

No Israelis are injured in Palestinian suicide attack

by Nomi Morris
Knight-Ridder Tribune
October 27, 2000

JERUSALEM -- A Palestinian suicide bomber on a bicycle blew himself up Thursday, but did not seriously injure any Israelis in the army post in the Gaza Strip that he was attacking.

Israeli authorities said they expect more such attacks and accused the Palestinian Authority of cooperating with radical Islamic groups.

"We stress to the leaders of the criminal enemy that this suicide attack was not the first and will not be the last," said a statement issued in Beirut by Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian guerrilla group dedicated to armed struggle against Israel.

An Israeli soldier was slightly injured by shrapnel in the attack. Israeli authorities believe Islamic Jihad used it to mark the fifth anniversary of the death of its leader, Fathi Shikaki, in a mysterious drive-by shooting in Malta. Palestinians blame Israeli intelligence agents for the murder.

The bicycle bomber was identified as Nabil Faraj al-Arair, 24, a student at the Islamic University in Gaza. The Israeli army said he was carrying a school satchel and wearing 13 pounds of explosives, which he detonated near the entrance of the Jewish settlement of Kisufim. Concrete blocks protected the Israeli troops.

Meanwhile, violence broke out in other parts of the Gaza Strip, as well as the West Bank towns of Tulkarm, Jenin, Ramallah and Hebron. Palestinians and Israeli troops exchanged gunfire, but there were no reports of deaths. The toll stands at 130, all but eight of them were Palestinians.

The suicide attack was the first of its kind since the latest wave of unrest began Sept. 28 when Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon visited a Muslim holy shrine in Jerusalem. Last weekend Israeli troops shot a Palestinian trying to infiltrate from Lebanon and said he was equipped with materials to carry out a terror attack.

In recent days, Israeli officials have warned repeatedly that the conflict

could turn even bloodier, accusing Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority of cooperating with Islamic Jihad and Hamas, both of which have vowed to intensify their attacks against Israel.

Arafat had curtailed the activities of

"Israel will consider pursuing the path of peace, but not at any cost. We will not negotiate under fire or under pressure."

-Gilad Sher,
one of Israeli Prime Minister Barak's lead negotiators.

these groups while he was engaged in peace negotiations with Israel.

But two weeks ago the Palestinian Authority released 80 to 100 suspected terrorists it had jailed. It re-arrested only 15 to 20 of them before the opening of the Sharm el Sheik peace conference on Oct. 16.

"They understand that they have the permission to carry out attacks," said

Maj. Gen. Giora Eiland, chief of the Israeli army's operations branch. "We are under a very serious and immediate threat."

In the past week, several Palestinian leaders have confirmed that both Hamas

and Islamic Jihad are participating in nightly planning sessions by a coordinating committee run by the PLO.

"There is complete agreement. This is the full national unity of the Intifada (uprising). Everyone is with this Intifada now," said Ismail Abu Shanab, a Hamas spokesman in Gaza.

Now all options are open to civilians and all military wings are active."

Marwan Barghouti, who has been leading the street riots in the West Bank on behalf of Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, said the PLO leadership is not promoting terror attacks inside Israel proper, but considers military targets in the West Bank and Gaza Strip legitimate.

"We do not support any kind of action inside the Green Line," Barghouti said, referring to Israel's borders prior to the 1967 Middle East war. "But we support resistance actions inside the Palestinian territories because they are occupied areas."

Barghouti's popular success in leading confrontations against Israeli troops in the West Bank is an example of how Arafat has successfully harnessed anger in the streets against Israel and the peace process, to prevent Hamas and other radical Islamic groups from gaining the upper hand.

"Barghouti is a rising star, the grassroots extension of Arafat. He is fierce competition for Hamas. He is trumping them," said Ghassan Khatib, director of the Jerusalem Media and

Communications Center.

Barghouti is filling the gap. They had to speak the language of Hamas, or lose ground to them. Now Fatah is in the lead. If they didn't speak this way, Hamas would have gained."

The threats of renewed terror come just as Israeli and Palestinian security officials appeared to be making progress in meetings for the first time in nearly a month.

Israel Radio also reported that Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin met with Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat on Tuesday in a secret effort to get the sides back on speaking terms.

Neither Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak nor Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has accepted President Clinton's invitation to come to Washington for separate meetings. The visits are unlikely to happen unless there is a calming of violence on the ground.

"Israel will consider pursuing the path of peace, but not at any cost. We will not negotiate under fire or under pressure," said Gilad Sher, one of Barak's lead negotiators.

Maryland ponders killing swans, which damage bay

by Anita Huslin
The Washington Post
October 26, 2000

They were the perfect guests when they took up residence on an Eastern Shore estate, imported from England to add an air of courtly beauty to the reflecting pond.

