



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Suicide bombing in Jerusalem

At least 16 people were killed in a suicide bombing Wednesday afternoon in downtown Jerusalem. Dozens were injured in the huge blast on a bus on Jaffa Road near the Mahane Yehuda market. In response, Israeli helicopters attacked the Gaza Strip, killing at least seven people. [Page 4]

### Bush strongly condemns killings

President Bush strongly condemned Wednesday's bus bombing in Jerusalem and called on countries to cut off funding to terrorist groups.

"There are people who want to kill in order to make sure that the desires of Israel to live in secure peace don't happen; who kill to make sure the desires of the prime minister from the Palestinian Authority and others, of a peaceful state living side by side with Israel, do not happen," Bush said in Chicago.

"I strongly urge all of you to fight off terror, to cut off money to organizations such as Hamas, to isolate those who hate so much that they're willing to kill to stop peace from going forward," Bush said.

### Laura Bush opens exhibit

First lady Laura Bush opened an exhibit on Anne Frank's writings at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"What this museum features is especially important today as we strive for peace in the Middle East and in the world," Bush said at the Wednesday evening opening of "Anne Frank the Writer: An Unfinished Story."

The exhibit contains selections from Frank's last notebook, along with lesser-known writings and her photo album.

Following the opening, President Bush was to host a dinner for Jewish leaders.

### Falash Mura immigration to slow

Israel's interior minister was criticized as racist for canceling a government decision to bring 20,000 Falash Mura from Ethiopia to Israel immediately.

Avraham Poraz of the Shinui Party said Israel would bring 250 to 300 Falash Mura to the Jewish state each month because it is too expensive to bring them all right away. The Falash Mura are descended from Jews who converted to Christianity under social and economic pressure.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### As 'road map' lurches off track, some say Bush must get involved

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A week ago, the path to peace seemed bright following the formal launch of the "road map" peace plan at a summit in Aqaba, Jordan.

One violent week later, many are wondering if the road map is already roadkill.

Wednesday's bus bombing in downtown Jerusalem capped a gory week and illustrated the dilemma facing Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

On Sunday, a coordinated attack among three Palestinian terrorist groups killed four Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip.

As warnings of further terrorist attacks proliferated and the Palestinian Authority did not act against them, Sharon on Tuesday ordered the army to take out Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantissi, who has directed the organization's military operations in recent months, Israeli intelligence officials say.

The attack failed, killing two Palestinians but only wounding Rantissi. It elicited a stern rebuke from President Bush as pundits around the world questioned Sharon's commitment to peace.

Wednesday's bus bombing, which was claimed by Hamas, was widely interpreted as a response to Tuesday's missile strike. The attack killed at least 16 people and wounded more than 90.

For Sharon, then, the dilemma is familiar: If Israel does not respond to attacks, it may embolden terrorists who believe Israel's hands are tied by the road map, leading to further Israeli deaths.

If Israel does strike back, it may be blamed for provoking the terrorists and ruining the peace plan.

Indeed, it's difficult to know just how much military pressure may encourage the Palestinians to keep their obligations under the road map, and how much may scuttle the plan's chances for success.

The volatile situation on the ground raises a fundamental question: Can three committed political leaders impose a new reality based on the vision at the Aqaba summit, or are Israelis and Palestinians destined to be sucked into another vicious round of violence?

Israel has begun to fulfill its obligations under the peace plan by dismantling illegal West Bank settlement outposts. Sharon has had to face down fierce criticism from his right wing in the process, though critics contend that the settlement moves were largely symbolic.

As for the Palestinians, despite his declaration at Aqaba that the armed intifada was over, Abbas so far hasn't been able to deliver a cease-fire.

Israeli officials see three main reasons for this: Hamas, the Fatah movement's Tanzim militia and Yasser Arafat.

Against the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas, Sharon is taking a hard line.

To bring to heel the unruly armed gangs of the Tanzim — who collaborated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists on Sunday's joint attack — Sharon is allowing the imprisoned Marwan Barghouti, who has more clout with the Tanzim than anyone else, to work for a cease-fire from his jail cell.

As for Arafat, Sharon again is considering expelling the Palestinian Authority president.

The issue has come up in talks between Israeli and American officials, who agree

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Egyptian official holds talks

Egypt's intelligence chief met senior Palestinian officials in Ramallah on Wednesday as part of efforts to mediate a truce among Palestinian groups.

Omar Suleiman met with the Palestinian Authority prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, and the P.A. president, Yasser Arafat, among others.

In Cairo, Egypt's foreign minister said Israel's attempted assassination of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantissi was intended to sabotage cease-fire efforts.

### Court orders hearing on outpost

Israel's High Court ordered the state Wednesday to hold a hearing for residents of a West Bank outpost before deciding whether it should be dismantled.

