

There is no doubt, ladies and gentlemen MPs, that the military operation carried out in international waters by the Israeli navy is condemnable – and not just because it had the tragic results we are all aware of. This was made clear in our earliest statements and actions, with clarity and in a categorical manner – not with PR blustering, but with substance and resolve. The cancellation of the joint military exercise of our two air forces and the postponement of the visit to Greece of the head of the Israeli Air Force leave no room for doubt as to the clarity of our stance from the very outset.

I must say that throughout this crisis, all of us, including the Prime Minister himself, acted in a timely manner. Indicatively, I point to our communication with the Israeli Foreign Minister, the Turkish Prime Minister, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the Secretary General of the Arab League, Mr. Amr Moussa – all of the key players in the region.

Finally, all of our actions, on all levels, were coordinated with our European partners, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Ashton, and the Spanish Presidency.

(rejoinder)

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be brief. You know that I am not an adherent of foreign policy that is exercised on public relations terms. Our actions are guided by substance, and principally Greece's interests.

So I want to say this with regard to the ongoing crisis in the Gaza Strip. I remind you that Greece has insisted from the very outset on the need for Israel to establish humanitarian corridors. Moreover, our country is contributing officially to the reconstruction of Gaza with significant humanitarian and economic aid that is managed via the Palestinian Authority and the mechanisms of international organizations.

We have worked systematically – and we are still working systematically – both on the EU level and bilaterally, for a successful outcome for the peace process, which was recently reactivated in the form of proximity talks. Our ultimate goal is the finding of a comprehensive, just and viable solution to the Palestinian problem, based on the principle of two states, with the creation of a viable future Palestinian state that will coexist with Israel in conditions of peace and security.

George H. Frowick
Political Counselor
U.S. Embassy
Athens, Greece
(30) 210-720-2381

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George. H. Frowick
Political Counselor
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Printed By: Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)
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B69

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Reisser, Wesley J;
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 8:45 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: FW: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest
Attachments: PASSENGERS ON THE MV RACHEL CORRIE.DOC

RELEASED IN PART
B6

From: Richter, Kim B
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 8:39 AM
To: Parker, Andrew C; Reisser, Wesley J
Cc: Greene, Elisa
Subject: RE: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

I ran the names but some are very generic - there were only a few names - so hard to say if any are Amcits. I checked with the Free Gaza Movement here in DC and they said none on this list were Amcits.

From: Parker, Andrew C
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 5:46 AM
To: Reisser, Wesley J; Richter, Kim B
Cc: Greene, Elisa
Subject: FW: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

FYI - none of us in CONS TLV are on the distro list of the Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group. We have not seen the manifest, but would appreciate a copy. If you get word that [redacted] is on-board please let us know. B6

Thanks,
Andy

From: Greene, Elisa
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 12:04 PM
To: Reisser, Wesley J; Goldberger, Thomas H; Holmstrom, Todd C; Parker, Andrew C
Subject: RE: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

Confirming that [redacted] is indeed an Amcit.

Elisa Greene Chief, American Citizen Services U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv, Israel
Address from Israel: 71 Ha-Yarkon Street, Tel Aviv 63900, Israel
Address from the U.S.: Box 13, APO AE 09830, U.S.A.
Switchboard Tel: +972-3-519-7575; Fax: +972-3-517-2348; Email: greenee@state.gov

From: Reisser, Wesley J
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 8:32 PM
To: Goldberger, Thomas H; Holmstrom, Todd C; Parker, Andrew C; Greene, Elisa
Subject: FW: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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CA has run the names. Some are common ones, but Kim called Free Gaza to deconflict. As of now, we are aware of no Amcits on the list.

From: Richter, Kim B
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 12:41 PM
To: Reisser, Wesley J; Bernier-Toth, Michelle
Subject: RE: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

I asked the Free Gaza Movement rep her to confirm if anybody on the list that you got from the Rebuilding Alliance was an Amcit – she said they weren't. I checked PIERS but for some – such as [redacted] – there were a lot of entries.

From: Reisser, Wesley J
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 11:41 AM
To: Bernier-Toth, Michelle
Cc: Richter, Kim B
Subject: RE: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

They are what we have from the Rebuilding Alliance. There may be others, but none that I am aware of. Note, she mentions [redacted] may join (who I believe is in Cyprus right now, 88 y/o Holocaust survivor). However, we don't know the boat's course as of right now.

From: Bernier-Toth, Michelle
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Reisser, Wesley J
Subject: RE: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

These are some or all of the pax?

From: Reisser, Wesley J
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 11:36 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: FW: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

Emb Tel Aviv or CA/OCS – Please check the manifest against PIERS. All others, FYI on the Rachel Corrie from the NGO community.
Wes

From: dbaranskiw [redacted] [mailto:dbaranskiw@redacted] **On Behalf Of** Donna Baranski Walker
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 11:32 AM
To: Reisser, Wesley J
Cc: niamh moloughney
Subject: Re: MV Rachel Corrie Manifest

Dear Wesley,

Thank you for calling me back yesterday. As discussed, and with the permission of Niamh Moloughney of Free Gaza Movement - Ireland, I am forwarding the list of passengers and the manifest for the MV Rachel Corrie. There is an international crew. You asked specifically if any Americans will be on board. Although none are currently registered, American [redacted] is weighing the possibility of going.

I am copying Niamh on this message.

My goal is to help to assure maximum transparency and safety for voyage of the MV Rachel Corrie and any boats who may join them, in part because these are my friends are the organizers and in part because the Rebuilding Alliance put chocolates and school supplies, sports equipment and wheelchairs, and cement to build a kindergarten on that boat. Your suggestions on behalf of the State Department would be sincerely appreciated.

The Rebuilding Alliance and the Free Gaza Movement are ramping up to tell the stories of the NGO projects that will receive the humanitarian aid and to publish the passenger list and manifest as well. Please note the request I sent via UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk to the Quartet in April, requesting temporary "UN Certification Team" status and support to go to Gaza to assure transparency for this all-NGO transport and project installment -- there was no reply from the Quartet. Can you raise the proposal now at the Quartet level? Please note: My team and I are uniquely qualified to assume this role in Gaza and hold an invitation from UNRWA and good welcome from the Palestinian NGO Network, and Gaza Community Mental Health Programme. President Carter can press a message to the H government to assure that the NGOs have full approval to receive the materials and install them with streamlined building permits. I am well-positioned to form a team in Gaza to certify use of construction materials by the NGO's -- and these are your best allies.

Please note there are no plans to bring the MV Rachel Corrie or other boats to Turkey nor are they requesting military escort. They do not expect to leave for Gaza until early next week.

You can also reach Niamh by phone at the following numbers:

Phone 353 (085) 774-7257
Name Ms. Niamh Moloughney
Account Name Irish Free Gaza Movement Mobile B6

Sincerely,
Donna
Mobile:

P.S. I am copying Rebuilding Alliance Operations Manager, Penina Eilberg-Schwartz on this message. If you are having difficulty reaching me please give Penina a call at

Donna Baranski-Walker, Executive Director
The Rebuilding Alliance
178 South Boulevard, San Mateo CA U.S.A.
phone: 650 325-4663 . fax: 650 325-4667
email: dbw@RebuildingAlliance.org
web: www.RebuildingAlliance.org

"Rebuilding War-Torn Communities, Making Them Safe"
The Rebuilding Alliance is a 501c3 tax-exempt organization, EIN 56-2392452. Donation checks may be made out to "The Rebuilding Alliance" or visit our website to donate online.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 7:35 AM, Reisser, Wesley J <ReisserWJ@state.gov> wrote:

Donna -- Do you have the manifest as we discussed yesterday? Any info you have is exceptionally helpful so that our consular personnel in Tel Aviv can be ready to assist Americans as necessary.

C18749681

NO CLASSIFICATION MARKED
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Wes

Wesley J. Reisser, Ph.D.

Desk Officer - NEA/IPA

Office of Israel & Palestinian Affairs

Phone (202) 647-2647

Fax (202) 736-4461

This message is UNCLASSIFIED/SBU according to the definitions provided by E.O. 12958.

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B70

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Goodman, Ilan A
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 6:29 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Fw: "Unsubstantiated Reports that Turkish warships are now escorting Rachel Corrie as it approaches Gaza"

Embassy Ankara reports that Turkish MFA firmly denies press reports that Turkish frigates are escorting the Rachel Corrie.

Apparently this was reported in a small Turkish press outlet, but I'm not sure if the report will be picked up elsewhere or not.

-Ilan

From: Witmer, Kami A
To: Goodman, Ilan A
Sent: Fri Jun 04 05:45:35 2010
Subject: FW: "Unsubstantiated Reports that Turkish warships are now escorting Rachel Corrie as it approaches Gaza"

FYI.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Witmer, Kami A
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 11:30 AM
To: Silliman, Douglas A; Catalano, Peter R; Schneider, Charles J; Freeman, Lloyd D
Cc: Godfrey, Anthony F; Lee, Robert D
Subject: FW: "Unsubstantiated Reports that Turkish warships are now escorting Rachel Corrie as it approaches Gaza"

MFA confirmed no Turkish escort. Ops notified.

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From: Lee, Robert D
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 11:28 AM
To: 'Haldun Tekneci'
Cc: Cagatay Erdiyes; Godfrey, Anthony F; Witmer, Kami A; Kiel, Stephanie
Subject: RE: "Unsubstantiated Reports that Turkish warships are now escorting Rachel Corrie as it approaches Gaza"

Thanks, Haldun. Useful to get this clear response. We'll get this back to Washington immediately.

Rob

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Robert Lee
Office of Political and Military Affairs
U.S. Embassy, Ankara
tel: +90-312-457-7177
e-mail: leerd@state.gov

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Haldun Tekneci [<mailto:haldun.tekneci@mfa.gov.tr>]
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 11:21 AM
To: Lee, Robert D
Cc: Çağatay Erciyas
Subject: RE: "Unsubstantiated Reports that Turkish warships are now escorting Rachel Corrie as it approaches Gaza"

Hi Robert: You should dismiss that hoax right away. There are no Turkish frigates escorting "Rachel Corrie" which was about some 60 nm North of Alexandria last night according to NATO AIS. It is especially important now not to get wound up easily about unsubstantiated press reports.

Take care and I too hope that I will be able to attend

Best,
Haldun

From: Lee, Robert D [<mailto:LeeRD@state.gov>]
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 10:44 AM
To: Haldun Tekneci
Subject: "Unsubstantiated Reports that Turkish warships are now escorting Rachel Corrie as it approaches Gaza"

Hi Haldun – Link to the report from "hamsayeh.net" and the key text below. Not exactly the New York Times, so we're inclined to dismiss it outright. But given the nature of the claim, we thought it would be useful to get an informed response from you so that people back in Washington don't get too spun up about this report. It would be very helpful to get a reaction by noon as we would be able to get the information to Washington as the key policy makers are waking up.

Many thanks, and I hope to see you on June 16.

Best,
Rob

There are unsubstantiated reports that Turkish warships are now escorting Rachel Corrie as it approaches Gaza. Confrontational Israelis have vowed to even challenge Turkish warships despite Turkey being a member of North Atlantic Treaty (NATO). Ankara has called for immediate lifting of Gaza blockade and an international investigation into Israeli act of piracy in international waters.

http://www.hamsayeh.net/hamsayehnet_iran-international%20news1309.htm

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e-mail: leerd@state.gov

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B71

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Macris, Gregory P
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 6:04 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Situation Report No. 9 - Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group MGGZ01 (SBU Version)

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SITUATION REPORT No. 9

Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group MGGZ01

Friday, June 4, 2010
0600 EDT

STATUS OF FOREIGN PASSENGERS

- (SBU) All participants in the Gaza Flotilla, except for seven still hospitalized in Israel, are back in their countries of origin or are en route there. *(Tel Aviv 1240)*

OTHER SHIPS EN ROUTE TO GAZA

- (U) Media report RACHEL CORRIE has no plans to stop until reaching port in Gaza and does not intend to resist, should Israeli forces attempt to board. The vessel is equipped with video and satellite devices to stream live events over the internet. *(CNN)*
- (U) Former UN Assistant Secretary General Denis Halliday, Northern Irish Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mairead Corrigan-Maguire, and an Irish lawmaker are a part of the 11-passenger manifest of RACHEL CORRIE. *(CNN, The Guardian)*

INTERNATIONAL REACTION

- (U) A spokesman for a group of Malaysian NGOs, accompanied by approximately 1000 peaceful protesters, assembled outside Embassy Kuala Lumpur and denounced the Israeli operation. *(Reuters)*
- (U) Malaysian FM Aman said Israeli authorities should ensure safe passage for RACHEL CORRIE to deliver its humanitarian cargo to Gaza. *(Bernama)*
- (U) Turkish President Gul stated "Turkey's ties with Israel will never be the same again." Thousands thronged an Istanbul funeral for eight activists who died in the raid. *(Reuters)*
- (U) Turkey's health ministry dispatched two ambulance planes to Israel to bring home the remaining five Turkish activists who were wounded during the raid. *(Associated Press)*

ISRAELI RESPONSE

- (U) Israeli PM Netanyahu vowed Israel would not permit RACHEL CORRIE to reach Gaza but would consider some form of international role in enforcing an arms embargo there. He added civilian goods would be allowed to reach Gaza, but declined to elaborate. *(CNN)*
- (U) Nearly 1000 Israelis protested outside the Turkish embassy in Tel Aviv, denouncing Turkey's leaders. Israeli television showed one protester waving a doctored photograph that depicted Turkish PM Tayyip Erdogan as Hitler. *(CNN)*
- (U) Israeli Ambassador to the United States Oren said Israel and the U.S. are holding initial talks over a dialogue to address civilian needs in Gaza, but the discussion will not involve an end to the Israeli blockade. *(CNN)*

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Additional updates are available through our unclassified Intellipedia portal at
http://www.intelink.gov/wiki/Portal:Gaza_Flotilla_2010

Drafted: ANorris

Approved: GPMacris

Dist: State (all bureaus), NSS, OSD, NMCC, JCS, CIA, OSC, NCTC, DHS, DNI

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B72

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Valdez, Pablo M
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 6:00 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: MGGZ01: (Reuters) Turkey may reduce ties with Israel to a "minimum"

RELEASED IN FULL

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Arinc said Turkey may reduce its relations with Israel to "a minimum" after Israeli marines stormed a Turkish aid ship bound for Gaza.

Pablo Valdez
Watch Officer
Operations Center
Department of State
202-647-1512

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B73

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Valdez, Pablo M
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 4:38 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group; NEWS-Iran
Subject: MGGZ01: (AP) Ahmadinejad warns opposition, blasts Israeli raid

RELEASED IN FULL

TEHRAN (AP) – President Ahmadinejad warned the country's opposition against straying from the path of the founder of the Islamic Revolution and slammed Israel for a deadly raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla. Ahmadinejad spoke before tens of thousands gathered at the shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini for a ceremony marking the 21st anniversary of his death. The speech comes days ahead of the opposition's mass rally planned on the anniversary of last June's disputed presidential election. Ahmadinejad also said the Israeli commando raid on the international flotilla off Gaza's shores was "barbaric" and called for dismantling the Zionist regime.

