El Fatah "the main constituent of the so-called PLO," that the attack originated from terrorist bases in Lebanon and was master-minded by "Abu Jihad," the pseudonym of the terrorist who heads El Fatah's military arm.

Will Examine Aspects Of Security

Begin side-stepped repeated questions about possible retaliatory action by Israeli forces.

"Such a question cannot be answered," he told one reporter, adding, "What I can say is that those who kill Jews in our time cannot enjoy impunity." He said there had been no appeal from the U.S. to Israel to show restraint and not launch massive reprisals. He repeated several times that Israel "would not forget" yesterday's slaughter.

An army spokesman denied tonight a BBC report of a retaliatory air raid on Lebanon. He said no Israeli planes carried out any action across Israel's borders.

Begin said, in reply to questions that all aspects of the security forces' preparedness and how they handled the attack once it begun would be "examined." Questions have been raised in the Israeli media as to how the terrorists penetrated Israel's sea defenses and their progress along the main Tel Aviv-Haifa highway in a hijacked bus and the final shoot-out at a road-

block near Tel Aviv when the bus was set afire. Begin revealed that 25 of the dead were found in the bus, their bodies charred almost beyond recognition.

Terms PLO A Nazi Movement

The Premier was grim and at an emotional pitch when he addressed the reporters. He denounced the PLO and the Soviet Union which, he said, supports and arms them, in equal terms, likening both to the Nazis in their determination to destroy Jews. The PLO, he noted, is headed by Yasir Arafat who was accorded recognition by the United Nations and applauded in the General Assembly. He called on the entire world "to stop and think" about this, saying it only confirmed what Israel has been arguing for "years--that the PLO is a Nazi movement... the basest ever to arise... whose sole aim is to kill Jews."

"They never attack military installations," he said. "They come to kill civilians... And these were the people who had ordained the 'Palestine Covenant' and whom the Arab world at Rabat (in 1973) appointed the sole representative of the Palestinian people. I hope all men of good will will now reassess their appreciation of our position regarding the demands being made these days... which are in practice that Judaea, Samaria and Gaza become a state ruled by Yasir Arafat," Begin said.

Begin disclosed that documents found on the terrorists showed that they intended to capture hostages and "make demands of the government of Israel." (Israel Radio reported today that a list of imprisoned terrorists whose release was to be demanded had been found on the terrorists.)

Asked if the attack would affect the peace process, Begin replied, "If Egypt sincerely desires to reach a peace agreement, then this event should not prevent the negotiations from going forward." He warmly thanked President Carter for his condolence message and said similar messages were received from Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, British Prime Minister James Callaghan and United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim. In reply to questions he said no expression of condolence had been forthcoming from Cairo. (See separate stories for reactions.)

(In Cairo, the Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Boutros Ghali, said the latest violence demonstrates the need for President Anwar Sadat's initiative to succeed and to result in a Mideast settlement that would "establish a homeland for the Palestinians." He added that the new violence proved that additional territory alone cannot guarantee Israel's security.)

Excoriates The Soviet Union

Begin was especially furious toward the Soviet Union. He noted repeatedly that the weapons carried by the terrorists, which included a light mortar and rapid firing machineguns were supplied by the Soviets. "Let the rulers of the Kremlin who saw what the Nazis did to the Jews--ask themselves

what are they doing in our time? What are they ready to do for the sake of ostensible political interests?"

Begin opened the weekly Cabinet session today by calling on the ministers to stand and observe a minute's silence to "honor the memory of the dead men, women and children, victims of our people's war of survival, who were wantonly murdered. We wish the wounded complete and speedy recovery."

Meanwhile, Israel has appealed to a number of countries with which it has diplomatic ties to rescind their recognition of the PLO as representative of the Palestinians. Israeli missions abroad had been instructed by the government to cite yesterday's terrorist assault for which El Fatah has taken credit as proof of the basically terrorist nature of the PLO.

The Israeli diplomatic missions have also been instructed to urge friendly members of parliaments in several countries to introduce motions condemning the attack and to urge their governments to cancel recognition of the PLO and shut down PLO offices in their cities.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said the Israeli missions had been up-dated on the major PLO atrocities of recent years, beginning with the 1969 Avivim schoolbus killings through the terrorist attacks on civilians in Maalot, Kiryat Shemona, Yuval, Beit Shean, Nqhariya, Kikar Zion and Mahane Yehuda in Jerusalem and the Lod Airport massacre and the sea-borne attack on the Savoy Hotel in Tel Aviv in March, 1975.

A NATION IS IN-MOURNING

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 12 (JTA)—A five-year-old girl, Naama Hadani, was buried in Haifa today. She was given a military funeral for she was a victim of war as much as any soldier fallen in battle—a war by terrorists against Israel's civilian population that has been going on intermittently almost from the moment the State of Israel was founded 30 years ago.

