

(S) ISRAEL: Assessed Impact of Botched INF Interdiction of Gaza Freedom Flotilla

Summary:

(b)(1), (b)(3); 50 USC §3024, Sec. 1.4(a), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c)

Details:

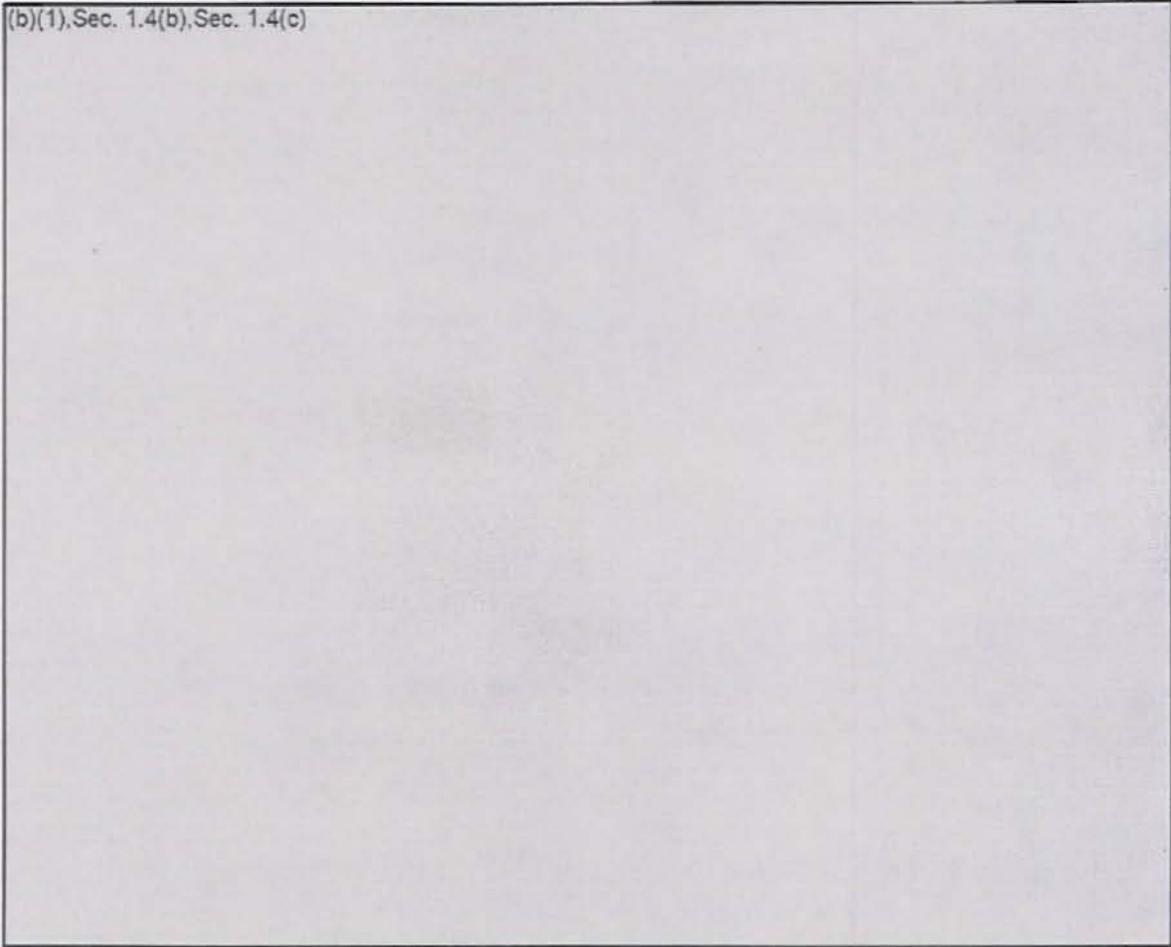
(U) What Went Wrong?

