

**YESHIVA STUDENT SLAIN IN OLD CITY
RAISES FEAR OF MORE VIOLENT CRIMES**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- A yeshiva student was brutally killed in the Old City around midnight Wednesday, a murder viewed by Israelis as a desperate attempt by Palestinian activists to rekindle the intifada in the wake of Iraq's ignominious defeat by the U.S.-led coalition forces.

The murder also raised concern in Israel that more violent crimes can be expected once Arab workers from the territories return in full strength to their jobs in Israel.

The victim, 25-year-old Elchanan Attali, was found by border police in an alley early Thursday morning with his throat cut and 13 stab wounds all over his body. Police believe he was killed by more than one assailant.

Attali was attacked near his school, the Ateret Cohanim yeshiva, which was established in the Moslem Quarter in 1986 in the belief living side by side would contribute to Arab-Jewish coexistence.

More than 1,000 people attended Attali's funeral Thursday, which was without incident.

"He was murdered only because he was a Jew," the victim's brother, Nahalel Attali, said. "He did not carry arms," he said. "He did not provoke them, he did not humiliate them."

The murder prompted Police Minister Ronni Milo to renew his call for the death penalty. "We shall take unprecedented strong measures to prevent such trouble," he declared.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir dismissed speculation that the murder, the first since the Persian Gulf war, pointed to a "turning point." In his view, it was just a continuation of "the murderous and bloody path of our enemies."

Meanwhile, Palestinians are showing signs of deep depression over the allied forces' defeat of Iraq. The despair follows upon what seemed to be irrational jubilation in the West Bank over what was initially deemed Saddam Hussein's "victory."

Now, many who had supported Saddam Hussein have expressed anger at him for dragging his country and people into such a catastrophe.

They fear a solution of the Palestinian problem is more remote than ever.

Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem, one of the few Arab dignitaries in the West Bank who opposed Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, expressed satisfaction Thursday over the cease-fire and said it was time to start new efforts for peace.

Palestinian activist Faisal Hussein said a cease-fire could have been achieved before the ground war started.

**ROUT OF HAMAN, HUSSEIN CELEBRATED
AS ISRAELIS PUT AWAY THEIR GAS MASKS**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Israelis were told Thursday to put their gas masks in mothballs, remove the plastic sealants from their gas-proof rooms and return to normal routines, including the enjoyment of nightlife, suspended when the first Scud missiles hit Tel Aviv six weeks ago.

The occasion was the cease-fire in Iraq, announced at 7 a.m. local time, which ended the

fighting in the Persian Gulf with a total victory for the U.S.-led forces.

The cease-fire coincided with the celebration of Purim, the festival commemorating the deliverance of the Jews in ancient Persia from the death decreed them by the villainous Haman.

It took no great leap of imagination to draw an analogy between Haman and the modern-day enemy of the Jews, Saddam Hussein.

Orthodox Jews saw the fortuitous juxtaposition of Purim with the cease-fire as proof of the efficacy of prayer and a sign of the Almighty's special concern for the well-being of the Jews.

Lifting Of All Restrictions

The Israel Defense Force and the civil defense authorities lifted all restrictions on evening and nighttime entertainment and public gatherings, restraints which were instituted to avoid concentrations of civilians after dark when the Scud missile attacks occurred.

While that was good news for the cinemas, restaurants and nightclubs, the biggest sigh of relief greeted the instructions to pack away the gas masks in their original cartons "for safekeeping should they ever be needed again, God forbid."

Another sign normalcy had returned was the resumption of broadcast weather reports. They had been suspended to deny Iraqi missile launchers information about local weather conditions.

The rabbinical authorities quickly reinstated the restrictions they had eased for the duration of the emergency. Observant Jews may no longer listen to their radios on the Sabbath.

Israelis were told to peel off the adhesive tape used to protect windows and doorframes from poison gas. But disposing of the plastic tape and sheets that provided additional protection for windows and doors was a little more complicated.

