

**READ AHEAD FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

Meeting with **MG Gadi Shamni, Israeli Defense Attaché**
Addressed as: **General Shamni**
Tuesday, June 1, 2010, 1600-1645, 3C889

FROM: Colin Kahl, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA/ME)

Host: (U) You will host the meeting with MG Shamni (bio at Tab B).

Issues: (U) Shamni has requested to brief you on recent Israeli actions against the flotilla of six maritime vessels that were headed for Gaza, including Mavi Marmara, in an effort to break the blockade and to carry aid to Gaza.

Desired Outcome:

- (U) Convey that the U.S. will examine all of the facts before making a judgment about the situation.
- (U) Obtain additional clarification regarding Israeli actions.

Attendees: (U)

DoD: ASD (ISA) Vershbow; DASD (ISA/ME) Kahl; Brig Gen Mike Holmes; ME Director Pat Antonietti; Israel Country Team Eric Lynn and Dave Wiltse

Israel: MG Shamni; CAPT Yoram Laks (Israeli Naval Attaché); MAJ Oron Mincha

Recommendations: (U) Use talking points at Tab A, if desired.

Relationship History: (U) You last met with MG Shamni on April 27 at the SecDef-MoD Barak meeting. The DPAG, co-chaired by USDP and Director General Shani, will be in Tel Aviv June 22-24.

Background: (U) On Monday, May 31 Israeli Naval Forces (INF) interdicted six vessels with pro-Palestinians activists attempting to break the Israel blockade and deliver aid to Gaza. Israel instructed the six vessels to divert to the southern port of Ashdod

Prepared by: (b)(6)

Derived from: Multiple Sources
Declassify on: April 20, 2020



where their cargo would be offloaded and it would be determined which cargo could be delivered overland to Gaza following inspection for weapons or dangerous material. Five vessels complied with IDF orders at sea and diverted to Ashdod. The Mavi Marmara refused.

- (U) Israel has been strictly enforcing its blockade of Gaza since 2009.
- (U) Before boarding the ships, the INF repeatedly asked the ships to divert to Ashdod and offered to transfer the cargo to Ashdod and then to Gaza.
- (U) After INF requests for the vessels to stop were rejected, elite INF units from Flotilla 13 were ordered to take control of the vessels. INF fast-roped from helicopters onto all six boats simultaneously in international waters at approximately 0400. The interdiction took place approximately 60 miles off Israel's coast.
 - (U) As the INF commandos fast-roped onto the Mavi Marmara, a riot occurred during which the commandos, armed with paintball guns and side arms, were attacked with knives and beaten with metal pipes. In the ensuing action, nine activists were killed, several dozen wounded, and approximately six INF personnel injured. Israel has provided medical attention to all individuals who were injured.
- (U) The GoI has stressed the link between IHH (Insani Yardim Vakfi - Turkish Humanitarian Relief Fund) and the Muslim Brotherhood who both emphasized clear action on the part individuals on Mavi Marmara to incite violence. Bulent Yildirim, head of IHH, said on May 30, that "We will definitely resist, and we will not allow the Israelis to enter here ... If Israel wants to board the ship, it will meet strong resistance."

Fallout: International condemnation has been swift and harsh against Israel.

- ~~(C)~~ Israel reports that there has not been a significant increase in activity on its borders or in Gaza. Two rockets were fired from Gaza into southern Israel today (Tuesday) and the Israeli Air Force (IAF) responded with retaliatory fire at the launch site. Some minor incidents have occurred including Israeli Arabs throwing stones at Israelis and an Israeli Arab protest is expected today. As of now, the West Bank remains quiet.
- (U) Open source reports that an air exercise that has been taking place in Crete with the Greeks has been stopped and the Greeks have asked the IAF to leave.

- (U) Several Israeli embassies and consulates have reported significant protests or violence against them including the Israeli embassy in Paris and the consulate in Istanbul.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

- (U) On Monday, the UN Security Council emergency session called for a transparent investigation, but not/not an independent investigation or condemnation at this time. USUN supports this approach.

