

## ISRAELI NAVY KILLS GAZA FISHERMAN

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been a strong supporter of Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank. After his arrival in Tel Aviv, Friedman visited the Western Wall in Jerusalem, praying there and kissing the sacred site, the holiest location where Jews are allowed to pray.

"I prayed for the president and I wished him success, especially on his upcoming trip," Friedman said in a video posted on the US embassy's Twitter feed. "I know it's going to be an amazing trip," he said. Friedman, a frequent visitor to Jerusalem, also exchanged words near the wall with Steven Tyler of American rock band Aerosmith, in town for a concert.

Jewish-American bankruptcy lawyer Friedman has expressed skepticism over the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the basis of years of US peace efforts. He has also advocated breaking with decades of precedent by moving the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the disputed city of Jerusalem, a prospect deeply alarming to Palestinians.

Trump vowed to move the embassy to Jerusalem during his campaign, but has since backed away, saying the move was still being looked at. He will have to

decide by the beginning of June whether to continue with the policy of his predecessors and again block the embassy's transfer. Trump is expected to visit Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories on May 22 and 23.

Speaking at a pre-election rally in October in support of Trump on Jerusalem's Mount Zion, Friedman said the now US president would fire US State Department "lifelines" who refused to move the embassy. He has also clashed with American Jewish progressive groups, notably dubbing liberals "worse than kapos", a reference to Jewish collaborators who worked as guards in Nazi concentration camps. His appointment comes as Trump seeks ways to restart moribund Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, and questions have been raised over whether Friedman will be able to put his personal views aside.

Trump himself has sent mixed signals over how he will approach the decades-old conflict. He cast uncertainty over years of international efforts to foster a two-state solution when he met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House in February. At that meeting, he said he would support a single state if it led to peace, delighting Israeli right-wingers who want to see their country annex most of the occupied West Bank. — Agencies

## MP CALLS TO REDUCE EXPAT STUDENTS IN GOVT...

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categories, who include children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis, children of diplomats and others. Shaheen demanded that the exemptions should be reviewed to reduce the number of foreign students in public schools.

MP Askar Al-Enezi yesterday submitted an amendment to the residency law stipulating that those who give shelter or employ runaway domestic helpers should be forced to pay the costs of their deportation from the country. The lawmaker said that the number of domestic helpers fleeing their employers has been on the increase recently, negatively impacting employers. He said that many people have given shelter and even employment to these

runaway domestic helpers, which is a clear violation of the law. As a result, he proposed that people who employ runaway domestic helpers should pay the costs of sending the domestic helpers back to their homelands.

Supervisor of the National Assembly MP Nayef Al-Merdas said yesterday that the issue of providing allowances to retired servicemen will be debated in the assembly next session on May 23. Meanwhile, MP Safaa Al-Hashem asked Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh about a previously unannounced contract to develop the ministry's taxation department and prepare the legal foundations for value added tax and other selective taxes. She said if the issue is correct, she demanded the details of the reported studies about the taxes. She also asked if VAT is mentioned in the national reform plan.

## SECURITY KEY TO DEVELOPMENT, ARAB SPRING...

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Moreover, he cited other issues that have been shrouded in corruption, including allowances to national delegations sent abroad and government budgets. Speaking on development in Kuwait, the prime minister said there has been tangible progress as a slew of infrastructure projects have commenced as of late.

Sheikh Jaber said Kuwaiti youth have amassed accomplishments in sports and education, which is a testament of their desire to attain further success. He noted that he keeps abreast of what circulates on social media, saying all political leaders should be open to criticism. On the government's relationship with the National Assembly, the premier said that the aim is to "establish a relationship founded on trust and we have been fortunate to maintain cordial ties with parliamentary speakers". Meanwhile, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak said that the process of appointing ministers is not an easy one and all those chosen are deemed fit for the position. He added that parliament prioritizes health and housing issues, indicating that this was adopted by the executive authority.

In the interview, Sheikh Jaber said the army was not ready for conscription when he was serving as minister of defense. "As a result, I called for reconsidering compulsory military service. The army needed a numerical intensity, but not by this way. The armed forces cannot attract many as it is a tiring job. If a member makes a mistake, he will face a military trial," the premier said. He stressed that he sought to provide incentives to soldiers and officers when he was serving as minister of defense. "The armed forces have progressed greatly and ground

forces have become strong," the PM said.