In the nearly 40 years since the first mute swans arrived in Maryland, however, the graceful birds with the snowy plumage also have become known for their decidedly inelegant behavior.

Since the first five swans were liberated by a storm and then multiplied exponentially, the largest waterfowl species on the Chesapeake Bay has become notorious for menacing people and other birds, trampling on nests and driving off native species.

Now their penchant for devouring acres of underwater grasses a day have placed the birds in the cross hairs of environmentalists.

A groundswell of voices from community and environmental groups are urging state officials to act - killing, if necessary - to stop mute swans from stripping the bay of fragile underwater grasses that serve as habitat and food for a wide range of creatures.

Nowhere is the threat more urgent than in Maryland, the only state in the Atlantic flyway whose anti-hunting laws do not differentiate between mute and native swans. As a

result, the mute swan population has ballooned in the state, increasing from 5 percent of mute swans in the region in 1986 to 31 percent - numbering 4,000 - in 1999.

At the same time, the swans are settling near grass beds that have only recently begun to recover from the effects of pollution, sediment and other threats that have devastated 90 percent of the bay's 600,000 historic acres since the 1930s.

"Mute swans have completely destroyed a number of (underwater grass) planting projects," Theresa

Pierno, Maryland executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the region's largest environmental group, said in a letter to the Maryland secretary of natural resources. For years, the group has promoted shaking mute swan eggs or coating them with vegetable oil to prevent their hatching, but staff biologists and naturalists say the time for further steps is nearing. "Lethal methods specific to mute swans should be considered," Pierno wrote.

Mute swans do not migrate, but fly from freshwater sources inland,

where they spend the spring and summer, to saltwater in the fall. And they feed on underwater grasses year-round, depleting the food source for migratory birds like the tundra swan and black duck which overwinter in the bay. Mute swans also consume young plants and seeds before they have a chance to propagate, reducing the acreage from year to year.



WASHINGTON POST PHOTO BY GERALD MARTINEAU

A mute swan takes flight on the Severn River near Annapolis, Md. A groundswell of voices from community and environmental groups are urging state officials to act - killing, if necessary - to stop mute swans from stripping the Chesapeake Bay of fragile underwater grasses that serve as habitat and food for a wide range of creatures.



WASHINGTON POST PHOTO BY GERALD MARTINEAU

John Page Williams, a Chesapeake Bay Foundation naturalist, holds grass that a mute swan dislodged.

BMG drops suit, forges partnership with Napster

by Matthew McGuire
TMS Campus
October 31, 2000

In a move that could temporarily save the Internet file sharing web site Napster, Bertelsmann said it will team up with Napster to form a membership-based site that will dole out royalties to music rights holders.

Once the new site is up and running, Bertelsmann's music subsidiary BMG will in turn drop its lawsuit against Napster and make its music catalog available through the Internet site.

This recent development will be the largest step the music industry has taken to embrace the new file sharing software that has spread like wild fire throughout the Internet. However, Napster is no longer the main music swapping Internet site.

Other sites - such as Gnutella, Hotline, JungleMonkey and FreeNet - have increased in popularity and use technology that allows users to swap files without a centralized network.

With no centralized network, the recording

industry may find it hard, if not impossible, to shut down the music swapping technology.

Bertelsmann and Napster announced the deal Tuesday, Oct. 31, and also included plans to seek support and membership from other four major recording companies, Sony, Universal, Warner and EMI. The other record companies have made no announcements.

Under the deal, Bertelsmann will loan Napster the money to develop the new service and retain rights to purchase a portion of Napster's equity.

Napster's legal woes aren't completely over, however. The company is still caught up in court over the Recording Industry of America's December 1999 lawsuit, which alleges copyright infringement. In July, a federal judge ordered the company to remove all copyrighted material from its network until the outcome of the pending trial. And less than a day later, a U.S. District

Court of Appeals granted a temporary stay of an injunction that would have shut Napster down.



Crew seeks to make a space station a home

by John Daniszewski
Los Angeles Times
October 30, 2000

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan - The first crew of what has been called the most ambitious international science project ever attempted, the \$60 billion International Space Station, was set to blast off on its four-month mission Tuesday from this frigid Russian base in the wastes of Kazakhstan.

From the same pad used by the first Sputnik in 1957 and Russian cosmonaut Yuri A. Gagarin, who opened the era of manned space flight in 1961, a slender Soyuz TM-31 launch vehicle was to start an American and two Russians on a voyage that could represent the beginning of humanity's permanent habitation of space.

Agreed upon by the U.S. and Russian governments in 1993 and under construction since 1998, the project has become the primary focus of both countries' space programs.

