

Arafat lives through attack on compound

By Christine Spolar
Chicago Tribune

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Vowing defiance but facing growing doubts about his future as Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat emerged Thursday from the remnants of his shrinking West Bank compound, pummeled anew in a morning siege by Israeli troops.

As Israel mourned the 17 people who died Monday when a suicide bomber struck a commuter bus in the country's north, Arafat accused Israeli forces of trying to kill him when their tanks and bulldozers responded to the bombing by pounding his Ramallah bedroom, home and office complex early Thursday.

Israeli officials dismissed Arafat's charge. Killing Arafat would have been easy, the Israelis say, given the collapse of his security services and the overwhelming firepower of the Israeli army.

More difficult for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is finding a way to decisively sideline a man he insists has neither the will nor the ability to be a reliable partner.

Sharon has long tried to persuade the Bush administration to abandon Arafat, who retains some U.S. support by virtue of being the Palestinians' only elected leader. With Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak scheduled to meet with President Bush this weekend, and Sharon to visit Washington next week, Israel is pressing for more leeway to act against Arafat.

In its six-hour assault on the Ramallah compound, a thundering echo of the Israeli army siege that made Arafat a captive from late March until early

May, Israeli troops and tanks again showed the Palestinian people that they can move at will against the Palestinian Authority leader.

A dormitory was pummeled into a mountain of concrete and a swirl of white powder. A gas station was flattened. Mattresses and bureaus tumbled out of one building. A small fire was sparked in another. By the time the thunder of grenades, tanks shells and automatic gunfire fell silent around 7 a.m., six buildings were rubble and one Palestinian intelligence officer was dead.

"If there had been any intention of harming Arafat, it would not have been a problem," said Capt. Jacob Dalal, an Israeli army spokesman.

Arafat, however, again presented himself as a survivor.

Emerging shortly before 10 a.m. to flash a V-for-victory sign with a trembling, pale hand, Arafat took reporters on a tour of his wreck of a complex. An Israeli blast had opened a hole in the wall between his bedroom and bathroom, and a fine dust covered the quarters.

"I was supposed to sleep here last night but I had some work downstairs," Arafat said. "Of course (the Israelis) knew where I was. Everybody knows this is my bedroom."

Arafat has said he would rather die than endure exile, and on Thursday he repeated this while examining the damage from the latest Israeli attack on his compound. "Expel me?" laughed Arafat, when asked about it. "I will die here."

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Inside/Out

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periment, a group of local artists from the University and Eugene communities.

There was a smaller Inside/Out performance in 2001, hosted by the Campbell Club co-op. This year is the first year that the Cultural Forum has been involved, and the event has grown.

UO Cultural Forum Visual Arts Coordinator Mary Rasmussen said the purpose of this event is to fuse all forms of art together in two shows. Promoters also want to feature the artwork being created in the local community and the surrounding area.

"This event is to promote the arts from every genre," UO Cultural Forum National Music Coordinator Alexis Stevens said. "It's a collaboration of many different art forms. The overall theme is the coming together of opposites."

Stevens said more than one performer will be onstage at a time combining different art forms. For example, she said, while a poet is speaking, there will also be an art performance and film playing in the background.

"When different artists come together, it forms a conversation of all art," Rasmussen said.

Each night has a different theme, and Friday will celebrate the wedding of the sun and the moon. Promoters want people to dress in formal wear. On Saturday, the theme will be the sun and moon's wedding reception, and promoters want people to wear "freaked-out gear" or ecologically extreme ensembles.

"We split up the nights because it's a juxtaposition between two arts, the formal and the informal," Rasmussen said. "Each night will appeal to different people."

Friday night, promoters scheduled more "classical" art, such as academic poetry, ballroom dance groups and chamber music. Saturday will feature more "extreme"

art, such as fire dancers, performance art and experimental music. Friday night's headliners will be Mood Area 52, a local Eugene seven-piece tango band. Stevens said the band is a diverse group of people playing instruments such as the accordion, violin and saxophone.

"They fit the mood for Friday night," Stevens said. "There will be tango dancers dancing to their music, and they fit the marriage setting."