State prosecutors had argued that residents of Gilad Farm had failed to show up for such a hearing some eight months ago, and that there was no need for such a hearing now, the daily Ha'aretz reported.

The court on Tuesday issued interim orders barring the evacuation of Gilad Farm and five other outposts pending the hearing of petitions filed against their removal.

### Turkish leader to visit Israel

Turkey's president told visiting Jewish leaders that he will visit Israel.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan told American Jewish Committee officials that the visit reflects Turkey's ongoing friendship with Israel and its support for peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians.

It is not clear when the visit will take place.

### Who wants to be a millionaire?

Some 5,000 Israelis are millionaires. According to figures released by Merrill Lynch, 50 of them are multi-millionaires with liquid assets exceeding \$30 million. Six are included on a list of the richest people in the world.



## Daily News Bulletin

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that Arafat is doing all he can to obstruct and humiliate Abbas. But Sharon seems determined to press ahead with the "Aqaba process" despite the shooting.

In a 180-degree reversal of policy, he says he won't allow a lone terrorist to derail moves toward peace.

Before, Sharon had demanded a week of absolute quiet on the Palestinian side as a condition for talks.

But given the new degree of American involvement, pressure and oversight, Sharon wants to be seen as giving Abbas every chance to lead the Palestinians out of the cycle of violence.

He does not want to be blamed for the collapse of the process.

Still, given the degree of ongoing terrorist activity, Israeli officials say Tuesday's strike at Rantissi was meant to convey a clear message: Israel will not stand for a situation in which Hamas tries to jack up its price for a cease-fire by continuing to kill Israelis.

Sharon hopes that as long as he keeps his side of the initial road map bargain, the Americans will allow him a free hand in fighting terrorism, even if it means a delay in achieving a cease-fire.

He may have miscalculated, however: Bush's criticism of the Rantissi strike, which he said might make it harder for Abbas to fight terrorism, was his strongest of an Israeli military move since Israel invaded the West Bank during Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002.

As for Abbas, Bush and Sharon both are convinced of his genuine commitment to the peace process, but they are less sure of his ability to deliver.

Israel and the United States have tried to sideline Arafat because of his alleged involvement with terrorism, but they agree that he remains a significant spoiler to Abbas' plans.

If Israeli and American officials decide that expelling Arafat would play to Abbas' advantage, they will go ahead.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz told the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday that the time was not yet ripe for Arafat's expulsion — but, he added cryptically, "it could be very soon."

Senior Fatah officials predict that if Arafat stays, Abbas won't last six months as prime minister.

A lot will depend on whether he can achieve a cease-fire deal with Hamas, despite the attack on Rantissi.

Egypt sent its intelligence chief, Omar Suleiman, to mediate, and Barghouti reportedly has sent a mediator of his own to negotiate with Hamas leaders in Damascus.

Most observers believe Hamas leaders are not against a cease-fire per se, but are holding out for a larger slice of power.

"What will Hamas have to negotiate about if it is not allowed to join the security forces or the P.A.'s ministerial positions?" senior Hamas spokesman Mahmoud Al-Zahar asked Monday, welcoming Abbas' call for a resumption of the dialogue that Hamas broke off over the weekend.

But that was before the attack on Rantissi.

It could take weeks before Hamas again is ready to discuss a cease-fire, and there could be further deterioration in that time.

If there is to be a new reality, observers say, it will depend on President Bush finding a way to deal with the intricacies of Israeli domestic politics, Palestinian factionalism and the cycle of terror and retaliation.

At Aqaba, Bush went a long way toward winning the Palestinians' confidence and convincing them that the United States will not favor Israel.

In a key session with leaders from both sides, Bush came down several times in favor of the Palestinians.

That helped strengthen the Abbas thesis that if the Palestinians can keep a cease-fire, Bush will deliver Israel.

Indeed, after the attack on Rantissi, the Palestinians already were calling on Bush to intervene.

But as committed and determined as the president may be, given the situation on the ground, it's going to be a very tough task. □

(Leslie Sussler is the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report.)

## JEWISH WORLD

### NATO force urged for Mideast

The chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee reiterated his call for a NATO security force for Israel and the Palestinian areas.

"The presence of NATO, I think, at the invitation of both governments, would bring about some measure of greater stability so that the process can go forward and the Palestinian prime minister can get a better grip on the internal security in his country," Sen. John Warner (R-Va.) said Wednesday on CNN.

### Rabbis back 'road map'

A Conservative rabbinical group backed the "road map" peace plan, while condemning Wednesday's suicide bombing in Israel.

The Executive Council of the Rabbinical Assembly, meeting in New York, supported the plan's call for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, adding that it would mean no "right of return" for Palestinian refugees from Israel's 1948 War of Independence to their former homes inside Israel.

