

IN THE NEWS
Palestinian killed in Israeli airstrike

An Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip killed a Palestinian civilian.

Seven Palestinians were wounded in Sunday's strike, which Israeli officials said was aimed at a car carrying suspected terrorists.

Also Sunday, a Kassam rocket fired from the Gaza Strip wounded three Israelis in Sderot.

More than 20 rockets were fired by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups over the weekend, in defiance of an ongoing Israeli military sweep of launch zones in northern Gaza.

Iranian leader again calls for Israel's end

Those who created Israel should "wrap it up and take it away," the Iranian president said.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad launched his latest anti-Israel broadside last Friday, criticizing Israel's strikes on the Gaza Strip.

Israel is a "fabricated regime" Ahmadinejad said, according to Reuters, and its strikes on Gaza "showed that it cannot last."

Former British Jewish student leader killed

A former chairman of the British Union of Jewish Students was killed in an apparent robbery and rape attempt in Washington.

Alan Senitt, 27, was walking his girlfriend home in Washington's Georgetown neighborhood before dawn on Sunday when he was stabbed to death.

Two adult males, a minor male and a woman were charged Sunday with murder.

One of the suspects was also charged with assault with intent to commit first-degree sexual assault, Washington police spokesman Sgt. Joe Gentile told JTA.

The SomethingJewish.co.uk Web site said he was active in Labor Party politics, pro-Israel activism and Muslim-Jewish dialogue.

WORLD REPORT

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U.S. silence about Israeli raid: A sign of friendship or weakness?

By **RON KAMPEAS**

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Is U.S. silence in the face of Israel's massive counterattack on the Gaza Strip a function of friendship or weakness?

The United States largely has refrained from criticizing Israeli strikes on Gaza that began June 28, days after gunmen affiliated with Hamas, the terrorist group governing the Palestinian Authority, attacked a base in Israel, killing two soldiers and kidnapping a third, Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

One spin on the U.S. restraint is that the Bush administration is hard-pressed to criticize Israel for retaliating against a Palestinian government that seems to recognize no red lines.

Another spin says the silence is a signal of U.S. impotence after years of relative inaction in the region — and they wonder whether a more involved Bush administration might have been able to bring about Shalit's release.

U.S. reticence to rebuke Israel "is disguised as a kind of supreme cooperation and friendship," Yossi Beilin, a leading dove and former Israeli Cabinet minister, told JTA. "But what do you need friends for if they can't help you at the moment of truth?"

Israel has inexorably upped the pressure on Hamas to release Shalit, destroying a Gaza power plant and several P.A. government offices and establishing footholds in the area for the first time since Israel withdrew from Gaza last summer.

After days of intense Israeli military action, P.A. Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh proposed a cease-fire Saturday.

"To solve this crisis, we must return to the starting point, to calm, including an end to

military actions on both sides," he said.

Olmert rejected the overture. "We will not negotiate with terrorists. We will not negotiate with Hamas. To do so would encourage more abductions," he said.

At the same time, Palestinian rocket fire continued over the weekend, with more than 20 Kassam rockets fired from the Gaza Strip. One of these attacks wounded three Israelis in Sderot.

The U.S. response has been to call on both sides to show restraint — and to make clear that, in U.S. eyes, the party failing to do so is the Palestinians.

"Let's remember that this began with the tunneling into Israeli territory, the abduction of an Israeli soldier," the U.S. secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, said July 5.

In an interview with a Turkish newspaper, an assistant to Rice accused the media of misrepresenting Israel, an opinion once almost unthinkable among State Department functionaries who deal with the Middle East.

Daniel Fried, the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, told Zaman that Israel's incursions were conducted with a high regard for civilian life.

"I don't think many Europeans or Turks understand this, but do you know the number of Palestinians who have been killed in the current Israeli operation as of this morning? Zero. None," Fried said July 3. "When I was watching CNN or BBC, I had the impression the casualties must have been enormous."

The comments were made before at least 20 Palestinians, mostly combatants, were killed in clashes July 6. And on Sunday, a Palestinian civilian was killed in an Israeli strike.

Another sign of U.S. support came July 6

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■ Why is the United States keeping a low public profile on Israel's Gaza incursions?

Continued from page 1

when John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, signaled he would veto any Security Council resolution ordering Israel to retreat. Bolton said a resolution drafted by Qatar blasting Israel was not only unacceptable as written, it was probably irredeemable.

"I'm not sure there are amendments that we could propose that would make it into an acceptable resolution," he said.

More significant than such advocacy is what Rice and others are not saying, according to David Makovsky, a senior analyst with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Makovsky said the United States has persuaded much of the West to keep quiet about the raids and Israel's arrests of P.A. Cabinet members from Hamas.

