

# 5 Palestinians killed during Israeli raid

## Gunmen kill Israeli soldier

REUTERS, AFP, Hebron

Israeli soldiers killed a leader of the Islamic Jihad movement and four other Palestinian militants yesterday in raids in the Gaza Strip and West Bank which drew immediate vows of revenge.

Gunmen also killed an Israeli soldier during the raids, which prompted some of the bloodiest clashes in weeks. The violence dealt a new blow to already slim hopes of progress on a US-backed peace "road map" after three years of violence.

Soldiers shot dead Diab Shyoukhi, the Islamic Jihad's leader for the southern West Bank, and another fugitive militant in a shoot-out at their hideout near the West Bank city of Hebron, Palestinian security sources said.

Soldiers killed two militants in a gunfight at the el-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, including an

Islamic Jihad member they went to detain, and wounded six other Palestinians including gunmen, Palestinian security officials said.

The Israeli military said one soldier was killed and six others wounded in el-Bureij, and that troops had found weapon hoards during both raids.

The killing of Shyoukhi, who was in hiding because he was on an Israeli hit list, was a high-profile success for the army as it tries to wipe out groups that have killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings. But it could fuel new attacks.

"The Islamic Jihad is ready to respond to Israeli killings and all our cells have a free hand in Gaza and the West Bank to respond and to teach the enemies a lesson," Nabil Abu Jaber, a leader of Islamic Jihad's armed wing, told Reuters.

Ahmed Abdel-Rahman, an adviser to Palestinian President

Yasser Arafat, said the raids were complicating efforts to convince militant groups to declare a cease-fire.

"Israel is escalating violence through assassinations and raids at a time the Palestinian side is seeking calm and a return to a cease-fire," Abdel-Rahman told Reuters.

Israel and Hamas's spiritual leader have ruled out a truce.

Israel says it carries out such raids because the Palestinian Authority has failed to rein in militant groups and blames the Palestinians for the stalling of the road map.

A military official said the raids were "very specific operations against the Islamic Jihad and Hamas infrastructure."

Israel has killed 12 militant leaders in missile strikes since a suicide bomber killed 23 Israelis in Jerusalem on August 19. It has also continued regular raids to root out

militants.

Israel's policy of killing the militants has been widely condemned abroad and drawn a degree of criticism in Israel. Twenty-seven airforce pilots have sent a letter to their commander saying they will not take part in such attacks.

"We, who have been educated to love the state of Israel... refuse to take part in airforce attacks in civilian population centers," one of the pilots told Israeli television.

Conscientious objectors have long refused to serve in the Palestinian territories, but the letter marks the first time pilots have protested as a separate group.

Airforce Brigadier General Ido Nehushtan said the 27 pilots were a "marginal, small group" of retired and reserve pilots. Israel's army chief, Moshe Ya'alon, said they could be punished.

