

'Zionist Regime Planned Atomic Explosion in 1967 War'

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime developed a secret contingency plan to move an atomic device atop a mountain in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and detonate it in a display of force during the Six-Day War in 1967, says a key organizer of the project.

Retired Zionist Brigadier General Itzhak Yaakov detailed the initiative to Israeli nuclear scholar Avner Cohen in interviews back in 1999 and 2000, The New York Times reported.

Yaakov said he had initiated, drafted and promoted the plan, code-named Shimshon or Samson, and it would have been activated if Tel Aviv feared it was going to lose the war.

It would have been the first nuclear explosion used for military purposes since the 1945 U.S. attacks on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"Look, it was so natural. You've got an enemy ... How can you stop him? You scare him. If you've got something you can scare him with, you scare him," Yaakov said.



This file photo by AFP taken on June 5, 1967 shows Zionist armored troops in action in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

He further called the Zionist project a "doomsday operation," saying it was aimed at intimidating Egypt as well as Syria, Iraq and Jordan into backing off.

"The goal was to create a new situation on the ground, a situation which would force the great powers to intervene, or a situation which would force the Egyptians to stop and say, 'Wait a minute, we

didn't prepare for that.' The objective was to change the picture," he added.

The site chosen for the atomic blast was a mountaintop about 17 kilometers from an Egyptian military complex at Abu Ageila, a strategic road junction in the north of the Sinai Peninsula.

The project included sending a small Israeli paratrooper force to

divert the Egyptian army in Sinai so that another Israeli team could make preparations for the explosion.

Two large helicopters were supposed to deliver the nuclear device and then create a command post in a mountain creek.

The blinding flash and mushroom cloud caused by the planned detonation was estimated to be visible throughout the Sinai, the Negev Desert and perhaps as far away as the Egyptian capital, Cairo.

Yaakov recalled a helicopter reconnaissance flight he made with an Israeli official, during which pilots learned that Egyptian jets were taking off, perhaps to intercept them.

"We got very close. We saw the mountain, and we saw that there is a place to hide there, in some canyon," he added.

"I still think to this day that we should have done it (nuclear explosion)," Yaakov said.

Cohen described the Zionist regime's atomic blast bid as "the last secret of the 1967 war."

Leader...

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negotiations with the people of the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei further criticized the wrongful presence of foreign countries in Syria contrary to the will of its government and nation, stressing, "The Syrian issues must be solved through dialogue."

The Leader warned that enemies were waging "proxy wars" in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen as well as other parts of the Muslim world.

Ayatollah Khamenei said attacks by Daesh in Europe and elsewhere show that Western policies in the Middle East have backfired.

"Today, Daesh is being pushed out from its birthplace in Iraq and Syria and is moving to other countries - Afghanistan, Pakistan and even the Philippines and European countries."

"This is a fire that (Western powers) themselves ignited and now has backfired on them," the Leader said.

Storm...

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and saying Trump might not be in power for long. Qatar denied the comments said it had been the victim of a "cybercrime."

The other Arab states that took action have long sparred with Qatar over its support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and around the region, including through the broadcasts of the Pan-Arab news network Al Jazeera, which Qatar funds. Qatar's rivals have also faulted it for condoning fundraising for militant groups fighting in Syria, although several of the other monarchies in the region have played similar roles.

There was no clear event in the region that might have precipitated the renewal of the campaign against Qatar. But it followed a recent visit to Saudi Arabia by Trump, who made clear that he strongly backed Saudi Arabia in its push against both Iran and against Muslim Brotherhood-style groups. Trump's support may have helped encourage the other states to renew their campaign against Qatar as well.

In another indication of how the Trump visit may have emboldened Persian Gulf monarchies, over the past two weeks Bahrain has cracked down on opposition from its Shia majority.

At least five people were killed and 286 arrested in the crackdown, which came as the government ordered the dissolution of the country's last opposition group and the shutdown of an independent newspaper. Amnesty International describing it a "blatant campaign to end all criticism of the government."

