



Suicide bomber injures 13 near school

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The Washington Post JERUSALEM Dressed in the skullcap, white shirt and black pants of a devout Jew, a Palestinian suicide bomber was just blocks from the heart of downtown Jerusalem yesterday morning when a pair of Israeli policemen became suspicious. As they ran up to him yelling "Stop!" the bomber turned, smiled from behind a beard and blew himself to bits. The blast sent the suicide bomber's head hurtling into the courtyard of a French international school, badly injured one of the policemen and left a dozen other people with less serious wounds. It was the fifth bomb to explode in Jerusalem in two days and potentially the most lethal: Had the bomber reached a busy intersection or snack bar a block or two away, many people could have died. The bombings this week have left Israelis in Jerusalem on edge. When the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, toured the scene of yesterday's bombing and denounced the "terrible criminal act," he was booed and heckled by Israelis and hustled back to his limousine by bodyguards. Some of the hecklers evidently associated Solana with the United Nations, whose conference on racism in Durban, South Africa, has become a forum for criticizing Israel. "Anti-Semite, go back to Durban!" one of the hecklers yelled at Solana. The bombings, coupled with clashes throughout the West Bank and Gaza City, Gaza Strip, have cast a pall over efforts by Solana and other diplomats to arrange talks between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. Arafat, speaking in Gaza, issued an expression of regret at attacks that hurt either Israeli or Palestinian civilians. But Avi Pazner, an Israeli spokesman, said: "Is it useful today to meet with (Arafat), who has continued a policy of hate and incitement?" The Jerusalem explosion occurred during the morning rush hour on the Street of the Prophets, a block from a pizzeria where a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 15 people last month. At least one pedestrian noticed the man, who seemed out of sorts and was nearly running down the street, and alerted a pair of policemen on patrol. "We began chasing him ... and at a distance of four (yards) we ordered him to halt," one of the patrolmen, Guy Mughrabi, told Israel Radio from his hospital bed a few hours later. "He stopped and at the same time moved his right hand to his bag, pushed a button and blew up. He didn't speak-he just smiled." Mughrabi's partner, who was nearest the bomber, suffered severe injuries and was listed in critical condition. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. Israeli officials immediately said they suspected the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas, which has been behind previous such bombings.

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