

Piracy Off The Promised Land

Ramming the Dignity with Clear Lethal Intent

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Piracy 1. the practice of attacking and robbing ships at sea Compact Oxford English Dictionary

The British have affection for Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta The Pirates of Penzance. These pirates are jolly rascals. No such description can be applied to the pirates of Somalia and even less to the Pirates of the Levant, the Israeli navy.

Wide publicity has been given to piracy in Somalian waters since Captain Phillips of the American crewed Maersk Alabama was captured. The arrival of a US missile cruiser and US destroyer added the tension and glamour required by the Hollywood confederation. The killing of three young Somalians and the release of the captain provided the blood and the triumph for the star spattered banner. Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and along the long shoreline of Somalia started in 1995 in response to rapacious fishing, mostly by Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean vessels. (1) The dumping of toxic waste by European nations stoked more resentment (2). Foreign fishing boats were the first targets but when these got protection from local warlords, the Somalian pirates turned to commercial and cruise shipping. With at least 20,000 vessels on passage they had plenty to choose from. Since the US navy Seals shot their men, over sixty more seamen have been taken hostage.

Why is it that little is heard of the piracy off the coast of the Zionist entity and the strip it dominates called Gaza? In contrast to the actions of young Muslim fishermen from an impoverished and broken Somalian nation, the entity carries out its piracy under the title of the Israeli Occupation Force, out of a country with the greatest wealth and with the pretence of a fully fledged legal system. As it turns out, its maritime law is the British Maritime Law of 1856, a hangover from the British Mandate.

Free Gaza advanced the sailing of its 66ft 50 tonne MV Dignity from 6 January 2009 to 29 December in response to the 'greater shoah (holocaust)' promised to the people of Gaza by the deputy defence minister Matan Vilnai in February 2008, this massacre having started with the killing of over two hundred people within the first fifteen minutes of the blitzkrieg on 27 December. The British master and the Greek mate had the boat readied as fourteen passengers joined in Larnaca. One was Cynthia McKinney. This erstwhile congress woman and very recent presidential candidate had come from the US at a day's notice. There were also two surgeons and a Palestinian physician. 3.5 tonnes of medical supplies were loaded; the majority had been given by the Cyprus government. Cypriot customs and excise officers had inspected the vessel and its cargo. The Dignity slipped its moorings in the dark at 07.00 hrs and the two Detroit 840 hp engines drove it hard and south towards Gaza.

At 04.55 hrs EMT on 30 December, searchlights appeared astern. There were two Israeli

gunboats. They came abreast, circled and stayed with us. These boats can do over 45 knots, carry ten tonnes of fuel and have sophisticated weapon systems including Hellfire missiles (3) Tracer bullets were fired skywards, forming ellipses, and flares put up. At 05.30 hrs approximately, one gunboat was playing its searchlight on the port side of Dignity. Suddenly there was a tremendous crash at the bow, and then another almost simultaneously, and another on the port beam across from where the author had sat vomiting for eight hours. The bow dipped and it seemed the boat was breaking up. It was dark, the wind force was 4 to 5 and there was a 10ft sea. The master shouted 'we have been rammed'. It was feared the boat would sink. He broadcast a Mayday distress signal; there was no later response. Cynthia Mc Kinney and Caoimhe Butterly could not swim; the life vests were rapidly deployed to all. The hull was taking water but bilge pumps were working. The first words from a commander of one of the gun boats came over the radio. First there was the accusation that the ship's company was involved with terrorists and that it was subversive. Then there came the threat to shoot. The master was forbidden from making for Gaza or further south to El Arish in Egypt. He was ordered to return for Larnaca - about 160 miles, though the boat was badly damaged and the Israeli did not know whether there was sufficient fuel, which there was not. He set a northerly course and the boat stayed buoyant in a moderating sea. A crew member arranged with the Lebanese authorities for a safe harbour in Sour (Tyre) where jubilant crowds thronged the quays.

Was there lethal intent? A gun boat came out of the black of night with no lights showing whilst a searchlight from the other gun boat displayed the port hull of its target. It would have approached at about 30 degrees to the Dignity's port and at speed. The intention to sink the Dignity and thus to drown its company was clear (4). If the hull had been GRP (Glass Reinforced Plastic) it would have shattered and the boat would have sunk like a stone where it was rammed 53 nautical miles off Haifa. Fortunately, the hull was constructed of marine ply with timber ribs and the company survived. The Zionist entity greatly resents anyone coming to the aid of the native population, whatever its depth of suffering, and war lust was growing by the day.

A Lebanese vessel, the Tali - 1500 tonnes gross, with food, medical aid, plasma, toys etc mattresses in the hold steamed from Tripoli via Larnaca with Gaza its final port. The entity insisted 5 February that it make for El Arish. The master persisted in his aim and changed course for Gaza. Warning shots were fired and the boat was boarded by armed soldiers. It is alleged they beat some of the twenty on board. The vessel was forced to dock in Ashdod from where it is said the 1000 units of plasma were transferred to Gaza. The entity was to transfer the remaining aid later. The ship's company were repatriated except for a resolute Scot, Theresa McDermott. She was imprisoned silently in Ramleh gaol. (5) When the British Consulate in Israel was contacted for assistance in finding Teresa, staff refused to help locate Teresa saying they couldn't provide assistance to a UK citizen unless she personally requested it. She was released after six days, her 'crime' probably being a member of the International Solidarity Campaign like Rachel Corrie before her.