Plastic is not biodegradable and, unless recycled, can constitute a permanent ecological hazard.

Uri Marinov, director general of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, advised people to compress the tape and the sheets separately into balls as small as possible, put them in plastic bags and have their children carry them to school.

The schools will be central collection points for recycling companies, which until now have been collecting wastepaper, bottles and metal cans.

Massive Traffic Jams

The ministry is trying to figure out how to dispose of an estimated 1.2 million square yards of clear plastic sheeting. What cannot be recycled will be buried at special garbage and toxic waste sites.

Meanwhile, massive traffic jams built up in Tel Aviv, where many streets were closed off for the traditional Purim parade.

Youngsters in a variety of costumes, many reflecting Gulf war themes, snake-danced along the roads, rattling their noisemakers.

Vehicular traffic was exceptionally heavy, as many Tel Aviv area residents who temporarily relocated to avoid the missile attacks returned home.

The Magen David Adom, Israel's equivalent

of the Red Cross, is being kept on alert status, a reminder that the cease-fire could be fragile.

Israel also anticipates renewed intifada violence in the administered territories from a Palestinian population bitterly disappointed by the defeat of Saddam Hussein.

FINALLY, BAKER SETS AGENDA FOR MIDEAST VISIT TO ISRAEL

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- It may have taken an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and a subsequent war to get Secretary of State James Baker to visit Israel, but the pro-Israel community is pleased nonetheless.

Baker will be visiting Israel in early March as part of a Middle East trip that includes return visits to several Arab countries in the U.S.-led allied coalition against Iraq, starting with Saudi Arabia.

In Israel, Baker will meet with President Chaim Herzog, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister David Levy and Defense Minister Moshe Arens during a "very short visit," in the words of one Israeli official.

The whirlwind trip, starting March 6, was revealed by President Bush in his television address Wednesday night in which he announced that the U.S.-led coalition forces would end all offensive action at midnight Wednesday.

Israeli officials and pro-Israeli activists do not see the trip as the linkage between Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the Palestinian issue unsuccessfully sought by Saddam Hussein.

They said they were not concerned as long as Israel was included in the trip.

"The question of linkage is irrelevant here," said one Israeli Embassy official.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler brushed aside reporters' questions asking if Baker's trip would create the linkage between Arab-Israeli issues and Kuwait that Saddam Hussein has called for since he invaded Kuwait Aug. 2.

Tutwiler argued that unlike Hussein's linkage, the Baker trip does not involve "conditions" that have to be met by any country.

The purpose of the 10-day trip is to conduct "true consultations" about regional issues following Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, said Tutwiler.

Baker will complete the trip by March 14 or 15, with the first stop in Saudi Arabia. Other countries he plans to visit are Egypt, Syria, Turkey and the Soviet Union. He also intends to meet with Kuwaiti officials somewhere in the Persian Gulf.

Tutwiler attributed the exclusion of Jordan from Baker's itinerary to scheduling difficulties. Jordan, unlike the other Arab countries on the itinerary, was not a member of the U.S.-led allied coalition against Iraq and was considered sympathetic to Iraq.

During his trip, Baker will be "in a listening mode" during discussions on four key topics: regional security arrangements, arms control and proliferation, Arab-Israeli peace and regional economic cooperation, she said.

"The secretary and the president do not underestimate the difficulty of securing the peace, the challenges that will be involved and the problems that will need to be addressed," she added.

In addition, she said, "the countries in the region will obviously have to take the lead" in

creating a new Middle East.

The Israeli official said he found it "very interesting" that Bush called for new security arrangements for the Middle East in his speech Wednesday night. On that point, he said, "we are fully supportive of the administration."

Another area that Tutwiler did not discuss but which will be on the table during Baker's meetings in Israel is the possibility of new U.S. aid. Israel formally asked the United States last Friday for \$1 billion to cover its added defense preparedness costs following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Last week, 22 of the 29 members of the Senate Appropriations Committee wrote Bush, asking him to "reimburse Israel for these incremental defense costs stemming from the Gulf crisis."