Pablo Valdez
Watch Officer
Operations Center
Department of State
202-647-1512

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B74

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Valdez, Pablo M
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 4:09 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: MGGZ01: (AP) Cargo ship trying to breach Gaza blockade could reach 20-mile limit by late June 4

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Pablo Valdez
Watch Officer
Operations Center
Department of State
202-647-1512

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B75

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Valdez, Pablo M
Sent: Friday, June 04, 2010 1:14 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: MGGZ01: (AP) Turkey sends 2 ambulance planes to Israel

RELEASED IN FULL

ISTANBUL (AP) - Turkey's health ministry says it has dispatched two ambulance planes to Israel to bring home the last five Turkish activists who were wounded by Israeli soldiers in a raid on an aid ship.

Pablo Valdez
Watch Officer
Operations Center
Department of State
202-647-1512

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B7C

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Martone, Stephanie L
 Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 9:37 PM
 To: DRL-Users-DL
 Subject: Fw: On the Record, Off-Camera Daily Press Briefing, 06-03-10, PJ Crowley, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

RELEASED IN FULL

From: State Department Press Office <Press@state.gov>
 To: State Department Press Office
 Sent: Thu Jun 03 21:32:44 2010
 Subject: On the Record, Off-Camera Daily Press Briefing, 06-03-10, PJ Crowley, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

For Immediate Release and Posting

On the Record, Off-Camera Daily Press Briefing Index
 Thursday, June 3, 2010
 12:35 p.m.

~DEPARTMENT~

- ^^ U.S. -India Strategic Dialogue Meetings
- ^^ EU Council of Ministers Adoption of Counter Terrorism Law
- ^^ UN Special Rapporteur's Report Under Review
- ^^ Turkish American Citizen's Death
- ^^ Injury to American Citizen Emily Henochowicz

~ISRAEL/FREE GAZA FLOTILLA~

- ^^ U.S. Takes Responsibility for U.S. Citizens Abroad Seriously/ Flotilla Larger with Greater Potential of Confrontation/ Consular Officials in Contact with U.S. Citizens/ Looking into the Cause of Death/ Multiple Contacts with Israel and Turkey Prior to the Incident/ US in Contact with Multiple Contacts Regarding Ships on Their Way to Gaza/ Israel Has Legitimate Security Concerns/ U.S. Confident Investigation Will Take Place/ U.S. Evaluating How to Expand its Assistance to Gaza/ Current Gaza Status Quo Not Sustainable/ Amb. Oren: Israel Has Received Over 10,000 Rockets from Gaza/ Israel Has a Legitimate Interest in Inspecting Supplies Entering Gaza/ U.S. Mindful of Humanitarian Plight of Gaza/ U.S. and Israel Interest in Isolating Hamas/ Ways to Assist Gaza Without Hamas/ Variety of U.S. Officials Involved in Investigation/ Furkan Dogan Born in Troy, New York/ Aged 19

~PROXIMITY TALKS~

- ^^ Senator Mitchell's Activities Continue/ Direct Negotiations the Only Way to Resolve These Issues/ Meetings Held with Palestinian Officials This Week

~IRAN~

- ^^ No Update on Sanctions Timeline/ Will Check on Musavian Request for Asylum/ Work Continues on Sanctions/ Secretary Spoke with Foreign Minister Lavrov/ Conference Call Among P-5+1

~PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY/HAMAS~

- ^^ Ongoing Efforts for Reconciliation/ Importance of a Government Willing to Pursue Peace

~TURKEY~

- ^^ Turkey Expressed Importance of Returning Citizens/ U.S. Conveyed Those Concerns to Israel

~INDIA~

- ^^ U.S. and India Discussing Counter-Terrorism Issues

~EGYPT~

- ^^ U.S. Supports Free and Fair Elections/ Concerned About Reports of Fraud

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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~~-RWANDA-~~

^^ Peter Erlinder Remains in the Hospital/ U.S. Remains in Touch with the Rwandan Government/ No Knowledge of Meeting with Family

~~-BURMA-~~

^^ Senator Webb Trip/ U.S. Concerned with Burma's Relationship with North Korea

~~-CHEONAN-~~

^^ No Readout of UN Meeting

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPB # 86

THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2010
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED/OFF CAMERA)

12:35 p.m. EDT

MR. CROWLEY: Obviously today, the Secretary and External Affairs Minister Krishna have opened our high-level interagency discussions here at the State Department. Senior delegations from across the government are discussing a range of issues including agriculture, energy, climate change, education, trade, intellectual property enforcement, fighting illicit network crime, especially related to counterfeit pharmaceuticals and counterterrorism. We look forward to having the President here later on this afternoon for a reception as part of this and you'll hear from the Secretary – what about an hour from now. And have a statement from us this afternoon welcoming the European Union Council of Ministers' adoption of the joint U.S.-EU Statement on Counterterrorism. We and our partners in the EU are committed to working together to combat the threat of terrorism, bring to that effort our common values of freedom, democracy, our respect for international law, the rule of law, human rights.

We – just one left over from yesterday. We do have the report of Special Rapporteur Alston and – as one of several reports, being provided today within the Human Rights Council. We continue to review it and we note that it is difficult for states to meaningfully engage in an interactive dialogue if reports are not released with sufficient time for review. But we are firmly committed to the rule of law. As Legal Adviser Harold Koh said back in March, we are committed to complying with all applicable law, including international humanitarian law, in all aspects of ongoing armed conflicts. While the United States cannot comment on specific activities, we work hard to ensure that our activities are subject to scrupulous oversight, comport with domestic and international law.

Finally, clearly the subject of greatest interest, we can confirm that a U.S.-Turkish national – dual national was among those killed in the raid on the Free Gaza flotilla. Our mission in Turkey has been in contact with his family and is providing consular assistance. This morning, our consular officer met with the father and offered our heartfelt condolences to his family. His name is Furkan Dogan, D-o-g-a-n.

QUESTION: Can you spell the first name, please?

MR. CROWLEY: F-u-r-k-a-n. The last name is spelled -- anglicized D-o-g-a-n, pronounced Dogan. And our Ambassador Jim Jeffrey will also be reaching out to the family soon. Clearly, we have obviously just learned about this. We are gathering information about what happened on the ship. We are also mindful that our citizen, Emily Henochowicz, has sustained a serious injury. She was involved in a West Bank protest. She is still in the hospital receiving proper treatment. We are aware that one additional American citizen had some injuries on board one of the ships and we are looking out for him as well.

We are in contact with the Israeli Government to obtain more information. We have made no decisions at this point on specific actions the United States Government will take. But as we've already stated, we expect the Israeli Government to conduct a prompt, impartial, credible, and transparent investigation that conforms to international standards and gets to all the facts surrounding this tragic incident.

We – as the Secretary has said, we are open to different ways of assuring a credible investigation, including international participation, and we continue to talk about these ideas with the Israelis and others. And

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meanwhile, we continue to evaluate how, together with the international community, we can expand the amount of assistance to the people of Gaza, and that is something we are looking into with our international partners.

QUESTION: What are the range of options that you can take related to this guy's death?

MR. CROWLEY: Well, we take the health and welfare of American citizens anywhere in the world seriously. It's our fundamental responsibility as a government. We will carefully evaluate all the information that we can gather about the circumstances of his death. And those facts will lead us wherever they lead to.

QUESTION: Do you have any information --

QUESTION: (Inaudible). Does the fact that an American was killed in this affect or change what you would like to see done in this case whether -- regarding the investigation and how that's carried out or otherwise?

MR. CROWLEY: I mean, we have taken this seriously from the moment that the -- we understood that this flotilla was being organized and that we understood both its ramifications for regional security and the fact that American citizens would be on board these vessels. We've had a number of conversations both with the Israeli Government and with others. In the weeks leading up to this, we have been very conscious of the ever-present danger of miscalculation when these kinds of situations and confrontations take place. So we have taken this seriously from the outset.

That said, the fact that -- and we've understood for a couple days that there were American citizens that had sustained injuries. But obviously, now that we understand that there has been the death of an American citizen, this will be something that we will evaluate carefully -- we take seriously given it is one of our fundamental responsibilities as a government.

QUESTION: Would you ask the Turks --

QUESTION: P.J. --

QUESTION: Would you ask the Turks --

QUESTION: Since 2005 -- the Israelis say since 2005 there have -- they have dealt with nine flotillas. This was the first time they had violence. Now, in the -- with the United States, did you also raise issues about previous flotillas? Was this one particularly flagged because you thought there were going to be Americans? What made you talk so seriously with the Israelis about this one flotilla?

MR. CROWLEY: I think we had an understanding that this was larger than previous efforts to bring humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. So we -- I think we understood that the -- there was a greater potential for a confrontation.

QUESTION: But you also talked about the presence of Americans. I think you just mentioned that in passing. Was that something that the United States was aware of, that there were going to be Americans? And if so, how did you know that?

MR. CROWLEY: A fair -- I don't know the answer to the second question. But I mean, we have a broader geopolitical interest in this issue and, obviously, we were conscious as we got closer to the launching of the flotilla that there would be American citizens involved as well.

QUESTION: P.J., would you ask the U.S. Embassy in -- or does the Embassy in Turkey -- why wouldn't they ask the Turks for the autopsy reports? I mean, the nine dead are all there, including the American.

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MR. CROWLEY: Well, I mean, from the outset, we've had consular officials in Israel in contact with Israeli authorities visiting hospitals. Our consular officials also visited the morgue, because we were looking to see -- ascertain, knowing that there were U.S. citizens on board these ships, if any American citizens were injured or killed in this incident. So -- and so we've been doing that from the outset. And we made contact with the family as soon as we learned today that one of those killed was a dual citizen.

QUESTION: P.J. --

QUESTION: What do we know about the cause of death?

MR. CROWLEY: Hmm?

QUESTION: What do we know about the cause of death of the American citizen?

MR. CROWLEY: The individual sustained -- I mean, I -- the injured -- our American citizen sustained gunshot wounds during this incident.

QUESTION: To the head?

QUESTION: To the head? Four shots to the head?

MR. CROWLEY: I --

QUESTION: He wasn't the one with the four to the head, was he?

QUESTION: Well, that's the reports, P.J., that he was four to the head and one to the body. Can you tell us what that tells you about the nature of the force that was used in --

MR. CROWLEY: I'm not -- we are looking into this. We are in conversation with the Israelis to get more information. As we've said all along, we're going to let facts govern our response. As we have said many, many times, we're going to be very cautious and prudent in how we approach this. So I'm not going to prejudge. We are aggressively trying to understand precisely what happened on that ship. And once we have more information, then we'll take appropriate steps based on that information.

QUESTION: Have you established as fact that this man sustained four bullet wounds to the head and one to the body?

MR. CROWLEY: I'm -- I've said all I'm going to say on that.

QUESTION: Was his family all in Turkey? Even though he is an American citizen, were the contacts -- consular contacts with his family in Turkey?

MR. CROWLEY: We had contact with his father today and he is a Turkish citizen. I can't make a broad statement about the rest of the family.

QUESTION: But the contacts so far have been in Turkey?

MR. CROWLEY: In Turkey.

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QUESTION: Did you at any point warn Turkish Government about the possible clash in the Mediterranean with this flotilla?

MR. CROWLEY: Again, all I'll say is that we had multiple contacts through multiple channels with the Israeli Government in the weeks leading up to the flotilla.

QUESTION: That was a question about the Turkish Government.

QUESTION: The Turkish Government.

MR. CROWLEY: Oh.

QUESTION: Did you inform Turkish Government about the possible clash?

MR. CROWLEY: I believe the answer is yes. I'm -- I'll -- yes.

QUESTION: Can you just confirm the comments that you made on the record to the *Post* about urging caution and restraint?

MR. CROWLEY: I think I just -- I basically have said that already. (Laughter.) We had multiple contacts with the Israeli Government in the weeks leading up to the flotilla. Understanding that civilians would be on those ships, including American citizens, we urged caution and restraint. And in fact, in previous episodes, that's precisely what Israel has done.

QUESTION: What about the flotilla that's on the way? The *Rachel Corrie*, I believe, is the name of the ship. What is -- what do you understand about it? Do you understand any Americans to be on board? And what contacts -- what steps are you taking to try and prevent a repeat --

MR. CROWLEY: We are in contact with multiple governments about vessels that may still be making their way towards Gaza.

QUESTION: Does that include the Irish?

MR. CROWLEY: Yes.

QUESTION: And what have you told the Irish?

MR. CROWLEY: Well, I mean, everybody has the same concern given what happened earlier this week. And as we have said all along, we are -- everyone wants to avoid a repetition of this tragic incident.

QUESTION: So is your advice to the Israelis the same now as it was apparently in the previous weeks to urge caution and restraint when responding to this one?

MR. CROWLEY: Yes.

QUESTION: It worked so well --

QUESTION: Are you prescribing any sort of other action since they didn't do that last time?

MR. CROWLEY: Again, Kirit, it's a fair question, but to what -- to some extent, it prejudices what we will all learn as we go through and ascertain more facts about precisely what happened. Clearly, there was a tragic

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confrontation on the high seas, and we deeply regret what's happened. We're looking into the circumstances. We all want to find a way to provide greater support to the people of Gaza, meet Israel's legitimate security interest, and avoid further loss of civilian life.

QUESTION: What I'm trying to understand is that given what's happened last time, how specific are you being with your advice to the Israelis this time?

MR. CROWLEY: Well, I mean, ultimately, governments are sovereign. Israel has very legitimate security concerns. They have their own policies in dealing with those security concerns. As a friend of Israel, we are providing them our perspective on how to best do this. But ultimately, these are decisions made by the Israeli Government. Only they can determine what they feel is best for their own security. We understand that.

QUESTION: Given the importance of this and the ease of which you can see whether Dogan's got four bullet wounds in the head, is it reasonable to assume the U.S. will be able to establish whether those reports are true or not in the next few hours?

MR. CROWLEY: I'm not sure I understand the question.

QUESTION: It seems to be important whether this person was shot four times in the head, which is clearly not a restrained way of dealing with anyone. Is - it's quite easy to establish whether someone's been shot four times in the head.

MR. CROWLEY: Well, again, we expect Israel to conduct a credible, prompt, transparent investigation of what happened on that ship. And we ourselves, in talking to Israel, are trying to gain greater information and perspective on what happened on the ship. And I'm not going to prejudge what information that is provided, what we learn ourselves, and what we do based on that information.

QUESTION: Do you want it to be international? I mean, you suggested - you kind of hinted at it - that you wanted an international component to the investigation.

MR. CROWLEY: Yeah, I mean, on the broader aspect, as we've said in the last couple of days, there are many, many countries that had citizens involved in this flotilla. We obviously are one of them. Everyone wants to understand what happened on that ship. Everyone wants to make sure - do everything possible to try to avoid this tragedy happening again. In trying to understand what happened on the ship, the investigation has to be credible. And we're open to a variety of ways of making that as credible as possible. Possible international involvement in the investigation is one way to accomplish that.

QUESTION: The Israelis still haven't announced an investigation despite the U.S. (inaudible) and in the UN Security Council over recent days. Are you disappointed by that? (Inaudible.)

MR. CROWLEY: I think we are confident that an investigation will take place.

QUESTION: The Turks themselves have been one of the countries that has asked to head an international investigation, while the Israelis, of course, are rejecting it. P.J., do you think the Israelis independently can conduct - can alleviate international concerns over the incident by conducting their own investigation?

MR. CROWLEY: Well, I mean, can Israel, as a vibrant democracy, with strong institutions of government, conduct a fair, credible, transparent investigation? The answer is yes. It is fully capable of doing that.