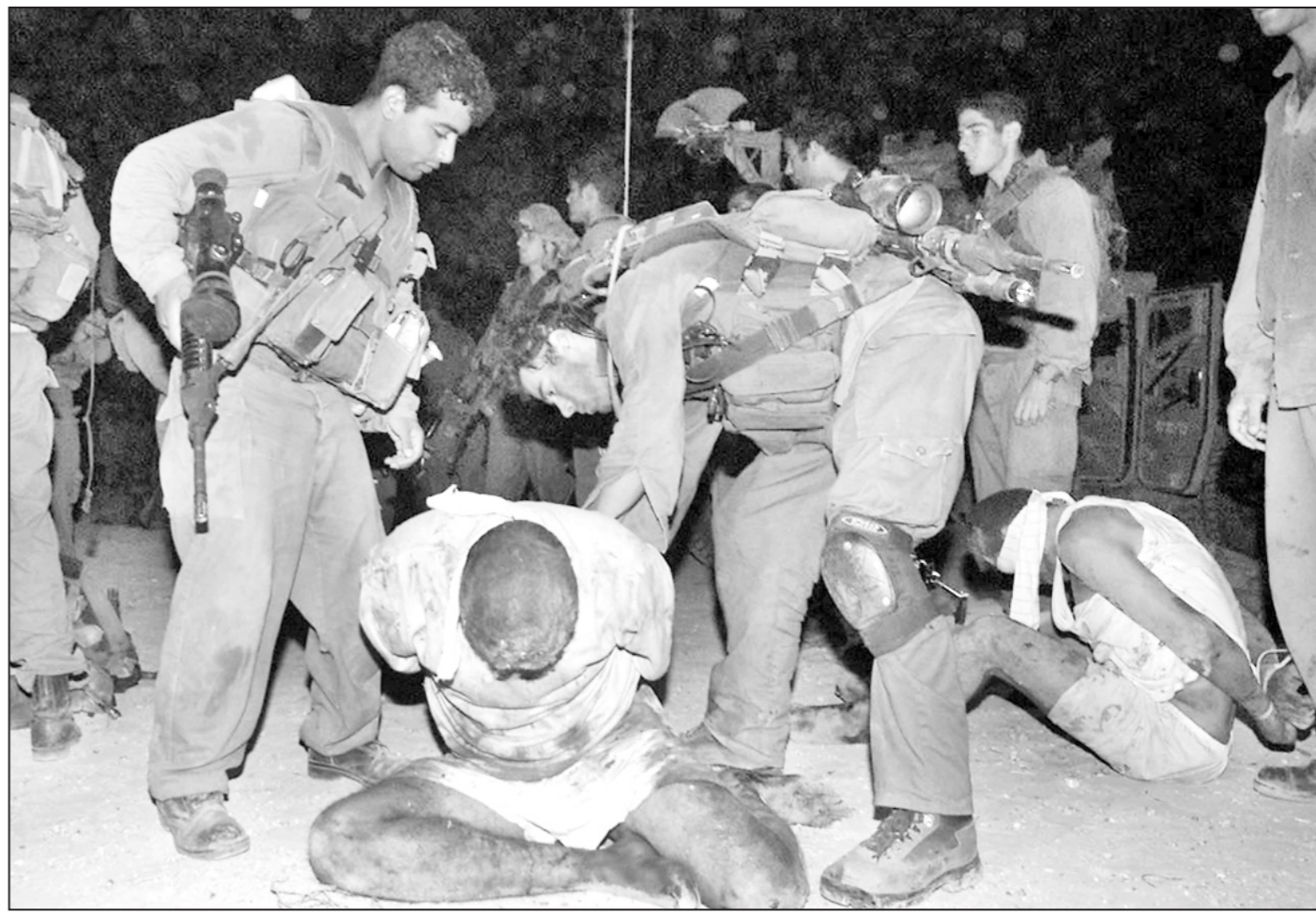


PHOTO: AFP  
Israeli soldiers arrest two Palestinians at Karni checkpoint, at the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip, during a military operation in the el-Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip yesterday. The Israeli army killed four Palestinians in separate pre-dawn raids in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which also left six soldiers injured, security sources said on both sides.

## ISI is directly under my control, says Musharraf

ANI, New York

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said that the country's much maligned Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is under his direct control and command.

In an interview with ABC correspondent Peter Jennings, Musharraf categorically refuted the charge that the ISI was a rogue organisation, adding emphatically it was under his complete control and command.

Responding to allegations that the ISI was supporting remnants of Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime, Musharraf said that such a charge was neither in Afghanistan nor the United States interest.

He also said that the ISI was not operating on its own, but was run by Pakistan military officers and commanders, who in turn reported to him on matters concerning the institution.



PHOTO: AFP  
US President George W. Bush (R) meets with Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the Waldorf Hotel in New York City Wednesday. Bush is in New York for the United Nations General Assembly session.

## Iran refuses to extradite al-Qaeda members

AFP, New York

Members of the al-Qaeda terror network detained in Iran will not be extradited to the United States, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said Wednesday.

But he told reporters here that some of the captives will be soon tried in Iran.

