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Israel has a right and a duty to defend itself from Hamas and its backers. Our struggle is not with the people of Gaza but only with the radical regime that overthrew the legitimate Palestinian Authority and has pledged to seek Israel's destruction.

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It seems that a special place in hell has been reserved for Israel, not only in the eyes of the Islamic world, but for many in the West as well. I cannot think of any country on earth that is more consistently reviled by the international community.

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'Peace convoy'? This was an Islamist terror ambush

Melanie Phillips, The Spectator, 1 June 2010

As the international community rushes to condemn Israel for the violence on board one of the ships in the Gaza flotilla, which left a reported 10 people dead and dozens injured, it is now obvious that the real purpose of this 'armada of hate' was not merely the further delegitimisation of Israel but something far worse.

Gaza's markets are full of produce, thousands of tons of supplies are travelling into Gaza every week through the Israeli-controlled border crossings, and there is *no* starvation or humanitarian crisis. It was always obvious that the flotilla was not the humanitarian exercise it was said to be. There is footage of the IDF offering to dock the Marmara -- the main flotilla ship -- at Ashdod and transfer its supplies and being told 'Negative, negative, our destination is Gaza'.

And now we can see that the real purpose of this invasion -- backed by the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), a radical Islamic organization outlawed by Israel in 2008 for allegedly serving as a major component in Hamas's global fund-raising machine -- was to incite a violent uprising in the Middle East and across the Islamic world. As I write, reports are coming in of Arab rioting in Jerusalem.

The notion -- uncritically swallowed by the lazy, ignorant and bigoted BBC and other western media -- that the flotilla organisers are 'peace activists' is simply ludicrous. Research by the Danish Institute for International Studies details the part played by the IHH in Islamist terror in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya. According to the French magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere testifying at the Seattle trial of would-be al Qaeda Millenium bomber Ahmed Ressamin, the IHH had played '[a]n important role' in the al Qaeda Millenium bomb plot targeting Los Angeles airport. It was also involved in weapons trafficking, and played in addition a key role in galvanizing anti-Western sentiment among Turkish Muslims in the lead-up to the 2003 war in Iraq. 'Peace activists' these people most certainly are not.

And this flotilla was but the latest jihadi attack, deploying the Islamists' signature strategy of violence and media manipulation. A MEMRI clip shows the hysteria against Israel being whipped up on board before the ships set sail, with the chanting of intifada songs about 'Khaybar' -- the iconic slaughter of Jews by Muslims in the 7th century which is used as a rallying cry to kill the Jews today -- and threats of 'martyrdom'. This was not merely a propaganda stunt, but a terrorist attack.

This is what the Jerusalem Post reported earlier today about what happened last night:

According to the IDF, the international activists 'prepared a lynch' for the soldiers who boarded the ships at about 2 a.m. Monday morning after calling on them to stop, or follow them to the Ashdod Port several hours earlier.

... Upon boarding the ships, the soldiers encountered fierce resistance from the passengers who were armed with knives, bats and metal pipes. The soldiers used non-lethal measures to disperse the crowd. The activists, according to an IDF report, succeeded in stealing two handguns from soldiers and opened fire, leading to an escalation in violence.

Also in the Jerusalem Post, David Horowitz wrote:

Benayahu said soldiers, who had been dispatched to block the flotilla because of fears that it was carrying weaponry and other highly dangerous cargo into the Hamas-controlled Strip, were attacked with knives and bars and sharpened metal implements.

Benayahu said two pistols that had been fired were subsequently found aboard the one ship, the Marmara, on which the violence erupted. And, most dramatically, he said that one IDF soldier had his weapon snatched away by one of the 'peace activists' on board, that this weapon was then turned against the IDF soldiers, who came under fire, and that they had no choice but to shoot back in self-defense.

... What seems urgent now is to make publicly available footage that shows exactly what did unfold. In early afternoon, video footage screened on Israel's Channel 2 appeared to show one of those aboard the Marmara stabbing an IDF soldier. Any such footage should have been made available hours earlier. Critically, if footage showing a soldier's weapon being snatched and turned on the IDF troops exists, it should be broadcast, and the sooner the better.

Some of this footage is now available on the web but much of it is hard to follow: as ever, the Israelis have been far too slow in making the most telling images and information available in comprehensible form (including in English rather than in Hebrew, for heaven's sake!). One clip appears to show masked and armed flotilla activists beating Israeli soldiers (although in the BBC report accompanying that footage, the voiceover appears to be claiming, perversely, that the people in masks were Israeli soldiers.)

There is a clip which shows an Israeli soldier being stabbed; and another which shows on the commandoes including throwing one off the deck, attacking others with a metal pole and a firebomb and an attempted kidnap of another.

