Jerusalem continues as a focus for Palestinian terrorism as the lull arrangement in the Gaza Strip continues. A terrorist cell of East Jerusalem residents was recently uncovered. It was behind two shooting attacks in 2008 in which two policemen were killed, and planned to carry out a series of attacks in Jerusalem and elsewhere. In Judea and Samaria as well, light arms fire, stabbings and attacks involving vehicles continue.

Palestinian Authority chairman Abu Mazen visited the United States, meeting with President Bush and attending UN General Assembly and Security Council deliberations. He said that the Palestinians would continue the with the peace process and did not want another armed uprising (intifada). He again represented Israel as an obstacle to peace, ignoring the continuation of terrorist attack in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.
The Gaza Strip

- The lull arrangement has generally been preserved with the exception of two IEDs found near the Karni crossing (September 24).

Judea and Samaria

- This past week disturbances continued and stones were thrown by Palestinians in Judea and Samaria. In addition, there were a number of attempted terrorist attacks:
  - **September 27** – Light arms were fired at an Israeli civilian vehicle south of Qalqilya, slightly wounding the driver.
  - **September 24** – Three Palestinian vehicles, one of which was a tractor, broke through an IDF barrier north of Ramallah, and tried to run over the soldiers stationed there. An IDF force detained four Palestinians involved in the attack.
  - **September 24** – A Palestinian went to the Hawara crossing south of Nablus, took out a knife and tried to stab an IDF soldier. The knife was confiscated and the Palestinian was transferred to the security forces for interrogation.

Counterterrorism Activities

A terrorist cell active in the Jerusalem area is exposed

- Routine Israel Security Agency and Israeli police activities exposed a seven-man terrorist cell, six of whose members were East Jerusalem residents carrying Israeli identity cards. The cell was headed by Muhammad Adnan Abu Sneina, 21, who lived in the village of Anata in East Jerusalem and worked in the Old City.

- Muhammad Adnan Abu Sneina is a devout, extremist Muslim. Until his arrest he studied Muslim law (the sharia) at the university in Abu Dis and continued with religious studies. He founded the cell while at the university with the objective of attacking Israeli civilians. His father, Muhammad Adnan Abu Sneina

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1 According to an Israel Security Agency report. An Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center bulletin dealing with Jerusalem as a focus for terrorism is forthcoming.
Adnan Daoud Abu Sneina, was a member of the Fatah terrorist cell which killed Israeli soldier Avraham Deutsch near the Rockefeller Museum in 1978 and Yosef Moskovitch at Gat Shmanim in Jerusalem in 1979. He was detained in 1981 and sentenced to life imprisonment, but was released as part of the Jibril deal in 1985.

In 2008 the cell carried out two shooting attacks in Jerusalem, killing two Border Policemen and wounding two others:

- **January 24, 2008** – Two Palestinian terrorists carried out a shooting attack at Ras Hamis at the entrance to Shua’fat. Adnan Abu Sneina shot and killed Border Policeman Rami Zohari at short range and took his gun. He also critically wounded a policewoman accompanying Zohari; the two fled the scene in a car.

- **July 11, 2008** – Adnan Abu Sneina and another Palestinian terrorist drove to the Lions Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. Abu Sneina got out of the vehicle, ran toward two policemen, shot and wounded them and fled in the same vehicle. Policeman David Shariki died of his wounds two weeks later.

An Israel Security Agency investigation determined that the cell planned to carry out other attacks, some of them almost ready for execution in August. Among the planned attacks were the assassination of an officer of the Jerusalem district police, a shooting attack at a bus stop at the French Hill junction, a shooting attack against a police car on the road to the Dead Sea, a shooting attack at the Tel Romeida road block in Hebron (carried out in conjunction with operatives of a cell from Hebron) and the abduction of a civilian working for the security forces.

**Exposing a terrorist cell involved in stealing weapons from IDF soldiers**

In August 2008 the ISA and the Israeli police detained five residents of Judea and Samaria and an Israeli Arab from Taybeh who were involved in two incidents of stealing weapons from IDF soldiers in Tel Aviv. The thefts were carried out by Omar Shafi’, a Palestinian from the village of Nur al-Shams (near Tulkarm).

