



## IFI Special Alert

The response of the nations to yesterday's Israeli interdiction of the Gaza Flotilla has been as expected. General condemnation and accusations of disproportionate force. The fact that the Israeli commandoes roped down to the deck primarily armed with non lethal paint guns and were immediately pounced upon by a mob intent to kill them has not meant anything to the vast majority of the nations.

There are at least 3 different levels that this operation has set in motion.

1. [The truth of what has happened, why it has happened and its legal justification.](#)
2. [The response of the nations regardless of facts, truth and how they themselves would act in the same circumstances.](#)
3. [The response of the Israeli Government - at least one more ship is on the way.](#)

### **What happened, why and legal justification:**

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Defense Ministry (DM) and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) have all given a clear and succinct summary of the situation. I am quoting from their reports:

Israel was justified under international law in acting against the flotilla. A state of armed conflict exists between Israel and the Hamas regime that controls Gaza. Hamas has launched 10,000 rockets against Israeli civilians. At present, it is engaged in smuggling arms and military supplies into Gaza, by land and sea, in order to fortify its positions and continue its attacks.

Under international law, Israel has the right to protect the lives of its civilians from Hamas attacks. Consequently, it has undertaken measures to defend itself, including the imposition of a maritime blockade to curb Hamas rearmament. Israel cannot allow a sea-corridor to open to Gaza, a corridor which would allow weapons and terrorists to freely enter the Strip.

*(MFA)*

### **PART III, SECTION V : NEUTRAL MERCHANT VESSELS AND CIVIL AIRCRAFT**

#### **Neutral merchant vessels**

67. Merchant vessels flying the flag of neutral States may not be attacked unless they:
- a. (a) are believed on reasonable grounds to be carrying contraband or breaching a blockade, and after prior warning they intentionally and clearly refuse to stop, or intentionally and clearly resist visit, search or capture;
  - b. (b) engage in belligerent acts on behalf of the enemy;
  - c. (c) act as auxiliaries to the enemy's armed forces;
  - d. (d) are incorporated into or assist the enemy's intelligence system;
  - e. (e) sail under convoy of enemy warships or military aircraft; or
  - f. (f) otherwise make an effective contribution to the enemy's military action, e.g., by carrying military materials, and it is not feasible for the attacking forces to first place passengers and crew in a place of safety. Unless circumstances do not permit, they are to be given a warning, so that they can re-route, off-load, or take other precautions.

*Thanks to: IMRA - Independent Media Review and Analysis ([www.imra.org.il](http://www.imra.org.il))*<sup>ii</sup>

Israel appealed to the flotilla organizers prior to it sailing and also upon its approach to Gaza, in warning and inviting the flotilla to arrive to the Ashdod harbor, and offering to transfer the aid cargo to Gaza after having it undergo security examinations. All of these appeals - prior to the flotilla setting sail and afterwards - were refused. (DM)

The intent of the militants (on board the ship) was violent, the methods they employed were violent, and unfortunately, the result was violent.

The attack on the Israeli soldiers was premeditated. The weapons used had been prepared in advance. Huwaida Arraf, a flotilla organizer, foreshadowed the violence with her statement that: "They [the Israelis] are going to have to forcefully stop us." Bulent Yildirim, the leader of the [IHH](#)<sup>iii</sup>, one of the primary organizers of the flotilla, announced just prior to boarding: "We are going to resist and resistance will win." The militants whipped up the boarding crowd by chanting "Intifada, intifada, intifada!"

The flotilla organizers made clear that their primary goal was to target the maritime blockage. Greta Berlin, a flotilla spokesperson, told AFT news-agency on 27 May that "this mission is not about delivering humanitarian supplies, it's

about breaking Israel's siege." This fact is demonstrated not only by their words, but by their actions.

