

## IN THE NEWS

## Israeli tanks are massing near Gaza

Israeli aircraft killed two Palestinians in a Gaza assault ordered as part of retaliation for Sunday's terrorist attack.

Palestinian witnesses said missiles slammed into a house in Gaza City on Tuesday, killing two members of Islamic Jihad.

Terrorist groups in the Gaza Strip also were bracing for a ground assault as Israeli tanks massed at the Erez border crossing. Earlier, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Security Cabinet authorized the army to step up attacks on Hamas and the Al-Aksa Brigade, which jointly claimed responsibility for Sunday's double suicide bombing in Ashdod that killed 10 people.

## Swastikas on Toronto homes

Thirteen Jewish houses in a Toronto suburb were vandalized with racist messages and swastikas. The incidents in Thornhill took place Sunday night.

They followed the release of a report by B'nai Brith Canada that found anti-Semitic activity in Canada at its highest level in 20 years.

## Irish terrorists helped Palestinian terrorists

A radical Irish group instructed Palestinian terrorists in turning cell phones into bombs, a senior Northern Ireland politician said on a visit to Washington.

"Israeli security forces last year learned that a Real IRA suspect was involved in instructing members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in building and using the mobile phone bombs," David Trimble said in a speech Monday.

"Bombs very similar to the Real IRA devices were found in Israel and have since been used in several attacks in Iraq."

Real IRA splintered from the Irish Republican Army after the IRA agreed to a cease-fire in the U.S.-brokered peace accords of the mid-1990s.

# WORLD REPORT

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## Whither European policy? Jews ask after deadly train attacks in Madrid

By PHILIP CARMEL

**P**ARIS (JTA) — This time it was Spain, one of the principal European allies of the U.S.-led war in Iraq and a strong supporter of Israel's efforts against Palestinian terrorism.

Following last week's suicide bombings in Madrid, which left more than 200 people dead and some 1,400 wounded, even countries opposed to the Iraq war feel exposed to the threat of Islamic terrorism.

Within hours of the bombings, which struck trains in the center and suburbs of the Spanish capital on March 11, security was beefed up in cities across the continent as news of the carnage left Europe as shell-shocked as the United States was on Sept. 11, 2001.

Across the continent, Jewish communities wondered how the attacks would affect European attitudes toward the Middle East and the war on terrorism.

Some feared that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — and by extension, local Jews — would be blamed for bringing terrorism to a European capital. Others said the attacks would make Europe more vigilant against the Islamic terrorist threat that Israeli leaders have been warning about for years.

In recent days, links have been established between the attacks in Madrid and bombings last year in Casablanca and Istanbul that targeted Jewish sites.

As a first stage, European leaders are reorganizing how the European Union coordinates the battle against terrorism.

The E.U.'s Irish president has called for an extraordinary meeting of European justice ministers for Friday with the aim of agree-

ing on a joint response to the Madrid attacks, which could result in a package of anti-terrorism measures.

European terrorism experts also will gather Friday for an emergency workshop on "the lessons of Madrid" at the American Jewish Committee's new Brussels institute. Experts from Spain, Germany, France and Belgium are expected at the Transatlantic Institute, said Deidre Berger, head of the AJCommittee's Berlin office.

European Jewish leaders told JTA they are adopting a wait-and-see approach on new anti-terrorism measures.

One senior Jewish leader said he was "already concerned at the reaction of the Europeans, as if they have suddenly discovered that terrorism can strike anywhere and they're completely naked to deal with it."

In Italy, Andrea Jarach, president of the Federation of Italy-Israel Associations, told JTA he was pessimistic about how fallout from the Madrid attacks would impact Israel and Jews.

On the popular level in Europe, "they will say even more than they do now that if the 'Jewish problem' did not exist, there would not be terrorist attacks," he said. "It's terrible, but I fear that the expansion of Al-Qaida activities into Europe will be a further step that cannot but harm the Jews of the world and Israel in particular."

But that same notion — that the festering Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one reason terrorism has come to the heart of Europe — could produce some positive results, the AJCommittee's Berger said.

"I think this could create a dynamic where

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HEADLINES

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there will be more interest in Europe in helping to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because many here in Europe see that as one of the critical incitements to terror," she said.

Some commentators, though, doubt that the Madrid attacks will lead to major changes in the E.U.'s Middle East policy.

According to Jean-Luc Marret, a leading expert on terrorism at the Paris-based Strategic Research Foundation, "Europe does not have a security strategy for the Middle East" but would rather pursue its political goals through "incentives to the region in aid and development."