"It's like the dog that didn't bark," Makovsky said. "It's especially intriguing that international opinion has been muted when it comes to holding the Hamas lawmakers and Cabinet.

"The international community is grasping that with power comes responsibility" for Hamas, Makovsky continued. "If you're a government and not a revolutionary movement, you rein in militants that are striking cross-border."

Makovsky said the United States believes Israel is not simply trying to retrieve Shalit but may be trying to bring down the Hamas government. He noted that the United States had kept Europe in line for close to six months on shunning Hamas and cutting off funding to the Palestinian Authority as long as terrorists lead it.

But Beilin, who heads the left-wing Meretz list in the Knesset, said U.S. solidarity did little to advance peace or create the conditions that could lead to Shalit's release.

After years of Bush's relative disengagement compared to the intense shuttle diplomacy that marked previous administrations, the United States is considered impotent in the region, Beilin said. That's why Israel turned to Egypt, not the United

States, to try to broker Shalit's release, he claimed.

The United States has virtually cut off Syria, one of the few nations able to influence Hamas, because of Syria's support for terrorism. Rice revealed this week that she had asked Turkey to ask Syria to intervene with Hamas in the Shalit affair, but the remove only seemed to underscore how distant the United States is from some players in the region.

Another nation with sway over Hamas is Saudi Arabia, a U.S. ally, but there is no sign that the United States has approached the Saudis on the issue.

Tony Snow, the White House spokesman, said he would not discuss "behind-the-scenes" efforts to secure Shalit's release.

Some see Israel's actions in Gaza as another sign of decreased U.S. influence. Larry Garber, a former West Bank and Gaza administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, noted that during his years in the region, from 1999-2004, Israeli officials were careful to ask for the coordinates of U.S.-funded institutions in order to protect them during military actions.

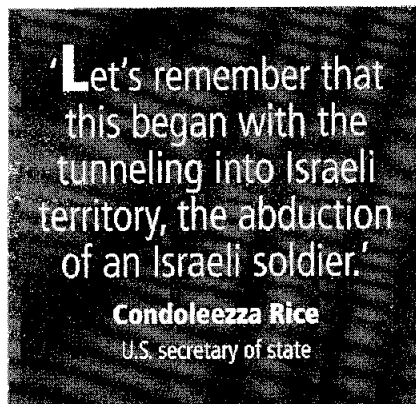
The destroyed Gaza power plant, however, could end up costing U.S. taxpayers as much as \$50 million, since it's insured by the U.S. government-run Overseas Private

Investment Corp.

"This is taking down the major U.S. investment in Gaza in the last five years," said Garber, who is now executive director of the New Israel Fund.

Palestinians still hope for U.S. involvement, if only to influence Israel while Egypt and Jordan attempt to broker Shalit's release, said Samar Assad, executive director of the Palestine Center, a Washington think tank.

"Airstrikes and other actions only escalate the situation and do not leave room for the Arab countries to negotiate an end to the crisis," she said. "If the United States can't deal with Hamas because of its position on dealing with terrorists, it should allow others enough time to engage in these talks." ■



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Tanks recall Argentina bombing

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — Images of tanks are being displayed at some of Buenos Aires' iconic institutions, a symbol of solidarity with the Jewish community as the 12th anniversary nears of the bombing of the AMIA Jewish center.

During the first days of July, City Hall, the main cathedral, the Latin American Art Museum, a Catholic school, the biggest national newspapers, universities, the National Library and the Youth Christian Association, among others, are covering their facades with images of 12 tanks.

The display will be installed at one institution per day; and the tanks will

remain on display for a few hours.

The symbolic tanks mean that scenery that has become "natural" at Argentine Jewish institutions will be featured, at least temporarily, at other buildings in Buenos Aires.

As soon as AMIA was bombed on July 18, 1994, killing 85 people and wounding some 300, tanks were placed in front of every Jewish institution. A few weeks later, cement blocks were placed at the front doors of every Jewish institution for added security.

The attack remains unsolved; courts are currently investigating irregularities in the case. ■

Jews for Jesus, Jews for Judaism out in force

By RACHEL SILVERMAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — There's a holy war of sorts going on in New York City.

Jews for Jesus has been running campaigns here for 33 years, but the messianic group's proselyting effort has never been as large as the one this summer — nor has it elicited such a united Jewish response.

The "Behold Your God" campaign represents the final stop of a five-year, \$22 million tour of every city outside Israel with a Jewish population of 25,000 or more.

While Jews for Jesus' previous efforts in New York focused on Manhattan, this year's program is meant to target all five boroughs, plus Westchester, Suffolk and Nassau counties, and Bergen County, N.J.