The soldiers who boarded the vessels did not carry arms openly, but were met with a violent ambush. Two soldiers were shot, one was stabbed and others were injured as they were set upon with clubs, knives, axes and heavy objects. They were in mortal danger and had to act accordingly in self-defense. (MFA)

Naval Commander Maj. General Eliezer Marom explained:

The Naval Corps was given a mission to stop the flotilla to Gaza. We prepared our forces in an organized manner, mentally, physically and operationally. In the weeks leading up to the flotilla, we warned the organizers. Last night, when they refused to change their port of destination to Ashdod and to let us transfer the humanitarian equipment, and decided to sail towards Gaza in order to break the maritime blockade, we departed to the water in order to carry out the mission, while warning the ships that they would not be able to enter Gaza, which is closed off.

We conveyed very clear messages to the ships, which were rejected with inappropriate behavior. Aboard the Marmara ship were about 600 activists who attacked IDF soldiers with firepower and other weapons, with unconventional violence. Once an imminent danger to life was seen, in order to defend themselves the soldiers had to operate their weapons, and in order to prevent the people from attacking, they tried to use riot dispersal means which they had been equipped with in order to prevent the passengers from harming them. After this was unsuccessful, and the soldiers' lives were in danger, they had to use live ammunition to defend themselves.

The fighters demonstrated determination and courage and exhibited much restraint, and the result of casualties in the incident could have been much worse if the soldiers acted differently. In terms of injuries to our forces: one soldier sustained a severe head wound, two soldiers were injured by live fire, and one was stabbed with a knife. In all of the five other ships we did not use live fire and we succeeded in stopping and intercepting the ships.

*(DM)*

### **Response of the nations:**

Once again the UN and many European nations are calling for an inquiry and before all the facts are in (or despite the facts) are already blaming Israel.

As we said before this was a lose - lose situation for Israel, though we believe that Israel took the right decision.

The following is an excerpted analysis of Israel's situation with the nations by George Friedman, founder and CEO of Stratfor, a private intelligence organization that bases its analyses on the theory of Geopolitics:

Israel is just not large enough to withstand extended isolation, meaning this event has profound geopolitical implications.

Public opinion matters where issues are not of fundamental interest to a nation. Israel is not a fundamental interest to other nations. The ability to generate public antipathy to Israel can therefore reshape Israeli relations with countries critical to Israel. For example, a redefinition of U.S. - Israeli relations will have much less effect on the United States than on Israel. The Obama administration, already irritated by the Israelis, might now see a shift in U.S. public opinion that will open the way to a new U.S.-Israeli relationship disadvantageous to Israel.

The Israelis will argue that this is all unfair, as they were provoked. They seem to think that the issue is whose logic is correct. But the issue actually is, whose logic will be heard? As with a tank battle or an airstrike, this sort of warfare has nothing to do with fairness. It has to do with controlling public perception and using that public perception to shape foreign policy around the world. In this case, the issue will be whether the deaths were necessary. The Israeli argument of provocation will have limited traction.

Internationally, there is little doubt that the incident will generate a firestorm. Certainly, Turkey will break cooperation with Israel. Opinion in Europe will likely harden. And public opinion in the United States - by far the most important in the equation - might shift to a "plague-on-both-your-houses" position.

While the international reaction is predictable the interesting question is whether this evolution will cause a political crisis in Israel. Those in Israel who feel that international isolation is preferable to accommodation with the Palestinians are in control now. Many in the opposition see Israel's isolation as a strategic threat. Economically and militarily, they argue, Israel cannot survive in isolation. The current regime will respond that there will be no isolation. The flotilla aimed to generate what the government has said would not happen.

The tougher Israel is, the more the flotilla's narrative takes hold. As the Zionists knew in 1947 and the Palestinians are learning, controlling public opinion requires subtlety, a selective narrative and cynicism. As they also knew, losing the battle can be catastrophic. It cost Britain the Mandate and allowed Israel to survive. Israel's enemies are now turning the tables. This maneuver was far more effective than suicide bombings or the Intifada in challenging Israel's public perception and therefore its geopolitical position (though if the Palestinians return to some of their more distasteful tactics like suicide bombing, the Turkish strategy of portraying Israel as the instigator of violence will be undermined).