The Spanish election results, in which Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar saw his Popular Party upset by the opposition Socialists in Sunday's general election, were "the quickest and most concrete results I have ever seen after a terror attack," Marret said, though he added that he didn't believe that states that opposed the war in Iraq were necessarily exempt from Islamic terrorism.

In Spain, maverick left-wing commentator Pilar Rahola said that the Socialists victors would be wrong to think that an anti-American and anti-Zionist stance would provide insurance against Islamic terrorism.

"We — the European left, and particularly the Spanish left — must learn the enormous lesson from the tragedy" in Madrid, she said.

In Britain, perhaps Washington's closest ally in the Iraq war, insiders predicted

that the Madrid attacks and their political aftermath would not change the government's course.

Lord Greville Janner, a veteran politician with the governing Labor Party, told JTA that Cabinet ministers already assume that the United Kingdom is a target for Islamist terrorists.

"We have been apprehensive since 9/11. Anyone who thinks it can't happen here doesn't know the situation," he said.

David Mencer, chairman of the Labor Friends of Israel lobbying group, agreed.

"There is no doubt that the U.K. is a target," he said, noting that London police officials say that "it's not a question of if, but when terrorists strike."

Much of the new policy set for the European Union is likely to please supporters of Israel — provided it doesn't include nuances distancing Europe from Israel in the hope of reducing the terrorist threat.

Jerusalem likely would warmly receive proposals expected to be presented by the Irish E.U. presidency calling for clearer definitions of terrorist organizations.

One senior Israeli diplomatic source in Europe said the Jewish state might gain both sympathy and empathy in Europe following the Madrid attacks.

"It's like after 9/11, when Americans started to realize what Israelis face everyday," the source told JTA on condition of anonymity.

Nevertheless, he said it was too early to tell if that would translate into a more pro-Israel policy in Europe.

However, the shock of last week's attacks in the heart of a major European capital has led some countries to issue the kind of statements more commonly heard from Israeli spokesmen.

Visiting a rail station in central Paris on Sunday, French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said it was necessary to be "particularly vigilant" but "one should not be overtaken by fear, because that would already give a victory to terrorism."

The French press, which almost unanimously opposed military intervention in Iraq, described the attacks in Madrid as an attack on all European democracies

rather than direct retribution for Spain's support for the war or for U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Non-participation in the war was "no guarantee against the murderous folly of these Islamo-terrorists" who have only two targets, "the Crusaders and the Jews," the Liberation newspaper said in an editorial.

In Germany, which fiercely opposed the Iraq war, editorialists wrote that giving in to terrorism wouldn't stop the terrorists' demands.

"The withdrawal from Iraq, as the designated Spanish prime minister now has announced, will have an effect comparable to what was produced by the withdrawal of the Israelis from Lebanon," Die Welt said in one editorial.

That resulted in a "bloody increase in Hezbollah attacks and the belief that the Jews 'hang on to life in a cowardly way, while we are prepared to fight and die' — as it was said at the time, and today again," the paper said.

While some Jewish leaders felt the attacks would further strain transatlantic ties, European Muslim leaders were worried about a backlash similar to the one they felt after Sept. 11.

Haj Thai. Braze, head of the Union of French Islamic Organizations, the leading group on France's recently created Muslim Council and an organization with strong ties to the international Muslim Brotherhood, said European states now would come closer to U.S. policy.

The United States "is going to say 'Watch out — you should support the USA. You've had your March 11 like we had our Sept. 11,'" he said. "I fear for a crusade against Islam and Muslims."

Marret dismissed that argument. "Ultimately, the Madrid attacks will not have a marked effect on the European conscience like 9/11," he told JTA. "We have had catastrophic events on our soil. The First and Second World Wars marked Europe and changed policy, but not Madrid."

*(JTA Correspondents Ruth Gruber in Rome, Richard Allen Greene in London, Jerome Socolovsky in Madrid and Toby Axelrod in Berlin contributed to this article.)*

**'The withdrawal from Iraq... will have an effect comparable to what was produced by the withdrawal of the Israelis from Lebanon.'**

German newspaper editorial

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# Mother, neighbors, workers among Ashdod dead

By DINA KRAFT

TEL AVIV (JTA) — It was an act of kindness reciprocated with murder.

Crane mechanic Moshe Hendler, 29, was on his way to wash up after a long day of work at the Ashdod port when, along with a group of fellow workers, he ran into a young man asking for water.

They passed him a jug. An instant later the young man turned himself into a human bomb, taking the lives of Hendler and several others.

Hendler's father Avraham, who also works at the port, rushed to be with his son, who was sprawled dead on the ground.

Hendler — father to a six-month-old daughter named Tal, whom he used to carry on his shoulders — was buried Monday. He was one of 10 Israelis killed in the double suicide bombing Sunday at the industrial port of Ashdod, along Israel's southern coast.