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QUESTION: P.J., the Secretary has said that the situation in Gaza is really unsustainable. What is the United States, looking forward, going to propose or what does the United States think should be the next step? If it is, in the U.S. opinion, unsustainable, what should be done? And how are you --

MR. CROWLEY: That's a process that we already have underway to evaluate how we can, working with Israel and other countries, expand the amount of and type of international assistance. In various meetings that we've had with world leaders, this has come up on a regular basis. The Secretary has commented on it on a regular basis. We have particular concern about and interest in construction materials that not only can help the people of Gaza sustain life, but actually improve their life on the ground.

We understand the security concerns that Israel has and we are going to be working with them, just as we have been pressing them for weeks and months to find a way to expand the amount of assistance that's provided on a regular basis to the people of Gaza. So we're going to redouble our efforts and see if there are other things that we can do and other things collectively the international community can do to increase that support while respecting and protecting Israel's legitimate security interests.

QUESTION: Should we interpret --

QUESTION: So when the Secretary -- I just want to make sure I understand. So when the Secretary talks about unsustainable, she's talking in a more direction fashion -- supplies, what people get in the situation in Gaza. She's not talking about a broader issue like what do you do with Gaza, should it remain part of Israel. I mean, some people in Israel say just put up a wall and make it separate.

MR. CROWLEY: I think what the Secretary is saying is that the current status quo is not sustainable. We don't think it's in Israel's long-term security interest to maintain the status quo. And we will be working with Israel and seeing if we can, together with the international community, others who have direct interest in what happens in Gaza, find ways to increase the amount of assistance while also protecting Israel's security interest.

QUESTION: Just to follow up on that, I want to make sure I understand this correctly. Should one interpret --

MR. CROWLEY: I've got to go in a couple of minutes.

STAFF: You're actually okay.

MR. CROWLEY: All right.

QUESTION: Should one interpret your comment that the current situation is not sustainable and that you believe it's not in Israel's interest to maintain the status quo -- should one interpret that to mean that you indeed have concluded that the blockade of Gaza simply isn't a good policy and you need another one? I mean, finding a way to get more goods in could mean that the blockade stays established -- you just get more stuff in there. So I want to make sure that we're -- is the blockade a bad policy?

MR. CROWLEY: It's a good question, Arshad. I -- Ambassador Michael Oren had an interesting piece today in *The New York Times*. And he mentioned in it that Israel has been victimized by more than 10,000 rockets that have been fired from Gaza into Israel, fired indiscriminately, and has threatened and killed Israeli citizens. Given that history and that reality, Israel has a very legitimate interest in being able to inspect and, to some extent, control the flow of materials into Gaza to make sure that that doesn't include further rockets, missiles, arms that pose a real threat to Israeli citizens. Israel feels that the blockade is the most effective way of doing that. We understand that.

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We also are very mindful of the humanitarian plight of the people of Gaza. And it is certainly possible that one can maintain the ability to control the flow of goods into Gaza so that Israel can be assured that the flow of goods does not include weapons that can threaten Israel directly, while expanding the amount of assistance, particularly construction materials, so that together the international community can help improve the lives of the average citizen of Gaza. We're also conscious of the legitimate interests that Israel has and the United States shares in isolating Hamas, which is a terrorist organization that has chosen not to join the peace process, has chosen not to recognize Israel, has chosen to fire rockets that jeopardize Israel's security, have chosen not to respect international agreements with respect to the peace process. Hamas has a choice it could make if it wanted to play a more constructive role in the region. It has chosen not to do that.

So it is quite a legitimate policy to find ways to improve the lives of the citizens of Gaza while isolating Hamas and protecting Israel's security. We're going to look with Israel to find out if there are improvements that can be made in the current practices so that more goods flow to the people of Gaza and fewer weapons.

As to how we're going to do that, those are the kinds of conversations we expect to have with Israel and with other interested countries in the coming days and weeks.

QUESTION: How does this incident affect the proximity talks? What's happening to them right now? I mean, George Mitchell is there.

MR. CROWLEY: I'm sorry, I'm stunned -- (laughter).

QUESTION: (Inaudible) talking about the length.

MR. CROWLEY: Oh. I'm far more coherent than the late senior senator from South Carolina.

QUESTION: How is the incident and the fallout affecting the proximity talks? George Mitchell is in the region.

MR. CROWLEY: George is in the region. I haven't been up to speed on his current activities today. We -- his activities are continuing. I think we still see ultimately this is the best route to avoid these kinds of confrontations in the future. Ultimately, direct negotiations are the only way to end the conflict. And so we would hope, and we've seen no evidence at this point, that the tragedy this week has affected proximity talks.

QUESTION: Has it --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) proximity talks, the Palestinians aren't really engaging on the issues because of this incident; isn't that right?

MR. CROWLEY: Actually, it's not right. We have had meetings already this week with Palestinian officials, including President Abbas. Now, the meeting with President Abbas was more about the Palestinian -- Palestine Investment Conference, but we would expect to have more meetings before -- this week before George comes back. And so as far as we're concerned, the proximity talks continue to move forward, and we think that is the right decision for Israel, the Palestinians, and other countries in the region to take.

QUESTION: Has it affected the timeline of UN debate on Iran?

MR. CROWLEY: No.

QUESTION: One more thing on the *Rachel Corrie* -- the next flotilla coming. Do you have any understanding about Americans on board that ship or others that may be accompanying it?

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MR. CROWLEY: I do not.

QUESTION: P.J., has anyone from the Embassy seen this guy's body?

MR. CROWLEY: Yes.

QUESTION: Yes? And who was that in the Embassy? Was it a consular person or was it an FBI liaison or DS?

MR. CROWLEY: I believe it's -- I'll take that question, but I think it was -- they were consular officials. Now, we went to the morgue in Israel, so as it turned out, we -- the first time we saw his body it was there at the -- at that time, we just did not know that he was a dual citizen.

QUESTION: Well --

QUESTION: P.J. --

QUESTION: -- so if you've seen the body then at least twice, why are you not able to say what kind of wounds --

MR. CROWLEY: I'm not going to characterize --

QUESTION: Are those the first time or the only time?

MR. CROWLEY: I know -- as it turned out, we saw the -- those who were killed on the ship in Israel. What we didn't know at the time was that it turned out one of them was a dual citizen.

QUESTION: Right. And subsequently, have you seen him?

MR. CROWLEY: Since he's been back in Turkey? I can't say. I don't think so.

QUESTION: And where is that body now?

MR. CROWLEY: I believe the family has the body and they are -- he's being shipped to their home town for burial.

QUESTION: Do you have any reason why --

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

QUESTION: (Inaudible) to ease the flow of goods necessarily require agreement from Hamas, and doesn't that look like a kind of remote possibility now?

MR. CROWLEY: I think we have ways of channeling goods through the Palestinian Authority, through NGOs, and also with the assistance of Israel and Egypt. So there are ways of getting assistance. I mean, I think we have projects underway in Gaza and we're going to evaluate if we -- if there's more that we can do.

QUESTION: Given the nature of these wounds could determine whether this person was killed in self-defense or (inaudible) execution?

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MR. CROWLEY: Again, we're trying to --

QUESTION: Is there some reason why you --

MR. CROWLEY: Again, I'm -- we're -- we will look into the circumstances of the death of an American citizen, as we would do anywhere in the world at all times. Let us try to determine as best we can what happened, and then once we have information, we'll evaluate what an appropriate course of action is.

QUESTION: Who from the American side is doing that? Who is doing the investigation on the U.S. side?

MR. CROWLEY: Right now, we're trying to ascertain facts. And then we have officials at a variety of levels here and in Israel are in contact with Israeli officials. We're finding out more information. We've had officials who have talked to the family.

QUESTION: Is the FBI involved?

MR. CROWLEY: At this point, no.

QUESTION: Have they done an autopsy?

MR. CROWLEY: I can't say. I don't -- I don't know what the Israelis did before they released the bodies back to Turkey.

QUESTION: I wanted to ask you -- Mahmoud Abbas recently sent a delegation to Gaza to talk to Hamas about a reconciliation between the PA and Hamas. Could you comment?

MR. CROWLEY: I mean, there are longstanding efforts led by Egypt to try to effect a reconciliation with Hamas. Among other things, the Palestinians are overdue for elections. They were supposed to take place early this year and they had to be rescheduled or delayed because Hamas has declined to participate in the electoral process. So we're not -- we certainly encourage efforts so that you can -- you have a unified government that is committed to the peace process. That has always been something that we think is beneficial.

QUESTION: Even though you've designated them as a terrorist group, you think it's --

MR. CROWLEY: Well, I'm not saying what the composition of that unified government would be. We have the red lines that the Quartet have laid out for quite some time about the rules under which we think people should be engaged in this process and we're open to any group that is willing to meet those conditions. But we recognize the importance and value of having a unified government that's willing to aggressively pursue peace. That -- and that's why we believe that government should be led by the Palestinian Authority. But like I say, there is a reconciliation process that we've had underway -- that has been underway for some time to see if -- and we would hope that that would strengthen the hand of the Palestinian Authority.

QUESTION: P.J., you said at this point now, the FBI is not involved. Under what circumstances would they get involved?

MR. CROWLEY: Well, again, let's let -- we're gathering facts about this case where a dual citizen has died during this incident. And based on those facts, we'll evaluate whether any further investigation is necessary.

QUESTION: P.J., can I ask --

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QUESTION: By who? By you, you mean? I mean, (inaudible) specifically said the FBI, and you said at this point no, suggesting that at some point they could be involved. And I'm wondering what it is that would trigger them --

MR. CROWLEY: Well, I mean, as to that judgment, you're welcome to talk to the FBI. But any time an American is killed overseas, we have the option of evaluating the circumstances and if we think a crime has been committed, then working with the host government we have the option of our own investigation. Let's not jump to any conclusions at this point. We're evaluating the facts as we can best ascertain them. And based on that evaluation of the information that's available, we have a variety of options that are available to us.

QUESTION: P.J., can I ask about the Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Davutoglu's meeting? Did at any point Turks give an ultimatum to the U.S. side about the freeing of the activists?

MR. CROWLEY: About the?

QUESTION: Freeing of the activists from the flotilla. Freeing of the --

MR. CROWLEY: As we've said, during the course of the meeting, Foreign Minister Davutoglu expressed the importance that Turkey attached to a return of its citizens, including those killed and injured. We understood fully that -- that concern. We conveyed that concern on Turkey's behalf to Israel, and Israel responded.

QUESTION: But what was the tone of Davutoglu? Was it an ultimatum? Was it friendly atmosphere? How was the interaction?

MR. CROWLEY: I mean, it just was --

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

MR. CROWLEY: This was a conversation among allies and friends. The foreign minister expressed very forcefully the importance that Turkey attached to resolving this quickly. He asked that we convey that to Israel. We did so. And we're gratified that Israel responded rapidly to those Turkish concerns.

QUESTION: Do you have an age and place of birth of the dual citizen?

MR. CROWLEY: He was born in New York.

QUESTION: New York City?

MR. CROWLEY: New York state. My understanding is he was 19 years old.

QUESTION: And where was he living? To your knowledge, was he living in Turkey?

MR. CROWLEY: Yes. I think he -- he was born in Troy, New York.

QUESTION: Can we change the topic?

MR. CROWLEY: Sure.

QUESTION: Okay, two quick things. One, did you ever get a comment on my question yesterday about the detained Kuwaiti blogger?

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MR. CROWLEY: Not yet. I --

QUESTION: Okay. And then --

MR. CROWLEY: I meant to bring that with me. (Inaudible) arrived before I came in.

QUESTION: And one other quick one. There's a report picked up by the BBC saying that a former aide to the chief of Iran's nuclear program, a man named Hossein Musavian, has asked for asylum in the United States. Is that true, or can you check on that?

MR. CROWLEY: I'll check on that.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: On India, will the United States grant the foreign minister's request this morning to get access to the American who was (inaudible) the Mumbai attacks?

MR. CROWLEY: It is an issue that we are discussing with India. During the course of our discussions here, counterterrorism cooperation is a significant priority for us. We are and have been working very closely with Indian authorities on our common threat. But as to that specific question, I'll defer to the Department of Justice.

QUESTION: Egyptian upper house elections yesterday -- the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights along with monitors from other groups have reported widespread irregularities. There's cases of vote buying. One candidate was apparently shot in the leg, yet the official electoral body, the High Elections Commission, announced that the vote went smoothly. What information do you have on the elections yesterday?

MR. CROWLEY: Well, we certainly support free and fair elections as a universal standard. We are concerned about reports of fraud and interference with the ability of some Egyptians to vote freely. We expect the Egyptian Government to take action to remedy any problems along with providing measures to ensure parliamentary elections next fall are free from similar problems. And we also have an interest in making sure that there is -- that the Egyptian Government facilitate credible monitoring of future elections.

QUESTION: Well, the high court said everything went smoothly. What steps do you foresee them taking? What steps do you see the government taking to ensure more effective elections?

MR. CROWLEY: I mean, there are some practical measures that can be taken. There were problems with access to polling stations both for voters, for election monitors. So the Egyptian Government has it within its power to improve on these clear challenges. As we've said many times, we -- there are practical issues regarding the execution of a particular election and there are broader issues on just opening up a political process to allow more candidates and more competitive elections. And these are issues that we continue to discuss on a regular basis with the Government of Egypt.

QUESTION: What time is the Secretary's press availability and how much time do we have to file or we get taken upstairs?

MR. CROWLEY: Yeah, I'm supposed to go up here --

STAFF: She's running a little bit late.

QUESTION: I was just thinking it's time we got out of here.

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QUESTION: Just one quick question on the Iran sanctions vote because there was a lot of expectations that it would be held as early as this week, but that's not happening. How close are you and how close are you to finishing the annexes?

MR. CROWLEY: We have work that is continuing. The Secretary had a conversation a short -- right before the Strategic Dialogue with India opened, the Secretary had a conversation with Foreign Minister Lavrov on this issue. Yesterday, Under Secretary Bill Burns had one of his regular conference calls with political directors among the P-5+1. So we continue to work very hard on this and we expect to meet the President's objective of concluding this by the end of spring, which I guess is June 21st.

QUESTION: Has the Secretary spoken to anybody -- back on the Israeli issue -- any senior Israeli officials in the last 24 or 36 hours?

MR. CROWLEY: Not to my knowledge.

QUESTION: Do you have any update on this lawyer in Rwanda?

MR. CROWLEY: Stand by. He's still in the hospital. I'm just looking --

QUESTION: Sorry. Who's this?

MR. CROWLEY: This is Peter Erlinder. We -- he's still in the hospital. We are still in touch with the Rwandan Government. We want to be sure that he is accorded all of his rights. We are in touch with him. His legal representatives are in touch with him. But we are pressing the Rwandan Government to resolve this case quickly and we would like to see him released on compassionate grounds.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: His family was seeking a meeting here today. Do you know if they got one?

MR. CROWLEY: I'll take that question. I don't know. We are obviously concerned about this and we are in direct conversation with the Rwandan Government to try to resolve this as quickly as possible.

QUESTION: P.J. --

QUESTION: Do you know -- is it correct that he tried to kill himself?

MR. CROWLEY: He is in a hospital. Beyond that, I'm not comfortable talking about the details.

QUESTION: P.J., do you have any comment on Senator Webb's cancellation of trip to Myanmar (inaudible)?

MR. CROWLEY: Obviously, we're aware that he chose not to go to Burma, but we'll defer to his office for comment.

QUESTION: How about the press allegations on Myanmar's nuclear connection to North Korea?

MR. CROWLEY: What?

QUESTION: Press allegation.

MR. CROWLEY: Of?

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QUESTION: Nuclear cooperation between Burma and North Korea.