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

(U) Maritime Interdiction Operation

(U) During the early morning hours of 31 May, approximately 70 nautical miles off the Israeli coast in international waters, the INF intercepted and took control of six vessels en route to the Gaza Strip with an announced intent to "break Israel's blockade" and deliver humanitarian aid. The six vessels, sailing from Turkey and Greece with passengers from over 40 countries, were the Turkish-flagged M/V MAVI MARMARA and M/V GAZZE (previously known as M/V YUNIS SIRIN), the Greek-flagged M/V SOFIA, the Kiribati-flagged M/V DEFNE Y, the unknown-flagged yacht CHALLENGER I, and the unknown-flagged SFENDONI (type unknown). Currently open source indicates that all ships are in port Ashdod and the IDF airlifted all wounded activists to Israeli hospitals.³

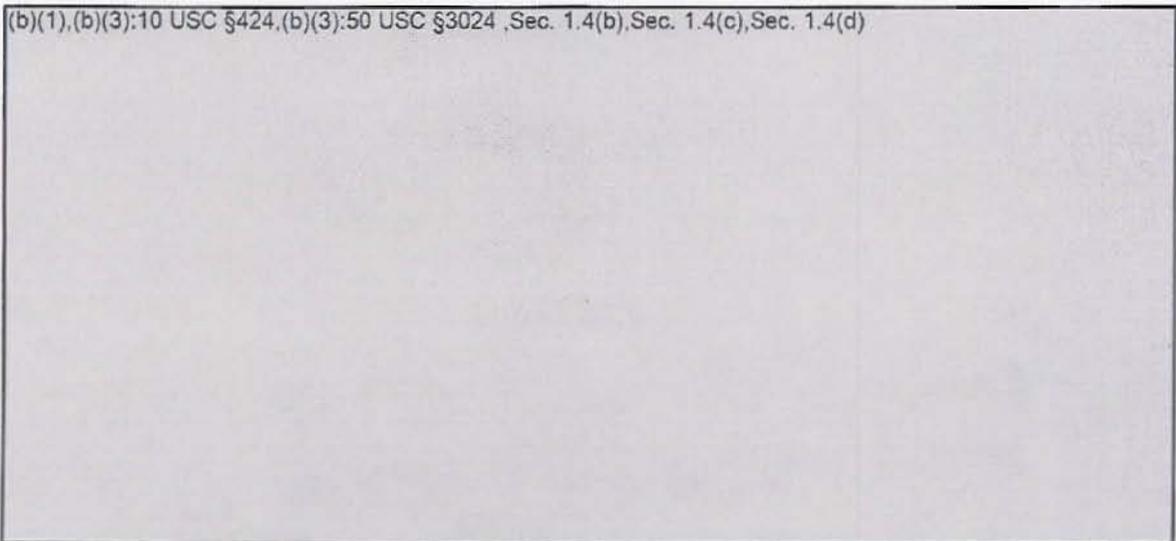
(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c)



Outlook:

(U) Outlook for the INF

(b)(1), (b)(3):10 USC §424, (b)(3):50 USC §3024, Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d)



(b)(1), (b)(3): 10 USC §424, (b)(3): 50 USC §3024, Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d)

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

(b)(1), (b)(3): 10 USC §424, (b)(3): 50 USC §3024, Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 02, 2010 10:45 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: GAZA FLOTILLA AFTERMATH - SITREP 1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ TEL AVIV 001218

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2020

TAGS: PREL, CASC, KPAL, KWBG, IS
SUBJECT: GAZA FLOTILLA AFTERMATH - SITREP 1

REF: TEL AVIV 1210

CLASSIFIED BY: A/DCM (b)(6) REASONS 1.4(B), (D).