It is also becoming clearer as the day wears on that, far from storming the boats in order to attack those on board, the Israelis were hopelessly ill-prepared for the violence they encountered. Israel's Channel 10 and IDF radio have reported that the Israeli naval commandos were equipped with *paint ball rifles* to ensure minimum casualties among the flotilla terrorists, with their hand guns to be used only as a last resort. The terrorists tried connecting the steel cables from the overhead helicopters to the boat's antenna, in order to cause the helicopters to crash. Only when the terrorists beat the soldiers with iron rods, stabbed them with knives and tried to lynch them did the soldiers respond. The Israeli commandoes were pushed down stairs, thrown overboard, and shot at.

Here is a report by an Israel army radio reporter on board:

'The activists had many things ready for an attack on the soldiers,' Lev-Rom said, 'including, for instance, a box of 20-30 slingshots with metal balls; these can kill. There were also all sorts of knives and many similar things. These are what they call "cold" weapons, as opposed to live fire. It was quite clear that a lynch had been prepared.'

Lev-Rom said, however, that it appears the army, 'even though it prepared for many different scenarios, was not ready for this one. The army seems not to have known what type of people were there and what type of weapons they had. It was hard for Israel to conceive that the ship, sponsored by the country of Turkey, would have such weapons. Israel was prepared to deal with anarchists, and instead had to deal with terrorists – that's the feeling here.'

Here is an even more vivid account showing how unprepared the Israeli soldiers were:

Navy commandoes slid down to the vessel one by one, yet then the unexpected occurred: The passengers that awaited them on the deck pulled out bats, clubs, and slingshots with glass marbles, assaulting each soldier as he disembarked. The fighters were nabbed one by one and were beaten up badly, yet they attempted to fight back.

However, to their misfortune, they were only equipped with paintball rifles used to disperse minor protests, such as the ones held in Bilin. The paintballs obviously made no impression on the activists, who kept on beating the troops up and even attempted to wrest away their weapons.

One soldier who came to the aid of a comrade was captured by the rioters and sustained severe blows. The commandoes were equipped with handguns but were told they should only use them in the face of life-threatening situations. When they came down from the chopper, they kept on shouting to each other 'don't shoot, don't shoot,' even though they sustained numerous blows.

The Navy commandoes were prepared to mostly encounter political activists seeking to hold a protest, rather than trained street fighters. The soldiers were told they were to verbally convince activists who offer resistance to give up, and only then use paintballs. They were permitted to use their handguns only under extreme circumstances.

The planned rush towards the vessel's bridge became impossible, even when a second chopper was brought in with another crew of soldiers. 'Throw stun grenades,' shouted Flotilla 13's commander who monitored the operation. The Navy chief was not too far, on board a speedboat belonging to Flotilla 13, along with forces who attempted to climb into the back of the ship.

The forces hurled stun grenades, yet the rioters on the top deck, whose number swelled up to 30 by that time, kept on beating up about 30 commandoes who kept gliding their way one by one from the helicopter. At one point, the attackers nabbed one commando, wrested away his handgun, and threw him down from the top deck to the lower deck, 30 feet below. The soldier sustained a serious head wound and lost his consciousness.

Only after this injury did Flotilla 13 troops ask for permission to use live fire. The commander approved it: You can go ahead and fire. The soldiers pulled out their handguns and started shooting at the rioters' legs, a move that ultimately neutralized them. Meanwhile, the rioters started to fire back at the commandoes.

It is becoming ever more clear that Islamist terror attacks like this are fiendishly staged theatrical events in which the western media – and beyond them, western governments -- play an absolutely essential role in the drama. If those media and governments refused to swallow the lies and instead called operations like this and the players behind it for what they actually are, *such terrorist operations would not happen*. The Islamist strategy of war against Israel is carefully calibrated to deploy the most effective weapon in its armoury in the cause of jihadi violence – the western media. Right on cue, western governments accordingly deliver their own script in condemning the victims of terror for defending themselves. And so, courtesy of the west's fifth columnists, yet another nail is driven into the west's own coffin.

Let's see whether this time the western elites show any signs of waking from their lethal trance.

An Assault, Cloaked in Peace

By Michael B Oren, Israeli Ambassador to the USA, NY Times, 2 June 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/03/opinion/03oren.html>

Peace activists are people who demonstrate non-violently for peaceful co-existence and human rights. The mob that assaulted Israeli special forces on the deck of the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara on Monday was not motivated by peace. On the contrary, the religious extremists embedded among those on board were paid and equipped to attack Israelis — both by their own hands as well as by aiding Hamas — and to destroy any hope of peace.

