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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

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SUBJECT= FOUR ISRAELIS KILLED IN JERICHO BUS ATTACK

REFERENCE= n/a

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LOCATOR= TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM

ERRORS= N/A

CONCEPTS= BUS, BOMBING, PALESTINIANS, INCIDENT, CASUALTY

TAGS= KPAL, PREL, PHUM, PTER, ASEC, IS

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| DEPARTMENT OF STATE | | IS/FPC/CDR | Date: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELEASE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DECLASSIFY | MR Cases Only: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCISE | <input type="checkbox"/> DECLASSIFY | EO Citations _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DENY | IN PART | _____ TS authority to: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DELETE Non-Responsive Info | | <input type="checkbox"/> CLASSIFY as | <input type="checkbox"/> S or |
| FOIA Exemptions _____ | | <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TS to | <input type="checkbox"/> S or |
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ACTION NEA-11

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-00 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03 TRSE-00
PM-10 PA-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 RP-10 USIE-00 SP-02
SNP-01 C-01 PRS-01 DS-01 SCT-02 P-02 T-01
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O 311450Z OCT 88
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3880
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 03591

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PTER, ASEC, KPAL, IS
SUBJECT: FOUR ISRAELIS KILLED IN JERICHO BUS
ATTACK

1. SUMMARY. FOUR ISRAELIS WERE KILLED
OCTOBER 30 WHEN THE EGGED BUS IN WHICH THEY WERE
RIDING WAS HIT BY FIVE MOLOTOV COCKTAILS IN
JERICHO. THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES HAVE RESPONDED
WITH LARGE-SCALE ARRESTS AND HARSH RHETORIC.
PALESTINIANS ARE AMBIVALENT. THEY DECRY THE
DEATHS, BUT NOTE THE DAILY LOSS OF PALESTINIAN
LIVES IN THE INTIFADA. THE INCIDENT IS LIKELY
TO STRENGTHEN HARD LINERS ON BOTH SIDES AND
BOLSTER LIKUD'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS. END
SUMMARY.

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2. (U) AN ISRAELI WOMAN AND THREE OF HER
CHILDREN WERE KILLED, AND SEVEN OTHERS WERE
INJURED, WHEN AN EGGED BUS WAS ATTACKED WITH
MOLOTOV COCKTAILS IN JERICHO OCTOBER 30. THE
BUS, WHICH WAS EN ROUTE FROM TIBERIAS TO
JERUSALEM, WAS HIT BY MULTIPLE FIRE BOMBS AS IT

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WAS PASSING THROUGH THE NORTHERN OUTSKIRTS OF JERICHO AROUND 7:45 PM. ACCORDING TO THE OCTOBER 31 JERUSALEM POST, THE AMBUSH WAS PLANNED WELL. YOUTHS SLOWED THE BUS BY PLACING STONES ON THE ROAD AND THEN HIT IT WITH FIVE PETROL BOMBS. ACCORDING TO A PASSENGER ON THE BUS, THE WOMAN WHO DIED PANICKED AND FROZE IN HER SEAT AT THE BACK OF THE BUS, RESISTING EFFORTS TO SAVE HER. THE INCIDENT IS THE FIRST FATAL ATTACK ON AN ISRAELI VEHICLE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE INTIFADA.

3. (U) ISRAELI RESPONSE HAS BEEN PREDICTABLY SWIFT AND HARSH. THE JERUSALEM POST QUOTES PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR AS PROMISING "AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE...THE MURDERERS WILL BE PUNISHED AND THEIR MURDEROUS INTENTIONS ERADICATED." FOREIGN MINISTER PERES VOWED THAT "THE PERPETRATORS WILL BE CAUGHT AND TERRORISM WILL BE FOUGHT TO THE BITTER END." THE SETTLERS' COMMITTEE FOR SAFE TRAVEL BLAMED THE GOVERNMENT'S LAX SECURITY POLICIES FOR THE INCIDENT AND CALLED FOR THE EXPUSION OF "ANYONE WHO DARES TO LIFT A HAND AGAINST A SOLDIER." GUSH EMUNIM DEMANDED THE EXPULSION OF THE PALESTINIANS RELEASED IN THE 1985 PRISONER EXCHANGE WITH THE AHMED JIBRIL ORGANIZATION.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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4. [REDACTED] THE IDF CLAMPED A CURFEW ON JERICHO SHORTLY AFTER THE INCIDENT. ACCORDING TO MAYOR KHALAF, SEVERAL HUNDRED MEN BETWEEN 16 AND 60 WERE DETAINED FOR QUESTIONING. THOSE OVER AGE 35 SUBSEQUENTLY WERE RELEASED. HE ADDED THAT SECURITY OFFICIALS HAVE IDENTIFIED SEVERAL YOUTHS THEY BELIEVE PARTICIPATED IN THE ATTACK AND ARE HOLDING OTHERS FOR FURTHER QUESTIONING.

