
PREFACE

Sunday is the first day of the week in Israel. It has that “Monday morning” feeling, when everyone heads back to their routines. Both men and women serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), two years for women and three for men from the age of 18.

These young men and women were making their way, sleepily, from the welcome relief of home and home comforts, back to their bases for another hectic week of service on the cool morning of Sunday, January 22, 1995. Many of them converged on a junction to the north of Tel Aviv and near the coastal city of Netanya, where buses would ferry them all over the country. The junction served as a meeting point for paratroop units that were reporting back to duty at 9 A.M. sharp. They frequently set their watches by the beeps of the 9 A.M. news; a news bulletin few Israelis miss. That morning the junction would have been swamped with men and women in uniform rushing to get back to their bases on time.

HaSharon Junction, commonly known as Beit Lid Junction, is not a scenic crossroads. It intersects Highway 4, which goes north and south, and Highway 57, which goes east and west. It was in that time really a large bus stop with several covered and uncovered stops for dozens of different bus lines that came in and out to pick up anyone there. On the southwest corner of the junction is the Ashmoret Prison—a civilian jail.

For weeks, a group of young Palestinian men allowed into Israel to work and earn money for their families had been doing reconnaissance on the junction, and it had nothing to do with which bus they should take.

Notwithstanding the effort that had been made to establish the Palestinian Authority as a result of Oslo agreements, along with the efforts of the Rabin Government to placate the demands of the then-head of the Palestinian Authority, Yassir Arafat, other factions within the Authority were more than ready to play the bad guys while Arafat feigned conciliation. The Palestine Islamic Jihad funded by people—such as Professor Sami al-Arian at the South Florida University in Tampa—and a network that spread across the United States—had other plans.

At 9:30 A.M., on that fateful morning a Palestinian named Anwar Soukar feigned intense stomach pains and dropped to his knees. As soldiers gathered around him to help, Soukar reached into his bag and detonated the first bomb.

Bodies were instantly transformed into bleeding projectiles of disconnected appendages as a result of the blast wave—many to be found as shreds embedded

in the surrounding trees, on fences, and under bus benches. The packed scene of devastation was now the scene of hundreds running toward the blast to rescue whomever they could. As first responders began descending on the scene in great numbers to tend to those wounded with a chance of survival, another member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Salaah Shaaker, detonated a bomb that he wore on his chest so that the blast would go out and kill and maim as many first responders as possible.

The massacre caused the deaths of 21, and more than 69 were injured. It was not Israel's first suicide bombing; there had already been others, but it was the first double bombing; a suicide terror mission designed to instill fear and hopelessness in the population. Almost all the victims were paratroopers from the same brave units that had once freed Jerusalem—now helplessly slaughtered—and it underlined the vulnerability of first responders to this type of attack.

At nearby Ashmoret Prison, which held the founder of another bloody terrorist group known as Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin was whisked away; the prison officials believed that this might be the first volley in an attempt to free him. In the Palestinian Authority, the engineer or master bomb maker Ihyah Ayyash, would have been celebrating his handy work.

For the Israeli Government's Prime Minister, Yitzhak, who told his cabinet a few days later that suicide terror was a strategic threat to the existence of the State of Israel, this was an attack that marked a turning point. Benjamin Netanyahu, who would be Prime Minister of Israel after Rabin, writing back in 1986, claimed that suicide terror was a strategic threat to the world (see the case studies in Chapter 4).

Indeed, in the 1980s and 1990s, international terror or the Global Jihad prepared itself and conducted many bloody attacks using the tactic or weapon of suicide terror, culminating in the bloodiest day of them all, 9/11/2001. Since then there have been thousands of attacks, especially in Iraq.

This book provides the professional first responder and student of Homeland Security with an understanding of suicide terror as a tactic and also as a strategic tool used by terrorists worldwide. We have based the text on diligently researched findings, aimed at constructing a full picture of the challenge posed by the threat.

The Introduction sets the international context of the development of this weapon. Chapter 1 shows how the Global Jihad justifies the use of indiscriminate murder, the sources for the justification by radicals, and where this may take us. Chapter 2 looks at the Israeli experience in the eyes of those who most contributed to confronting this strategic threat to Israel's existence and, in that sense, makes a unique contribution to understanding the Israeli difficulties in dealing with such an effective mode of terror. Nothing would be complete in the realm of terrorism without a close look at the Iraqi experience that U.S. forces have encountered—without precedence in the history of terrorism. Chapter 4 looks at the wide reach of suicide terror and its internationalism. Some of the probable scenarios that pose the greatest risk and some ideas on mitigation are detailed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 addresses U.S. law enforcement's challenge in dealing with the threat of this weapon. No study would be complete without a look at

the medical response necessary to save lives and provide insights into the results of attacks as provided by Chapter 7.

It is our hope that we create a better understanding—and since knowledge is power—enabling our first responder community and homeland security professionals to be more ready for the challenges that this terrorist weapon of choice poses.

Though better understanding, we hope to make a modest contribution to avoiding the death and destruction that suicide terror wreaks on its victims.

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