The first theft was committed in Tel Aviv on January 20, 2008. Omar Shafi’ attacked an IDF soldier on a bridge over the Ayalon highway, struck him in the head with a rock and stole his M-16 assault rifle; he escaped with the help of his brother. The rifle was confiscated by the PA. On July 14, 2008, he attacked another IDF soldier at the same site, hitting him with an iron bar. The

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2 According to an ISA report.
soldier lost consciousness and Shafi’ took his weapon, also an M-16. He later sold it to an arms dealer in Qalqiya. In addition, he tried on other occasions to steal weapons but did not succeed.

The Lull Arrangement - Update

- This past week merchandise continued being delivered though the crossings into the Gaza Strip. Routine fuel deliveries also continued.

- At the same time, the Egyptians increased their efforts to stop the smuggling along the Philadelphi route. On September 23 they blew up a tunnel in the vicinity of the Al-Brazil camp, killing six Palestinians (Ma’an News Agency, September 23). A Hamas-affiliated website accused the Egyptians of responsibility for the event, calling it “a new crime.” Egyptian opposition sources criticized the action, and the Muslim Brotherhood’s General Guide in Egypt stated that only Israel profited (Al-Ayyam, September 27).

Gilad Shalit, the abducted Israeli soldier

- The Israeli governmental committee headed by Haim Ramon to determine criteria for releasing Hamas terrorists in return for Gilad Shalit, finished its work on September 25 and drew up a list of names. According to the Palestinian media Israel agreed to include at least half of the 450 prisoners demanded by Hamas.

- Senior Hamas figures said that the list indicated Israel was willing to back down, but not sufficiently:
  - **Osama al-Muzeini**, said that the Israeli list showed an Israeli willingness to back down and “recognize the justice of Hamas’s demands.” He added that it was “not enough,” and that Hamas’s demand had been its “absolute minimum” (Filastin al-‘An website, September 25).
  - **Riadh al-Ashqar**, head of the information bureau of the prisoners’ affairs ministry in the Haniya administration, also represented Israel’s agreement as a “victory” and as Israel “backing down from its stubborn position.” He called upon the organizations holding Gilad Shalit to adhere to their own positions and not waiver from their initial conditions (Felesteen, September 26).
Hamas continues boasting of the lull arrangement’s achievements

The Hamas media and spokesmen continue boasting of the lull arrangement’s achievements, as opposed to the other terrorist organizations, which claim that the arrangement does not serve the Palestinians:

- **Khaled Mashal**, head of Hamas’s political bureau in Damascus, said in a newspaper interview that “the lull’s achievements have been good, but naturally we did not succeed in compelling [the Israelis to accept] all our conditions.” He also claimed that Israel did not implement the lull arrangement “in a genuine way.” He complained that the Rafah crossing “the Gaza Strip’s gate to the world” had not been opened as promised by the lull arrangement, and that Israel was mainly responsible (Al-Ra’i, Kuwait), September 26).

- Hamas’s daily newspaper **Felesteen** published a human interest story from the town of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip which reflected the local population’s satisfaction with the lull arrangement and the fruit it has borne. According to the story, the town, which has been the arena of violent clashes, “has restored its tranquil nature.” Civilians who were interviewed said that they felt more secure during [the holy Muslim month of] Ramadan than they had at any time during the previous eight years (Felesteen, September 26).

Preparing for “the morning after”

Operatives of the Jerusalem Battalions, the PIJ’s terrorist-military wing, conducted military exercises in the southern Gaza strip. During the exercises, watched by senior organization members, the operatives staged infiltrations into “Israeli” posts and abductions of soldiers. A Jerusalem Battalions spokesman said that the training exercised conducted by the organizations were in preparation for the stage after the lull arrangement (Ma’an News Agency, September 27).
Army of Islam commander admits his organization violated the lull arrangement a number of times

In an interview, Army of Islam commander Mumtaz Dughmush admitted that his organization, which announced it was not committed to the lull arrangement, had carried out a number of “small” shelling attacks without publicly claiming responsibility for them (Sada al-Jihad website, September 25). (Recently Hamas forces confronted the Army of Islam, and Mumtaz Dughmush was reportedly wounded or detained by Hamas.)

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Abu Mazen’s term of office to end

On January 9, 2009, Abu Mazen’s term as president of the PA is scheduled to end. Senior Hamas figure Sayid Siyam said that after that date Hamas would recognize Abu Mazen only as Fatah’s general secretary or as former president. He said that even if Abu Mazen received legitimization from other countries, he would not receive it from Palestinians (Al-Quds website, September 22).

For his part, Abu Mazen asked constitutional experts to appoint a committee to examine the possibility of extending his term for another year. Should that not be possible, presidential elections would be held in January 2009 (Al-Hayat, September 23).