MR. CROWLEY: Well, we are -- we have been concerned about Burma's relationship with North Korea, the transactions that occur between Burma and North Korea. We are very conscious that North Korea is a serial proliferator of dangerous materials and weapons, and this is something that we have expressed directly to Burma and that continues to be a major concern of ours.

QUESTION: Did you hear anything from Ambassador Susan Rice after her meeting with Mr. (inaudible) from South Korea regarding *Cheonan* issue and when they are bringing this issue --

MR. CROWLEY: If you call my colleague, Mark Kornblau, I'm sure he can give you a readout. I don't have one.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. CROWLEY: Thanks.

(The briefing was concluded at 2:18 p.m.)

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Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Lewis, Robert B.
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 7:24 PM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Telephone Numbers for Merchant Vessels
Attachments: CARGO MANIFEST img090.jpg

RELEASED IN FULL

Most vessels equipped with INMARSAT terminals can be contacted via landlines, INMARSAT or Skype. Please review the following website:

http://www.inmarsat.com/Services/Maritime/Ships_Directory/default.aspx

http://www.inmarsat.com/Services/Maritime/Ships_Directory/default.aspx?ShipName=rachel%20corrie

insert the name of any merchant vessel and the particulars should come up. The MV Rachel Corrie should be able to accept faxes and emails that do not contain attachments. Thanks for listening and have a great day.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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Austin Mathews Shipping Services Ltd
Dundalk
Ireland

Phone: +353 (0)42 93 38169
Fax: +353 (0)42 93 32400
amsstd@eircom.net

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CARGO MANIFEST

M.V. RACHEL CORRIE Flag: CAMBODIA Loading Port: DUNDALK
Discharge Port: GAZA CITY

Bill of Lading	Shippers	Consignees	custom status	remarks	Description Of Cargo	Weight KGS
1	FG Human Rights Projects LTD	FG Human Rights Projects LTD 9 Priory Road Harolds Cross Dublin 6 Ireland			Bagged Cement	550,000
					Printing Paper	20,000
					School Supplies/Books	25,000
					Toys	12,000
					Medical Equipment	150,000
					TOTAL LOADED	757,000

Austin Mathews Shipping Services Ltd
17 MOURNE VALE
AVENUE ROAD, DUNDALK
DU2 9338169

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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B78

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Goldberg, Joshua W
 Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 6:12 PM
 To: SES-O
 Cc: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
 Subject: Situation Report No.8 - Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group MGGZ01 (SBU Version)
 Attachments: oledata.mso

RELEASED IN PART

B6

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED



EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

SITUATION REPORT No. 8 Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group MGGZ01

Thursday, June 3, 2010
1800 EDT

STATUS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS

- (SBU) A family member confirmed that 19 year-old Turkish-American citizen, Furkan Dogan, was among those killed on the MAVI MARMARA. (MGGZ01/Embassy Ankara e-mail)
- (SBU) Embassy officials located previously unaccounted for Israeli-American citizen, [redacted] in Ramallah. Eight American citizens departed from Tel Aviv to Istanbul, another to Athens, and two to Jordan. (MGGZ01/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

B6

STATUS OF FOREIGN PASSENGERS

- (U) The Israeli Foreign Ministry announced three activists from Ireland, Australia, and Italy remain in Israel for "technical reasons," without providing any further information. Seven additional activists are still hospitalized in Israel. (Israel Radio News)
- (SBU) Israel turned over 120 detainees from Muslim and Arab countries to Jordan. (Amman 1231)

OTHER SHIPS EN ROUTE TO GAZA

(U) Media report the Israeli Navy intends to board the RACHEL CORRIE if necessary, but released no additional specifics. (Ma'ariv)

STATUS OF HUMANITARIAN GOODS

(SBU) Truckloads of goods arrived in Kerem Shalom but have not entered Gaza. UNRWA and ICRC are waiting for permission from Turkey to secure the items. Hamas is disallowing any further entry of goods into the area. (MGGZ01/Special Envoy for Middle East Peace e-mail)

ISRAELI RESPONSE

(U) Media report Israel decided to release flotilla detainees immediately in order to help the United States garner support for UN sanctions against Iran. (ynetnews.com)

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- (SBU) Arab League: Foreign ministers agreed to ask the UN Security Council to urge an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza.
(MGGZ01/Embassy Riyadh e-mail)
- (U) UN: Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, condemned Hamas for raiding NGO offices in Gaza City and the Rafah crossing.
(MGGZ01/Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process e-mail)
- (SBU) A June 3 International Maritime Organization (IMO) meeting was interrupted by Cuba, Indonesia, Syria, and Venezuela condemning Israeli actions. Turkey is expected to push for official IMO condemnation of Israel at the June 7 meeting.
(MGGZ01/Bureau of International Organization Affairs e-mail)

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

- (U) Turkey: PM Erdogan said full restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel was contingent upon ending Israel's blockade of Gaza. *(nytimes.com)*
- (U) South Africa: The ambassador to Israel was recalled June 3. *(ynetnews.com)*
- (U) Ecuador: The ambassador to Israel was recalled June 3. *(washingtonpost.com)*
- (U) EU: The European Jewish Congress called on the EU to ban the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH) and other "terrorist front organizations" *(European Jewish Congress press release)*
- (U) Saudi Arabia: Flotilla discussions interrupted meetings between a U.S. Congressional delegation and members of the Saudi business community at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry on June 2.
(Saudi Gazette, Al-Watan, Shams)
- (U) UK: Former FS Miliband restated the British call for an end to the blockade as the only way to limit Hamas' control over the region.
(MGGZ01/Embassy of the United Kingdom to the United States e-mail)
- (SBU) Australia: PM Rudd called for an independent inquiry and an easing of the blockade.
(MGGZ01/Embassy of Australia to the United States e-mail)

Additional updates on the Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group are available through our classified website at <http://ses.state.gov.gov>

Drafted: KFrellich/JGroeblicher
Dist: State (all bureaus), NSS, OSD, NMCC, JCS, CIA, OSC, NCTC, DHS, DNI

Approved: RWThomas

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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StateDept01474

1280

RELEASED IN FULL

From: Riley, Robert J
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
CC: Cohen, Jonathan R; EUR-SE-DAR-DL; Kaidanow, Tina S
Subject: Report from Embassy Nicosia on Challenger II and III
Sent: 6/3/2010 3:52:58 PM

I just got off the phone with Embassy Nicosia, which we asked to check into the reports a ship may have departed Limassol, Cyprus possibly ert Gaza. Embassy spoke directly with Cypriot Marine Police, which reported the following:

- Challenger III remains in Limassol, is seriously damaged and will take an estimated month to repair. There are currently no captain, crew or passengers aboard the ship. As they have stated previously, Cypriots have no intention of allowing ship depart for Gaza.
- Challenger II, a different ship, is damaged and anchored in the Med outside of Cypriot territorial waters. Cypriot marine police do not believe it is seaworthy.
- Previously, upon learning of the Challenger III's potential for involvement with the Gaza Flotilla, Embassy Consular Officers asked Cypriot authorities for a briefing on the ship's status, crew and passengers to protect any Amcits potentially aboard. It was then that the Cypriots informed Embassy that there were no Amcits on board and the GoC had no intention of allowing the ship to depart for Gaza. Embassy officers of course agreed with the GoC's course of action and thanked them for the briefing.

Robert J. Riley
Deputy Director
Office of Southern European Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Tel: 202-647-5120
rileyri@state.gov

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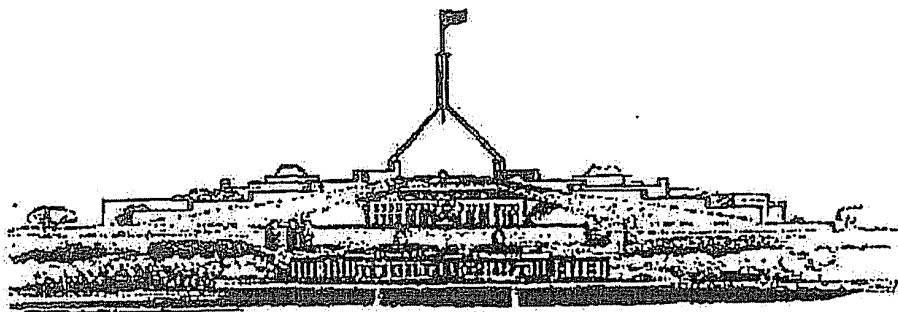
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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Middle East

QUESTION

Tuesday, 1 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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StateDept01476

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Tuesday, 1 June 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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QUESTION

Date Tuesday, 1 June 2010
Page 3
Questioner Vamvakinou, Maria, MP
Speaker

Source House
Proof Yes
Responder Smith, Stephen, MP
Question No.

Middle East

Ms VAMVAKINO (Calwell) (2.19 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister advise the House of the Australian government's response to the incident yesterday between the Israeli navy and a flotilla of vessels attempting to make its way to Gaza?

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (Perth—Minister for Foreign Affairs)—I thank the member for her question, and I know that all members of the House will be both interested and concerned about this matter. This is a terrible and shocking incident, a terrible and shocking event, and I think many Australians will be shocked by it. I will deal firstly with the safety and welfare of Australian citizens and an Australian permanent resident who have been caught up in this matter. I deal firstly with the *Sydney Morning Herald* photographer and journalist, Kate Geraghty and Paul McGeough. Kate Geraghty is an Australian citizen; Paul McGeough is a permanent resident of Australia but is understood to be an Irish citizen and travelling on an Irish passport. I make that point, which I would not normally make public, because it is important as it goes to contra assistance and access.

I indicate that both Ms Geraghty and Mr McGeough are to be transferred from the city of Ashdod to the Beersheba detention centre. Australian officials have been advised that, in the case of Ms Geraghty, consular access will be granted in the course of today, Tel Aviv time. In the case of Mr McGeough, Australian officials have been advised that Irish officials will be granted the same consular access. Australian officials have taken the opportunity, as you would expect, of underlining with Irish officials our very keen interest in the wellbeing of this Australian permanent resident, who would be, as he is to me, well known to many members of the House. So we expect that in the case of Ms Geraghty, so far as Australian officials are concerned, and the case of Mr McGeough, so far as Irish officials are concerned, consular access will be given in the course of the day, Tel Aviv time. In the meantime, I am advised that the welfare of Ms Geraghty and Mr McGeough has been confirmed.

I made public this morning that there is an Australian citizen, an Australian man, who has been injured through a gunshot wound to the leg. He has undergone

surgery and is currently in hospital. He has been visited by Australian officials in hospital, and Australian officials will continue to provide consular assistance to him. I can advise the House that two Australian women, who were also on board one of the flotilla vessels, are being detained at the Beersheba detention centre. As is the case with detained Australian nationals, Australian officials will be granted consular access to these two women in the course of today, Tel Aviv time.

I indicate to the House that Australian officials are working assiduously with Israeli officials in Canberra, Tel Aviv and New York—working assiduously not just on the matter generally but also to seek to ascertain whether there are any other Australians who have been caught up in this incident. I can advise the House that to date Australian officials have received no information or evidence which would suggest that any other Australians have been killed or injured in this terrible matter. Our officials continue to work very closely with Israeli officials in that respect.

That deals with consular matters. Can I make some remarks in the House so far as this terrible and shocking event is concerned. The Australian government very strongly believes that the onus is now on Israel to conduct a credible and transparent investigation into this matter. That investigation should of course be subject to the scrutiny of the international community. The Security Council, as we speak, is dealing with this matter and may well later in the night, New York time, issue a statement in respect of these matters. What is required is a transparent and credible investigation by Israel which will be the subject of, obviously, the international community's scrutiny and which, in Australia's view, should appropriately be the subject of Security Council consideration.

The Australian government's policy position on the blockade of aid or humanitarian assistance to Gaza is well known. We believe there should be an easing of the blockade to enable aid and humanitarian assistance to be delivered to Gaza. We have made that point both to Israel and also in the most recent open session of the Security Council on this matter in October of last year. Australian officials will continue to work closely with Israeli officials on consular matters. We will of course continue to put our view to Israel at officials

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Tuesday, 1 June 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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level in Canberra, Tel Aviv and New York. We await the deliberations of the Security Council.

While it may well be the case that an easing of the blockade would help prevent such terrible events occurring in the future, I think all members of the House would have the view that the only long-term, enduring solution to such matters is a long-term, enduring peace in the Middle-East. Such a peace can only be based, can only be predicated, on a two-state solution. That is why not just this Australian government but Australian governments of both political persuasions consistently have been very strong supporters of the peace process and very strong supporters of a two-state solution, and the Australia government urges all of the parties to engage as quickly as possible in the proposed proximity talks.

The **SPEAKER**—I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, on a brief indulgence.

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MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
STEPHEN SMITH, MP

3 June 2010

TRANSCRIPTION: PROOF COPY E & OE

Transcript: Interview by Ashleigh Gillon with Foreign Minister Stephen Smith, Lunchtime Agenda, Sky New Australia

Main Topic: Gaza flotilla incident, Australian women in Yemen, US President Obama's visit, Fiji, deportation of Sheikh Monsour Leghaei, federal election, shooting in Britain

ASHLEIGH GILLON: Some of the Australians who were caught up in the Gaza flotilla crisis have now been deported from Israel to Istanbul. It comes as another boat threatens to break Israel's Gaza blockade.

I spoke with the Foreign Minister, Stephen Smith, a short time ago.

Minister, thank you for your time.

STEPHEN SMITH: Pleasure.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: Four Australians caught up in that Gaza flotilla crisis have now been deported from Israel to Istanbul. What's the next step? Are they due back in Australia soon?

STEPHEN SMITH: In the last hour or so, the two Sydney Morning Herald employees - Paul McGeough, the journalist, and Kate Geraghty, the photographer - have arrived in Istanbul. They were met there by our Consul-General. I'm advised that they're safe and well and it'll now be a matter for them as to when they return to Australia but they're now in the company of Australian officials.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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Mr Talib, who is suffering from the gunshot wound, remains in hospital. It's expected that he'll be in hospital for several days but once he's fit to travel he will also leave Israel.

One of the Australian women has chosen to remain in the detention centre until he is fit to travel. There's obviously a relationship between those two.

The second Australian woman, we expect to arrive in Istanbul in the course of today and we have an official at the airport awaiting her arrival.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: The Prime Minister said he requested that Mr Netanyahu closely observe the process involving Australians. Has that happened? Are you pleased with the way Australians have been handled post-this crisis?

STEPHEN SMITH: To date we've got nothing to express concern about. We just want to wait until we've got all of the Australians safely at hand, so to speak, and then we'll have a careful review of the consular arrangements.

We were pleased, of course, that we were given consular access, including whilst there was no legal or diplomatic obligation, including to Mr McGeough who is a permanent resident rather than an Australian citizen. We'll have a close look at that after the event. For the moment we're now awaiting the arrival of an Australian woman at Istanbul airport and, on her arrival she'll be met by one of our officials, and the other two will remain in Israel pending Mr Talib being in a fit state to travel.

REPORTER: Another ship crewed by activists is now apparently on its way to try to break that blockade. How would you hope the Israeli authorities deal with that case?

STEPHEN SMITH: We would hope that given the terrible events of the last couple of days that all parties exercise commonsense and restraint. The last thing we want to see is a repetition of the shocking events of the last couple of days. So we would hope that everyone in the area - everyone - exercises restraint and approaches these matters in a calm way.

REPORTER: Were you disappointed that Israel has played down calls for the need for an internal inquiry?