Six soldiers carried the small coffin to its grave. An army chaplain conducted the services. An army cantor chanted the El Moleh Rohamim and recited a chapter from the Psalms. The child was one of the 37 Israeli men, women and children who died in yesterday's terrorist massacre on the Tel Aviv-Haifa highway. Her father, Joseph, was one of the 82 civilians injured. He was released from the hospital to attend the burial services.

There will be more funerals tomorrow. But some of the dead may not be buried immediately because time is needed to establish their identity. Twenty-five of the victims were burned almost beyond recognition when the terrorists turned their bus into an inferno during a climactic shoot-out at a roadblock near Tel Aviv. The passengers were tied to their seats, preventing their escape.

Massive Search Continues

Today the entire nation was in mourning and in shock. Of the estimated 11 terrorists who carried out what has been called the worst and bloodiest outrage in Israel's history, three are believed still at large. Troops, police, aircraft and helicopters were, as of this evening, carrying out a massive search for the killers who may still be armed and dangerous.

As a protective measure, some 300,000 residents of the Tel Aviv area and suburbs to the

north were placed under a round-the-clock curfew. It was lifted for three hours this afternoon to enable householders to stock up on bread, milk and groceries. There were large, mostly silent queues outside shops and supermarkets. Schools in the curfew area remained closed today but classes were held as usual in other parts of the country. In some places eighth graders and high school students volunteered to help the civil defense authorities. Special arrangements were made to transport teachers living in the curfew area to their schools outside the area.

No Arab workers arrived for their jobs in Israel today. Roads to the West Bank were closed as were the Jordan River bridges. There were 53 wounded in the hospitals, some in critical or serious condition. Five hospitals were still functioning on an emergency basis.

The search for the terrorists was hampered by a sudden change in the weather. Yesterday it was warm and dusty. Today it rained heavily, the winds reached almost gale force and thunderstorms beat down on searchers combing every swamp and thicket, cave or gully where the terrorists might find a hiding place. Tonight, helicopters hovered overhead dropping flares and beaming searchlights through the downpour.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy questions were raised. How did the terrorists manage to elude Israel's sea patrols and land on a beach along Israel's crowded, heavily populated coastal plain? Did Israel's vaunted intelligence services have no inkling of the impending assault? Why were the police unable to halt the hijacked bus in its 50-kilometer race toward death until it reached the suburbs of Tel Aviv? There are already calls for an inquiry and the government has promised one without delay.

Terrorist Plans Were Ambitious

Documents found on the terrorists who were killed or captured cast light on their plans which were more ambitious than the wanton killing of civilians. After landing on the beach at Maagan Michael, south of Haifa, from two rubber dinghies launched by a mother ship, they intended to hijack a vehicle, drive to Tel Aviv, invade a major hotel there and capture hostages.

They would then submit their demands to the government: release of imprisoned terrorists, including Kozo Okamoto, sole survivor of the Japanese "Red Army" kamikaze killers who carried out the Lod Airport massacre on May 30, 1972. A list of their demands was found, written in bad Hebrew on a sheet of paper. The terrorists planned to demand that three diplomats—the British and Rumanian ambassadors and the United Nations representative—accompany them to a United Nations plane to fly them to Damascus.

The plan was not executed. But the terrorists carried out their threat that all hostages would be killed if their demands were not met or if they failed to reach Tel Aviv. The victims were not hotel guests but Israeli families—32 adults, 31 children—returning from a bus-tour of the north. Most were families of Egged bus cooperative employees.

A DAY OF TERROR

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 12 (JTA)—In early spring, Israel's weather alternates capriciously between hot and dry and the torrential downpours of lingering winter rains. Yesterday, Saturday,

March 11, dawned fair and warm. Had the weather been less salubrious, the carnage that marked the day as one of the bloodiest and most tragic in Israel's history might have been less extensive, or might not have occurred. The following events were pieced together from eye-witness accounts and police reports.

By mid-afternoon, thousands of Israelis were at the Mediterranean beaches, on the tennis courts and in swimming pools. Some 60-odd men, women and children, mostly families of Egged bus cooperative employees, were returning from a pleasant nature tour of the northern countryside. Some of the youngsters, tired from their outing, slept in the back of their bus. A young Israeli woman photographer, employed by Time-Life, was in a rented car near the beach at Maagan Michael, south of Haifa.

None of these people could have had an inkling of the bloodbath and flames that would end their lives or send them, severely injured, into hospitals before the day was over.