Change In Baker's Attitude?

On Tuesday, Budget Director Richard Darman was pressed by a handful of committee members, but made no commitments and said that for budgetary procedural reasons, the \$1 billion could not be included in the so-called Operation Desert Storm supplemental appropriations bill working its way through Congress.

Tutwiler was asked if the Baker trip to Israel constituted a change in Baker's attitude in light of his statement last June to Congress telling Israel, "When you're serious about peace, call us."

"Obviously, the world is quite different than it was when he made that statement," Tutwiler said. "There may be opportunities here, we do not know."

"The secretary of state has said for the last two years how much he very, very much wants to go to Israel, how he wanted to go when he was secretary of the treasury and at the White House. The trips got canceled on him," Tutwiler said.

Pro-Israel activists here have been publicly critical of Baker for not having visited Israel. This became even more pronounced last fall, after both Baker and Bush met separately with Syrian President Hafez Assad.

For over a decade, Syria has been on the U.S. list of "state-sponsored terrorist" nations.

On one hand, Tutwiler said, "the secretary of state has made terrorism and our views on it very well known to President Assad. At the same time, President Bush and the secretary have been very appreciative that Syria throughout has been a strong and loyal member of this coalition and had troops on the ground."

Partner For Peace Process

An Israeli official said that despite Syria's terrorist past, "we don't see (the visit) in this light." If Baker wants to "visit the countries that were members of the coalition and start discussing with leaders of the region the aftermath of the war, why should he exclude a country that may be a partner for the peace process?"

For sure, the one place in Israel that Baker will not see is the Golan Heights, which Israel annexed from Syria. As was the case with Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, the United States does not recognize Israel's annexation of the Golan.

The Israeli official said Baker's Israel itinerary is in "very preliminary" form. He said his colleagues in Israel would like to show Baker "things that are important when you make decisions," including Israel's topography in relation to its Arab neighbors.

**NEWS ANALYSIS:
DESPITE JOY OVER WAR'S END,
SCHISMS STILL EXIST IN ISRAEL**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- The jubilation that greeted the allied victory over Iraq when a cease-fire was announced Thursday hardly masked the deep divisions in Israel that have solidified during six months of crisis and six weeks of war in the region.

The nation is polarized between political hawks and doves, who remain firmly entrenched in their respective ideological turfs, waiting for the inevitable diplomatic challenges ahead.

While imminent pressure from Washington is not expected, the Bush administration is bound to exercise its newly acquired power and prestige in the region in the role of peacemaker, and possibly peace enforcer.

For some in the political community, this could be bad news. Likud hard-liner Ariel Sharon, currently minister of housing, has called for the immediate annexation of those areas of the administered territories inhabited by Jewish settlers.

Minister of Science and Energy Yuval Ne'eman of Tehiya, Likud's coalition partner to its right, warned ominously of tough battles ahead with the United States over "Eretz Yisrael," or "Greater Israel," meaning the country with all the Arab-populated territories it administers.

On the left side of the divide, the prospect of vigorous American involvement in local diplomacy is welcomed.

Even among left-wing politicians, there is a keen awareness that the Palestine Liberation Organization probably is finished as a negotiating partner acceptable to either the Americans or Israelis, because of its blatant support for Saddam Hussein from the outset of the Gulf crisis.

An Air Of Calm

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir radiated an air of calm confidence Thursday, according to sources close to him.

He sent a warm message of congratulations to President Bush on his victory in the Gulf. He also issued a statement urging that the cease-fire arrangements dispose of any residual Scud threat to Israel and deal with what remains of Iraq's capability to stockpile non-conventional weapons.

Asked about the looming diplomatic process, Shamir gave the impression he expects it to be long and slow, with no dramatic breakthroughs.

But more activist positions have been articulated within both Labor and Likud.

In the Labor camp, former Energy Minister Moshe Shahal, a self-declared candidate for party leadership, spoke out in favor of a Palestinian state in confederation with Jordan.