STEPHEN SMITH: Our position, the Australian position, has not changed and our position has been reflected by the Security Council statement. We continue to believe, as I've said publicly, as the Prime Minister has said publicly, and as was the subject of a conversation between him and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, that Israel now needs to conduct a credible and transparent investigation so that the facts are there for all to see and for that to be subject to the scrutiny of the international community.

That's in Israel's interests as well as the international community's interests.

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REPORTER: On another matter, an Australian woman has been taken into custody in Yemen over alleged links to Al-Qaeda. What information do you have about this and is the Government doing anything to help her?

STEPHEN SMITH: There are two aspects to it. Firstly, as was indicated in Senate Estimates yesterday, on the advice of the Director-General of ASIO, I cancelled her passport a couple of weeks ago. That was on security grounds and I'm not, for all of the obvious reasons, proposing to go further than that.

She has two young children, we don't have an Embassy in the Yemen, but we've sent an officer from Saudi Arabia, from Riyadh, to render consular assistance.

We have put the view to the Yemen authorities that the wishes of the mother in respect of the children should be followed. And her wish is for the children to be cared for by family friends or for the children to return to Australia, and we're urging that upon the Yemeni authorities.

We believe the best outcome is for the children to be given their passports, they have their own passports, and for them to return to Australia and we're urging that upon the Yemeni authorities.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: Did Australia give the Yemeni authorities any information about this woman that could have led to her arrest?

STEPHEN SMITH: I'm not proposing to go into any of the matters that would go to the security information or arrangements in place. I have been happy to confirm on the public record that, as was indicated in Senate Estimates by officials, that on the advice of the Director-General of ASIO I cancelled her passport.

We are concerned to make sure that everything we can do to have her wishes respected so far as her young children are concerned are met and we're working very hard with the Yemeni authorities on that point. We've made it clear to them that we frankly see no reason why the children should not be allowed to return on their own passports to Australia.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: The US President is, of course, dealing with the BP oil spill. Is there a risk that President Obama's visit to Australia later this month will be cancelled?

STEPHEN SMITH: We, of course, want him to come. We understood the reasons for his deferral on the previous occasion but in these matters we always await the official advice of the White House as to the detailed arrangements for any trip. So...

ASHLEIGH GILLON: But how likely is it, do you think, that he won't be coming?

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STEPHEN SMITH: I'm not going to get into a guessing game. In all of these matters any visit by the United States President is a matter for the White House to announce the details of that. We've made it clear that whenever the President wants to visit Australia of course he will be welcomed not just by the Government but by the Parliament and the Australian people.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: A much more fraught relationship is with Fiji. You held meetings this week with several of your Pacific counterparts about the ongoing problems with that country. As Foreign Minister, have you managed to make any progress at all in convincing Fiji to hold democratic elections?

STEPHEN SMITH: Well the meeting in Auckland, was a meeting of the Fiji Ministerial Contact Group which is chaired by Tonga, chaired by the Tongan Prime Minister who is also the Foreign Minister, and had representatives either Foreign Ministers or Ministers from Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tuvalu.

We received a report from the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, and that essentially detailed what I'd said publicly which was, if anything, since the last time the Contact Group met things had gone backwards in Fiji in an economic sense, in a political sense, in a freedom of speech sense.

So we continue to be very concerned. We very much want to continue a dialogue with Fiji to try and bring Fiji to democracy.

Since the meeting, Commodore Bainimarama has said that neither Australia nor New Zealand is welcome. There are two points about that. Firstly, that's very disappointing and deeply regrettable. Secondly, this is not about Australia, this is about the Pacific Islands Forum establishing a Ministerial Contact Group chaired by Tonga, with broad representation from the Forum, wanting to engage in a dialogue. The problem is we can't force a dialogue upon Commodore Bainimarama or Fiji. A dialogue has got to be two-way, it can't be one-way.

But we continue to want to engage with Fiji because it's not in Fiji's interests, either economically or socially, to continue to be under the rule of a military regime. It's important to Fiji, important to the Pacific Islands Forum, important to our region that Fiji return to democracy.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: Outside Parliament House today, bus loads of people are arriving to protest the deportation of Sheikh Monsour. What is your message to those people out there today?

STEPHEN SMITH: They are perfectly entitled, obviously, to express their point of view. One of the things we pride ourselves on in Australia is the right to freedom of expression and the right to do that in a peaceful and peaceable way. So they're perfectly entitled to put their point of view.

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The Minister for Immigration, Senator Evans, has indicated publicly that he's proposing to effect his deportation on security grounds. I understand that there is cooperation between him [Sheikh Monsour] and the Commonwealth on this point. People are perfectly entitled to put a view about a Government decision but Senator Evans has made a decision on security grounds to deport him.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: So when the UN wrote to the Immigration Minister requesting that he not be deported, the UN was wrong?

STEPHEN SMITH: The UN is entitled to express its point of view. It's not a point of view which binds Australia legally in any way. Obviously we always give consideration to what a United Nations point of view might be. But, in the end, Senator Evans has made it clear that he is proposing to deport him on security grounds. And we are always, as we should be, as we have to be, very diligent, very conscientious and very vigilant about our security requirements and our security needs.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: Several retiring MPs are delivering their valedictory speeches today in parliament. Should we see that as a hint that the election will be called before Parliament is due to resume in August?

STEPHEN SMITH: This is the standard practice that about this time when there is a prospect of an election that the valedictories occur in the course of the...

ASHLEIGH GILLON: Do you think an election will be called before parliament resumes in August?

STEPHEN SMITH: Well, there's only one person who knows that, and it's not me. But what we do want to make sure from a Parliamentary point of view is that those retiring members don't miss their chance, and that's why the opportunity is afforded to them in the course of the Budget session to make their valedictory remarks.

What we do know is the election will be in the course of the second half of this year and...

ASHLEIGH GILLON: And you're not going to tell us more than that.

STEPHEN SMITH: Well, if I knew, I wouldn't tell you.

There's only one person who might know and I suspect he hasn't made a judgement about that.

What we do know is that we're going to have an election in the course of this year and at some point in the cycle the starter's gun will be fired and the community after four weeks will make their judgement.

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ASHLEIGH GILLON: Just finally on a much sadder note, has Australia expressed its condolences to Britain over the shootings overnight?

STEPHEN SMITH: I haven't had the opportunity of doing that personally with Foreign Secretary William Hague but at opening of business our High Commissioner will express, on Australia's behalf, our condolences to the British people. It's a terrible tragic event. We have been on the receiving end in Australia of comparable terrible tragedies, and so our thoughts and our hearts go out to them and to the families and friends and loved ones of the people who have been killed.

So it's a terrible day for the United Kingdom. We have great historical and people-to-people links. There are so many of us who have travelled or studied or worked there, and there are many of us who have been to the areas where the atrocities occurred. So it's a bad day for the United Kingdom, for the British people, and our hearts and our thoughts are with them.

ASHLEIGH GILLON: Foreign Minister, thanks for your time.

STEPHEN SMITH: Thanks very much.

END

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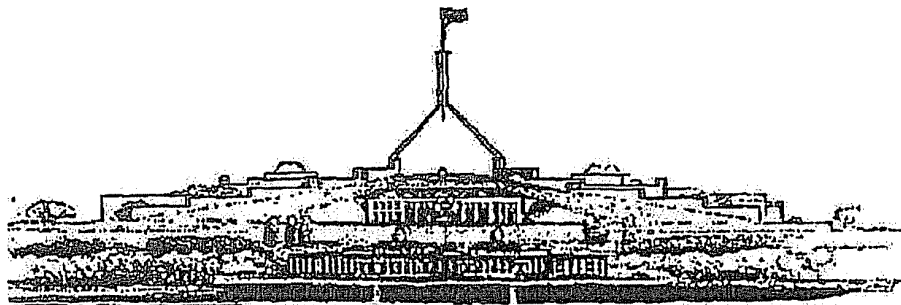
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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Middle East

QUESTION

Wednesday, 2 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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StateDept01485

QUESTION

Date Wednesday, 2 June 2010
 Page 48
 Questioner Bevis, Arch, MP
 Speaker

Source House
 Proof Yes
 Responder Rudd, Kevin, MP
 Question No.

Middle East

Mr BEVIS (Brisbane) (2.03 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House in relation to the incident yesterday between the Israeli navy and a flotilla of vessels attempting to make its way to Gaza?

Mr RUDD (Griffith—Prime Minister)—I thank the member for Brisbane for his question. Last night I spoke to the Prime Minister of Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu. He had just returned from his visit to Canada and was about to go into a cabinet meeting to discuss the incident that the honourable member's question refers to. I set out the framework in which Australia views this tragedy in my discussion with the Prime Minister, and reflected Australia's deep concerns over the recent military operation off Gaza.

Consistent with the public remarks made both by myself and by the foreign minister yesterday, I indicated that the Australian government was deeply concerned at the loss of life and injuries that had occurred as part of the IDF operation; furthermore, that deaths in these circumstances are deeply disturbing and of deep concern to the Australian people; and, furthermore, that Israel should mount an independent inquiry into the incident so that all the facts can be established and an informed judgment made about the events surrounding the incident of Monday. Furthermore, I reiterated that the Australian government's position was that more needs to be done to ensure a reasonable continuing supply of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. Australia recognises the unique security challenges that the government of Israel faces from the government of Iran, the state of Iran, and the terrorist organisations which the Iranians support. Australia remains sensitive to the security concerns of Israel. Australia is nonetheless deeply concerned by the loss of life in this most recent military action off Gaza.

The government gives the highest priority to the welfare of Australians caught up in this incident. The Australian embassy in Israel has been in close contact with Israeli authorities concerning the welfare and safety of the Australians who have been involved. I can advise the House that Australian officials have been granted access to all known Australians from vessels in the flotilla and that officials have provided

consular assistance to those Australians. Yesterday embassy officials visited the three Australians and one permanent resident currently at the Beersheba detention centre, where people on the flotilla have been taken. Also yesterday an Australian embassy official made a second consular visit to an injured Australian man in an Israeli hospital. We have been advised that consular access will be provided again to the Australians at the Beersheba detention centre today, 2 June. We have also been advised that all those detained can request access to lawyers.

Our embassy officials are working with detained Australians and Israeli authorities on the appropriate way forward for each Australian given their specific circumstances. We continue to seek confirmation that no other Australians were on board. Furthermore, I requested of Prime Minister Netanyahu last night that he personally engage on the matter concerning the wellbeing of these Australians and these Australian permanent residents. The Prime Minister indicated he would do so.

The events of Monday have generated protests in a number of countries around the world. Australia has been no exception. Australia has a deep commitment to the right of Australians to protest and to express their views on subjects of their choice. Whatever the issue Australians have that right. That protest, however, needs to be undertaken peacefully and in a manner which does not incite or provoke violence or lead any community to feel under threat within our country, Australia. At times like this, when passions are aroused, it is important that our communities understand that protest activity needs to be peaceful and undertaken in a way that does not fray the threads that make our society the strong fabric that it is. This is Australia. All protest activity must be undertaken peacefully, and in relation to individual communities within Australia none of those communities should be left feeling under threat.

Australia has a very strong relationship with Israel, a relationship that goes back to the founding of the Israeli state and Australia's vote at the United Nations in 1947, which was the first cast in support of the establishment of the state of Israel, under the Chifley Labor government. We are friends. At times, however, the role of friends is to speak plainly, and that is what

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Wednesday, 2 June 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Australia has done on this occasion in relation to this matter.

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386

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Bernier-Toth, Michelle
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 11:35 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Status of U.S. Citizens with Gaza Flotilla

RELEASED IN PART

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From ACS Tel Aviv. Please note that Embassy Ankara has confirmed the death of Furkan Dogan, the 19-year old dual national, via his family in Turkey. Post has been in contact with Dogan's father, who identified his son's remains following their repatriation to Turkey. Embassy Tel Aviv had been trying to locate Dogan among the detainees since being notified of his participation in the flotilla. Dogan's father has released his son's name to the media.

Tel Aviv -

1. Very early this morning, CONS confirmed through MFA the departure of eight Amcits to Istanbul and one Amcit to Athens. The nine left from Ben Gurion Airport on aircraft sent by the Greek and Turkish governments. Consular access was not permitted at BGA. Onward transportation was to be the responsibility of each traveler. Many inquiries were received concerning [redacted] an activist who has been arrested previously in Israel. He showed signs of bruising all over his body when visited by Conoff on June 2. He alleges mistreatment and has publicized his condition to Physicians for Human Rights and to the media. B6
2. Post learned this afternoon that one of the deceased whose remains were returned to Turkey at the same time was that of Furkan Dogan, a 19-year-old Turkish American who we had been trying to locate for several days. He is listed on the manifest of the Mavi Marmara as a Turkish citizen. Post does not know of any American citizens who participated in the flotilla who remain in detention. We have no information on three possible Amcits [redacted] None of them are listed on the Mavi Marmara manifest.
3. CONS has requested that MFA provide guidance on how American citizens can seek to reclaim property confiscated by the GOI. One Amcit reported his suitcase was left on board the vessel he jump from; others had property confiscated at processing and they were given numbers to assist in reclaiming. We will provide guidance when available and will contact the Amcits directly.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARONE AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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StateDept01488

The Free Gaza Movement

Breaking the Siege of Gaza

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Email: friends@freegaza.org

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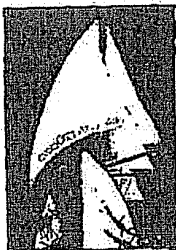
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Sunday, 25 April 2010

Professor Richard Falk
UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in
The Occupied Palestinian Territory

Dear Professor Falk,

Greetings from the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I hope this note finds you well. I am writing to update you on the plans of the Free Gaza Movement to launch an international Flotilla to Gaza and to request your assistance.

Since we launched our two small fishing boats to challenge Israel's near hermetic closure of the Gaza Strip in August 2008, the idea of challenging Israel's illegal blockade via the sea has grown. Next month the Free Gaza Movement, in collaboration with four other organizations from the UK, Turkey, Greece and Sweden will launch an eight-vessel flotilla to Gaza that will include three cargo ships carrying building materials and educational supplies, as well as medical equipment, water filtration materials and more. We will be joined by 600 parliamentarians, artists, journalists and human rights campaigners from around the world.

Professor Falk, in order to increase support of international bodies for this mission and to preempt arguments that our supplies will be used by Hamas to attack Israel, we would like to ask your office to create a certification team to assure transparency for delivery of the Flotilla cargo and its use.

Donna Baranski-Walker, Executive Director of the Rebuilding Alliance, is uniquely qualified to lead such a team. We have already received invitations from UNRWA to facilitate Donna's entry into Gaza from Rafah, and from the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, the Palestinian Network of NGOs for collaboration. We also have contact with the government's coordinating committee for reconstruction.

The UN certification team that we are requesting would undertake to:

- Receive clear bills of lading, inspected and certified at ports of departure;
- Put in place a good plan for unloading the cargo ship and insuring secure storage upon arrival in Gaza port;
- Liaise with the government to ensure understanding and respect for the planned use of the rebuilding equipment;
- Have an inspection process to certify that materials were used as stated.

We believe this level of transparency will maximize support for the Flotilla, as well as encourage a diplomatic push to end the strangulating blockade on Gaza. The creation of a UN certification team will also enhance the Flotilla's stature in the diplomatic community and make it all the safer for everyone involved.