At about 3:45 p.m. two Zodiac-type rubber dinghies reached the surf at Maagan Michael. Aboard were 11 heavily armed terrorists—two of them women—on a mission of death and destruction. They landed stealthily, unnoticed. They saw the young photographer in her small rented car. Reportedly they asked her for directions, then shot her to death. But the car could not hold the killers and their Russian-made arms and ammunition. They walked to the main coastal highway between Haifa and Tel Aviv and opened fire on passing vehicles.

Fired At Passing Cars

The terrorists managed to commandeer a large Mercedes taxi. But it, too, could not contain them and their deadly equipment. From the taxi they fired at a northbound bus, hitting some of the passengers. The bus halted and its driver was ordered, at gunpoint, to turn around and head south toward Tel Aviv. A touring bus was also halted and its passengers ordered to board the hijacked bus. The terrorists had almost 70 hostages. They continued southward, firing at passing cars, killing or wounding their occupants.

By this time, police were alerted. Small patrols attempted to intercept the terrorists' bus but were driven off by hand grenades, automatic fire and mortar shells. The bus raced through Nathanya. Police re-enforcements were brought up with orders to prevent the killers' bus from entering Tel Aviv. A large roadblock was erected at Herzliya. Police and border police took positions on both sides of the road. As the hijacked bus approached, they fired at its tires. The bus was halted, machinegun and rocket fire blasting from its windows.

The terrorists had already wired explosives throughout the vehicle and tied their hostages to their seats. At the roadblock, they left the bus under cover of deadly fire. They lobbed a mortar shell into it and the bus exploded bringing fiery death to those inside. Six terrorists were felled by police fire and two were captured. Three, believed to have escaped, were identified late tonight among the dead on the bus. The only survivors among the passengers were those who managed to extricate themselves and leave the bus before it was blown up.

Eye-witnesses told of horrendous sights. A girl was running frantically near the burning bus. Her father had been burned to death. Her mother

was hospitalized. Her two brothers were rescued by a police sergeant and taken to his home for the night. A physician took the girl to his home. Avraham Shamir, of Haifa, burned in both eyes and on his arm, told reporters at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv that he had grabbed a live hand grenade in the bus and tossed it out of a window.

Twenty-five of the victims were too badly burned to be identified. It fell to the soldiers, many of them young recruits who had never witnessed such sights, to remove the charred remains.

THE SEARCH FOR THE TERRORISTS

By Gil Sedan

TEL AVIV, March 12 (JTA)—The usually busy intersection near the agricultural school of Hayarak, just north of Tel Aviv, was today almost as quiet as on Yom Kippur. The few vehicles on the road were mostly military or police cars rushing from one end of the curfewed area to another. Few pedestrians were on the road, with most of the neighborhood residents preferring the safety of their homes. The outdoors presented one big threatening question mark.

Teams of policemen were directing the traffic, blocking the main northern entrance to Tel Aviv. Despite the absence of sirens and other wartime phenomena, there was a definite air of war. Standing at one intersection, one could almost smell in the air that "something" was going on, only nobody knew exactly where and when.

This feeling was given substance by an army unit composed of young soldiers, some of whom were apparently just taken out of basic training. The soldiers got off a big truck by the side of the road and slowly marched toward a large orchard nearby. Now it was like war, but not quite.

But the army took its job seriously. The soldiers covered the area inch by inch, foot by foot. The target was simple: to make sure that every possible hideout for the terrorists was checked. The main Tel Aviv-Haifa highway was closed to traffic. Cars going to and from Haifa were diverted to the old Haifa road which was the eastern boundary of the curfew area.

At one of those intersections a number of officers planned their next moves. They knew, no doubt, that they were planning a shot in the dark—but they knew just the same that they had no choice but to try their luck. "They (the terrorists) can be anywhere," said one senior officer. "They may be on their way to the West Bank, but they may also be around us, wearing civilian clothes or preparing themselves for a suicide attack."

As the officer handed his soldiers the next assignment, a helicopter nearby was preparing to take off. Helicopters were used throughout the day to try and spot the terrorists and at the same time as a potential initial striking force. Helicopters swept the curfewed area time and again, but to no avail.

In the absence of substantial information, rumors flourished. Suddenly a rumor passed among the few who dared leave their homes that there was an exchange of fire near one of the intersections. It turned out to be just the sound of the helicopter's rotary blades. But this, of course, did not prevent officers from rushing to the scene for fear they might miss something. By this afternoon there was a general feeling of tiredness among the soldiers.

The feeling that the terrorists were already far away from the scene of the crime could not be helped. Tired soldiers lay by the side of the road, waiting for the next assignment--and the helicopter was heating up its engine for another attempt to hit the terrorists. The largest manhunt ever in Israel was at its peak. By late tonight the manhunt was called off and the curfew lifted when it was ascertained that the missing three terrorists were among the dead in the bus.