The group also backed Israel's right to self-defense against terrorism.

The group, which represents Conservative rabbis around the globe, called on President Bush to "reassert his stand recognizing that only an end to this violence will permit Israel to make the painful compromises necessary to end this conflict once and for all."

### French Jews, Muslims rally

Hundreds of French Jews and Muslims gathered in a Paris theater at the launch of a joint campaign to support the Middle East "road map" peace plan.

Tuesday's event, entitled "Words and Music for Peace: Let's Be Zionists and Pro-Palestinians" was organized by the Union of Jewish Students in cooperation with the newly formed Secular Convention for Equality for French Muslims.

"Until now, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a major attraction for extremists from all sides," Jewish student leader Patrick Klugman said. People "have to unite in order to offer a position which brings them together rather than divides them."

### Canadian Indian charged

A former Canadian Indian leader was charged with promoting hatred for justifying the Holocaust late last year.

"The Jews damn near owned all of Germany prior to the war. That's how Hitler came in," David Ahenakew said last December. He later apologized for the remarks.

B'nai Brith Canada praised Wednesday's move by prosecutors in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. "This is a very positive step," said Frank Diamant, the group's executive vice president.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Jewish friends and events take stage as Hillary tells all

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Soon after the Monica Lewinsky scandal erupted, Hillary Rodham Clinton encountered Elie Wiesel in Davos, Switzerland.

The Nobel laureate embraced the first lady and asked, "What is wrong with America? Why are they doing this?"

Clinton said she did not know, and Wiesel replied that he and his wife, Marion, were her friends and "want to help you."

Wiesel's "experience as a Holocaust survivor has given Elie a kind of genius for empathy. He never flinches from anyone else's suffering, and his heart is big enough to absorb a friend's pain without a second thought," Clinton writes in her new autobiography, "Living History."

The book hit bookstores with a huge media splash Monday.

While the Lewinsky affair may be dominating the media swirl around the launch of Clinton's hotly selling title, Jews and events in the Jewish world play roles big and small in Hillary's story.

Among Jewish footnotes to Hillary's history is a phone conversation she had with Steve Rabinowitz, a former campaign figure and later White House staffer for Bill Clinton.

The former first lady describes how she called the campaign's Little Rock, Ark., headquarters one day. Rabinowitz, the director of design and production for Clinton's first presidential election, picked up the phone and "for no particular reason, blurted out, 'Hillaryland!'"

"He was embarrassed to hear my voice, but I thought he had come up with a great nickname," Clinton writes. "The name stuck."

When he learned he had made it into Clinton's index, Rabinowitz said, "I am flattered that she would even remember that, and beyond grateful that is the only story she would tell."

Rabinowitz later traveled with the president to Israel several times and orchestrated the logistics for the September 1993 peace treaty signing ceremony on the White House lawn in which then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat shook hands.

The former first-lady-turned-U.S.-senator refers admiringly and affectionately to the late Rabin and his wife, Leah, and writes that the Israeli leader only agreed to the Arafat handshake "as long as there would be no kissing, a common Arab custom."

"Before the ceremony, Bill and Yitzhak engaged in a hilarious rehearsal of the handshake, with Bill pretending to be Arafat as they practiced a complicated maneuver that would prevent the Palestinian leader from drawing too close," Clinton recalls.

Clinton, the junior Democratic senator from New York and a potential presidential candidate in 2008, is far less complimentary about Arafat, at one point blasting the Palestinian leader for the failed 2000 peace talks with then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

"Unfortunately, while Barak came to Camp David to make peace, Arafat did not," she says bluntly.

"The tragic events of the last few years show what a terrible mistake Arafat made."

Clinton also calls a now-infamous 1999 encounter with Arafat's wife, Suha, the "worst instance" of mistakes she made during her campaign for the Senate, which she launched even before she left the White House.

During an official trip to Israel and the West Bank, Clinton attended an event where Suha spoke before her in Arabic and made an "outrageous remark suggesting that Israel had used poison gas to control Palestinians," Clinton writes.

Arafat's remark was not translated into English, Clinton says, and when the first lady stepped to the podium to speak, the two women embraced — and the New York tabloids played the story big.

"Had I been aware of her hateful words, I would have denounced them on the spot," she says, repeating assertions she made at the time. □

## Bomb in downtown Jerusalem shatters lives — and peace moves

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The fragile peace efforts launched a week ago at the Middle East summit in Aqaba, Jordan, appeared to be unraveling at a dizzying pace this week, as Israel and the Palestinians were drawn back into a familiar and bloody pattern of violence and retaliation.

In the latest day of violence, a suicide bomber dressed as a fervently Orthodox Jew blew himself up on a bus in downtown Jerusalem on Wednesday, killing at least 16 people and wounding more than 150.