Sheikh Jaber said that ministry of defense during his tenure was supported by 10 billion (he did not specify whether Kuwaiti dinars or US dollars), emphasizing that the Kuwaiti army is defensive in accordance with the constitution, and carries out trainings with armies of a number of Western and Arab countries to share expertise. "We have our Peninsula Shield forces," he added.

Sheikh Jaber remembered the period of drawing up the constitution under the era of late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, confirming that it was a source of pride at that time. He said that the constitution showed the vision of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem that paid much attention to democracy. The premier revealed that he was first appointed at the Amiri Diwan's financial and administrative affairs in 1968.

He noted that he was named governor of Hawally, preceded by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad at that time. "Hawally governorate included many neighborhoods and a total of 400,000 Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) office. They (Palestinians) wanted to secure their conferences themselves, but I achieved the mission through our security forces. I took charge of the ministry of social affairs for a short period of time. I knew about chaos and lack of discipline. So I met with undersecretaries and told them that they knew better than me where corruption was. I said I trust you (undersecretaries) and needed help to achieve the mission. I finally succeeded in this job," Sheikh Jaber recalled. "I was appointed as minister of information, and many officials at the ministry were keen on helping me like Abdulaziz Jafar and Hamad Al-Roumi. We worked as a team." — KUNA

## PUTIN BLAMES US AS CYBER ATTACKS EASE

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But according to Michel Van Den Berghe, director of telecom group Orange's cyber security arm, a "second wave" is to be expected. "Loads of people will use the original to generate variations... to recreate the panic and try to get some money for themselves," he said.

The indiscriminate attack was unleashed Friday, striking hundreds of thousands of computers worldwide by exploiting known vulnerabilities in older Microsoft computer operating systems. US package delivery giant FedEx, Spanish telecoms giant Telefonica and Germany's Deutsche Bahn rail network were among those hit. The attackers demanded money to unblock their computers. In China, "hundreds of thousands" of computers were affected, including petrol stations, cash machines and universities, according to Qihoo 360, one of the country's largest providers of antivirus software. Russia said its banking and railway systems were hit.

A fifth of regional hospital associations in Britain's National Health Service were affected and several still had to cancel appointments yesterday. French carmaker Renault shut its Douai plant - one of its biggest sites, employing 5,500 people - yesterday as systems were upgraded.

The attack blocks computers and puts up images on victims' screens demanding payment of \$300 in the virtual currency Bitcoin, saying: "Ooops, your files have

been encrypted!" Payment is demanded within three days or the price is doubled, and if none is received within seven days the locked files will be deleted, according to the screen message. Bitcoin, the world's most-used virtual currency, allows anonymous transactions via heavily encrypted codes.

Experts and governments alike warn against ceding to the demands and few victims so far had been paying up. Security firm Digital Shadows said on Sunday that transactions totalling \$32,000 had taken place through Bitcoin addresses used by the ransomware. A hacking group called Shadow Brokers released the malware in April, claiming to have discovered the flaw from the NSA, according to researchers at the Moscow-based computer security firm Kaspersky Lab. The attack is unique, according to Europol, because it combines ransomware with a worm function, meaning once one machine is infected, the entire internal network is scanned and other vulnerable machines are infected.

Although the economic fallout is still unknown, the political fallout "will be significant" according to the Eurasia consultancy. As well as Russia, China and India have blamed the US government for developing the original code. It also predicted a review in the United States about when to inform software vendors of vulnerabilities in their systems and increased funding to ensure timely patches to protect computer systems. — AFP

## SAUDI KINGHAILS TRUMP SUMMIT

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Meanwhile, Trump yesterday met with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi at the White House. The president welcomed Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates for their first face-to-face meeting since Trump took office. Sitting alongside one another in the Oval Office, Trump called Sheikh Mohammed a "very special person" who loves his coun-

try and loves the US.

Washington and Riyadh have a decades-old relationship, but US ties with Riyadh and its Gulf neighbors became increasingly frayed during the administration of president Barack Obama. Saudi leaders felt Obama was reluctant to get involved in the civil war in Syria and was tilting toward Shiite-dominated Iran. The Saudis have found a more favorable ear in Washington under Trump, who has denounced Iran's "harmful influence" in the Middle East. — Agencies

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