

# Yemen Transition Deal Collapses

The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) has halted its efforts to end the political crisis in Yemen after the country's president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, refused to sign a transition deal that would have seen him step down.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the PGCC said it had suspended the initiative because of a failure to agree on suitable conditions, Al-Jazeera reported.

Saleh attended a signing ceremony, in which the transition deal was ratified by members of his ruling party, but failed to add his signature to the document, saying he would not sign the deal unless opposition leaders were present.

Diplomats who had gathered for the ceremony in Sana'a, the Yemeni capital, were earlier evacuated from an embassy by helicopter after the building was surrounded by armed pro-government supporters.

Abdullatif Al-Zayani, the secretary general of the PGCC, "left without getting the signature of the president", Tareq Al-Shami, the spokesman of Yemen's ruling



General People's Congress, was quoted as saying.

The deal committed Saleh to stepping down within 30 days in return for immunity from prosecution. But, in a provocative statement on state television, Saleh warned of civil war if the opposition de-

fied his call for them to be present at his palace to sign the deal.

"If they remain stubborn, we will confront them everywhere with all possible means," he said.

"If they don't bow, and want to take the country into a civil war, let them be re-

sponsible for it and for the blood that was shed and that will be shed if they insist on their stupidity."

Soon afterwards, state television showed ruling party leaders signing the pact at the palace as Saleh and the US ambassador stood behind them, but Saleh did not sign the document.

Yemen's opposition coalition signed the deal on Saturday, based on what it said were guarantees that the president would sign on Sunday.

Saleh had backed away from signing the PGCC deal at least twice before.

Earlier, European, US and Arab ambassadors, who were pressing Saleh to sign the accord, were trapped for hours in an embassy surrounded by armed government supporters.

Eventually Yemeni army helicopters ferried the diplomats to the signing ceremony.

Yemen has been reeling from months of street protests that have seen tens of thousands of people massing in Sana'a, calling on Saleh, who has ruled Yemen for 32 years, to step down.

## News in Brief

### Fatah, Hamas Make Progress on Accord

Russia said on Monday that rival Palestinian leaders from Fatah and Hamas had further bridged their differences and made progress on the details of a new Palestinian reconciliation accord.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced after talks with visiting Palestinian delegations that Fatah and Hamas representatives had put their names on a new statement detailing the agreement signed in Cairo in early May, AFP reported.

Lavrov said the implementation mechanism was signed on Sunday and approved personally by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas.

"We have taken another step and agreed a statement that will help implement the Cairo accord," Lavrov said after talks with Fatah's Azzam Al-Ahmed and Hamas member Mussa Abu Marzuk along with other Palestinian negotiators.

Analysts said the Moscow meeting represented one of Russia's most serious interventions in the stalled Middle East peace process in recent years.

Russia has voiced support for the agreement and also favors the creation of a single Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders—an idea rejected by Israel but mooted by US President Barack Obama last week.

### EU Sanctions Assad for First Time

Europe tightened the noose on President Bashar Al-Assad on Monday, sanctioning the Syrian leader for the first time as it responded to the change sweeping North Africa and the Middle East.

The 27-nation bloc agreed to add the president, along with several leading officials, to an earlier blacklist, AFP reported. "The repression in Syria continues," said British Foreign Secretary William Hague as he went into the talks with his counterparts.

"It is important to see the right to peaceful protest, the release of political prisoners and taking the path of reform, not repression, in Syria over the coming days."

An EU diplomat said the sanctions aimed "to stop the violence and press Assad to agree to a process of reform, but not to force him to step down".

## Moroccan Police Crackdown on Protesters

Moroccan police beat protesters who defied a ban on demonstrations across the country on Sunday, leading to arrests and dozens of injuries, some of them life threatening, witnesses said.

The violence appears to signal a tougher government line against the protest movement, which has become more defiant after festive demonstrations starting in February, but has yet to attract mass public support, Reuters reported.

Some protesters are also becoming more outspoken about criticizing King Mohammed but the demonstrations have failed to match the scale of those in several other Arab countries.

Much of the anger was directed at the Makhzen, Morocco's royal court. "Protest is a legal right, why is the Makhzen afraid?" crowds in Casablanca chanted. "Makhzen get out. Down with despotism."

A Reuters correspondent saw seven



riot police attacking one bearded man in his 30s, repeatedly hitting his head and body, causing severe bleeding.