Full-time missionaries, all of whom spent two weeks at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago before their arrival, have been instructed to target Israelis, Russian-speaking Jews, intermarried families and the fervently Orthodox.

Instead of sticking to phone calls and brochure distribution, Jews for Jesus

volunteers now are manning kiosks at shopping malls, hanging out at Yankee Stadium, hosting film screenings and striking up conversations in Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish. The \$3 million effort will continue through July 29.

In a rare show of unity, all four major Jewish streams have banded together to launch a counter-campaign.

The New York Board of Rabbis also has signed on,

with the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York's anti-missionary task force doing much of the heavy lifting.

Jews for Judaism, a Baltimore-based anti-missionary group, is serving as a consultant. The groups' message is one of unity and community building: "Say 'Yes' to Judaism."

In roughly 60 newspaper ads, the coalition is asking Jews to affirm their commitment to Judaism by learning Torah, having Shabbat dinner or by giving charity, among other things. Information on Judaism is being distributed to local camps, schools and synagogues, and is available online.

Rabbi Michael Miller, executive vice president and CEO of the JCRC of New York, said the Jews for Jesus message doesn't require a direct response, since "the vast majority of Jews have no interest whatsoever in the message the Hebrew Christians are promoting."

But, he said, "it provided us with an opportunity to reinvigorate Jewish practice. We are approaching this as a positive, educational learning experience for the Jewish community.

Miller said he doesn't challenge Jews for Jesus' right to disseminate information, but he does take issue with the group's "deceptive interpretation of the Christian faith."

Scott Hillman, director of Jews for Judaism, said the idea that a Jew can consider Jesus the messiah is an oxymoron.

"If you have two different faith com-

munities, you can't be a member of both at the same time," he said. "If you accept the scripture of another faith, you have left the Jewish community behind."

Hillman said some Jews may be vulnerable to Jews for Jesus' message because of its packaging. He cited misleading ads about Hebrew Christians being "fulfilled" Jews, and brochures that cater to whatever religious group the target belongs to.

"Deception, straight out," he said.

But Jews for Jesus says its methods and message are valid.

"I'm just mystified as to how we could be perceived as deceptive," said Susan Perlman, Jews for Jesus' director of communications, pointing out that all missionaries wear T-shirts with "Jews for Jesus" emblazoned across the front. "We tell people straight up front what we believe about Jesus."

David Brickner, the missionary group's executive director, said Jewish leaders had a "kind of protective attitude, like this

community is somehow not able to think for itself on these issues," he said, "that somehow we're Svengalis that can come in and mind-control."

"Look, we didn't come to believe this in order to win a popularity contest," he continued. "We understand that Jesus has been a controversial issue for the Jewish community for 2,000 years. But we sure would like to have a voice on this."

Marcia Eisenberg, the JCRC's general counsel and director of its Jewish communal affairs and legal assistance program, said Jews for Jesus should not be afforded the luxury.

"They're trying to define themselves into our community," she said. "But we get to define our community, not you guys."

Miller agreed.

"From our perspective, even one Jew enticed by the deceptive message of the Hebrew Christians is one Jew too many," he said. ■

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Jews for Jesus volunteers now are manning kiosks at shopping malls, hanging out at Yankee Stadium, hosting film screenings and striking up conversations in Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish.

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

■ Jewish groups around the world protest outside Syrian diplomatic missions demanding that Syria, which hosts the terrorist group Hamas, exert pressure on the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority to release a kidnapped Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

■ The Albert Einstein Archives at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem displays a collection of correspondence shedding light on Einstein's personal life and perspectives. Highlights of the correspondence will be presented at a news conference.

WEDNESDAY

■ The United States has set this as Iran's final deadline for responding to an incentive package from the major powers to open up its nuclear facilities to inspectors, or face sanctions.

SATURDAY

■ The Group of Eight (G8) summit of major industrial nations meets in St. Petersburg, Russia through Monday. How to deal with Iran's response — or non-response — to demands that it open its nuclear facilities will feature in the talks.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Katsav in sexual harassment scandal?

Israeli President Moshe Katsav reportedly complained he is being blackmailed.

Channel 2 television reported Saturday that Katsav summoned Attorney General Menachem Mazuz earlier this week to tell him that a woman had falsely accused him of sexual harassment and was trying to extort money from him. Yediot Achronot on Sunday identified the alleged would-be blackmailer as a former director in Katsav's office.

Mazuz, addressing the Knesset Law Committee on Sunday, confirmed he had met with Katsav to hear about allegations of "improper conduct" lodged against him, but said there was no mention of blackmail.