Sincerely Yours,

Huwaida Arraf, Chairperson
huwaida@freegaza.org

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1389

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Casteel, Ezra A.
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 11:10 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: (Reuters) Aid ship sailing towards Gaza, prefers UN escort

RELEASED IN FULL

DUBLIN (Reuters) - The aid ship MV Rachel Corrie expects to arrive in Gaza by the morning of June 5 if given clear passage by Israel, just days after another aid vessel was boarded by Israeli commandos who killed nine people. It is carrying 15 activists including a northern Irish Nobel Peace laureate and is 280 miles away from Gaza. Israel offered to escort the vessel and deliver the civilian aid for it and said Egypt was prepared to do the same. Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Israel would not allow its Gaza blockade to be breached.

Ezra Casteel
S/ES-O Operations Specialist
202.647.1512

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

Page 1 of 1

RELEASED IN FULL

1392

From: Carle, Lisa M
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
CC: Berndt, Jeremy R; Ziadeh, Susan L; Smith, James B; Treiber, Laird D (NEA/I-ASSIST)
Subject: Saudi Special Media Reaction to Gaza Flotilla incident .docx
Sent: 6/3/2010 10:08:02 AM
Attachments: Second Special Media Reaction to Gaza Flotilla incident .docx [Second Special Media Reaction to Gaza Flotilla incident .docx]
FYI, more Saudi media reaction.

*Lisa M. Carle
Counselor for Political Affairs*

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CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

Printed By: Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)
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B92A

2nd Special Media Reaction to Gaza Flotilla Incident on May 31, 2010

SUMMARY: Several papers, television, and radio continued to devote prominent coverage to reaction to the Gaza Flotilla incident. Saudi officials continued to denounce the attacks and newspaper commentaries expressed skepticism about seeing an appropriate response from the U.S. and the international community as a whole. Bloggers made negative comments about local reaction, expressed skepticism that any significant action would be taken in regard to the incident, and criticized officials for neglecting internal matters while focusing on Israel. END SUMMARY.

Sample Headlines:

"Another Aid Ship to Challenge Israel"- *Arab News*, June 2; "Outrage" - *Saudi Gazette*, June 2

Media Coverage:

Geneva, June 02, 2010, SPA--

- Saudi Ambassador to UN Describes Israeli Attack on Freedom Flotilla as "Massacre"
 - Saudi Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Dr. Abdulwahab Attar, described Israel's attack as "a flagrant violation of international law," in which "Israel recorded its lack of respect for civilian lives."
 - During an emergency session held here on Tuesday by the Human Rights Council for discussion of the Israeli attack on the convoy, he called on the international community to carry out its responsibilities to put an end to "barbaric" Israeli policies.

Makkah, June 02, 2010, SPA--

- MWL Affiliate Condemns Israeli "Heinous Aggression" on Gaza Aid Flotilla
 - The International Forum for Muslim scholars and thinkers, an affiliate of the Muslim World League (MWL) condemned Israeli aggression against Gaza Aid Flotilla.
 - The statement urged the Muslim countries and organizations to extend support to the people of Gaza and called on charitable organizations to provide the people of Gaza with the required food materials and medical supplies.

QR June 2, 2010 -

- *Saudi NSHR condemns Israeli "state terrorism," demands prosecution:* The National Society for Human Rights in Saudi Arabia considers the (Flotilla) attack to be a "war crime," "an act of piracy," and "state terrorism," as well as a violation of all laws, norms, humanitarian treaties and international conventions. The society encouraged the international community and organizations related to human rights to condemn Israel and bring officials who ordered and carried out this criminal act to justice (*Al-Riyadh*, pg. 6).

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- **Saudi Red Crescent condemns Israeli massacre and calls for international action:** Head of the Saudi Red Crescent Authority Prince Faisal bin Abdullah issued telegrams of condemnation and denunciation to the President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, calling on authorities of various international humanitarian organizations to carry out their humanitarian and international duties and denounce the "flagrant Israeli aggression against the unarmed civilians in violation of international law and humanitarian law" (*Al-Riyadh*, pg. 13).

QR, June 3, 2010 –

- **Freedom Flotilla disturbs a U.S. – Saudi economic meeting at the JCCI:** Several papers reported that the Israeli raid on the Freedom Flotilla dominated and disturbed a meeting between a visiting U.S. Congressional delegation and members of the Saudi business community at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) on Wednesday. Attempts by the U.S. delegation not to discuss the issue were in vain, as Saudi businessmen and businesswomen insisted that the continuous U.S. support of the "Israeli aggression" in the region would have a direct impact on the sales of American products. Saudi businessmen said the priority for them is to have peace in the region which will allow all countries to prosper economically. A young Saudi businessman, Ahmad Mustafa Sabri, who appeared in the much talked about recent MTV documentary "True Life," said that every topic should be open for discussion in a house of commerce. Sabri added, "We are not going to talk about business while our brothers are being killed" (*Saudi Gazette*, pg. 2; *Al-Watan* and *Shams*, pg. 1).

Editorials:

QR, June 2, 2010 –

- A skeptical editorial in *Al-Watan* argued: "Gradually, in light of the UNSC resolution, the focus will be on releasing detained activists of the Freedom Flotilla ships, not on the Palestinian people who are under siege in Gaza. With the start of the usual investigations and establishing of investigation committees, eventually doubts will be cast on their findings. The issue will then be closed and the Palestinian people will continue to be under siege, suffering under conditions of starvation and suppression."
- *Al-Madina* editorialized: "Arabs achieved a diplomatic and media victory against Israel without contributing toward it and without any valuable efforts. Even the Arab League's Ministerial Council meeting came after the meetings of the UNSC, the NATO and the EU... but international reactions, which condemned Israel in an unprecedented way, do not spare Arabs and Palestinians from the requirement of observing their duties and responsibilities to utilize this incident. This would include a move toward weakening the U.S. – Israeli relations, which have already been in a state of real crisis for more than a year."
- An editorial in *Al-Bilad* stated: "The important question is how much effort the U.S. will exert to weaken any resolution by the UNSC. The U.S. – Israeli relationship itself is in crisis. The indirect negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis, which are supported by the U.S., are likely to resume eventually, but under dark clouds of doubts, which will produce nothing, but will allow the extremist Israeli government to gain more time to carry out its plans."

Blogs:

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QR, June 2, 2010 -

- <http://tomaar.net/vb/showthread.php?t=147000> a blogger commented that the "re-siege of Gaza represents a third 'Intifada' against Israel. The heart of this Intifada is Palestinian but its body is global and its pillars come from all strands of thought and religions." He advises to take advantage of it, not only [to raise issues] against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, but also against the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.
- <http://tomaar.net/vb/showthread.php?t=147120> this blogger (Saudi writer Sulaiman Al-Salman) commented that the incidents in Gaza are only a "trick," aimed at obstructing the peace process, withdrawal of Arab parties from the peace process, pulling the carpet from the Iranian support to Palestine and handing it to "friendly" Turkey, and keeping the public busy in preparation for a new attack by Israel on Gaza and Hizbollah.
- <http://www.rasid.com/artc.php?id=38015> Over 90 Saudi intellectual (lawyers, journalists and academics) announced their support to the Freedom Flotilla and urged the Arab regimes to reconsider peace efforts with the "occupying country of Israel."

Other Online Commentary:

Comments on Prince Faisal bin Abdullah's Cable condemning the attack:

- All comments approved what the prince said in the cable, saying this is what is expected from the King's son.

Others commented on the NSHR condemning the attack

- Some displayed anger toward Saudi's National Society for Human Rights for neglecting its duties in the Kingdom while commenting on human rights abroad.
- One commented that the society should focus on bringing Houthi leaders to court before bringing Israelis responsible for the attack to justice.
- Others said they are tired of hearing "just talk" and are looking for someone to take action.

Comments on Al-Riyadh article on the Arab Foreign Minister emergency meeting on June 2:

- "The meeting is like any other held in the past and the result will be the breaking of the 4-year long siege."
- "If a decision is issued from the UN denouncing or punishing those responsible, the U.S. will only veto the decision; the true problem is the U.S."
- Others think that Arabs should continue their "long nap"
- One commented that Arab foreign ministers should take some notes from Erdogan.
- Some think that this "emergency" meeting came a couple of days late

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Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Valdez, Pablo M
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: MGGZ01: (Reuters) Ship raid must not undermine Mideast talks-US envoy

RELEASED IN FULL

BETHLEHEM (Reuters) - The U.S. Middle East Peace Envoy said a lethal Israeli raid on a Gaza-bound aid ship must not undermine indirect negotiations he is mediating between Israel and the Palestinians. "This incident underscores to need to make progress in negotiations," said Mitchell, who held talks with Palestinian President Abbas.

Pablo Valdez
Watch Officer
Operations Center
Department of State
202-647-1512

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DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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1297

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

RELEASED IN FULL

From: Shelstad, Jeffrey
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 6:41 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Situation Report No. 7 - Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group MGGZ01 (SBU Version)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SITUATION REPORT No. 7

Gaza Monitoring Group MGGZ01

Thursday, June 3, 2010
0600 EDT

STATUS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS

(SBU) Eight AmCits were deported to Turkey, arriving in Istanbul on June 3. One AmCit was deported to Athens, and two are believed to have exited Israel via Jordan. The location of one dual-national AmCit remains unknown. (MGGZ01/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

STATUS OF FOREIGN PASSENGERS

(SBU) Approximately 520 foreign passengers have been deported to Turkey and Greece with the exception of a small group of passengers who were not able to travel, as well as approximately five who remain hospitalized. (MGGZ01/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

OTHER SHIPS EN ROUTE TO GAZA

Please see the classified version of this product.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- (U) UN Secretary General Ban described Israeli actions as "counterproductive, unsustainable, and wrong," and called for Israel to lift its blockade of the Gaza Strip immediately. (*The Telegraph*)
- (U) Arab League Secretary General Moussa stated in a news conference following an emergency ministerial in Cairo that the Arab League will ask the UN Security Council to demand an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza. (*Reuters*)

INTERNATIONAL REACTION

- (SBU) Bahrain: The four Bahrainis who were on the flotilla were given a hero's welcome upon arrival in Bahrain. (MGGZ01/NEA/PD e-mail)
- (SBU) Kuwait: The 18 Kuwaitis who participated in the flotilla aid convoy were given a widely-publicized welcome upon arrival in Kuwait, and were received at the airport by the prime minister and members of parliament. (MGGZ01/NEA/PD e-mail)
- (SBU) UAE: Anti-U.S. sentiment remains present throughout UAE press, particularly focusing on President Obama's "moral collapse" and support of Israel's "barbaric" crimes and aggression. (MGGZ01/NEA/PD e-mail)
- (SBU) Norway: Foreign Minister Stoere stated Norway does not support a unilateral boycott against Israel. (MGGZ01/Embassy Oslo e-mail)

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Additional updates on events in BAHRAIN, ALGERIA, LIBYA, KUWAIT, BELGIUM, and ZIMBABWE are available through our classified website at <http://ses.state.sgov.gov>.

Drafted: RChatterji

Approved: DLBanks

Dist: State (all bureaus), NSS, OSD, NMCC, JCS, CIA, OSC, NCTC, DHS, DNI

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1398

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Benze, David K
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 6:39 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Gaza Flotilla: Reuters - Israel resists international probe into Gaza ship raid

RELEASED IN FULL

(Reuters) - Israel on Thursday resisted calls for an international inquiry to investigate its lethal seizure of a Turkish ship bound for blockaded Gaza.

WORLD

The United States, less outspoken than most of Israel's enemies and friends since nine people on the Mavi Marmara were killed on Monday, backed calls from the European Union, Turkey and the United Nations for some form of international inquiry.

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden suggested an Israeli probe with international involvement.

Turkish and foreign pro-Palestinian activists arrived to a hero's welcome in Istanbul from the government and leveled charges of "war crimes" and unjustified killings at the Israeli marines who stormed the cruise liner Mavi Marmara and five other ships in international waters under cover of dark.

The allegations, coming after activists were released from Israeli custody, were not possible to verify immediately.

Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, speaking on Army Radio, said "there is a need for an investigation to draw lessons," an apparent reference to a narrow Israeli inquiry into the operational details of the commando raid.

"As far as we are concerned there is no need for a commission of inquiry," he said, using Israel's term for a state panel, usually led by a judge, that would look into all aspects of the operation, including decisions made by political leaders.

Steinitz made no mention of any international participation.

Israelis have been shocked by military video of commandos being winched onto the ship's deck from helicopters only to be outnumbered and set upon with sticks by activists.

Officers say their men opened fire to save their lives and that two of the ship passengers shot at them with pistols seized from marines.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made an unrepentant defense of the four-year-old blockade on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip in a televised address on Wednesday, lambasting European and other governments for "hypocrisy" in challenging Israel's efforts to prevent the Iranian-backed Islamists from arming.

He made no mention in his speech of any investigation.

INTERNATIONAL DEMANDS

Political sources in Israel said the issue for the government now was not whether to launch an inquiry but what kind would satisfy the very different demands of Israeli public opinion and that of the international community.

The Foreign Ministry dismissed a vote by the United Nations Human Rights Council, a forum Israel says is deeply biased against it, to form an independent fact-finding mission to look into what it called violations of international law.

Israel was stung by a U.N. inquiry into the three-week offensive it launched in the Gaza Strip in December 2008 which found evidence its forces committed war crimes, allegations Israeli leaders denied.

Three Turkish planes brought some of a total of about 700 people detained on the convoy from Tel Aviv to Turkey. They also carried the simple wooden coffins of the nine killed.

Their identities are still uncertain, though Israel has said it believes most of them were Turks.

"We've been scared, frightened, kidnapped and attacked with battleships," said Mustafa Ahmet from Britain.

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As activists disembarked they lifted their arms in defiance, but afterwards some were overcome with emotion and wept.

Several accused the Israeli army of destroying evidence: "The soldiers shot a doctor who wanted to surrender and they threw dead bodies into the sea," said Bulent Yildirim, chairman of IHH, the Islamic charity which organized the convoy.

Kevin Ovenden of Britain said a man who had pointed a camera at the soldiers was shot dead through the forehead.

Many of those waiting at Istanbul's Ataturk airport carried Palestinian flags and bore slogans such as "murderer Israel."

The killings of Turks onboard the flotilla has brought the already strained relationship between the Jewish state and Turkey's Islamist-leaning government close to breaking point.

Turkey recalled its ambassador and Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, charging Israel with "state terrorism" has called for those responsible for the deaths to be punished.

Arab states will ask the U.N. Security Council to demand an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Arab League chief said.

The Council, with Israel's ally the United States holding a veto, is unlikely to do that, although Western powers have been discussing how to pressure Israel to do more to let in supplies for the benefit of the 1.5 million people stuck in the enclave.

"Once again, Israel faces hypocrisy and a biased rush to judgment," Netanyahu said.

"The international community cannot afford an Iranian port on the Mediterranean ... The same countries that are criticizing us today, should know that they could be targeted tomorrow."

Egypt opened its Rafah border crossing to Gaza indefinitely on Wednesday — a step seen as an attempt by Cairo to deflect criticism of its role in imposing the Gaza blockade on Hamas, which is allied with Egypt's main Islamist opposition.

U.S. Vice President Biden on Wednesday backed Israel's right to board ships bound for Gaza to prevent weapons smuggling, but said Washington was concerned about the plight of people there.

"Israel has an absolute right to deal with its security interest," Biden told PBS television. He stressed President Barack Obama's support for an impartial investigation.

"It's legitimate for Israel to say, 'I don't know what's on that ship. These guys are dropping eight — 3,000 rockets on my people,'" he said, referring to Hamas.