Israeli Response

- (U) The Israelis say they will conduct a full investigation into the incident. Today, PM Netanyahu returned to Israel to conduct a Cabinet meeting on the events of yesterday, continued decisions to be made with regard to the detained people and the ships, and future vessels headed to Gaza.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

- (U) Two more ships are said to be headed to Gaza with a similar purpose. Shani stated that the Cabinet would also decide how to deal with these, but he was not sure if they would continue their mission to Gaza.

COORDINATION: Tab C

Attachments:
As Stated

Principals Committee Meeting on Middle East/Flotilla Incident
Thursday, June 3, 2010, 1815-1945
White House Situation Room

(b)(5)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d)

Issue Summary:

Mavi Marmarra Boarding Incident – May 31

- (U) On Monday, May 31 Israeli Naval Forces (INF) interdicted six vessels with pro-Palestinians activists attempting to break the Israel blockade and deliver aid to Gaza. Israel instructed the six vessels via loudspeakers to divert to the southern port of Ashdod where their cargo would be offloaded and delivered overland to Gaza following inspection for weapons or dangerous material.
- (U) After INF requests for the vessels to divert to Ashdod were rejected for two hours, elite INF units from Flotilla 13 (Israel’s Naval Commando Unit) began an operation to take control of the vessels. INF fast-roped from helicopters onto all six boats simultaneously at approximately 0430 L. The interdiction took place approximately 60 miles off Israel’s coast.

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b)

- (U) Once INF were aboard, five vessels complied with INF orders at sea and diverted to Ashdod. The Mavi Marmara, a Turkish flagged ship with over 500 passengers aboard, refused.
- (U) As the INF commandos fast-roped onto the Mavi Marmara, they were attacked with knives and beaten with metal pipes. The INF soldiers were armed with non-lethal weapons, such as paintball guns and tear gas, and holstered pistols for self defense. Israel claims the attackers were mercenaries who were looking for a fight

Prepared by: (b)(6)

Classified by: (b)(6)
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)
Declassify on: June 2, 2020

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and were equipped with gasmasks and weapons and several possessed large amounts of cash.

- (U) In the ensuing melee, nine activists were killed, several dozen wounded, and approximately six INF personnel injured. Israel has provided medical attention to all individuals who were injured.
- (U) The GoI has stressed the link between IHH (Insani Yardim Vakfi - Turkish Humanitarian Relief Fund) and the Muslim Brotherhood and claims that certain individuals on Mavi Marmara incited the violence. Bulent Yildirim, head of IHH, said on May 30, that "We will definitely resist, and we will not allow the Israelis to enter here ... if Israel wants to board the ship, it will meet strong resistance." This warning raises the question of why the INF appeared ill-prepared to face such resistance.

Fallout:

- ~~(C)~~ International condemnation has been swift and harsh against Israel.
- ~~(C)~~ Israel reports that there has not been a significant increase in activity on its borders or in Gaza. Two rockets were fired from Gaza into southern Israel Tuesday and the Israeli Air Force (IAF) responded with retaliatory fire at the launch site. Three Palestinians in Gaza were killed in the strike and two others killed in a ground confrontation. Some minor incidents have occurred including Israeli Arabs throwing stones at Israelis and an Israeli Arab protest is expected today. As of now, the West Bank remains quiet.
- (U) Open sources report that an air exercise that has been taking place in Crete with the Greeks has been stopped and the Greeks have asked the IAF to leave.
- (U) Several Israeli embassies and consulates have reported significant protests or violence against them including the Israeli embassy in Paris and the consulate in Istanbul.
- ~~(S)~~ The most concerned response has come from Turkey. Turkey immediately recalled its Ambassador to Israel. Preliminary reports from NATO indicate that the Turks are considering bringing this issue up at the next North Atlantic Council (NAC).
 - (U) Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu exemplified the Turkish overreaction to this incident when he stated that "this attack is like 9/11 for Turkey."

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(d)

- (U) On Monday, the UN Security Council emergency session called for a transparent investigation, but not/not an independent investigation or condemnation at this time. USUN supports this approach. The PC will discuss options for international participation in the investigation. (See State Paper that will arrive as an addendum Thursday).