Expedition I is commanded by Navy Capt. William Shepherd, 51, who has flown three prior U.S. space shuttle missions. His crew consists of Russian air force Lt. Col. Yuri Gidzenko, 38,

who was to pilot the Soyuz launch vehicle into orbit and dock it 48 hours later with the space station 221 miles above the earth; and Russian flight engineer Sergei Krikalev, 42, a veteran of four Russian and U.S. space missions. Krikalev is one of the world's most experienced space travelers, having logged 484 days in orbit.

The astronaut and two cosmonauts have been training in each other's languages since 1996. They plan to speak a polyglot they call "Runglish" and eat both Russian and American foods during their mission. As the first crew, their job will be to turn on computer and navigation systems, assist in expansion of the space station and establish everyday procedures - in short, to bring it to life.

"It's definitely the beginning of a new era in human space flight," said NASA official Mike Baker. "From now on, all human endeavors in space will be joint."

Although it is already 140 feet long and weighs 80 tons, the space station remains very much a work in progress.

Dozens more construction missions are anticipated in the next five years. The space station will gradually ex-

pand until it weighs about 1 million pounds and be both longer and wider than a football field. Huge solar panels will generate more than 60 times the power for experiments than on the existing Russian orbiter Mir. In the future, the station will be home to as many as seven astronauts at a time.

The station is designed to remain operational for at least 15 years and perhaps as long as 25 years. Its laboratories are expected to contribute vital knowledge about the effects of microgravity and long-term living in space, lessons that could lay the foundation for new drug discoveries or a possible future manned voyage to Mars.

Under the original timetable, the station should have received its first crew 2 1/2 years ago. But the project fell behind because of Russia's financial collapse, which slowed delivery of the station's first living module, and by problems with its Proton rocket.

Asked at a pre-launch news conference how he felt to be finally embarking on a mission for which he began preparing years ago, Shepherd answered crisply: "I'm anxious to get started."

Speaking to reporters Monday, Krikalev said that in its present state, life aboard the shuttle would be tough - with a heavy workload, quarters more cramped than the nearly 15-year-old Mir, and a U.S.-designed toilet that does not work as well as one of Russian design.

With so much to be done, Shepherd said his biggest challenge might be to restrain the Russians from working too aggressively at first. "My job is to make sure that the crew stays on an even keel and gets its work done (but) without really tiring ourselves out," he said.

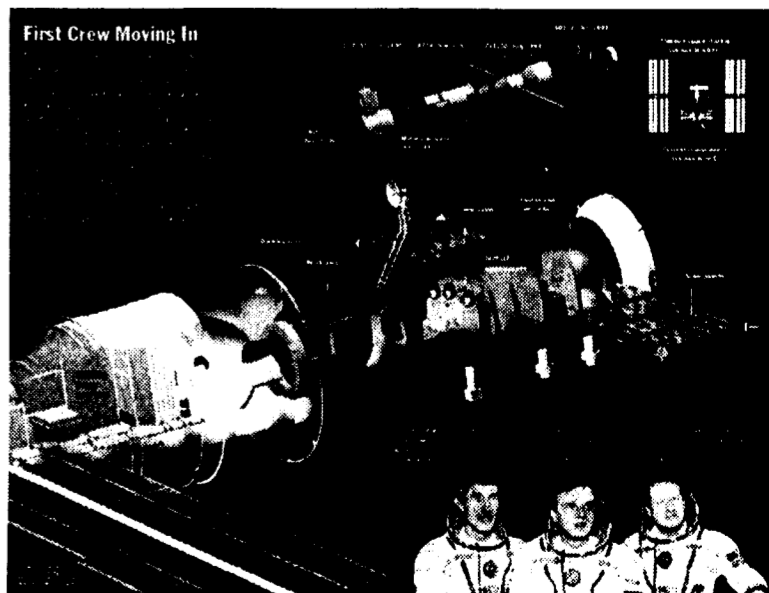
For the United States, which is leading the 16-nation space station project with contributions from Brazil, Japan, Canada and 11 nations of the European Space Agency, the advantage of the new station is that it now has an ongoing venue in which to conduct experiments in space.

For Russia, the space station provides a chance to continue and expand the research begun on Mir, now vacant and likely - unless new government or private funds miraculously appear - to be brought down into the Pacific Ocean in February.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration flight director John Curry told reporters last week in Houston that Tuesday's launch might someday be remembered as the beginning of

permanent human habitation off the surface of Earth.

"I'd say there's a decent chance that Oct. 30 may, in fact, be the last day we don't have humans in space," he said.



WASHINGTON POST GRAPHIC BY CRISTINA RIVERO AND LOUIS SPIRITO; RESEARCH BY SETH HAMBLIN

A Russian Soyuz rocket is to launch the first crew -- two Russians and one American -- to live aboard the new International Space Station Tuesday. Graphic details the four-month mission.