Mazal Marciano, 30, was sitting in her office when the explosion went off, killing her immediately. Marciano worked as the marketing manager for the Nehemia Lahovitz meat products company.

Gal Lahovitz, who owns the company, said one of the suicide bombers blew himself up outside the trailer office where Marciano was working. She was the mother of two young sons, aged 2 and 5.

Although Ashdod largely has been free of violence during the three-and-a-half year old Palestinian intifada, Marciano's

relatives said they knew they likely would be hit by terror one day.

"We knew this round of terror attacks would reach us too, and every time we saw pictures of terror attacks on television we felt it would happen to us one day," one of Marciano's brothers said after the attack, Ha'aretz reported.

As after every attack, photos of the bombing victims were splashed across the front pages of Israel's newspapers early in the week.

"I don't understand," a relative was quoted as saying in one headline. "Her children meant everything to her," read another.

Among the dead was Avi Avraham, 33, who recently had been hired as a crane electrician at Ashdod's port and who got married just four months ago.

His wife Ettie, 27, rushed to the scene of the attack but was kept away by police. Meanwhile, she kept calling his cell phone. It rang and rang, but no one answered.

Meanwhile, the family of Zion Dahan, 30, frantically searched the hospitals. Dahan, a second-generation port worker in his family, operated heavy machinery.

Six months ago, Dahan had had a close brush with death when a cable came loose and hit him in the face, relatives said. This time, he found himself in the path

of Palestinian terrorists, and he was not fortunate enough to escape.

Some Israeli authorities said the bombers may have intended to detonate themselves next to the port's bromine tanks, sending a cloud of poisonous gas into the surrounding area and potentially killing thousands. Palestinian groups said

they indeed had hoped to carry out a massive attack.

Hamas and the Al-Aksa Brigade jointly claimed responsibility for the attack, which was perpetrated by two 18-year-olds from the Gaza Strip.

Morris Tuval, 30, who was a neighbor and former classmate of Marciano, also was killed in the attack. Filling in for a co-worker who could not make his shift, Tuval had just returned from an afternoon out with his friends, the well-known Israeli soccer players from the Ashdod team, Chaim and David Revivo.

The three were childhood friends.

After lunch together, David Revivo went to soccer practice, which is where he heard the two explosions.

"I can't stop crying," said Revivo, who described Morris as "one of the greatest guys in the world."

Also killed in Sunday's attack were Gil Abutbul, 31; Dan Asulin, 51; Ophir Damari, 31; Avi Suissa, 55; and Pinchas Avraham Zilberman, 46.

Palestinian teens, bombs, and Jewish blood and body parts.

## 3,000 years on, locust plague may strike again on Passover

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

ROME (JTA) — Just a few weeks before Passover, a real and potentially devastating plague of locusts may be hitting the Red Sea coast and other parts of the Middle East and Africa.

In a new warning, the Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said a locust outbreak is "in progress on the Red Sea coast in Saudi Arabia where swarms are forming."

Despite intensive control operations, it said, "some of these are expected to move into the central interior of the country where a further generation of breeding could occur in the spring. It is possible that a few swarms could reach adjacent areas in Jordan, southern Iraq and Western Iran later in the spring."

The organization's Red Sea locust warning came as part of an appeal for \$9 million in funding to stave off potential plague-proportion locust outbreaks in desert parts of northern and western Africa.

"If control operations have to slow down or be interrupted, more locusts added to those already there could contribute to eventually transforming the current situation into a plague," the organization warned.

Rampaging swarms of locusts that darken the sky and consume everything in their path have long been one of the most feared natural phenomena in the region.

Most famously, a locust outbreak was one of the 10 Plagues that God inflicted on the Egyptians in order to win freedom for the Israelites, commemorated each year at Passover seders.

The plague consisted of Sudanese locusts, which wreaked havoc in the region every few years, according to Encyclopedia Judaica.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said that when weather conditions are right, individual locusts can quickly multiply into huge, devastating and highly mobile swarms that move collectively and fly hundreds or even thousands of miles.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## MIDDLE EAST

### Activist remembered

Rachel Corrie, the American activist killed by an Israeli bulldozer a year ago, was commemorated by Palestinians.

Scores of children rallied Tuesday in the southern Gaza refugee camp of Rafah, where the 23-year-old Corrie died while trying to stop the demolition of a Palestinian home.

"With our souls and our blood we will redeem you, Rachel," they chanted. "You are an American martyr for Palestine."

Israel called Corrie's death an accident but accused her activist group, the International Solidarity Movement, of protecting Palestinian terrorists. Israel said the home it was demolishing when Corrie was killed was believed to conceal the entrance to an arms-smuggling tunnel.