Israel is now in uncharted waters. It does not know how to respond. It is not clear that the Palestinians know how to take full advantage of the situation, either. But even so, this places the battle on a new field, far more fluid and uncontrollable than what went before. The next steps will involve calls for sanctions against Israel. The Israeli threats against Iran will be seen in a different context, and Israeli portrayal of Iran will hold less sway over the world.

And this will cause a political crisis in Israel. If this government survives, then Israel is locked into a course that gives it freedom of action but international isolation. If the government falls, then Israel enters a period of domestic uncertainty. In either case, the flotilla achieved its strategic mission. It got Israel to take violent action against it. In doing so, Israel ran into its own fist.

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We don't have to agree with Statfor's whole analysis of the situation to agree that Israel is in a grave place in relationship to the nations. As of now the U.S. is holding back on condemning the interdiction and is waiting for clarifications.

### **The response of the Israeli Government:**

As of now the Prime Minister's response to the international condemnation is as follows:

We have a simple policy, which will continue. That policy is: we have no argument or fight with the population of Gaza. We are interested in allowing them to continue their regular routines. We want to prevent any humanitarian crisis in Gaza, but we are fighting the Hamas organization, which threatens the citizens of Israel and fires missiles at Israeli cities. It is our duty to defend the citizens of Israel, protect Israel's cities and ensure the security of the State of Israel - and we will continue to do so. *(PMO)*

I believe this is where the pressure will really present itself. There are many in Israel who believe that Israel cannot exist without the U.S.A. Those who feel that way will exert much pressure upon the government to surrender its policy and principles. This is where we must make our stand in prayer.

There will be pressure to allow the other ship(s) that want to break the blockade through.

There will be pressure to open the borders with Gaza.

If either or both of these happen without Gilad Shalit's freedom, it will be a great harm to Israel's deterrent posture before her enemies. Even with Shalit's freedom, this would not solve the problem of the flooding of Gaza with weapons

and terrorists. There has to be a mechanism in Israeli hands that will ensure that this will not happen.

There will also be intense pressure if Turkey breaks diplomatic relations with Israel. As Turkey has been considered Israel's only friend in the region many will blame the P.M. for this turn of events.

In my opinion this would actually be a good, even a very good thing. Turkey has been an enemy of Israel for some years now. The Fundamentalist Islamic government of Turkey has been causing us nothing but difficulties for a long time. Many Israelis have not wanted to acknowledge this turn of events and blindly ran after Turkey as a fool would after a lover that has jilted them.

We have even sold them Israeli-made high tech weapons that at some time will be used against us. Remember that Turkey is part of that confederation of nations that comes to attack Israel, written of in *Ezekiel 38*.

**Pray for the P.M. and the Government to hold firm to their policy.**

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

*Prov 21:1*

**Pray for the Lord to anoint Israel's spokesmen to speak the truth with clarity and power.**

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; The heart of the wicked is worth little.

*Prov 10:20*

As for the U.N., E.U. and the nations - if you have faith that they are not irredeemably set in their ways concerning their animosity towards Israel, pray that they would receive the truth and it will set them free. Europe may eventually recognize that they are in the same battle as Israel but it appears that it is going to take much more suffering and violence in Europe for them to wake up from their humanistic slumber.

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

*John 8:32*

This is a critical time for Israel. We need to be alert in the natural (that is why we have included much information in this Alert so that you would be armed in your understanding with the facts) and in the Spirit. God is looking for watchmen who

will take their place as a spiritual wall of protection around Israel and pray for the Lord's will to be done on earth as it is written in heaven.

I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

*Is. 62:6-7*

What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

*1 Cor 14:15*

Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.

*Luke 12:37*

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

*1 Co 16:13*

Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

*1 Th 5:6*

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/385ec082b509e76c41256739003e636d/7694fe2016f347e1c125641f002d49ce>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.imra.org.il/>

<sup>iii</sup> [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/html/hamas\\_e105.htm](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/hamas_e105.htm)

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100531\\_flotillas\\_and\\_wars\\_public\\_opinion](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100531_flotillas_and_wars_public_opinion)