World Jerusalem Day marked in the Gaza Strip

Hamas and the PIJ marked Iranian-sponsored World Jerusalem Day with a mass demonstration (September 26). Several thousand activists participated, including senior figures. Ahmed Abu Halbia, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, gave a speech praising the attacks in Jerusalem during the past year, saying that it was necessary to use such suicide attacks (ishtishhad) to “restrain the enemy.”

3 For further information see our September 21, 2008 Bulletin entitled “Hamas security forces exerted massive military power to confront the Dugmush clan and operatives of the Army of Islam, a network affiliated with Al-Qaeda” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e006.pdf.

4 World Jerusalem Day is marked on the last Friday of the Muslim month of Ramadan. The event was initiated by Iran and is supposed to be a day for the world to identify with the Palestinian “struggle” and its aspirations to “liberate” Jerusalem and “Palestine” by force and to destroy the State of Israel.
Joint Hamas-PIJ parades in Gaza City marking world Jerusalem Day (Pal-today website, September 26).

The Annapolis Process

Abu Mazen visits the United States

On his visit to the United States, Abu Mazen met with President George Bush (September 25). He also attended the UN General Assembly and held a long series of meetings, including one with Israeli President Shimon Peres, and with the UN General Secretary, the American secretary of state and the Egyptian foreign minister. He attended a UN Security Council meeting of foreign ministers dealing with the building of the settlements.

While in the United States he was interviewed several times. The following issues arose:

- The Palestinians want to continue negotiations and are not interested in an armed confrontation: According to Abu Mazen, even if no solution is found in 2008 “we will not despair, hesitate or retreat. We will continue until peace is reached.” He said that the Palestinians did not want another armed confrontation (intifada) but prefered the path of negotiations. The Palestinians, he added, had had seven difficult years and were now determined to rebuild their institutions and infrastructure (Wafa News Agency, remarks made by Abu Mazen during the Ramadan fast-breaking meal, September 24). Interviewed by Al-Hayat on September 25, Abu Mazen again said that “the intifada destroyed us” and that Israel had to be dealt with on the political level and not through armed resistance. However, speaking in the Security Council, he warned that if building in the settlements did not cease,

5 His remarks contradict those made by Abu Alaa’ when interviewed by an Israeli newspaper. Abu Alaa’ said that if peace were not achieved, “we will have to find other alternatives.” Among them he noted a renewal of the “resistance” (i.e., terrorism and violence) (Yedioth Ahronoth, September 26).
“we will return to the cycle of violence and terrorism, and I do not know what will happen in our region” (Wafa News Agency, September 27).

- **Israel [according to Abu Mazen] creates obstacles to negotiations with the settlements and roadblocks:** According to Abu Mazen, the Palestinians are serious about negotiations with Israel and want to find a solution. “The ball is in the Israeli court,” he said. The main obstacle, he noted, was the continued construction in the settlements and the existence of 640 roadblocks, which prevent any development in the West Bank (Al-Hayat, September 25). Abu Mazen attended a session of the UN Security Council on construction in the settlements (September 26) and gave a speech demanding, among other things, a complete stop to the building, including adding buildings for “natural growth” (Wafa News Agency, September 27).

- **The internal Palestinian situation:** “We want a solution despite the bloodshed...and we are determined to conduct a dialogue to reach national reconciliation.” Abu Mazen said that the situation in the West Bank had stabilized and anarchy was almost ended. He said that the PA would not allow armed militias to exist, whether they belonged to Fatah, Hamas or any other group. He said that the economy had improved despite the obstacles posed by Israel with the settlements and roadblocks (Wafa News Agency, remarks made by Abu Mazen during the fast-breaking meal, September 25).

- The picture painted by **Abu Mazen** was one of the return of security to the West Bank and Israel as the obstacle to peace, but he made no mention of the increase in terrorist attacks in Jerusalem and the continuation of attacks in Judea and Samaria. However, Abu Alaa, a high-ranking PA figure, was interviewed by an Israeli newspaper and tried to downplay the significance of the wave of terrorist attacks in Jerusalem. He represented the last attack, in which a vehicle was used, as a “traffic accident” carried out by “a spoiled child.” He represented the terrorist attacks using vehicles as acts by “lone individuals” expressing the frustration of East Jerusalem residents who suffer from problems of unemployment, education and a lack of places of entertainment (Yedioth Ahronoth, September 26).