Israel won't talk to Polish Cabinet minister

Israeli officials said they are refusing all contacts with Poland's education minister because they consider his party to be anti-Semitic. Roman Giertych heads the League of Polish Families, which has a history of anti-Semitism, according to several anti-racist organizations. Israeli officials said the lack of contacts could affect Holocaust education efforts in the two countries.

Arab comments on abduction stir ire

An Israeli Arab lawmaker drew fire for defending Palestinian hostage-takers.

In an online chat with readers of a popular Muslim Web site last week, Wasil Taha of the Arab party Balad spoke in favor of the "option" exercised by the Palestinian "resistance" to abduct Israeli soldiers in operations such as the June 25 cross-border raid from Gaza. He also accused Israel and the United States of waging "war against Islam."

The remarks, which surfaced Sunday on the heels of similar statements by other Israeli Arab lawmakers about the kidnapping of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, boosted calls for public figures who endorse Palestinian terrorism to be prosecuted.

Effi Eitan of the National Religious Party told Israel Radio that Taha's comments are "simply treasonous."

Friendly fire suspected in soldier's death

The Israeli army said its lone fatality from the recent Gaza Strip offensive was probably the result of friendly fire.

"It appears that he died at the hands of our own forces," Col. Tamir Yadai, chief of the Golani infantry brigade, told Army Radio on Sunday in reference to Sgt. Yehuda Basel.

Basel suffered a fatal gunshot wound to the head last week as his unit stormed northern Gaza in a hunt for Palestinian rocket crews. Initial reports said he was felled by Palestinian sniper fire.

Israeli woman to head Conservative seminary

The first Israeli woman to be ordained a rabbi is now also the first to head a conservative seminary. Einat Ramon, 47, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary's rabbinical school, was appointed dean of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary in Israel.

Israeli scores Wimbledon crown

Andy Ram became the first Israeli to win a Grand Slam professional tennis title.

Ram teamed with Russian Vera Zvonareva to win the mixed doubles championship Saturday at Wimbledon with a victory over Americans Bob Bryan and Venus Williams. Two Israelis, Anna Smashnova and Shahar Peer, have won juniors titles at Grand Slam events.

NORTH AMERICA

Real-estate firm charged with favoring Jews

U.S. officials charged a real-estate company in New Jersey with violating the Fair Housing Act in favor of Jewish families.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development alleges that Triple H. Realty of Lakewood, N.J., kept minority residents out of the nicer parts of a housing complex, provided them with poorer maintenance and subjected them to rules not applied to the Jewish residents.

Lakewood is home to a large Orthodox Jewish community.

Teacher pleads not guilty to hate crime

A teacher accused of beating a Jewish mother pleaded not guilty to hate-crime charges. Donna Jean Hubbard of Coarsegold, Calif., entered her plea July 5.

Hubbard allegedly pulled the hair of a mother of one of her students, kicked her and said she wished she had burned in the Holocaust. Police closed the case after concluding they couldn't establish who started the fight, but reopened it this year after discovering that Hubbard and her husband had hosted a white supremacist rally.

WORLD

Peruvian author criticizes Israel's actions

Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa called Israel's military actions in the Gaza Strip "excessively severe."

Vargas Llosa, a former presidential candidate in Peru, said over the weekend that Israel has "become a powerful and arrogant country, and it is the role of its friends to be highly critical of its policies," Ha'aretz reported.

Vargas Llosa made his comments at a meeting in Madrid organized by his International Freedom Fund.

He also called the Palestinian abduction of an Israeli soldier an "unacceptable move."

Neo-Nazis burn Anne Frank book

German neo-Nazis burned a copy of "The Diary of Anne Frank" at a summer solstice festival.

The Anne Frank Center in Berlin and local religious and political groups have organized educational programs in response to the late June event in the town of Pretzien in the former East Germany. "I have never heard of anybody burning the diary," center director Thomas Heppener told JTA. "For us it's new that they take two symbols of the Nazi past — book burning and the diary — and bring them together."

The youths allegedly also burned an American flag.

Three suspects, apparently right-wing extremist sympathizers, have been arrested.

Some 200 of Pretzien's 1,000 residents came to a town hall meeting July 5 to discuss the incident and its repercussions.

Georgian leader welcomes Jews

Georgia's president welcomed the return of 700 Jewish families from Israel.

Mikhail Saakashvili said up to 85,000 Georgians living abroad returned to their homeland in 2005, signaling an upturn in the former Soviet republic's economy and political freedoms.

Appearing July 6 at the American Enterprise Institute during a state visit to Washington, Saakashvili said it was "good news" that the returnees were ethnically diverse.

Saakashvili said an Israeli chief rabbi told him with regret about Jewish families leaving Israel for Georgia.