"We have been called here to preserve order because of this unauthorized protest," said a senior police officer on the scene who declined to give his name.

In Fes, three leading members of the city's protest movement were in "very critical condition," said demonstrator Fathallah Al-Hamdani. Injuries were also reported in Tangier and elsewhere.

## Interview

### Final Part

Interview with Philip F. Tourney, USS Liberty Survivor  
Interviewer: AIA, Jafari  
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> Q: President Ahmadinejad has been called to judgment, sentenced and pronounced guilty in the high court of the American media. Unfortunately for them and fortunately for the Iranian President, this negative publicity has produced exactly the opposite of the intended consequences; because at the end they turned him into a saint whom young Muslims world over would come to admire and cherish as a defender of Islam and the Arabs. His recent visit to Lebanon is a living testimony to that. He even had the audacity to tell Americans to ignore stories they were told long ago about the Holocaust, but rather to look at it from all sources not just from one point of view. As it was, in Ahmadinejad the world community saw an Iranian leader who eclipsed both the American President and the other leaders of the world. In the very heart of New York where the Jewish opponents of the Iranian leader could have embargoed or sabotaged his coverage they failed miserably to deny him the coverage and the attention.

American reporters were racing for pictures and sound bites from the Iranian president and all their colleagues covering the White House and the United Nations joined in the pursuit. He owes a great part of his popularity in Iran and in the Islamic world to his bold behavior and performance at the United Nations. He is indeed the voice of the voiceless in a world which pays little to the oppressed. In the final pages of your book, you touch on the possibility of Iran's president bringing up the issue of USS Liberty on the floor of UN. For some reasons things did not go as planned. Let me quote from your book. "The result would have been tsunami, Iran's leader getting up in front of literally the entire world and mentioning the unmentionable would have sent shock waves throughout the entire world?" Mr. Tourney, here is your opportunity to send your message to Iran's president. Go ahead please:

PT-What I would tell the Honorable President of Iran and to all the leaders of all the world's nations is this—you are in mortal danger. What Israel and America did to Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Gaza and elsewhere, they will do to you if they are not stopped. You cannot fight this beast militarily, only with the truth, but you must be bold in doing so. Tell the truth, loudly and boldly, and you must do it soon, because time is running out. There is no telling what Israel and America will do next in feeding their lust for power. We already know that this 2-headed beast has no regard for human life. I believe firmly that the story of the USS LIBERTY IS THE KEY to locking up this beast forever. Imagine if all the sudden it were being discussed in every public forum, including the UN, Israel and America would be defeated before the eyes of the world. Nothing they said or did would be credible. As I said earlier, God saved us for a reason, and I believe that it

## Israeli Attack on American Ship

# The Forgotten Crisis

was so that our story could save the world.

> Q: Mr. Tourney, there is no doubt that the United States has paid a very hefty price for its blind and relentless support of Israel. A total of \$114 billion dollars in direct military and economic aid since the establishment of the Zionist regime in 1947, as well as other unquantifiable costs which include widespread hatred in the Islamic world and in fact non-Islamic world, attack on USS Liberty in 1967, assassination of Robert F. Kennedy on June 5, 1968 by a young Palestinian called Sirhan Sirhan, murder of Rachel Corrie on March 16, 2003, crushed to death in the Gaza Strip by an Israeli bulldozer, the list is endless. In your book, you try to persuade your readers that, following the attack on USS Liberty, "Had America dealt with Israel the way she dealt with Japan after December 7, 1941, the events of 9/11/2001 would never have occurred..." But what about the military-industrial-congressional complex or what others have referred to the beast as the "Iron Triangle"? You know wars have always been good business for weapons manufacturers. You also know I am sure that, after 9/11 which you believe was the work of Israeli Mossad, that very "Iron Triangle" found a golden opportunity to increase its profits by leading the US into the ruinous Iraq adventure. The question is how could prevention of all these disasters, including wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which according to Professor Chalmers Johnson is going to bring American empire to its knees very soon, revolve around USS Liberty?

PT—Again, we must remember that criminals do their dirty work at night, away from watchful eyes. Like cockroaches that scurry for cover when the light is turned on or like sunlight on a vampire, the truth is poison to these creatures of the night. The story of the USS LIBERTY being broadcast far and wide around the world is the first step in turning on those lights and causing those cockroaches to scurry. Soon to follow are all the other crimes that have been committed by this syndicate, including the murder of 3,000 Americans on 9/11. After that, we leave the light on permanently so that they don't come back.