Israel's action following the bombing was swift: At least eight Palestinians were killed, including two senior Hamas militants, in military helicopter strikes in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday evening.

One of the militants was identified as Massoud Titi, a senior leader of Hamas' military wing and the person Israel believes was behind the group's Kassam rocket firing.

The other senior militant named was Suhil Abu Nahel, an aide to Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Condemning the bus bombing, President Bush urged the parties to work to end the bloodshed. He also called on countries that want peace in the Middle East to fight terrorism and stop the flow of funds to groups like Hamas.

The suicide bombing and Israel's attack were just the latest incidents in a bloody week.

At least five Israelis were killed and five wounded in separate incidents in the Gaza Strip and West Bank on Sunday.

Israel responded to those attacks on Tuesday, when it launched a helicopter strike in Gaza City that wounded its intended target, senior Hamas official Abdel Aziz Rantissi, and killed two bystanders.

Later Tuesday, Israeli helicopters attacked a residential area in the Gaza Strip, killing at least three Palestinians who had just fired rockets at an Israeli town, and wounding at least 30.

The strike on Rantissi, which prompted Bush to issue Israel a stiff rebuke, came a day after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon began fulfilling Israel's obligations under the "road map" peace plan, removing some 10 illegal outposts in the West Bank, most of them unpopulated.

Though the United States defines Hamas as a terrorist group, Bush criticized Israel's strike against Rantissi, saying it "does not contribute to the security of Israel."

Palestinian Authority officials also blasted the attack, but P.A. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas — who called the strike an act of terrorism — said it would not halt progress on the road map.

Israelis had been bracing for possible terrorist retaliation since the failed assassination attempt. Israel says Rantissi serves as the head of Hamas' military wing and believes he played a vital role in organizing Sunday's attack in the Gaza Strip that killed four Israeli soldiers.

The retaliatory attack against Israel was not long in coming.

Wednesday's bombing occurred during rush hour, at around 5:30 p.m., as Egged bus number 14A was making its way up Jerusalem's Jaffa Road toward King George Street. The bomber blew himself up as the bus was near a stop in front of a large office building not far from the Mahane Yehuda outdoor market.

"The bus was ripped apart by the force of the blast and heavy

smoke billowed from it," area resident Roni Zada told the daily Yediot Achronot.

Reports said the bomber wore a kippah and ritual fringes to pass as a fervently Orthodox Jew.

Avraham Atrash, the Israeli Arab driver of the bus, was lightly wounded in the attack. He said he noticed nothing unusual about any of the passengers.

"Today I didn't see anyone suspicious. If I did, I would have questioned them before letting them board," Yediot quoted him as saying.

Police said the bomb used in the attack was large and packed with nails and metal pieces to maximize casualties.

Jerusalem police chief Mickey Levy said a security alert had been in effect in Jerusalem, but there had been no concrete warning of such an attack.

Police commissioner Shlomo Aharonishky said police anticipated that terrorist groups would try to carry out attacks when Israeli and Palestinian leaders were trying to engage in some form of dialogue. There were many terrorist warnings, Aharonishky said, playing down the depiction of Wednesday's bombing as a direct response to the assassination attempt on Rantissi.

But Hamas' military wing, which claimed responsibility for the bombing, said the attack was intended to avenge the strike on Rantissi.

Unfazed by international criticism of the assassination attempt, Sharon said Israel would not compromise its fight against terrorism.

"Israel will pursue to the end Palestinian terrorist organizations and their leaders," including "those who initiate, finance and dispatch terrorists," Sharon said Wednesday evening. "We have a deep commitment to make every effort to advance a political process that will bring — we hope — peace and quiet. We will take every step to protect the security of Israeli citizens."

In remarks to Cabinet ministers before the Jerusalem bombing, Sharon was quoted as saying that Israel had made clear its position on fighting terrorism to the United States and the Palestinian Authority. Israeli officials have acknowledged that Abbas must be given an opportunity to establish himself, but Israel justifies its anti-terror actions by charging that the Palestinian Authority is not taking necessary anti-terror actions.

Several P.A. officials voiced responses to the attack.

Abbas urged Israel and the Palestinians to work toward implementing the road map.

In unusually explicit language, P.A. President Yasser Arafat condemned the "terrorist attack in Jerusalem," while also denouncing as terrorism Israel's attack on Rantissi.

Other P.A. officials blamed Israel for the recent escalation, accusing the Sharon government of deliberately sabotaging peace efforts. □

## Burns says force necessary

NEW YORK (JTA) — A senior State Department official said the dismantling of the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure "will have to be achieved with whatever means are necessary."

Speaking Wednesday to the House International Relations Committee, William Burns, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, said he believes the use of force will be necessary to dismantle terrorist groups that target Israel, but that the goal should be to rebuild the Palestinian Authority's capabilities to reign in terror. □