### Suicide follows suicide bombings

A relative of one of the Ashdod bombing victims killed herself.

The Israeli army said a 19-year-old soldier shot herself Tuesday after leaving a note that said: "Had I died in a terrorist attack it would have been an easier way of departing this world."

The woman's cousin, Mazal Marciano, was one of 10 Israelis killed in a double suicide bombing at the Ashdod port Sunday.

### Artist's prize controversial

Religious lawmakers in Israel opposed a decision to award the Israel Prize to a controversial sculptor.

Yigal Tumarkin, whose honor for lifetime achievement in the arts was confirmed Monday, has created controversy with derisive comments about women, ethnic minorities and religious Jews.

"Granting the prize to Tumarkin is an abandonment of reason and national common sense," said Shaul Yahalom, a Knesset member from the National Religious Party.

Along with members of the Shas Party, he plans to petition the Israel Prize Committee to retract its decision.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Muslim blasts Islamic anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is endemic to the Muslim world, a U.S.-based Muslim scholar said.

Interviewed Monday at the International Conference on the Global Dimensions of Contemporary Anti-Semitism in Montreal, Khaleel Mohammed said anti-Semitism has become part of Islamic theology so that even the average Muslim learns anti-Semitism in a subtle form.

Other Muslim leaders criticized the remarks by Mohammed, an assistant professor of religion at San Diego State University.

"There is not an iota of evidence that this is correct," said Salam Elmenyawi, president of the Muslim Council of Montreal.

"Why is he the only Muslim at this conference? Why are there no other Muslims to respond to this kind of claim that does nothing but burn the bridges that have been built between Muslims and the Jewish community in North America?"

### Group: Stop selling bulldozers

U.S. activists protested the sale of American-made bulldozers to Israel.

Sixty members of Jewish Voice for Peace gathered at a San Francisco-area Caterpillar dealership Tuesday to protest the company's sale of bulldozers to the Israeli army.

The group chose Tuesday to demonstrate because it was the first anniversary of the death of American activist Rachel Corrie in the

Gaza Strip. Corrie, a member of the pro-Palestinian International Solidarity Movement, was crushed to death by an army bulldozer while trying to prevent Israeli troops from demolishing a Palestinian house as part of an anti-terrorist operation.

"This is where corporate responsibility needs to take hold," said Liat Weingart, co-director of Jewish Voice for Peace. "Caterpillar is supposed to be in the business of constructing homes and working farmland, not destroying homes, buildings and crops."

## WORLD

### Group rips Greece on anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitic rhetoric in Greece is the worst in Europe, the Simon Wiesenthal Center said.

In a letter Monday to Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis, the center's international liaison director, Shimon Samuels, said anti-Semitism was rife in mainstream newspapers in Greece. As a result, the center would maintain its advisory to Jewish travelers to avoid the country.

The Greek government must pay "attention to this crisis as a matter of highest priority," Samuels wrote.

Samuels said Greece will be on the agenda of next month's conference in Berlin of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on anti-Semitism.

### University Web site crackdown

A British university tightened its policy on professors' Web sites after Jewish groups complained of links to anti-Semitic material.

Birmingham University has told scholars that as of the end of March, links from university-hosted sites must be "relevant and legitimate to their academic or administrative work."

A leader of the Union of Jewish Students, Danny Stone, said, "A lot of hard work has paid off."

He called the announcement "extraordinary news."

### Report: Mussolini pressed Hitler to save Jews

Mussolini may secretly have attempted to persuade Hitler not to persecute Jews. The London Times' Rome correspondent reported that he saw documents to this effect from the Vatican's secret archives.

One document, he wrote, was from the office of the Vatican Secretary of State dated April 1933, soon after Hitler became German chancellor.

It said that "the head of the Italian government" had given "an oral exhortation and then a secret message to Hitler imploring him not to allow himself to be carried away by an anti-Semitic campaign." Mussolini was not considered anti-Semitic in the early part of his rule, but in 1938 he became allied with the Nazis and enacted harsh anti-Semitic laws.

A mass of documents in the secret archives dealing with the Vatican's diplomatic relations with Germany before World War II was opened to scholars a year ago.

### Not waxing poetic

A Hitler wax doll was displayed at a Berlin museum.

Museum officials said that the display at Galerie Art'el museum is the first of the Nazi dictator in postwar Germany, Reuters reported.

Hitler shares a room with his World War II adversaries Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, overlooking the former Checkpoint Charlie border crossing in the once-divided German capital.

German officials said the display does not break German laws against using Nazi symbols and insignia.