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Report: Netanyahu says 9/11 terror attacks good for Israel

By Haaretz Service and Reuters

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The Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv on Wednesday reported that Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu told an audience at Bar Ilan university that the September 11, 2001 terror attacks had been beneficial for Israel.

"We are benefiting from one thing, and that is the attack on the Twin Towers and Pentagon, and the American struggle in Iraq," Ma'ariv quoted the former prime minister as saying. He reportedly added that these events "swung American public opinion in our favor."

Netanyahu reportedly made the comments during a conference at Bar-Ilan University on the division of Jerusalem as part of a peace deal with the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad cast doubt over the veracity of the September 11 attacks Thursday, calling it a pretext to invade Afghanistan and Iraq.

"Four or five years ago, a suspicious event occurred in New York. A building collapsed and they said that 3,000 people had been killed but never published their names," Ahmadinejad told Iranians in the holy city of Qom.

"Under this pretext, they [the U.S.] attacked Afghanistan and Iraq and since then, a million people have been killed only in Iraq."

Speaking Wednesday at a news conference on the Iran threat, Netanyahu compared Ahmadinejad to Adolf Hitler and likened Tehran's nuclear program to the threat the Nazis posed to Europe in the late 1930s.

Netanyahu said Iran differed from the Nazis in one vital respect, explaining that "where that [Nazi] regime embarked on a global conflict before it developed nuclear weapons," he said. "This regime [Iran] is developing nuclear weapons before it embarks on a global conflict."