

Israeli investigation widened

Government suspects another acted as 'catalyst' in slaying of Rabin

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Suspecting that others may have encouraged the gunman who assassinated Yitzhak Rabin, the government on Wednesday described a new suspect as a "catalyst" for the attack and launched a crackdown on Jews who preach violence.

As the investigation widened, so did a probe of how the confessed assassin penetrated Israeli security. The head of Shin Bet's VIP protection branch resigned, and the government ordered a full-scale investigation into security breaches the night the premier was gunned down.

The new suspect, Avishai Raviv, head of the militant right-wing group Eyal, appeared before a magistrate Wednesday and was ordered held for seven days. Police are investigating whether he knew in advance about Yigal Amir's plans to kill Rabin.

Amir, who has confessed to the shooting, and his older brother, Hagai, are already under arrest.

"This is a political investigation! This is a dictatorship!" Raviv shouted as guards brought him into Tel Aviv's Magistrate Court. He was arrested Monday night.

Police said they considered the 28-year-old Raviv, whose group is linked to the banned anti-

Arab Kach movement, "a catalyst in the murder of Rabin."

Raviv admitted knowing Amir, a 25-year-old religious nationalist, and meeting him only six days before the murder. But he maintained he never took Amir's talk of killing Rabin seriously and was therefore not culpable.

"You ask did he (Amir) say something ... OK, so he did. But I didn't know about his intentions, or I would have reported it," said Raviv, dressed in a blue skullcap, T-shirt and jeans.

Police said they had no comment on an Israeli radio report that two additional suspects are also in custody. The radio identified them as Eyal member Benny Aharoni and West Bank seminary student Dror Adani, thought to be a friend of Amir.

In a Cabinet meeting Wednesday, Peres promised to move quickly against Jewish extremists.

"We must not hesitate to use all the means at our disposal against people indulging in incitement, the instigators and those who pull the trigger," he said.

There were indications that Peres — who as foreign minister was widely seen as the main visionary of peace — might significantly accelerate negotiations with both Syria and the PLO.

The Labor Party has ruled out holding early elections in the wake of Rabin's assassination and wants to move swiftly in the stalled talks on a land-for-peace deal with Syria, party mem-

ber Eli Dayan said.

The Haaretz daily newspaper said Peres' confidants were also pushing him to speed up and finish negotiations with the PLO, going beyond Rabin's autonomy agreements to a permanent solution to the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

That would mean addressing issues Rabin preferred to put off — like Palestinian statehood and the future of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Cabinet also heard the findings of an initial Shin Bet probe into Rabin's assassination Saturday night at a peace rally in Tel Aviv. The security agency is in charge of protecting Israel's leaders and also keeps tabs on Arab and Jewish extremists.

The report said Rabin's bodyguards failed to shield the premier as he walked to his car and that unauthorized people were allowed in the stairway to the terrace from which Rabin spoke and in the adjacent parking lot.

Rabin's bodyguards were also too focused on possible Arab assailants and ill-prepared for a Jewish attacker, it suggested. Army radio said Shin Bet received warnings just before the rally that a Palestinian militant might try to kill Rabin.

In response to the report, the head of Shin Bet's VIP protection branch resigned and the agent in charge of Rabin's bodyguards was suspended, government sources said. An agent in charge of coordinating with police and another in charge of security at Saturday's rally were being transferred.

Powell

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tives for "ad hominem" attacks on his character. He also said the party would be wise to show more compassion as it reforms welfare and to welcome blacks and other minorities.

"I believe I can help the party of Lincoln move once again closer to the spirit of Lincoln," he said.

In another sign of his awkward transition from soldier to author to prominent Republican, Powell would not promise to back the 1996 GOP nominee, saying he wanted to watch the campaign unfold. Nor did he rule out voting for President Clinton.

In the short term, Powell's decision was seen as a boon to Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, whose position as the GOP front-runner would have been imperiled by a Powell candidacy. The decision came amid some evidence that conservatives wary of Powell were rallying to Dole's side.

White House aides also breathed a sigh of relief: At this early date, polls showed Powell easily beating Clinton in a head-to-head matchup, something none of the GOP candidates could do.

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