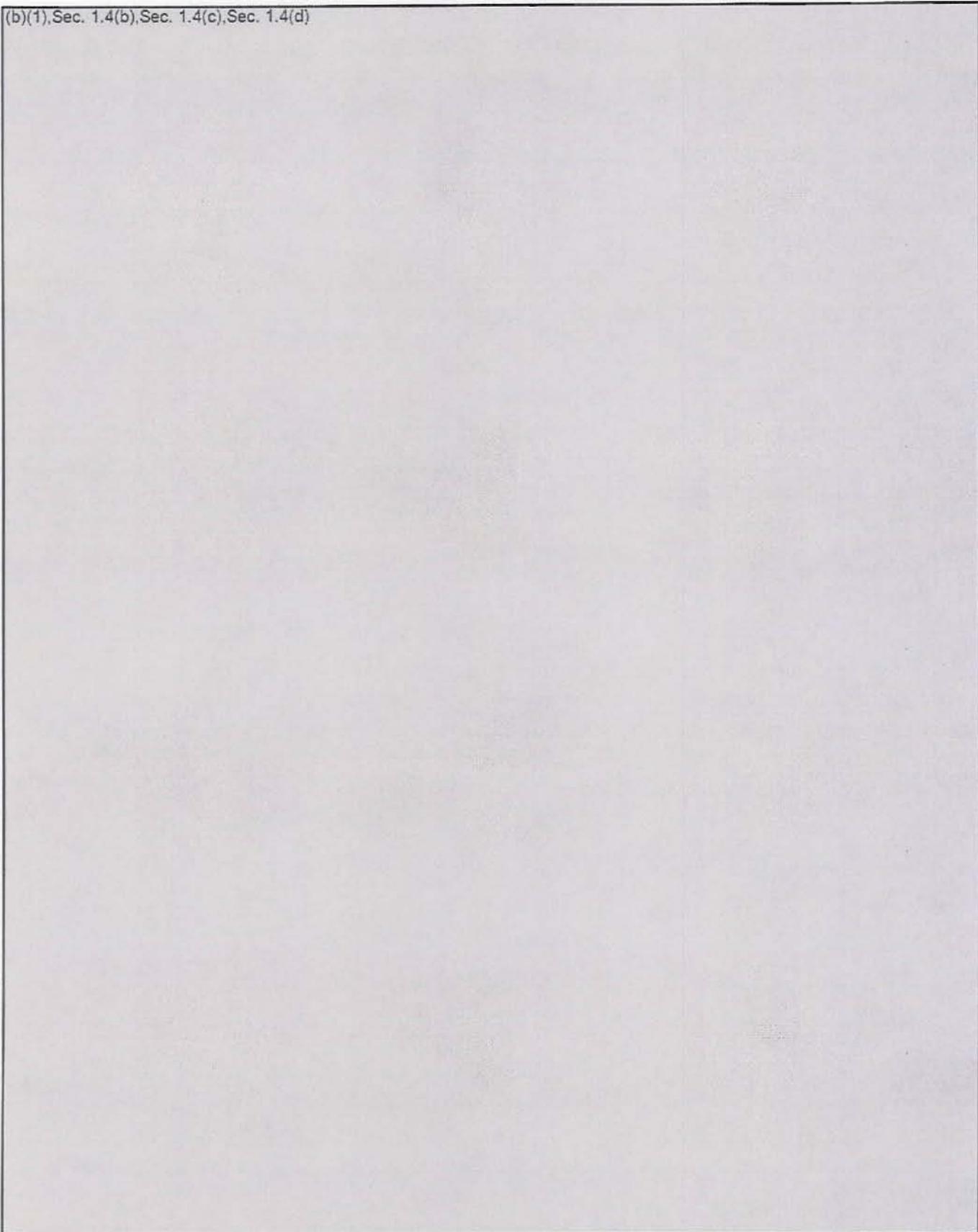
1. AS OF JUNE 1 AT 5 P.M. LOCAL TIME:

POLITICAL-MILITARY

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

[Large redacted area]

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



11. ~~(SBU)~~ BARAK SAID JORDAN HAS OFFERED TO FACILITATE THE REPATRIATION OF CITIZENS OF MUSLIM STATES THAT DO NOT HAVE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. AT LEAST ONE INDONESIAN AND ONE LEBANESE ARE AMONG THE WOUNDED, AND THE JORDANIANS ARE HANDLING THEIR REPATRIATION ONCE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S HOLD IS RESOLVED.