Yezid Sayigh, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, Lebanon, said the new moves had come as Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia saw an opportunity to distract from their internal troubles and reflected "bullishness" prompted by the Trump administration's stances — on the confrontation with Iran and on a willingness to look the other way on human rights violations.

Saudi Arabia received a political and material lift from military hardware deals it signed with the United States at the time of Trump's recent visit, Sayigh said.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are getting "no U.S. push-back" on human rights or on the Yemen intervention, he said, while "Egypt also feels off the hook with Trump, and is using the opportunity to repair ties with the Saudis, reinforce with the Emiratis and be more assertive in Libya."

But, Sayigh warned, "Cutting relations with Qatar suggests a worrying readiness to be assertive and belligerent, which masks the countries' deeper problems and challenges and may prove to be a case of overreach."

The escalating confrontation between Qatar and other Arab states presents a fresh and unwelcome complication for the United States military.

Beyond the military difficulties, a host of multinational corporations have operations in the feuding nations. A Saudi call for companies to withdraw from Qatar could present international executives with a blizzard of difficult choices about where to do business.

Qatar is hosting the 2022 World Cup, for instance, and is building facilities

for the tournament that are part of an ambitious construction boom, including creating branches of major international museums and universities.

Economists say the diplomatic rift may cost them billions of dollars by slowing trade and investment and making it more expensive for the region to borrow money as it grapples with low oil prices.

Former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh was quoted as saying that the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Qatar is rooted in "accumulated differences from the past even though both countries are followers of the Wahhabi school."

Prominent Palestinian journalist Abdel Bari Atwan said in a Twitter post that the diplomatic rupture is a "prelude" to a military action against Qatar.

"The next move may be a military offensive to change the regime in Qatar. It's a war planned months ago," wrote the editor-in-chief of the Rai al-Youm news website.

Recent reports have suggested Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were divided over their role in Yemen on which they have been waging a deadly war for more than two years now.

In a recent interview with Middle East Eye online news portal, Saudi-backed former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi accused the UAE of acting "like an occupation power in Yemen rather than a force of liberation."

Iran...

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Trump's visit as Iran was cited an anniversary.

"I had already written that the era of creating coalitions and Big Brothers is over, and political domination, security clannishness, occupation, and invasion is not going to bring about anything other than insecurity," Aboutalebi wrote.

"Today, I am writing that the era of sanctions is over too, and cutting diplomatic ties, closing borders, laying sieges on countries, and ejecting countries out of the selfsame coalition, etc. is not the way out of the crisis," he added.

Aboutalebi chided Saudi Arabia and its allies for the "fragile" coalition, saying these countries have no other option but to start regional dialog.

"Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain which are fragile to such an extent in the face of a small country have no other way than democracy inside and dialog in the region," he said.

"The question is how a small country has been able to topple the Bahraini government, support Daesh and Al-Qaeda as well as extremism in the Sinai Peninsula and cause split in the coalition," he wrote, referring to each of the accusations which the four countries have cited in cutting ties with Qatar.

Temperatures...

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people were taken to hospital, while livestock and poultry also suffered and offices were forced to close.

Friday prayers leaders across the province, which is home to a major Sunni community, have appealed to the government for help, demanding a write-off or discount in electricity prices.

Chitchian arrived in the city of Konarak in the province's extreme south on Sunday, accompanied by the provincial governor, in order to observe the situation on the ground and compile a report for the government to take necessary measures.

Sistan-and-Baluchestan, home to close to three million people, is Iran's largest province in terms of area.

Chitchian pledged to tackle water and electricity shortages in the province, saying the government is about to build an 800-megawatt power station, which will be funded by Energy Ministry.

Over the past years, he said, a number of development projects had got off the ground in the province, including a 500-megawatt power station and water supply to 500 villages.

Bahraini Court Sends Dozen Activists to Prison

MANAMA (Dispatches) – A dozen Bahraini pro-democracy campaigners have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from three to five years over their alleged involvement in acts of violence and participation in anti-regime demonstrations.