But Biden said the United States also needed to "put as much pressure and as much cajoling on Israel as we can" to allow in aid shipments such as building materials.

He said an Israeli investigation with international involvement might resemble this year's probe in South Korean into the sinking of a warship, now blamed on North Korea.

(Additional reporting by Joseph Nasr in Jerusalem, Ross Colvin in Washington and Simon Cameron-Moore in Istanbul, Editing by Samia Nakhoul)

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Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

RELEASED IN FULL

From: Benze, David K
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 6:33 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Gaza Flotilla: Israeli FM Lieberman backs supervised probe of Gaza flotilla

Lieberman backs supervised probe of Gaza flotilla

Speaking to Ynet, FM says Israel should 'not fear' any investigation into raid that left nine pro-Palestinian activists dead. Adds: We won't let Irish aid ship reach Gaza

Roni Sofer

Published: 06.03.10, 13:16 / Israel News

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Thursday called for the establishment of an Israeli commission of inquiry to investigate the raid on the Gaza-bound aid flotilla, during which nine pro-Palestinian activists were killed.

Lieberman said the investigation must be supervised by impartial foreign officials. Industry, Trade and Labor Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer announced earlier that he supports the establishment of an international commission of inquiry to probe Monday's calamitous raid.

"I have no fear of an investigation committee into the operation against the Gaza-bound flotilla. We should not be afraid of any commission of inquiry. I spoke to the prime minister while he was in Canada. I told him there was nothing to be afraid of and that we should set up a transparent commission of inquiry headed by a senior judge, such as former Supreme Court presidents Aharon Barak or Meir Shamgar," the FM told Ynet. "If they'll ask to include foreign overseers in the probe - we'll include them."

As for the Irish-owned ship Rachel Corrie, which is attempting to reach Gaza, the foreign minister said that "we are in touch with Ireland. In any case, we won't let the boat reach the shores of Gaza. We've explained this to the Irish."

Asked whether he would suggest military action against the Rachel Corrie, Lieberman said once again, "We won't let the Irish ship reach Gaza's shores."

He said the army was drawing the necessary lessons from the raid on the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara, adding "there is no doubt that they (IDF) will be better prepared for the next ship."

The foreign minister criticized the UN Human Rights Council's decision to launch an international investigation into the raid. "We've already seen the term 'human rights' with Judge (Richard) Goldstone, who is responsible for 18 death sentences during the apartheid regime in South Africa," he said.

Lieberman said Washington's response to the flotilla affair was encouraging on the whole. "The latest statements from officials in the US administration were very clear and very objective. There are problems and we don't see eye-to-eye on everything, but I'm not concerned."

US Vice President Joe Biden said in an interview on PBS's "Charlie Rose" show Wednesday that "Israel has an absolute right to deal with its security interest."

"They (Israel) have said, 'Here you go. You're in the Mediterranean. This ship - if you divert slightly north you can unload it and we'll get the stuff into Gaza.' So what's the big deal here?" Biden said, "What's the big deal of insisting it go straight to Gaza?"

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Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Benze, David K
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 6:26 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: Gaza Flotilla: Saudi Media Reaction

RELEASED IN FULL

SAUDI ARABIA Media Reaction

Freedom Flotilla disturbs a U.S. -Saudi economic meeting at the JCCI: Several papers reported that the Israeli raid on the Freedom Flotilla dominated and disturbed a meeting between a visiting U.S Congressional delegation and members of the Saudi business community at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) on Wednesday. Attempts by the U.S. delegation not to discuss the issue were in vain, as Saudi businessmen and businesswomen insisted that the continuous U.S. support of the "Israeli aggression" in the region would have a direct impact on the sales of American products. Saudi businessmen said the priority for them is to have peace in the region which will allow all countries to prosper economically. A young Saudi businessman, Ahmad Mustafa Sabri, who appeared in the much talked about recent MTV documentary "True Life," said that every topic should be open for discussion in a house of commerce. Sabri added, "We are not going to talk about business while our brothers are being killed" (*Saudi Gazette*, pg. 2; *Al-Watan* and *Shams*, pg. 1).

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B101

From: Daniels, Cherrie S
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
CC: Oslo, PAS; Oslo, PolEcon; Selinger, Thomas B; Peterson, Julie Anne
Subject: MGGZ01: Norwegian FM Store Opposes Boycott of Israel, according to Media reports
Sent: 6/3/2010 5:26:05 AM

Monitoring Group and EUR/NB colleagues - Here is Embassy Oslo public affairs section's Gaza Flotilla related media reaction for today - the top story is especially noteworthy.

Cherrie S. Daniels
Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs and A/DCM
U.S. Embassy Oslo

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Naess, Petter
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 10:39 AM
Subject: Oslo press brief, Thursday, June 3

Oslo press briefing Thursday, June 3, 2010

News/commentary

(U) FM Støre opposes boycott (VG16-17) Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre says the demand for boycott of Israel is an expression of frustration that he understands and shares, but he is against a unilateral Norwegian boycott, which would mean closing a door. He notes that details on what happened during the boarding are still unclear. Embassy pol.econ section note: This comment was likely generated by Red-Green Government Coalition member Kristin Halvorsen's (Education Minister, from the Socialist Left Party) suggestion of a boycott of Israel in previous days, as well as by opinion polling reported June 2 showing a majority of Norway's public supported a boycott and thought FM Støre's reaction to that point had been too mild. See June 2 media reporting and June 1 MFA press release at bottom of this email. End note.

In a column in Dagens Næringsliv yesterday (Profession: Hostage) Bjørn Gabrielsen - one of a new breed of "freethinkers" (Aslak Nore is another) commonly associated with the left but who resist leftist orthodoxy on a range of issues - slammed writer Erlend Loe for participating in a protest outside the Israeli embassy and thereby becoming a puppet for terrorist groups Hamas and Hizbollah. Loe made it quite clear that he neither hated Israel or supported Hamas, but needed to protest the Israeli operation against the ship and express support for the people of Gaza. The Gabrielsen/Loe debate has also been picked up by Dagbladet. Petter Eide, Secretary General of Norwegian People's Aid, writes that Gabrielsen's criticism of Loe - and Swedish writer Henning Mankell (who participated in the convoy) as "useful idiots" for Hamas is a red herring; the issue is solidarity with the people of Gaza and the killing of civilians in international waters (DB65)

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In Aftenposten Per Anders Madsen emphasizes that IDF soldiers were incontestably out of line, boarding a ship and shooting civilians in international waters. But an event consists of more than the most evident facts, and David Grossman's article in Aftenposten yesterday – in which he asserted that both IDF and the Gaza pilgrims were hoodwinked by the Turkish based organization IHH – complicates the story, and should be a warning to those who would simplify complicated issues. In an op-ed in VG Hanne Skartveit (*Mutual fear – and with good reason*, VG2-3) also underscores the complexity of the conflict, and alludes to Grossman and the alleged IHH ties to Al Qaeda.

Ingrid Brekke (*Controlled Information* AFTK9) writes that it is disturbing to realize how easy it was for Israeli authorities to control the flow of information from the event and ensure that the world only had access to one version. In this age of instant information, it took almost 36 hours for eyewitness accounts to reach the outside world. Dag Tuastad of PRIO writes that no solution in the Middle East can be achieved until the West recognizes Hamas. (VG46)

Editorials

DAGBLADET

Not credible ; Truth is the first casualty of war. Israel argues a) that commandos had expected no resistance from demonstrators and b) that they knew ships were full of militant activists who were out to make trouble and therefore had to intervene.

AFT=Aftenposten

VG=VG

DB=Dagbladet

DA=Dagsavisen

DN=Dagens Næringsliv

KK= Klassekampen

c=cover

Excerpt from June 2 Oslo press brief:
Oslo press briefing Wednesday, June 2, 2010

News/commentary

Israel

The cover of Aftenposten, as well as 5 pages inside the newspaper is devoted to the incident aboard the Free Gaza Flotilla. Aftenposten's US Correspondent Alf Ole Ask reports on UN activities, and has a picture of US demonstrators demanding that the US stop aid to Israel. John Harbo compares this to the massacres in Sabra and Shatila in 1982, as another time that Israel seriously did not care about what the world would think. (He emphasizes that it was different, however, in that the media was not hindered in their work at that time, and that the 1982 massacre did have serious ramifications for Israelis involved, whereas today, the Israeli government is working to defend what happened aboard the "Mavi Marmara"). Both Harbo and Ask write that Turkish-Israeli relations have been jeopardized, and that this might hamper the efforts in the UN to make sanctions against Iran stricter.

Aftenposten commentator Harald Stanghelle writes that the Israeli government is betting that the outrage will die out, and that no one in the end will demand betterment for the Palestinians in Gaza. Kjetil Wiedswang in Dagens Næringsliv writes that it is in nobody's interest to remove the blockade on Gaza—the Israeli right wing has nothing against showing Hamas from their bad side, Egypt does not want to let radical Islamists into their own society, and Iran is providing weapons to Hamas to get at their main enemy Israel. In most Arabic countries in the region, authoritarian leaders are targeting their populations' anger against this blockade, rather than at their own misrule.

David Grossman, an Israeli author, writes that the Israeli Government went into a trap, and that only a very unsure, panicked, and confused government would do what Israel has done, and that the Turkish religious fanatics who organized the Free Gaza Flotilla knew to take advantage of that. VG seconds this, and writes that one of the organizations behind the Flotilla, Turkish IHH, has connections to Al-Qaida, according to a Danish research report. Dagbladet's editors call the Israeli decision to board the ship disastrous, and that they now have lost Turkish support. Dagbladet focuses on the Swedish writer, Henning Mankell, who was also a part of the Flotilla, as well as on the three Norwegians who spent yesterday in Israeli prison. Henning Mankell in VG calls the Israeli government pirates.

Aftenposten.no and NRK.no write that Hillary Clinton refuses to condemn Israel after the incident, but Dagsavisen's editors point out that the US did agree to the UN Security Council condemnation of the incident yesterday. SV's leader Kristin Halvorsen had suggested a boycott, which most prominent labor politicians say is not appropriate. Today, VG's editors second this opinion, and write that the best way to get Israel to stop the blockade of Gaza is through open communication, not through a boycott. Through a poll in VG, where 1028 people answered, VG writes an article about how the Norwegian people want a boycott, and are of the opinion that Jonas Gahr Støre has reacted in too mild a manner. Meanwhile, NUPi director Jan Egeland hopes that this incident can result in an opening of the long blockade on Gaza, according to Dagsavisen, and he says to Klassekampen that Israel now should expect ship upon ship headed towards Gaza. He also encourages Norway to work with the UN and the US about creating a humanitarian corridor for necessary goods to enter Gaza. (AFTc, 15-17, K3, K5, DB, 2, 12-16, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/verden/1.7149338>, <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article3675578.ece> VG, 2, 6-9, 10, DAc, 2, 3, 16-19, DN, 2, KK, 12-13)

Petter Næss
Information Resource Director
American Embassy
Office of Public Affairs

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

Press release, 01.06.2010

Norway supports the Security Council's demand for a transparent, impartial investigation of the Israeli operation against the Gaza convoy

In a statement dated 31 May, the UN Security Council condemns the acts that led to the loss of civilian lives when Israeli naval forces boarded the convoy carrying humanitarian assistance to Gaza. The statement underscores the need for a prompt, impartial and credible investigation of the incident.

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"The Security Council's statement shows that the entire international community condemns the Israeli raid on the convoy carrying humanitarian assistance to Gaza. I welcome the Security Council's demand for a transparent and impartial investigation of the Israeli military operation, which is something I also took up with the UN Secretary-General yesterday. It is in Israel's interests to cooperate on such an investigation," said Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

The Security Council stresses that the situation in Gaza is not sustainable and underscores the need to allow necessary goods into the area.

"Norway has repeatedly called for an end to the blockade of Gaza so that humanitarian aid and other necessary assistance can reach the Palestinian population. This is important not least to enable the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for Assistance to the Palestinians (AHLIC) to fulfil its Security Council mandate concerning the reconstruction of Gaza after the war," said Mr Støre.

In its statement, the Security Council calls for full consular access to those who were on board the ships and who are now detained in Israel. It also calls on the Israeli authorities to release those detained and their ships. The three Norwegian nationals who were on board the convoy have been identified by the Israeli authorities, and are now being detained in the Beer Sheva prison.

"In line with the Security Council, Norway calls for full consular access to the Norwegian nationals involved, and for the immediate release of those detained. We have made this clear to the Israeli authorities," said Foreign Minister Støre.

http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/press/News/2010/investigation_israel.html?id=606557

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Printed By: Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)
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Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Valdez, Pablo M.
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 5:18 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: MGGZ01: (Reuters) Israel resists international probe into Gaza ship raid

RELEASED IN FULL

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Israel resisted calls for an international inquiry to investigate its lethal seizure of a Turkish ship bound for blockaded Gaza. Israeli Finance Minister Steinitz said "there is a need for an investigation to draw lessons", an apparent reference to a narrow Israeli inquiry into the operational details of the commando raid. "As far as we are concerned there is no need for a commission of inquiry," he said, using Israel's term for a state panel, usually led by a judge, that would look into all aspects of the operation, including decisions made by political leaders.

Watch Officer
Operations Center
Department of State
202-647-1512

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DATE/CASE ID: 03 APR 2012 201004163

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Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

13103

From: Benze, David K
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 5:14 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: GAZA Flotilla: CNN: Another Gaza Showdown Looming

RELEASED IN FULL

(CNN) – The next showdown over Israel's naval blockade of Gaza could come as early as Friday as an Irish-owned ship filled with humanitarian aid steams into the region.

The Rachel Corrie, named for an American activist killed in Gaza several years ago, was expected to arrive late Friday or early Saturday off the coast of Gaza. The vessel left Ireland laden with 550 tons of cement, educational materials, toys and medical equipment – the latest effort by peace activists to deliver humanitarian goods and break Israel's blockade, according to aid organizers.

Free Gaza Movement activist Derek Graham said that the plan was for the Rachel Corrie to be unloaded in Gaza and then return to Ireland.

The Irish government asked that Israel not interfere.

But an Israeli government official who spoke on background because of the diplomatic sensitivity of the issue told CNN "the Israeli government is offering to receive the ship's cargo, as it has offered other vessels if it docks at (Israel's) Ashdod port. The Israeli government will unload the cargo, screen it, and deliver it to Gaza."

That was the same deal rejected by the flotilla of six ships before Israeli commandos attacked one of them Monday. Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs Micheal Martin told the lower house of the Irish Parliament, the Dail, that he had asked the Israeli ambassador to convey to his government his request that, "following the tragedy which has occurred, the Rachel Corrie be allowed to continue unimpeded, and to deliver its cargo to Gaza."

"We will be watching this situation very closely – as indeed will the world – and it is imperative that Israel avoid any action which leads to further bloodshed," the foreign minister said.

More such ships may be on the horizon. The European Campaign to End Siege on Gaza announced Wednesday it has enough money to fund three more ships in a new fleet to Gaza.

On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended his country's actions that led to the deaths Monday of nine activists aboard the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish boat laden with humanitarian supplies for Gaza. Netanyahu said the goal of the international flotilla had been to penetrate Israel's blockade of Gaza, which he said was needed to halt the shipment of weapons from Iran to militants in Gaza.

Speaking in a nationally televised address, Netanyahu said the state has the responsibility to stop every vessel bound for Gaza, including the flotilla that was targeted Monday.

"That was not a love boat. That was a boat of hatred. It was not a peaceful flotilla. The soldiers who boarded the ships were attacked by clubs, batons and knives."