Of more immediate political consequence is the newly emerging moderation of Foreign Minister David Levy, who until recently was among the toughest of Likud hard-liners.

Levy has asserted several times in recent days that Israel should be ready to negotiate with the selfsame Palestinians who cheered from their rooftops whenever a Scud missile hit Tel Aviv.

Levy, like Shamir, has challenged the Arab states to enter into direct negotiations with Israel. Unlike Shamir, he is urging an active Israeli "peace initiative" to coincide with the end of the Gulf war.

The foreign minister wants to revive the

May 1989 proposals of the Shamir-led Likud-Labor unity government, calling for Palestinian elections in the territories, a period of autonomy and negotiations with the elected Palestinian representatives on the territories' final status.

Significantly, Shamir and Levy -- as opposed to Sharon, Ne'eman and other hard-liners -- have spoken frequently in recent days of preserving the stability of King Hussein's regime in neighboring Jordan.

Notwithstanding Hussein's vocal support for Saddam Hussein of Iraq before and during the war, the Jordanian ruler has been signaling Israel that he wants to take a more active role in peace talks, senior Labor Party sources here said.

Laborites differ from the government in their assessment of a recent report by the German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, that President Hafez Assad of Syria is prepared to talk peace with Israel if the Palestinian issue is on the agenda.

Laborites stress Assad's willingness to talk, a departure from his previous positions. Likud stresses his condition.

Despite the predictable political rhetoric, there is a sense among observers here that something deep has stirred the public mood and sentiment in the country.

No polls are available and no specific questions have been formulated to test the feeling that the war has affected the country's outlook on basic political and security considerations.

There is a profound sense that America, two decades after its Vietnam trauma, is reasserting its global power against the backdrop of a dramatic decline of Soviet power and influence.

What this means, in terms of evolving Israeli public opinion on the eve of a major American effort to advance the peace process, remains to be seen. Much depends on how Bush, and particularly Secretary of State James Baker, present themselves and their objectives to the Israeli people.

**RESOLUTION SPONSORED IN CONGRESS
CALLS FOR HUSSEIN WAR-CRIMES TRIAL**
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Thirty members of the House of Representatives have cosponsored a resolution calling for an international court to prosecute Iraq's Saddam Hussein for violations of the Geneva Convention.

The resolution, introduced by Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), also declared that "under no circumstances" should the anti-Hussein coalition "agree to an arrangement whereby Saddam Hussein would resign as president of Iraq in exchange for his not being prosecuted for war crimes."

"We must not forget the way Saddam treated the airmen who were captured during the first days of the war, how they were beaten and paraded in front of television cameras," Engel said at a Capitol Hill news conference Thursday.

He said Hussein also was guilty of other atrocities such as the Scud attacks against civilian population, environmental terrorism and the torture and murder of Kuwaitis.

U.S. military lawyers were believed to be in Kuwait City on Thursday collecting evidence of Iraqi atrocities.

The United States at this point is not expected to press for a war-crimes trial, but would turn over the evidence it is gathering to Kuwait if that country seeks such a trial.

IRAQ STILL POSES A THREAT, ISRAEL'S U.N. ENVOY WARNS

By Aliza Marcus

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Iraq's once-vaunted military arsenal, much of it now strewn across the desert in burned-out hulks of tank metal and abandoned weapons, still retains enough might to pose a credible threat to Israel, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations warned Thursday.

And while the war ended in sweeping defeat for what was the world's fourth largest army, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein so far has retained his hold, posing a continuing danger to Israel, the ambassador, Yoram Aridor, said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

"Israel is still in danger, but we are capable of defending ourselves if and when the need to defend ourselves arises," said Aridor, whose country has so far refrained from responding militarily to the 39 Iraqi missile attacks it has endured.

The 57-year-old former finance minister congratulated the U.S.-led forces that defeated the Iraqi army in just 100 hours, saying Hussein was stopped at the final moment before acquiring nuclear weapons.