Bahrain's Supreme Court of Appeal upheld the prison term of five years against seven defendants on charges of illegal gathering, setting tires alight along the streets and hurling petrol bombs at armored police vehicles in Manama's suburban neighborhood of Juffair on August 2, 2013, Arabic-language Bahrain Mirror news website reported.

The court also ordered each of the convicts to pay 300 dinars (\$795) for the damage caused by burning tires.

Five other defendants were each sentenced to

three years in prison over forming "unlawful" gatherings of more than five people.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah dynasty relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

In a latest development, Bahraini people have staged fresh protests across the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom in solidarity with Sheikh Isa Qassim

and his supporters.

Protesters, carrying candles, took to the streets of the northern villages Abu Saiba and Shakhoura on Sunday night to commemorate Sheikh Qassim's supporters of who lost their lives during a raid last month.

Five people were killed and dozens other injured when regime forces attacked Sheikh Qassim's supporters in the northwestern village of Diraz. The clergyman's fate remains unknown, with some reports saying he is under house arrest.

The scuffles came two days after Sheikh Qassim was handed a suspended one-year prison term and ordered to pay a fine over accusations that he had used his position to serve foreign interests and promote sectarianism and violence.

Anniversary of Deadly Zionist Attack on Turkish Gaza-Bound Flotilla Marked

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) – Turkish people have marched in the city of Istanbul to mark the anniversary of the Zionist regime's deadly attack against the civilian ships of an aid flotilla as it was carrying humanitarian assistance to the besieged Gaza Strip in 2010.

Demonstrators shouted slogans in solidarity with the Gazan people, who have been living under a Zionist blockade for the past decade. The families of those who had been on board one of the ships, the Turkish Mavi Marmara, demanded that the Zionist politicians and military officials be prosecuted over the raid.

The regime's naval commandos, from speedboats and helicopters, attacked the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, comprising six civilian ships, in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea on May 31, 2010, killing nine Turkish citizens and injuring about 50 other people. A tenth Turkish national later succumbed to his injuries.

The occupying regime's military raid against the civilian flotilla was met with global condemnation. The United Nations Security Council called for a prompt investigation into the incident and the United Nations Human Rights Council described the attack as "outrageous." A large number of human rights groups also strongly slammed the raid, while dozens of protests were held in support of the victims' cause in several countries, including Turkey, Indonesia, Lebanon, and Sweden.



This file photo shows the Turkish-flagged Mavi Marmara ship, part of a flotilla that was heading to the Gaza Strip in 2010.

In September 2010, Turkey suspended its military ties with the Zionist regime and expelled the Israeli envoy from Ankara over Tel Aviv's refusal to apologize for the killing.

Hamas Leader in Egypt for Talks After Spat

CAIRO (Dispatches) – A delegation from the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, headed by the newly chosen leader in Gaza Yehiya Sinwar, has travelled to Cairo to hold the first high-level meeting with the country's security officials after months of tensions.

Salah Bardaweel, an official within Hamas, said the three-member delegation crossed into Egypt via the Rafah border crossing, the only passageway to the outside world for the besieged

Gaza Strip which is mostly closed as part of a Zionist and Egyptian blockade.

The Zionist regime has been blockading Gaza since 2007 as a way of punishing its residents who voted for a Hamas administration. The blockade has caused a decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty in the Palestinian coastal enclave.

Bardaweel said the Palestinian and Egyptian officials discussed

the humanitarian situation in the besieged Gaza Strip, Egypt's role in making conditions better and the need to open Rafah crossing for Palestinian travelers.

Sinwar, a senior commander of Hamas' military wing, was elected to head the movement's political office in Gaza on February 13. He is second in rank only to the new chairman of Hamas political bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, who is also based in Gaza.

Ties between Hamas and Egypt

have been tense in recent years as Cairo accuses the Palestinian resistance group of backing militants in Sinai Peninsula, an allegation strongly rejected by the movement.

Last month, Hamas dispatched forces to the Gaza Strip's frontier with Egypt in a confidence-building measure aimed at boosting security in the border area. The deployment came as part of an agreement reached between the two sides in March.