Asked if some of the al-Qaeda detainees would be handed over to the United States, Kharazi answered: "Not to the United States."

He said Iran had turned over about 100 al-Qaeda members to Saudi Arabia and had shared some information with the kingdom.

"Those who have committed some crime in Iran, who have done something against national security, they have to be tried in Iran," the foreign minister said.

## Maoists ask US, China, India to stop interfering in Nepali affairs

AP, Kathmandu

Maoist rebels yesterday called on the United States, India and China to stop "interfering" in Nepal's internal affairs.

"We are asking all foreign powers, particularly the USA and our immediate neighbours India and China, to... let the Nepalese people choose their destiny themselves," the No 2 rebel leader Baburam Bhattarai said in a letter addressed to the US Ambassador Michael Malinowski.

The rebels have been especially critical of Washington because it has provided the Nepalese government with more than \$20 million worth of military

aid, including training and small arms. Both India and China have condemned recent rebel attacks.

Bhattarai's letter, posted on the guerrilla's website, told the three nations to stop interfering in Nepal's internal affairs. Bhattarai also objected to Malinowski's comments earlier this month that denounced the guerrilla attacks.

There was no immediate response from the American Embassy.

Last month, the rebels pulled out of peace talks and cease-fire, and stepped up their offensive. Nearly 200 people have died since then.

## 'No Bush request yet for Indo-Pak troops'

AFP, New York

US President George W. Bush met Wednesday with the leaders of India and Pakistan, seeking progress on ending cross-border attacks but not yet asking the nuclear rivals to send troops to Iraq, a top aide said.

Both Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee have made a UN mandate a precondition for helping the United States shoulder the military burden in that war-torn country.

And Bush anchored his two-day visit to New York on a speech aimed at winning support for a new US-crafted UN resolution to encourage international contributions of money and troops to Iraq.

But "the president didn't come

here to ask people for troops" from either leader during separate meetings on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly here, insisted the senior US official, who requested anonymity.

Another official clarified later that Bush had made no specific requests of reluctant nations meeting here.

In both closed-door sessions, Bush discussed the volatile issue of raids by Islamic militants who cross the Line of Control in Kashmir from the zone run by Pakistan into the section administered by India, the first official said.

Bush and Musharraf "talked about the need to stop cross-border terrorism in Kashmir," even as the US president vowed that the United States will "be there" to help Pakistan battle extremism, said the

official.

Bush and Vajpayee, who lunched together, also discussed the issue, as well as Indian support for stabilizing Afghanistan and Delhi's possible help in rebuilding Iraq, said the official.

The US president also followed up on a pledge he made a day earlier to Afghan President Hamid Karzai to raise concerns about Taliban-like Muslim hardliners striking at targets in Afghanistan from Pakistan.

Bush "did ask President Musharraf to go back and to redouble his efforts to try and deal with this particular problem. But this is a very hard problem and I don't think we believe it's from a lack of will," said the US official.

## UN inspectors find more enriched uranium in Iran

### Tehran defies IAEA

REUTERS, Vienna

The UN nuclear watchdog has found further traces of enriched uranium at a site in Iran, though this discovery could support Iran's explanation that the traces are due to contamination, diplomats told Reuters.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the diplomats said the new traces of highly enriched uranium were found at the Kalaye Electric Co.

Earlier this year, UN inspectors found enriched uranium particles at Iran's uranium-enrichment plant at Natanz.

AFP adds: Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said Wednesday that his country would not give up its uranium enrichment program, insisting it was purely for

civilian purposes.

"It's a matter of national pride to have this capability, this technology especially when it's produced domestically. This does not mean that producing (nuclear) weapons will be on our agenda," he told a business and security forum in New York.

"The capability is the important thing, that we can produce enriched uranium," Kharazi added.

The foreign minister's uncompromising message followed the announcement by a top Iranian diplomat earlier this week that Tehran had started uranium enrichment experiments several weeks ago at its Natanz factory.

This was despite a September 12 resolution passed by the UN nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, that urged Iran to cease enrichment activities amid US allegations that

the program -- part of a bid to generate atomic power -- is merely a cover for nuclear weapons development.