An attempt by Israel to deliver the goods from the flotilla was rejected, the IDF said Wednesday.

Palestinian sources confirmed that trucks that arrived from Israel at the Rafah terminal at the Israel-Gaza border were barred from delivering the aid.

Ra'ed Fatooh, in charge of the crossings, and Jamal Khudari, head of a committee against the Gaza blockade, laid out the following conditions for the aid to be accepted: Israel must release all flotilla detainees – and representatives of the Free Gaza Movement, which organized the flotilla, must deliver it.

Israel had released all foreign flotilla detainees by Wednesday, but four Israeli Arabs remained in custody.

Three Turkish Airlines planes carrying 466 activists and nine bodies landed Thursday morning in Istanbul, an official said.

Their numbers included several wounded people, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc told CNN.

Most of the passengers were Turks, who made up the majority of the activists in the flotilla.

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The commando raid that led to the deaths continued to draw international condemnation Wednesday and sparked outrage in the streets of world capitals. Demonstrators also decried Israel's ongoing blockade of Gaza.

"For years, many in the international community have been complicit in a policy that aimed at isolating Gaza in the hope of weakening Hamas," said the International Crisis Group, a think tank that denounced the Israeli action.

"This policy is morally appalling and politically self-defeating. It has harmed the people of Gaza without loosening Hamas' control. Yet it has persisted regardless of evident failure."

Turkish officials were seething. The country's prime minister launched strong rhetoric against the Jewish state — a onetime close ally — and its ambassador has been yanked from Tel Aviv.

A U.S. official said Turkey will cancel a trilateral military exercise with the United States and Israel set for August in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Attorneys for a Muslim humanitarian group have filed a petition asking Turkish prosecutors to sue Israel for murder.

The Israeli state attorney general's office, in a response to the High Court on two petitions regarding the flotilla, defended the Israeli actions Wednesday. It said the "Hamas terrorist organization" controls Gaza and is intent on deliberately assaulting civilians.

As a result, Israel has worked to thwart the infiltration of weapons and ordnance from tunnels between Egypt and Gaza and has imposed a naval blockade on Gaza to stop the weapons smuggling.

As for the Rachel Corrie, the Free Gaza Movement said customs officials and a senator from the Irish Green Party inspected the vessel and found no weapons.

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Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Benze, David K.
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 5:08 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: GAZA Flotilla: AP: Israel trying to limit diplomatic damage from raid

RELEASED IN FULL

Israel trying to limit diplomatic damage from raid

By MARK LAVIE
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM (AP) -- In an attempt to limit the diplomatic damage from its deadly raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla, Israel dropped plans Wednesday to prosecute dozens of pro-Palestinian activists, opting instead to deport them all immediately.

The stunning reversal came as Israel faced increasingly sharp international condemnation for Monday's high-seas raid that ended when Israeli commandos killed nine activists. The outcry included accusations of war crimes and a decision by Nicaragua to break diplomatic relations with Israel over the raid.

But Israeli officials said the decision not to prosecute any of the activists - despite suspicions that they were sent to attack Israeli forces on the ship - was primarily an attempt to control the damage to Israel's relations with Turkey, an unofficial sponsor of the flotilla. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing sensitive diplomatic issues.

Israel is anxious to patch up ties with Ankara because it is the Jewish state's most important Muslim ally. At least four of the nine killed were Turkish and the ship Israel attacked was Turkish. Israel ordered families of its diplomats out of that country a day after Ankara branded the raid a "massacre."

Turkish lawmakers continued to express their outrage Wednesday, calling on their government to review its political, military and economic ties with Israel. The lawmakers also said Israel must formally apologize for the raid, compensate the victims and bring those responsible to justice.

In a step aimed at calming the furious response, Israel announced Wednesday that it would deport all of the activists by day's end.

They received a hero's welcome in Istanbul. A few thousand jubilant relatives and supporters, waving Palestinian and Turkish flags, applauded outside the airport.

The deportees included about 50 of the nearly 700 activists on the ships who Israel said were apparently linked to the world jihad movement and possibly al-Qaida. Israel accused the suspects of attacking Israeli troops rappelling onto one of the ships and beating them with iron rods, clubs and knives. Originally, Israel planned on detaining them in Israel while police looked into possible charges.

But Israeli Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein said in a statement Wednesday that "keeping them here would do more damage to the country's vital interests than good."

Israeli Cabinet Minister Isaac Herzog said the expulsions were an attempt to dampen criticism of Israel.

"We are trying to take full control of this crisis management and move forward," Herzog told The Associated Press, while indicating that Israel would reject calls from the U.N. and others for an independent inquiry. "We are the last nation (that) you can say doesn't check itself," he said.

Herzog defended Israel's blockade of Gaza, saying weapons Hamas could receive by sea could be used

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"against Israel and the region."

International envoy Tony Blair told The Associated Press that Israel should ease the blockade and let more supplies in. He said the blockade was "counterproductive," but said it would be hard to lift it because of Israel's objections.

Israel instructed the families of its diplomats stationed in Turkey to return to Israel immediately because of noisy demonstrations at the Israeli embassy and consulate and the high level of Turkish outrage over the raid.

In another bizarre twist, Israel unloaded supplies from the six boats commandeered during the raid and sent some of the goods toward Gaza, only to see the blockaded territory's Hamas rulers refuse to accept them.

Israeli security officials said they had loaded 20 trucks with equipment that was on the ships, including wheelchairs, toys, clothes and medicine. They said contrary to earlier claims, there was no cement on board.

The Hamas minister of social affairs, Ahmad al-Kurd, accused Israel of keeping batteries for the wheelchairs and withholding tons of cement carried by the flotilla. He said the government would not accept the aid until Israel frees everything confiscated from the ships, but later said the aid would be picked up when all detainees were released.

Hanin Zoabi, an Arab lawmaker who sailed with the activists, was heckled when she took the podium in the Israeli parliament Wednesday.

"Go to Gaza, you traitor," Miri Regev, a lawmaker in the ruling Likud Party and former Israeli military spokeswoman, screamed in Arabic.

Despite the outcry over the raid, the Palestinians were resuming indirect peace talks with Israel Wednesday through U.S. envoy George Mitchell.

Associated Press writers Karin Laub in Jerusalem and Selcan Hacaoglu in Ankara, Turkey, contributed to this report.

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B.105

Coleman, Charmaine (DRL)

From: Benze, David K
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2010 4:32 AM
To: Gaza Flotilla Monitoring Group
Subject: GAZA Flotilla: Local Media Reactions (Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Algeria)

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KUWAIT

Kuwaiti members of Freedom Flotilla return to a hero's welcome

Major Kuwaiti newspapers reported on the return of the 18 Kuwaiti participants of the Freedom Flotilla aid convoy to the country yesterday. The 18 activists who attempted to undermine the embargo placed on Gaza by the Israeli authorities were given a widely-publicized hero's welcome upon arriving in Kuwait, with both the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the National Assembly at the forefront of relatives, MPs and members of the public who were present at the airport to receive the activists.

Dr. Waleed Al-Tabtabaie, a prominent member of Kuwait's National Assembly who participated in the Freedom Flotilla, was reported by the Al-Seyassah newspaper to have said that he, along with his compatriots, were subject to both verbal and physical abuse by Israeli prison authorities while detained in a Beersheba prison before being deported to Jordan.

Al-Qabas carried statements by all of the Kuwaiti returnees related to their participation in the Freedom Flotilla. One of the returnees, Haya Al-Shatti, spoke of the psychological abuse she encountered from Israeli prison guards, and said that they threatened to not release her and her compatriots until they signed a paper "acknowledging the existence of Israel."

Al-Seyassah newspaper reports that the Chairman of the Representatives of the Families of Persons in the Popular Committee for the Advocacy of the Sons of Kuwait Salah Al-Abdul Jader has confirmed that a second aid convoy is due to be initiated soon. The newspaper quotes him as saying that "60 Kuwaitis, both male and female, have signed up to take part in a second Freedom Flotilla after the purchase of two humanitarian ships."

BAHRAIN

All dailies celebrated the return of the four Bahrainis, who were in the Freedom flotilla to Gaza, yesterday. They had a heroes' welcome at Bahrain International Airport after they were taken hostage by Israeli commandos. In their press statements, the four citizens said that Israelis tortured them mentally and left them tied down for 36 hours at Eilat City Prison. They said: "the Israelis confiscated our money, cell phones and laptops but we will return to Gaza again with humanitarian aid."

Akhbar Al-Khalij & Al-Watan: During his meeting with a senior congressional delegation, the Second Vice Chairman of the Parliament Dr. Salah Ali said that the Parliament had reservations on the U.S. stance towards the UN Security Council statement on the Israeli aggression on freedom flotilla. Dr. Ali affirmed that the U.S. must have a fair and clear policy that is not based on full submission to the number one enemy of peace, Israel.

Commentaries:

Mansoor Al-Jamri of *Al-Wasat* believes that there is a new rhetoric coming out of Washington. He referred to an article by U.S. strategic analyst Anthony Cordesman in which he describes the Israeli ally as a strategic burden on the United

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States because as America and its President strive to restore peace and support Israel, Tel Aviv continues to embarrass Washington with its aggressive and defiant attitude in the region.

UAE

Freedom Flotilla Response:

Headlines: Israeli raid a test for President Obama; A setback for US diplomacy; Israeli raid may not change US policies (*Khaleej Times*); The White House refuses to condemn Israel and [Secretary] Clinton supports an Israel investigation (*Al Khaleej*); [Turkish PM Recep Tayyip] Erdogan to Obama: Israel is about to lose its sole friend in the Middle East (*Al Khaleej*); Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas wants "bold decisions" from Obama on Middle East (*Gulf News*); Israel Daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*: [PM Benjamin] Netanyahu and [Defense Minister Ehud] Barak planned the piracy operation (*Al Ittihad*); Netanyahu is proud of his crime (*Al Bayan*); Israel deports all detained Gaza aid activists (*All press*); Israel rushes to free aid activists (*The National*);

Editorials

Note: Anti-US sentiment escalates in UAE press, especially Arabic press. Most of the editorials reiterated their customary accusations of the US pro-Israel policy and its unconditional support of Israel's "barbaric" crimes and aggression. Writers also criticized President Obama's "moral collapse" and his defense of Israel crimes.

"A Miserable and Unacceptable American Softness"

Al Bayan Lead Editorial

"Obama's remark on Israel's naval aggression is surprising and shocking. His words do not correspond to the gravity of the crime. Such brutal and grotesque attack deserves more than expressing "deep regret!"

Moreover, the president, who advocates the adoption of dialogue and communication to solve problems and conflicts rather than the language of force and war... This president couldn't find more than this miserable sentence in response to Israel's bloody piracy? Of course, he could deliver the appropriate response, if the offender was not Israel!

The U.S. protection of Israel in international arena is a familiar and well-known issue. Washington has always played the role of the protective umbrella to Israel, covering its violations with an unwarranted immunity against all international resolutions. Moreover, Washington has allowed Israel to continue its aggression and violations, without any restrictions. One fact is clear; Obama's softness with these Israeli crimes is dangerous and unacceptable."

Cartoons

Emarat Alyoum

The cartoon suggests that the international Justice is turning a blind eye to US and Israeli criminal acts, as they violate all the international law.

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العدالة الدولية



ALGERIA

- The four Arabic-language newspapers whose journalists were among the Gaza aid flotilla, Echourouk El Youmi, El Khabar, Djazair News and El Bilad, published the testimonies of their journalists as well as members of the Algerian delegation.
 - The Algerians were blackmailed and insulted—the Israeli intelligence interrogated them about Enrico Macias, terrorism, and the financing of the Gaza aid flotilla. Echourouk El Youmi
 - Journalist Kada Ben Amar said: “They attacked during Al-Fadjr prayer. The Israeli soldiers searched the boat ‘Marmara’ with sniffing dogs.” Echourouk El Youmi
 - All members of the Algerian delegation refused to sign a document on not returning to Gaza to be released within 48 hours. Echourouk El Youmi
 - Photographer Maamar Halim said, “The Israelis took my camera but I hid the flash memory card in my shoes.” Echourouk El Youmi
 - The wife of Aboudjerra Soltani, the president of the Movement for the Society of Peace (MSP), said, “I was interrogated by an Israeli General because I have a diplomatic passport.” Echourouk El Youmi
 - The wife of Aboudjerra Soltani said, “The Israelis shot at us from helicopters.” L’Expression
 - The coordinator of the Algerian delegation, Ahmed Ibrahim, said, “I have seen Israeli soldiers killing wounded people.” Echourouk El Youmi



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Front page of Echourouk El Youmi

- Journalist Hamid Zaatchi said, "One of the Israeli investigators is from Constantine. The Israelis took all our cameras and threatened to kill a 1-year-old baby." El Khabar
- Journalist Abdelatif Belkaim said, "We were subjected to all forms of torture." Djazair News
- MSP Vice-president and president of the Algerian delegation, Abderrazak Mokri, said, "The flotilla achieved all of its goals." El Bilad
- Ennahda (Renaissance) Movement's leading officer Mohamed Dhouibi was wounded in Gaza; he is hospitalized in Jordan. Echourouk El Youmi



Mohamed Dhouibi—photo in Echourouk El Youmi

- 31 Algerian pro-Palestine activists repatriated to Algeria—the 32nd activist who had been wounded in his eye is still hospitalized in Jordan. Algerian Radio Channel 3
- The Algerian Foreign Minister, Mourad Medelci, said that the members of the Algerian delegation were released due to coordination with Turkey, Jordan and Egypt. Djazair News
- The Algerian Health Minister says that Algerian volunteer doctors will be sent to Gaza this week. Djazair News
- The Egyptian Embassy in Algiers refuses to receive a delegation from El Islah (Reform) Movement. El Islah is calling for the permanent unconditional opening of the Rafah Terminal and international denouncing the U.S.-Jewish-Egyptian alliance against Gaza. El Bilad

U.S. OFFICIALS IN THE PRESS

- The black mask of a white policy: Obama is Bush+smile and culture. La Tribune
- The U.S. voted against conducting an investigation into the Israeli raid on the Gaza aid flotilla. El Khabar

ISSUES OF U.S. INTEREST

- Protest against Israel blocked in front of the U.S. Embassy in Algiers. AP

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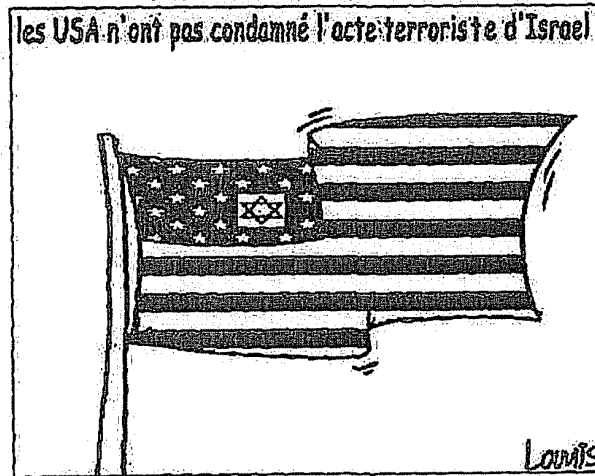
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MISCELLANEOUS

- French comedian M'bala M'bala Dieudonné said, "I am a cultural fighter against Zionism." El Khabar
 - Dieudonné wants a global anti-Zionist front. Liberté

CARTOON

- The U.S. has not condemned Israel's terrorist act. Le Jour d'Algérie



- The whole world condemns Israel. Liberté



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