WEIZMAN SAYS ISRAEL WILL HAVE TO STEP UP SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

WASHINGTON, March 12 (JTA)--Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman indicated that Israel will stiffen its security requirements in the aftermath of yesterday's terrorist massacre but does not believe that should alter the outcome of the presently stalled peace talks with Egypt or preclude negotiations with Jordan over the West Bank if Jordan is willing to negotiate.

Weizman made his remarks in an ABC television interview taped yesterday just before he cut short his Washington visit and returned to Israel after learning of the terrorist attack. He said the attack "will have to reflect somehow the way we present our defense and security problems."

He said that Israel must maintain military security measures on the West Bank "or we'll have trouble not only from Lebanon (where yesterday's assault was based) but we might have trouble like we had today from the West Bank." He added, however, that apart from security considerations the West Bank poses "a very discussable issue" if Jordan wants to negotiate it with Israel.

Weizman said that Israel intends to take action against the Palestine Liberation Organization which claimed responsibility for yesterday's attack, although he avoided the word "reprisals." He said, "We know where it came from. We know who is responsible and we will have to do something so things like this do not happen again."

CARTER TERMS TERRORIST ACT A 'COWARDLY AND SENSELESS ATTACK'

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 12 (JTA)--President Carter, in a message to Premier Menachem Begin of Israel, stated that the "cowardly and senseless attack" on innocent civilians in Israel was "a brutal act of terrorism" which "will surely be met with universal revulsion by all men of conscience."

In making public the message from Carter to Begin, the White House said it was delivered yesterday by U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Samuel Lewis. This message was in addition, the White House said, to the President's statement to the public that expressed his "deep shock" over the event.

The terrorist attack was "an outrageous act of lawlessness and senseless brutality," Carter's statement said. "Criminal acts such as this advance no cause or political belief. They inspire only revulsion and a lack of respect for innocent human life."

In his personal message to Begin, Carter said: "I offer you the condolences and deep sympathy of myself and all the American people who share your sorrow. Please give my personal sympathy to the families of the many who died and to those who were wounded. I am particularly dis-

tressed that an event such as this should occur just as you were preparing to depart on your mission of peace. I continue to look forward to talking to you soon and relaying to you, in person, the deep emotion which this event has aroused in this country."

'Murder That Cannot Be Justified'

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, in a message made public today at the State Department, condemned the "outrageous attack" by the terrorists "as murder that cannot be justified." He said, "the perpetrators should receive the punishment they deserve. I offer my condolences for this tragic loss of life. We oppose terrorism in all its forms and this incident only serves our determination to combat terrorism with every means at our disposal."

The Israeli Embassy stated that the tragedy, for which the El Fatah has taken credit, "proves our position of not agreeing to withdrawal from Judea, Samaria and Gaza." Israeli spokesman Avi Pazner said Israel remaining in those three areas "is the only way that we can have a degree of control over situations that otherwise might produce terrorist attacks on a daily basis like that we witnessed yesterday."

Andrew Young, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, expressed hope that Israel would not automatically retaliate against yesterday's terrorist assault. Appearing on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press," the envoy said: "I would hope that Prime Minister Begin's visit coming here would certainly precede any decisions that would escalate the tensions." He added: "I would ask anybody to consider the consequences of violence, even retaliatory violence." But, he observed, people in a life and death situation such as the Israelis were in, had to make those decisions for themselves.

Meanwhile, 18 Soviet Jews, along with Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei Sakharov, demonstrated today in Moscow against the terrorist atrocity in Israel. The demonstrators, according to the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, carried signs stating that the Kremlin was encouraging Arafat to commit these atrocities.

In New York, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said, "this newest terrorist outrage 'underscores once again' that to give the Palestinians the right of self-determination as President Sadat demands, amounts to legitimizing the terrorists' vow to destroy the Jewish State. The latest bloodbath makes a mockery of Sadat's 'blithe assurances that he will guarantee Israel's security and how dangerous are the demands that Israel surrender territories that have been used by her enemies four times in 30 years to attack in an effort to destroy her,'" Schindler said.

Theodore R. Mann, chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, said that "the murderous assault" by the terrorists "must evoke from all decent, sane persons the horror and revulsion expressed by President Carter and Secretary of State Vance. The PLO faction that claimed responsibility for the atrocity clearly seeks Israel's destruction; not peace. For Israel to agree to give them a staging area for their murderous attacks 10 miles from Tel Aviv is obviously impossible."

(Other Jewish leaders in the U.S. also expressed outrage at this latest tragedy. Their statements will be in Tuesday's Bulletin.)