

Pregnant student killed in bus shooting

ST. LOUIS — A teen-ager waiting at a school bus stop with a pistol began firing after the bus doors swung open Thursday, killing a pregnant 15-year-old and wounding the driver before running away. The baby was in critical condition.

Dozens of police officers searched the city's north side for the gunman, who was believed to be 16 to 18. Police were unsure of a motive.

Police were also uncertain whether Kyunia Taylor, who was sitting in the first seat inside the door on her way to school, had been targeted or was shot at random.

The shooting took place shortly before 7 a.m. when the small bus carrying the driver and three students pulled up to its regular stop.

When the door opened, the gunman stepped inside and asked if the bus was going to Beaumont High School. The driver said yes.

"It was very swift," Police Chief Ron Henderson said Thursday evening. "He walked up the steps and shot the driver, and then he shot the young lady."

The gunman looked at the other two girls, but didn't try to harm them, Henderson said. They were helping police with a description of the suspect.

The 60-year-old bus driver, Richard Lanemann, was in serious condition with three gunshot wounds.

Two bullets struck Taylor, a ninth-grader, in the chest. She was

dead on arrival at the hospital.

Doctors delivered her baby by Caesarean section. The 3-pound girl appeared to be one to three months premature.

"The fact that the mom had been dead for a period of time meant that although the baby's heart may have continued to beat, there was no oxygen going to the baby or to the baby's brain," said Dr. Timothy Buchman, head of the team of doctors that delivered the baby. "The baby's outcome is in doubt."

At the school, halls were mostly vacant Thursday morning. A crying girl was escorted to an office by two adults. Security was already tight — all students must pass through a metal detector each day

— but it appeared that movement was also being restricted.

Principal Floyd Crues announced Taylor's death over the public address system. "At the moment we have our counseling crisis management staff in place to deal with the students and staff," Crues said.

Taylor entered school there in September. Few people knew she was pregnant, Crues said.

Freshman Rhonda Palmer said Taylor was the third student from Beaumont killed this year.

"It's sad," she said. "Too many of us are being killed."

The shooting happened in a high-crime area. Many of the brick two- and four-family apartment houses have iron bars over the windows.

Cubans insist they will suffer undersanctions

HAVANA — Cuba warned Thursday it won't permit anyone to enter its waters to honor four exile pilots it shot down last weekend, and said new U.S. sanctions would have "severe" consequences for bilateral relations.

Cuban citizens, meanwhile, reacted with resignation or indifference to news that Washington would tighten its economic embargo.

"This is going to strengthen the government" by rallying people behind it, said Ramon Torres, a park worker. "The government here is fighting for everyone."

"They are fencing us in," said Miguel Rodriguez, who was selling carved wooden statues from an umbrella stand at a seaside market.

The sanctions that were agreed upon Wednesday are designed primarily to punish foreign investors using American assets confiscated by Cuba and to force President Fidel Castro from power.

Few Cubans, however, said they believed that would happen. Instead, some said, they would be the ones who would suffer.

"We are Cubans here. I'm not talking about communism or capitalism," Rodriguez said. "I'm here fighting to make a living. We have an economic opening now, but ..."

Cuba's communist government has allowed vendors such as Rodriguez to run their own stands at the market for four years now under an economic liberalization policy. Some Cubans are allowed to run their own businesses and to conduct them in U.S. dollars.

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Militant Islamic group says it will halt attacks in Israel for one week

JERUSALEM — The militant Islamic group Hamas said Thursday it will stop attacks against Israel for one week, but demanded that Israel release Palestinian prisoners and halt its offensive against members of Hamas' military wing.

The statement was released to The Associated Press by a Hamas source.

It said Israel had until the evening of March 8 to respond to the demands, and if it did not, "it will be considered that Israel is violating the agreement."

Aliza Goren, an adviser to Prime Minister Shimon Peres, said the prime minister's office had no comment on the demands. But Israel is highly unlikely to consider negotiating with the group it has vowed to destroy.

Hamas has claimed responsibility for two suicide bomb attacks that killed 25 people, including two Americans, in Israel on Sunday.

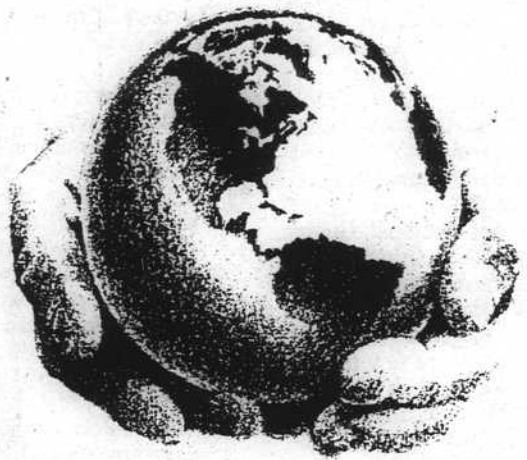
Hamas opposes the Israel-Palestinian peace agreement under which much territory once occupied by Israeli

troops now is under the authority of the Palestinian self-rule government led by Arafat.

Since Palestinian autonomy was first established two years ago, Arafat has avoided an all-out confrontation with militants in hopes of eventually drawing them into his administration.

But following the bombings, Peres has demanded that Arafat disarm and arrest Islamic extremists. Peres has warned he might delay Israel's planned March pullout from Hebron unless Arafat complies.

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Tanna Kinnaman/DN

At the Model United Nations Conference held Thursday in the Nebraska Union, Sam Ospovat, right, who represents the Russian Federation, holds up his placard to be recognized. The participants discussed testing of nuclear weapons in the South China Seas by China and France. From right are Jenny Erickson, representing France, Anne McShane, representing United States and Todd Anderson, representing China.

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