5. [REDACTED] RESPONSE AMONG PALESTINIANS CONTACTED BY THE CONGEN HAS BEEN AMBIVALENT. WHILE ALL PRIVATELY DECRY THE LOSS OF LIFE AND THE PROBABLE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, MANY POINT TO THE DAILY KILLING OF ARABS AND ASK WHY ISRAELIS DO NOT DENOUNCE THESE ACTS. BETHLEHEM MAYOR ELIAS FREIJ TERMED THE INCIDENT "A BAD ACT" AND PREDICTED A SEVERE ISRAELI RESPONSE. HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT "NO ONE CAN DENOUNCE THE ACT,

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SINCE ISRAELIS DO NOT DENOUNCE THE KILLING OF ARABS." JERICHO MAYOR KHALAF PRIVATELY CONDEMNED VIOLENCE AGAINST BOTH JEWS AND ARABS. NABLUS BUSINESSMAN BASEL KANAAN, WHILE CRITICIZING VIOLENCE, SAID THAT THE OCTOBER 18 KILLING OF A FIVE YEAR OLD IN NABLUS WAS WORSE BECAUSE THE JERICHO ATTACK HAD NOT BEEN AIMED AT CHILDREN.

6. JOURNALISTS MAHDI ABDUL-HADI, HANNA SINIORA, AND DAOUD KUTTAB ALL SAID THEY WERE DEEPLY DISTRESSED BY THE ATTACK. THEY PROMISED TO MAKE STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS AND SAID THEY WERE WORKING WITH OTHERS ON A POSSIBLE STATEMENT BY WEST BANK PALESTINIANS CONDEMNING VIOLENCE.

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[REDACTED] SECTION 02 OF 02 JERUSALEM 03591

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PTER, ASEC, KPAL, IS
SUBJECT: FOUR ISRAELIS KILLED IN JERICHO BUS

RADWAN ABU AYYASH, PRESIDENT OF THE ARAB JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION, NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE IN THE TERRITORIES TO MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT. SINIORA, HOWEVER, SAID HE PLANNED TO PUBLISH ONE TOMORROW WITHOUT SUBMITTING IT TO THE CENSORS. KUTTAB ALSO ADDED THAT EFFORTS WERE UNDERWAY TO CONTACT THE PLO AND GET IT TO DISCLAIM RESPONSIBILITY AND CONDEMN THE ACT. ABDUL-HADI SAID HE AND OTHERS LIKE HIM THOUGHT A STATEMENT, IF IT MATERIALIZED, SHOULD ALSO CONDEMN THE KILLING OF THE NABLUS FIVE YEAR OLD, WHILE ADDING THAT EFFORTS TO AVENGE THE KILLINGS OF PALESTINIANS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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WERE WRONG.

7. [REDACTED] COMMENT. WHILE NO ONE YET HAS A FIRM IDEA OF WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE JERICHO ATTACK, BOTH ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE DEATHS OF ISRAELI CITIZENS WILL WEAKEN MODERATES ON BOTH SIDES AND ENHANCE LIKUD'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS. GIVEN THE POLITICAL AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSE IN ISRAEL, THE INCIDENT IS LIKELY TO PROVOKE HARSH IDF MEASURES, INCLUDING HOUSE DEMOLITIONS AND THE LEVELING OF THE ROADSIDE BANANA GROVE WHERE THE ATTACKERS ARE SAID TO HAVE WAITED. SINCE THE PERPETRATORS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, THEIR TRIAL FOR MURDER IS LIKELY. DEPORTATIONS SEEM A MORE REMOTE POSSIBILITY SINCE, UNLIKE THE BEITA INCIDENT, CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY IS MORE CLEAR AND SUSPECTS ARE IN CUSTODY.

8. [REDACTED] COMMENT CONTINUED. THE ATTACK IS BEING PORTRAYED BY ISRAELI OFFICIALS AND SETTLERS AS AN ESCALATION IN PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE. THEY CITE INTIFADA LEAFLET NO. 28, WHICH APPEARED ON OCTOBER 30, AS CALLING FOR INCREASED VIOLENCE DURING THE PNC MEETING, INCLUDING "MORE PETROL BOMBS AND MORE STONES." HOWEVER, IT IS PREMATURE TO ATTRIBUTE THE DEATHS TO A

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PALESTINIAN DECISION TO ESCALATE THE UPRISING.
EARLIER INTIFADA LEAFLETS HAVE CONTAINED SIMILAR
EXHORTATIONS TO STEPPED-UP STREET ACTION,
INCLUDING MORE DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE USE OF
STONES AND MOLOTOVS. END COMMENT.
WILCOX

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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