"If he would have been able to finish his drive to acquire nuclear weapons, he would have constituted a threat to the whole world," the envoy said.

Aridor, who was an Israeli Cabinet minister during the 1981 raid on Iraq's nuclear research reactor, said Israel's decision to attack -- which triggered worldwide condemnation -- was an early warning sign of the danger Hussein posed to other countries.

"It has been proved that by that action we saved not only Jewish lives, we saved lives of American and allied soldiers fighting in the Gulf," he said. "We saved Arab lives, as well."

Ready For Direct Peace Talks

During the hour-long interview in his office at the Israeli Mission here, Aridor stressed over and over again Israel's willingness to engage in direct, bilateral negotiations with its Arab neighbors. Except for Egypt, which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1978, no Arab country has relations with the Jewish state.

But he did not offer any new initiatives to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem. And he adamantly affirmed Israel's refusal to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization, saying the PLO had thoroughly discredited itself by showing support for Iraq during the Gulf conflict.

"The legend of the PLO was shattered even among Arab countries," said Aridor. "I see no reason why we cannot have direct negotiations with any Arab country without any involvement of a terrorist organization."

With the end of the Gulf war, the international focus has shifted to bringing security to the tumultuous Middle East region. And one of the top priorities, say Middle East analysts, will be finding an answer to the Palestinian question.

While Saddam Hussein ultimately failed in his attempt to link his withdrawal from Kuwait with a solution to the Palestinian problem, analysts say he did manage to push it to the forefront of the international agenda.

The U.N. Security Council, whose 15 members worked in unprecedented harmony to effect an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, might try to

take its new-found unity and apply it to the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian problem.

Comparing the Security Council to a car, Aridor said sometimes Israel sits in the back seat and sometimes Israel is put outside by the car's front wheels, where it can be run over by whoever is driving.

No Need For A Soviet Role

But he said Israel "should not be worried. We must be concerned, and we have to take care that our situation and our problem will be better understood and that our policies to secure our people in our land will be better supported."

He said Israel would not agree to participate in an international conference on the Middle East -- an option that has been backed strongly by Arab and European nations, and one which the United States appears willing to consider.

Aridor also dismissed the idea of the Soviet Union becoming a major player in the region.

"There is no use or advantage in getting the Soviet Union involved again in the Middle East," he said, noting its role in arming Iraq and its attempt to prevent the allied ground war against Iraq through a negotiated settlement.

Aridor did say that if Israel were to begin direct negotiations with its Arab neighbors, it could simultaneously open talks with representatives of the Palestinians about an autonomy plan.

"Of course, this means we will not talk with the PLO, which represents only terrorists," he added.

He also maintained that there could be a role for Jordan's King Hussein in the postwar period, despite the king's support for Saddam Hussein over the past six months.

Although Israel and Jordan are formally at war, Israel has long had a tacit understanding with the usually pro-Western king, and the border between the two countries is mainly quiet.

"Our hope is that King Hussein's regime will be continued," said Aridor. "We hope it will be stable, although King Hussein is his own worst enemy. His behavior during the Gulf war was the behavior of someone who blessed the tiger for having dinner, with the hope the tiger will not be hungry by breakfast," he said.

A Fiery Speaker

Aridor, who took up his post last October, shortly after the riots on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, in which Israeli border police fatally shot at least 17 Palestinians, has been a fiery if not combative speaker at Security Council meetings.

On Jan. 16, just before the war against Iraq broke out, the Security Council met at the behest of the PLO to consider a resolution to censure Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians.

Aridor, who spoke at the meeting, first welcomed the new council president, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, and then compared the council to Nero, "the Roman emperor who found the time to fiddle while Rome was burning."

He said the Security Council "hits a new record of irrelevance, playing the PLO's latest tune," and made an unflattering comparison between the council and a kangaroo court for attempting to judge Israel at such a time.

"Even a kangaroo court would have the decency, at least during the court's proceedings, to remove the gun from the victim's head. But the semblance of decency will not be forthcoming here," he said.