Israeli Response

- (U) The Israelis say they will conduct a full investigation into the incident. PM Netanyahu returned to Israel from Canada to conduct Cabinet meetings to decide their way ahead regarding the detainees, the ships held, and the other ships heading for Gaza.
- ~~(S)~~ Israel decided to acquiesce to four Turkish demands with caveats. The four requests include: (1) release the wounded; (2) send the bodies back to Turkey; (3) release the detainees; and (4) release the ships.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b)

- (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b)

- (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

U.S. Objective (and DoD's Objective):

- ~~(S)~~ USG Objective is to learn the facts of the incident, work to mitigate diplomatic fallout, and work to ensure this type of incident does not repeat itself. ^{Exhibit 5} (b)(1),(b)(5),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

Key Points to Make:

- ~~(S)~~ We are concerned with the loss of life and the way the incident played out. (b)(1)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S)~~ We remain concerned about Turkey's reaction to this incident, including comparisons to 9/11, and one of our key objective is to repair relations between Israel and Turkey. (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S)~~ We should seize all opportunities to press the Israelis to explain their Gaza strategy

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

Bureaucratic State-of-Play:

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

**Deputies Committee Meeting on Gaza
Tuesday, June 8, 2010, 1330-1500
White House Situation Room**

(b)(1),(b)(5),Sec. 1.4(d)

Issue Summary and Background:

Ship Interdictions En Route to Gaza

- (U) On Monday, May 31 Israeli Naval Forces (INF) interdicted six vessels with pro-Palestinians activists attempting to break the Israel blockade and deliver aid to Gaza. Israel instructed the six vessels via loudspeakers to divert to the southern port of Ashdod where their cargo would be offloaded and delivered overland to Gaza following inspection for weapons or dangerous material.
 - (U) After INF requests for the vessels to divert to Ashdod were rejected for two hours, elite INF units from Flotilla 13 (Israel’s Naval Commando Unit) began an operation to take control of the vessels. As the INF commandos fast-roped onto the Mavi Marmara, they were attacked with knives and beaten with metal pipes. The INF soldiers were armed with non-lethal weapons, such as paintball guns and tear gas, and holstered pistols for self- defense. Israel claims the attackers were mercenaries who were looking for a fight and were equipped with gasmasks and weapons and several possessed large amounts of cash.
 - (U) In the ensuing melee, nine activists were killed, several dozen wounded, and approximately six INF personnel injured. Israel has subsequently released the activists on board following their arrest upon arrival to Ashdod.
- (U) Israel has stressed the link between IHH (Insani Yardim Vakfi - Turkish Humanitarian Relief Fund) and the Muslim Brotherhood and claims individuals on Mavi Marmara incited the violence. Bulent Yildirim, head of IHH, said on May 30, that “We will definitely resist, and we will not allow the Israelis to enter here ... if Israel wants to board the ship, it will meet strong resistance.” This warning raises the question of why the INF appeared ill-prepared to face such resistance.

Prepared by: (b)(6)

Classified by (b)(6)
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)
Declassify on: June 2, 2020

- (U) An additional Irish flagged ship, the Rachel Corrie, was boarded peacefully on Saturday, June 5 by the INF and directed to Ashdod following its refusal to heed Israel and Irish government pleas for it to divert voluntarily, despite Irish government attempts to convince those on board.
- ~~(S)~~ Press reports this morning that the Iranian Red Crescent is sending a ship of aid to challenge the blockade of Gaza and Iranian authorities have said that they are willing to send the IRGC to escort the ships to their destinations. (b)(1),(b)(5),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

Israeli Response

- (U) The Israelis say they will conduct a full investigation into the incident, and are open to international participation.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b)

US Military – IDF Discussions

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

- (U) It is important to note that Gaza's only port does not have the capacity to handle large ships' cargo (i.e., no cranes for offload). Large ships would most likely use small boats making multiple runs to shore to offload cargo.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d)

Gaza Situation and New Ideas

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d)

U.S. Objective (and DoD's Objective):

- ~~(S)~~ USG objective is to galvanize a new approach to Gaza that meets Israel's security needs, ensures normal life for Gazans, (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(d) and creates a basis to move towards peace.