> Q: Ever since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, with media sensationalism in full swing, the United States has been busy capitalizing on the slightest chance to demonize Iran. You might remember that on 20 January, 1981, minutes after the inauguration of the new US President Ronald Reagan, Iranian released 52 US Embassy staff that had spent 444 days in Iran. Jimmy Carter went to West Germany to greet them as President Reagan's special envoy. After entering the United States, they stayed at the Thayer Hotel at West Point for three days receiving a heroes' welcome all along the route. Ten days after their release, the former hostages were given a ticker tape parade through the Canyon of Heroes in New York City. Taking into consideration that 34 sailors of the USS Liberty killed and the 171 wounded



as a result of Israel's attack and your own heroic actions to save the ship, I am sure our readers would be interested to know how you were treated by your government when you returned to the United States?

PT—I was treated worse than if I had been a criminal convicted of a capital offense. I was warned that if I ever told anyone of what happened to us out there that I would be put in prison, or worse, "and we all knew what 'worse' meant—dead. We have been ignored, mocked, spat upon and treated the way that a nation's enemies would be treated upon being conquered. Every step of the way my government has dealt with me with contempt, including a recent event where my life was threatened by someone claiming to be with Israel's Mossad and my own government, in this case the FBI, was put out that time and resources had to be expended in protecting a citizen of the United States from a foreign terrorist organization.

> Q: Mr. Tourney, on June 22, 2009, in an interview with Harry Smith of CBS, President Obama, regarding the sedition in Iran said, "...and we believe that the voices of the people have to be heard, that that's a universal value that the American people stand for and this administration stands for."

I do not know exactly how many administrations have come to power in the United States since June 8th 1967. But I would like to know has there been any administration that has shown any meaningful and real willingness to hear the voice of USS Liberty survivors?

PT—Not one. As we already discussed, the closest we came was the meeting with George Bush Sr that was aborted at the last moment. I am sure that were I to make my way face to face with the president, tell him who I was and what had been done to us that more than likely he would pass out with raw, visceral fear.

> Q: Mr. Tourney, it is a reality that the Israel Lobby Juggernaut scares people to death. It tries to crush those who stand up against them; some suffer but persist, and the pragmatists survive by changing their tune. Nobody is immune; reporters, editors, columnists, professors, academics, politicians.... Everyone is labeled 'anti-Semite' when s/he criticizes the power of the Israel Lobby. Ahmadinejad has been compared

with Hitler for making statements that are welcomed by those who challenge your government. Former president George W. Bush lies your nation into wars in the Middle East and then out he goes. Then comes President Obama with the promise of change and he continues with lies: "Israel's quest for peace with its neighbors has stalled, despite the heavy burdens borne by the Israeli people." With such an impotent political system are you optimistic that things will change for the better? Do you hope that this whole thing will someday take a U-turn and the truth will shine thru for you and your shipmates?

PT—Like I said, I know that someday the truth will win out over the lies. I don't know when or how, but it will happen. Personally from what I know of the American people and their present mindset, it is going to take something bad, and I mean REALLY bad, to snap them out of the trance that presently imprisons them. It will take the complete collapse of their way of life, which is happening as we speak, before they will start asking the difficult questions—who am I, why am I here, how did my world come crashing down the way it did and who is responsible for it? The fact is, I want justice for my shipmates, but more important to me is justice for my country, because the past is the past, but the present and the future are what we have to deal with, and they are becoming more and more dangerous everyday.

> Q: The Middle East in recent months has been witnessing a wave of revolutions which obviously has Israel shaking in their boots. People are happily talking about a Middle East without America. These revolutions may indeed be the beginning of the end for the Jewish state of Israel as well. The end of Zionism might in turn begin the international peace process. You have rightfully shown your deep resentment to wars Israel and its stooges inside your congress. How happy would you be to see that day, I mean the day that Israel and its powerful lobby, namely AIPAC, are once and for ever gone from the life of Americans?

PT—it would be like being born again, or hearing from your doctor that after a long and painful healing period that you are cancer-free, with an open road in front of you for a peaceful, productive life.

Q: Do you have any message for the Iranian nation?  
PT—Yes—stay cancer free. Do not let Zionism infect your country as it has ours. It is fatal.

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to add?  
PT—May God bless all people of good will with peace, happiness and justice.

Philip F. Tourney, 3-Time President of the Liberty Veterans Association and author of the book "What I Saw That Day" available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)