Millions have already seen the Al Jazeera broadcast showing these “activists” chanting “Khaibar! Khaibar - a reference to a Muslim massacre of Jews in the Arabian peninsula in the seventh century. YouTube viewers saw Israeli troops, armed with crowd-dispersing paintball guns and side arms for emergency protection, being beaten and hurled over the railings of the ship by attackers wielding iron bars.

What the videos don't show, however, are several curious aspects Israeli authorities are now investigating. First, about 100 of those detained from the boats were carrying immense sums in their pockets - nearly a million euros in total. Second, Israel discovered spent bullet cartridges on the Mavi Marmara that are of a calibre not used by the Israeli commandos, some of whom suffered gunshot wounds. Also found on the boat were propaganda clips showing passengers “injured” by Israeli forces; these videos, however, were filmed during daylight, hours before the night-time operation occurred.

The investigations of all this evidence will be transparent, in accordance with Israel's security needs.

There is little doubt as to the real purpose of the Mavi Marmara's voyage — not to deliver humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza, but to create a provocation that would put international pressure on Israel to drop the Gaza embargo, and thus allow the flow of seaborne military supplies to Hamas. Just as Hamas gunmen hide behind civilians in Gaza, so, too, do their sponsors cower behind shipments of seemingly innocent aid.

This is why the organizers of the flotilla repeatedly rejected Israeli offers to transfer its cargo to Gaza once it was inspected for military contraband. They also rebuffed an Israeli request to earmark some aid packages for Gilad Shalit, held hostage by Hamas for four years.

In the recent past, Israeli forces have diverted nine such flotillas, all without incident, and peacefully boarded five of the ships in this week's convoy. Their cargoes, after proper inspection, were delivered to non-Hamas institutions in Gaza. Only the Marmara, a vessel too large to be neutralized by technical means such as fouling the propeller, violently resisted. It is no coincidence that the ship was dispatched by İnsani Yardım Vakfı (also called the I.H.H.), a supposed charity that Israeli and other intelligence services have linked to Islamic extremists.

The real intent of breaking the embargo is to allow rockets to be transported to Gaza from Hamas's suppliers in Syria and Iran. Israel has already intercepted several such ships laden with munitions. Since Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005, Hamas has fired more than 10,000 rockets and mortars at our civilian population. This week, two Hamas rockets exploded near Ashkelon, one of Israel's largest cities.

Israel has a right and a duty to defend itself from Hamas and its backers. Our struggle is not with the people of Gaza but only with the radical regime that overthrew the legitimate Palestinian Authority and has pledged to seek Israel's destruction. Each day, Israel facilitates the passage into Gaza of more than 100 truckloads of food and medicine — there is no shortage of either. We, too, want a free Gaza — a Gaza liberated from brutal Hamas rule — as well as an Israel freed from terrorist threats.

Israel will scrupulously review the events surrounding the Marmara's interception. But Israel will also persist in denying advanced weaponry to Hamas. At the same time, the Israeli government will vigorously pursue peace with the Palestinian Authority, which shares our need for defense against armed extremists. The real peace activists are those who support our vision of a two-state solution, not those supporting the terrorists bent on destroying it.

Israel's war is the West's too

Nile Gardener, Telegraph.co.uk, 2 June 2010

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nilegardiner/100041916/israel%E2%80%99s-war-is-the-west%E2%80%99s-too/>

It is all too easy for smug, self-righteous politicians in the West to pour scorn upon Israel's actions in the face of its enemies, from the safety of European capitals thousands of miles away from Hamas rockets. The outpouring of hatred towards Israel following the shoot-out aboard an "aid" vessel headed towards Gaza earlier this week has been overwhelming, yet sadly predictable. From London to Berlin, Paris and Brussels, the vitriol against a close friend and ally has been both ugly and brutal, with language that is rarely used if at all these days, even against the likes of odious tyrannies such as North Korea or Sudan.

It seems that a special place in hell has been reserved for Israel, not only in the eyes of the Islamic world, but for many in the West as well. I cannot think of any country on earth that is more consistently reviled by the international community, and persecuted by the likes of the UN or the European Union, than this small nation of seven million people, who have bravely fought seven wars just to stay alive.

Yet, as Douglas Murray pointed out in an excellent post, Israel's enemies are ours too. Make no mistake. The barbaric terrorist groups including Hamas and Hizbollah, whose very existence revolves around the destruction of Israel, view Britain and the United States as the Great Satan as well. Their poisonous Islamist ideology, backed by Syria and Iran, is a deadly threat not only to Israel, but to the West as well. The defeat of these terrorist organisations as well as the dictatorships that back them, is in the fundamental national interest of both the US and UK.