For Saturday's "Carnival" theme, Madigan Shive of the San Francisco band Bonfire Madigan will be performing solo. Shive is a cellist and vocalist who plays a folk-punk mixture. Shive will be flying in from her European tour and this will be her only show in the United States. Cultural Forum Regional Music Coordinator Nathan Hazard said Shive writes all of her songs, and she combines chamber music with stylized vocals.

"I think that talent like Madigan doesn't come through the Eugene area all the time," Hazard said. "She is a genius of our generation."

Other performances will include Champagne Syndicate, a local funk blues band, DJ Silver, a techno hip-hop artist, Eugene Capoeira Team, a martial arts group and the Eugene Highlanders, a local bagpipe band. In addition, the Olympus Mons will be performing tribal music and the University's Hawaii Club will be chanting and dancing.

Stevens said she hopes Inside/Out will be an excellent vehicle for local artists to expand their audience.

"This production shows what young people can do to promote the arts and be creative," she said.

The doors open both nights at 7:30 p.m. and the shows begin at 8 p.m. Tickets for one night cost \$9 for students and \$12 for the general public. Two-night tickets are \$13 for students and \$15 for the general public. The tickets are available at Fasttix outlets, the EMU Ticket Office and some Safeway locations.

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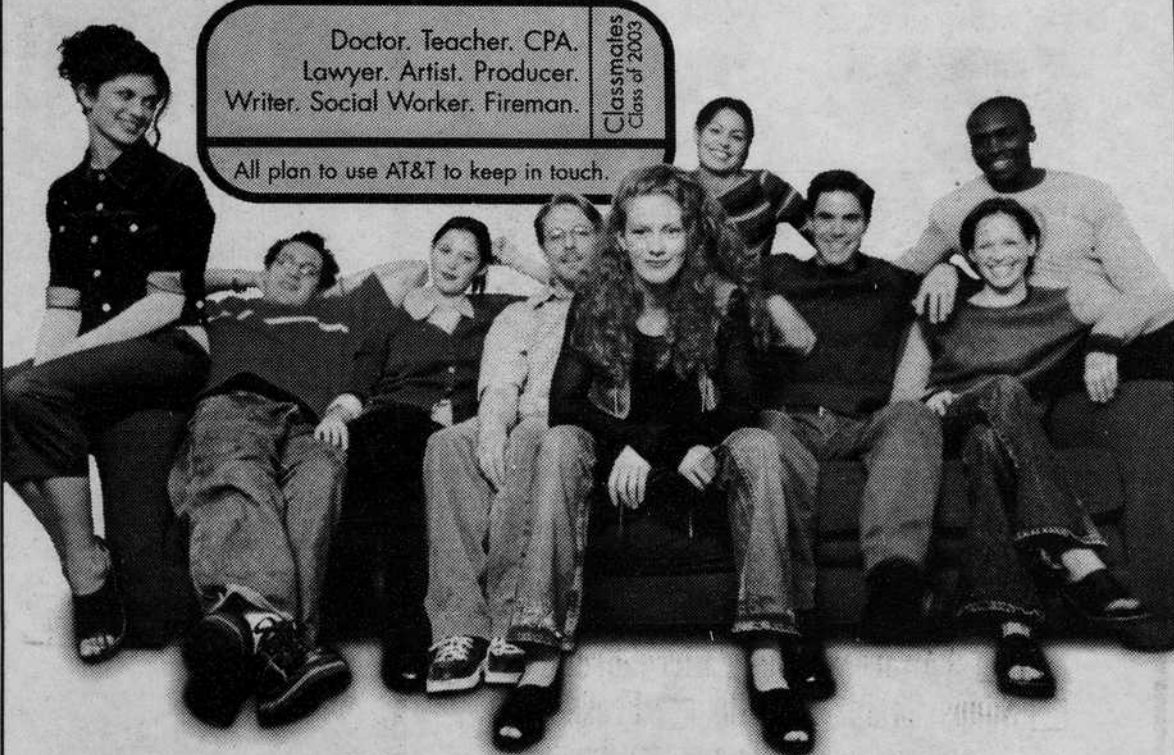
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