The enrichment could also complicate efforts by the IAEA to account for traces of enriched uranium they found in Natanz, 250 km south of Tehran and the site of 164 centrifuges, on a previous inspection -- traces that Iran said were on imported equipment.

Kharazi, however, denied that this enrichment programme would enable Iran to develop nuclear weapons, but was instead aimed at reducing reliance on supplies of nuclear fuel from Russia -- which is building Iran's first nuclear reactor.

"No, we do not have the technology to produce nuclear weapons. We have the technology to enrich uranium needed for power plants as fuel.

## Taliban kill another Afghan NGO worker

REUTERS, Kabul

An Afghan engineer working for a local non-government organisation was killed and another seriously wounded by suspected Taliban guerrillas in southern Afghanistan, officials said on Thursday.

The attack, the latest in recent weeks on Afghans working for humanitarian organisations, took place in the province of Helmand on Wednesday, district military commander Haji Ghulam Sarwar told Reuters.

He said the worker with the Voluntary Association for Rehabilitation of Afghanistan was killed when four guerrillas attacked his vehicle on the road to the city of Kandahar in Girishek district, about 345 miles west of Kabul.

Sarwar said two of the attackers had been arrested and were carrying documents and a satellite telephone.

David Singh, a spokesman for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said the driver of the vehicle had suffered serious injuries to his shoulders and legs.

## Myanmar neighbours step up pressure to free Suu Kyi

REUTERS, Yangon

Myanmar's Southeast Asian neighbours stepped up pressure on its military rulers to free opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi as a second envoy arrived yesterday for talks a day after another left empty-handed.

Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai flew into Yangon for talks with top leader General Than Shwe and new Prime Minister Khin Nyunt ahead of a regional October 7-8 summit that could be overshadowed if Suu Kyi were still in detention.

Surakiart arrived a day after Indonesian special envoy Ali Alatas left Myanmar without a promise from its military rulers to free Suu Kyi, who is recovering from surgery after more than three months in detention at a secret location.

"The minister is expected to meet with senior leaders to discuss matters of bilateral interest," a Thai diplomat told Reuters, declining to give more details.

Surakiart was expected to press the generals on plans to move their country toward democracy.

There is concern next month's Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit could be embarrassed if the military kept the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner, whose plight has sparked international outrage and Western sanctions, isolated.

Leaders of the 10-member ASEAN, one of the few groups willing to have Myanmar as a member, will meet on the Indonesian island of Bali.

ASEAN, usually loathe to criticize the internal affairs of its members, issued a sharp rebuke to Yangon after Suu Kyi was detained on May 30 following a bloody clash between her supporters and government backers.

ASEAN Secretary General Ong Keng Yong said on Wednesday the group's credibility and image would take a knock if it did not express concern over Myanmar's actions.

## Stay on Rae Bareilly order may ease Joshi crisis

THE STATESMAN/ ANN, New Delhi

An honourable solution to the crisis due to Murlidhar Joshi's resignation lies in his ability to get a stay on the Rae Bareilly court ordering framing of charges in the Ayodhya demolition case.

This would give him a temporary reprieve and the Prime Minister a reasonable argument to reject the resignation. The VHP working president, Ashok Singhal, Wednesday met Joshi to discuss the legal issues involved in the case and how to go about fighting it.

Alternatively, Atal Behari Vajpayee and the party must take an unequivocal stand that none would resign due to charges accruing in the Ayodhya case. This would mean facing the Opposition head on, the way the government did in the case of George Fernandes, some BJP leaders close to Joshi said.

This has, however, a major complication as this would need a consensus within the NDA, otherwise the Opposition would have an edge, a senior BJP leader said.



PHOTO: AFP  
Indian Muslim children and elders walk in a candle-light procession with placards to show solidarity to the people of Palestine, on the occasion of 'Meeraj Un Nabi' in Mumbai Wednesday. They protested against the recent statement by Israel vice president to eliminate Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and claimed American President George W. Bush responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians.