Israel is on the front line of the war against Islamist terrorism, and fights every day for its existence amidst a sea of hostility. I am in no doubt that faced with the same situation, Americans and Britons would also be fighting tooth and nail for their survival as well. The Israelis are engaged in a long term war against vicious enemies, a vital component of a global war the free world is waging against Islamists.

Those who condemn Israel's use of "disproportionate force" would do well to remember that her foes are our deadly opponents too. If Israel is defeated the security of the West itself would be significantly undermined. There is no middle ground in this war – political leaders in the West must decide whose side they are on – the defenders of freedom in the Middle East or the forces of terrorism and tyranny that threaten them.

The Freedom Flotilla fraud

Editorial, Washington Post, 1 June 2010

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jun/1/the-freedom-flotilla-fraud/>

What was supposed to be a routine Israeli maritime boarding and inspection operation is turning into a propaganda victory for the Islamist terror group Hamas. The main lesson learned from the incident on the ship Mavi Marmara is: Don't bring a paintball gun to a knife fight.

The initial frenzy of denunciations of the operation in which nine people died - using words like piracy, slaughter, genocide and so forth - is fading in the cold light of facts. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay claimed that the Israeli operation had no legal justification, which only betrays her ignorance of maritime law. Navies routinely stop, board and search suspicious vessels, and Israel has intercepted blockade runners headed to Gaza for years. The difference this time is that the "peace activists" on board were armed and looking for a fight.

The Israelis boarded with paintball guns, tasers, tear gas and other nonlethal weapons. They expected the usual highly choreographed dance in which they board the ship and take control of it while the activists link arms, sing the Palestinian terrorist equivalent of "We Shall Overcome," take photos and issue press releases about the latest "Zionist atrocity." That's the usual Mahatma Gandhi/Martin Luther King Jr. passive-resistance theater.

But extremists have learned a key lesson of our age - violent resistance is better than passive submission when they know they will not be held accountable. In this case, the pro-Hamas activists sought a confrontation. Israeli troops rappelling onto the deck of the Mavi Marmara were immediately set upon with clubs, knives and other weapons. Pundits who reflexively denounced Israel for "disproportionate force" were blaming the wrong side. Had the terrorist sympathizers on the ship not incited the violence, no one would have been killed. There were no casualties on other ships in the flotilla where people did not resist.

Backers of the illegal blockade-running effort portray themselves as humanitarians, but this claim is dubious. They had rejected an Israeli offer to send the supplies they were carrying to Gaza overland, joining the tons of supplies that flow to Gaza daily, but this would not have fulfilled the organizers' goal of having a splashy, made-for-media event. So they went ahead

with their voyage, fomented the incident, and international organizations, governments and the press fell for it, as expected.

This is the beginning of a high-seas intifada aimed at the hearts and minds of the global community, an attempt to isolate Israel and make heroes of Hamas. The campaign continues this week as the blockade runner Rachel Corrie will make an attempt to reach Gaza. The ship is named after an American peace activist who was killed accidentally in 2003 when she attempted to block an Israeli bulldozer, and it is a much more media savvy moniker than Mavi Marmara.

There will be no more routine inspection operations; Monday's events raised the stakes. It is certain that the Hamas supporters on board will not yield to Israeli requests that the ship halt, and if troops attempt another boarding, it will be met with violence. This poses a quandary for Israel's navy, but a few well-placed shells fired at the stern of the Rachel Corrie to disable her rudder and propulsion system may offer a satisfactory solution.

Meanwhile, extremists in Gaza continue to attack civilians in Israel with mortars and rockets, and in one recent incident attempted a terror attack with a donkey-pulled cart-bomb. The world awaits the United Nations' expression of outrage.

***Bits and Pieces* Informative clips from media in the Middle East and elsewhere**

Imra.org.il, 3 June 2010: In the wake of the events surrounding the flotilla that was headed towards Gaza earlier in the week, the European Jewish Congress (EJC) calls on the European Union and European nations to immediately proscribe the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (Insani Yardim Vakfi), otherwise known as the IHH and other similar terrorist front organizations. "Organizations affiliated with and used as front for terrorist groups like Hamas and Al Qaeda have to be outlawed with immediate effect," Dr. Moshe Kantor, President of the EJC said.

Imra.org.il, 2 June 2010: Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communication Nabil Sharif on Wednesday said that upon royal directives, the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization JHCO will dispatch a new aid convoy to the Israeli-besieged Gaza Strip. Sharif told reporters that the 28-truck consignment will be laden with staple foodstuffs and other basic relief supplies to mitigate the suffering of the Palestinian people in the coastal territory.

ICEJ News, 1 June 2010: The US has assured Israel of continued support for its nuclear posture after the closing statement from the month-long review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on Friday singled out Israel as a target for disarmament.