These evil doings of the Zionist entity pale besides the piracy suffered by the fishermen of Gaza since the second intifada was triggered by Sharon striding into the Temple Mount with many dozens of border guards in September 2000. The disastrous 1993 Oslo Accords did 'allow' the fishermen to go out 20 nautical miles and south along Sinai. Altogether they had access to 75,000 square kilometres of sea. There has been a steady increase in the attacks on these men and their boats (6); now they are being attacked by the shore. Since 2000, 15 men have been killed and over 200 injured. Precious high quality protein is being kept from

the mouths of often malnourished children. Some believe the discovery of over one trillion cu ft of natural gas by BP off the Gazan shore is the prime reason for fencing in the fishermen by force. (7) Some in Gaza believe the gas is already coming ashore in Israel, at Ashkelon.

Since mid-March, 20 men have been snatched by the entity and one shot. (8) They are forced to strip off and swim naked to the Israeli war ship. They were all taken for interrogation in Ashdod and then released but some of the vessels remained impounded. All this is the maritime equivalent of the robbery being done in the ineptly named 'West Bank' and in Silwan, as well as the imprisonment of thousands in Israeli gaols (sometimes without charge) and the 1.5 million in the concentration camp which is Gaza.

The Somali pirates have netted about 100 million dollars per year but this is very small fry compared with the many billions burnt by the banks of the US and UK. And no hostage has been killed by his captor. The fourth Security Council resolution on Somali piracy to be passed in 2008 was brought by Condoleeza Rice. 'The U.N. Security Council has unanimously adopted a resolution authorizing member states to fight pirates in Somali territory by land, sea and air.' (9) As of December 18, 2008, naval ships from eleven NATO, four SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), and 4 other countries were deployed in the region in order to serve as escorts and to deter acts of piracy.

What are the UN and all the western nations doing about the more dangerous piracy of the Israeli state? These nations are silent and lift no finger showing they approve of Israel's murderous actions against the Palestinian fishermen and foreign nationals bringing aid. This is a grotesque hypocrisy and a sure sign 'the powerful own the law' – for the time being.

The greatest act of piracy by the Israeli state was the all out attack on the communications ship USS Liberty on June 8 1967. (10) Rockets, napalm and torpedoes killed 34, wounded more than 170 crew members and damaged the ship severely. The ship was in international waters north of the Sinai Peninsula, about 25.5 nautical miles northwest from the Egyptian city of El Arish. There were inquiries and many words. Crew members were silenced.

An independent commission reported on Capitol Hill in October 2003. Alison Weir reported this in Counterpunch but the US media buried it. (11) These key findings are to be noted:-

- * That the attack, by a US ally, was a "deliberate attempt to destroy an American ship and kill her entire crew"
- * That the ally committed "acts of murder against American servicemen and an act of war against the United States"
- * That the attack involved the machine-gunning of stretcher-bearers and life rafts
- * That "the White House deliberately prevented the U.S. Navy from coming to the defense of the [ship] never before in American naval history has a rescue mission been cancelled when an American ship was under attack"
- * That surviving crewmembers were later threatened with "court-martial, imprisonment or worse" if they talked to anyone about what had happened to them; and were "abandoned by their own government"

- * That due to the influence of the ally's "powerful supporters in the United States, the White House deliberately covered up the facts of this attack from the American people"
- * That due to continuing pressure by this lobby, this attack remains "the only serious naval incident that has never been thoroughly investigated by Congress"
- * That "there has been an official cover-up without precedent in American naval history"
- * That "the truth about Israel's attack and subsequent White House cover-up continues to be officially concealed from the American people to the present day and is a national disgrace"
- * That "a danger to the national security exists whenever our elected officials are willing to subordinate American interests to those of any foreign nation" and that this policy "endangers the safety of Americans and the security of the United States"

Nothing has changed. Blue and white leopards do not change their spots.

1914

1. Jay Bahadur <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article6100783.ece>

2. BBC News Roger Middleton <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8001183.stm>

'However, people who have been forgotten by the world and who hear of toxic waste being dumped on their beaches and foreigners stealing their fish have difficulty being concerned when representatives of that world are held to ransom.'

3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Super_Dvora_Mk_III

4. <http://sydney.indymedia.org.au/image/dignity-rammed-israeli-patrol-boat>

5. <http://www.freegaza.org/en/home/740-disappeared-free-gaza-activist-theresa-mcdermott-found-in-israels-ramleh-prison>

6. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87NrKNV_owM

7. <http://www.freegaza.org/en/links-a-gaza-info/stealing-gazas-gas>

8. <http://www.williambowles.info/isrl-pal/2009/0309/gaza-abductions060409.html>

9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somali_pirate#cite_note-115

10. <http://www.gtr5.com/>

11. <http://www.counterpunch.org/weir06232007.html>

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