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d)

Key Points to Make:

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S)~~ We support the principles of access, security, and diplomacy and offer DoD assistance, including working with State to identify ways to improve security inspections and counter smuggling efforts. (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S)~~ We remain concerned about Turkey's reaction to this incident, including comparisons to 9/11. One of our key objectives is to repair relations between Israel and Turkey. (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

Bureaucratic State-of-Play:

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

DepSec Action _____

USD(P) _____

READ AHEAD FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Office call with **Ehud Barak, Defense Minister of Israel**

Addressed as: **Minister Barak (Ehud – eh-HOOD)**

June 21, 2010, TBD 3E880

FROM: Alexander Vershbow, Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)

Host: (U) You will host Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak for a meeting at the Pentagon.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

[Redacted]

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

[Redacted]

Attendees: (U) U.S.: SecDef; CJCS Mullen; USD(P) Flournoy; ASD(ISA) Vershbow; DASD(ME) Kahl; ME Director Pat Antonietti; ME Adviser Eric Lynn. Israel: MoD Barak (Bio at Tab B); others TBD.

Background: (U) MoD Barak is in the U.S. to attend meetings at the U.N. He is making the trip to Washington specifically to meet with you. You last met with Barak on April 27.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

[Redacted]

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

[Redacted]

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

[Redacted]

Prepared by: (b)(6)

Classified by: (b)(6)

Derived from: 1.4(d)

Declassify on: June 11, 2030



(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

Ship Interdictions En Route to Gaza

- (U) On May 31 Israeli Naval Forces (INF) interdicted six vessels with activists attempting to break the Israel blockade and deliver aid to Gaza. After INF requests for the vessels to divert to Ashdod were rejected, INF commandos attempted to take control of the vessels.
 - (U) Inefficient intelligence led the INF soldiers to be attacked with knives and metal pipes upon fast-roping onto the Marmara. Israel claims the attackers were mercenaries seeking a fight, equipped with weapons and found with large amounts of cash.
 - (U) In the aftermath, nine activists were killed, several dozen wounded, and six INF personnel injured. Israel has since released the activists upon arrival to Ashdod.
 - (U) Israel has stressed the link between IHH (Turkish Humanitarian Relief Fund) and the Muslim Brotherhood and claims individuals on Mavi Marmara incited the violence.
- (U) An additional Irish flagged ship, the Rachel Corrie, was boarded peacefully on Saturday, June 5 by the INF and directed to Ashdod following its refusal to heed Israeli and Irish pleas for it to divert voluntarily.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

- (U) Israel has refused a UN-led international investigation, but have agreed to international participation in their investigation, inviting David Trimble of Northern Ireland and Ken Watkins of Canada as observers.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(5)

(b)(1),(b)(5),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d)

COORDINATION: Tab D

TALKING POINTS FOR UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY

DPAG GAZA DISCUSSION

Thursday, June 24, 2010

(b)(5)

Flotilla and Gaza Strategy Talking Points

- ~~(S//REL-ISR)~~ We are concerned with the loss of life on the flotilla and will look to the upcoming investigation for clarification of all the facts. Let me emphasize that we believe the investigation needs to be transparent and with international participation.
- ~~(S//REL-ISR)~~ As the President has said, we need to work together to devise a new, long-term, sustainable strategy for Gaza that ensures normal life there, reinforces Israel's right to prevent the importation of arms, (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S//REL-ISR)~~ We are open to having a discussion with you on non-boarding redirection of blockade running vessels.

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

Prepared by: (b)(6)

Derived from: Multiple Sources
Declassify on: April 2, 2020

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(b),Sec. 1.4(d)

ATTACHMENTS:

(b)(5)

POLICY COORDINATION SHEET

Subject: Litigation FOIA Request
SACCP Number: USP009601-11

<u>Title/Organization</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
PDASD(ISA)	Joseph McMillan	
DASD, ME	Colin H. Kahl	
Principal Director	Brig Gen Mike Minahan	<i>M 9 Sep 11</i>
Acting Director, Egypt and Levant	Jana Kay	