## Musharraf asks Bush to facilitate talks with India

### US asks Pakistan to stop infiltration

PTI, ANI, New York

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said that he has asked American President George W. Bush during their meeting to facilitate dialogue with India but said he was not keen to meet Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee if the latter does not so desire.

He, however, did not elaborate on his proposal to Bush nor give the US President's reaction to it.

Addressing a press conference shortly after meeting with Bush, he rejected the allegation that he had not done enough to stop cross-border terrorism and infiltration of terrorists into Kashmir and said, "Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee should stop making such accusation."

Nobody in the world, he asserted, could guarantee the total security of the borders.

"India's 700,000 troops in Kashmir have failed to seal border, how could Pakistan's 60,000 troops do so," especially given the region mountainous terrain with peaks rising between 12,000 and 15,000 people.

Musharraf also said he was not keen to meet Vajpayee if the latter does not so desire. "I do not want to rub shoulders with someone who does not want it."

His statements at his meeting with reporters were on the lines of his address to the United Nations General Assembly only three hours earlier.

Accusing India of acquiring weapons, both conventional and non-conventional, to tilt balance in its favour, Musharraf said he is following an strategy of deterrence to ensure safety of Pakistan and that India does not attack. He had discussed this with Bush and in this context, the issue of Pakistan desire to acquire F-16 war planes.

Musharraf also expressed

apprehension about growing Indo-Israeli ties especially in the field of defence but said in reply to a question that he did not bring up this issue during his meeting with Bush.

He commended his action plan to resolve the differences with India which envisages ceasefire on the Line of Control, an enlarged United Nations force to patrol the area and greater restraint with respect of acquiring weapons.

"The ball is now in India's court," he told a questioner.

"I can't say whether India would come forward and accept the action plan and start talking. But I can only hope optimistically that good sense will prevail and they would come forward" so that two can sit down, talk and move forward towards the resolution of dispute to the benefit the people," he claimed.

Meanwhile, US President George W. Bush has stressed the need to stop cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, a senior US administration official said.

During a meeting with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf here yesterday, Bush told him about "the need to stop cross-border terrorism" in Jammu and Kashmir, the official said.

About the meeting between Bush and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the official said, they talked about the progress that were making in US-Indian relations, about cross-border terrorism, India's support for Afghanistan and Iraq situation.

During the half-an-hour closed door meeting with Musharraf here on Wednesday, Bush stressed the need for Pakistan to clamp down on "cross-border infiltration", which is affecting Kashmir and Afghanistan, the Daily Times quoted a US senior official as saying.

## FBI probes Hamas-linked 'criminal enterprises'

AFP, Washington

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation is probing several "criminal enterprises" associated with the radical Islamic group Hamas that has taken responsibility for a string of suicide bombings in Israel, a senior bureau official said.

Assistant FBI director for counterterrorism John Pistole told Congress that information collected in the course of this work had helped thwart four terrorist attacks planned in a country he refused to identify.

At the request of a foreign intelligence service, the FBI was able to trace financial transactions of people preparing a terrorist strike on four different occasions and came up with "specific and identifiable information regarding the parties involved," Pistole said.

"Based on this information, the foreign intelligence agency was able to locate the members of terrorist cells and prevent them from conducting their intended terrorist attacks," he testified at a hearing in the House Subcommittee on

Oversight and Investigations.

No specifics were provided. The on-going probes of suspected Hamas associates follow a 2001 crackdown against the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation described as the main fundraiser for Hamas in the United States credited with collecting 13 million dollars in 2000 alone.

The US government designated the group a terrorist organisation, froze its assets in the United States and made it illegal for individuals and businesses to do business with it.

But Pistole said Hamas was still conducting "a myriad" of smaller operations designed to raise funds in the United States, primarily through criminal enterprises.

"Some of the suggested criminal activity include, but not limited to, drug trafficking, credit card fraud, counterfeit products, fraudulent documents, cigarette tax fraud and stolen infant formula," said the FBI official.