CONSULAR

12. ~~(SBU)~~ TEL AVIV CONSULS ARE CURRENTLY VISITING WITH 11 DETAINEES AT THE ELLA PRISON IN BEERSHEVA. THE FIVE MEN AND SIX WOMEN ARE IN GOOD HEALTH AND ARE FREE TO MEET WITH THE CONSULS. TWO OTHER DETAINEES WERE BRIEFLY HOSPITALIZED AND RELEASED TO DETENTION (WILDER, POWELL). TWO DETAINEES (PECK, MEADOR) ACCEPTED REPATRIATION LAST NIGHT. CG WILL VISIT ONE DETAINEE AT GIVON PRISON THIS EVENING.

13. ~~(SBU)~~ THE CONDITIONS AT ELLA ARE CROWDED, WITH CONSULS FROM MANY COUNTRIES MEETING WITH THEIR NATIONALS IN A COMMON SPACE. MEN AND WOMEN ARE HELD SEPARATELY. IMMIGRATION JUDGES HAVE SEEN SOME OF THE DETAINEES AND PROVIDED DEPORTATION ORDERS FOR THE DETAINEES TO SIGN. IF THEY SIGN, THEY AGREE TO DEPORTATION WITHIN 72 HOURS. IF THEY REFUSE, THEY ARE BEING TOLD THEY COULD WAIT UP TO 30 DAYS FOR AN IMMIGRATION HEARING. A HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER FROM JERUSALEM, WELL-KNOWN TO SOME OF THE DETAINEES, IS PRESENT. THE GENERAL POLITICAL VIEW OF THE DETAINEES IS THAT THEY WERE KIDNAPPED ON THE HIGH SEAS, ARE ILLEGALLY IN ISRAEL, AND ARE BEING HELD HOSTAGE. MANY OF THEM ARE RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR OWN DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS.

14. ~~(SBU)~~ PRISON AUTHORITIES REPORT AT LEAST 100 DETAINEES NOT YET REGISTERED AND RELEASED TO DETENTION FACILITIES. UPDATED LIST EXPECTED IN ANOTHER FOUR HOURS.

KNOWN AMCIT DETAINEES:

HAMANN, SCOTT MICHAEL (ELLA)

KOBREN, JANET (ELLA)

LEE, LARA (ELLA)

MEADORS, JOSEPH LESLIE (REPATRIATED 5/31) MOHAMMADI, FATIMA ELIZABETH (ELLA) O'LUAIN, FIACHRA (ELLA) PECK, EDWARD LIONEL (REPATRIATED 5/31) POWELL, VEDER (MALE) (RELEASED FROM HOSPITAL, LOCATION UNKNOWN)

SCHERMERHORN, DAVID (ELLA)

SHATTI (ADNAN SHATTI), HAYA ADNAN (ELLA) SHEETZ, KATHERINE ELLIOTT (ELLA) ST. ONGE, EUGENE EDWARD (ELLA) TURAANI, KHALID MUSTAFA (ELLA) WILDER (LARUDEE), PAUL (GIVON PRISON, RAMLE) WRIGHT, MARY ANNETTE (ANN) (ELLA)

SECURITY

15. ~~(SBU)~~ ISRAELI NATIONAL POLICE ARE SLATED TO REQUEST AN EXTENSION OF THE REMAND OF 18 YOUTHS ARRESTED MAY 31 FOR RIOTING IN UMM AL-FAHM, NAZARETH, FUREIDIS AND HAIFA. A POLICE STATEMENT SAID, "WE WILL CONTINUE WITH A FIRM POLICY AGAINST ANYONE WHO USES ANY KIND OF VIOLENCE. WE WILL ALLOW PROTESTS, BUT NOT RIOTS." MEANWHILE, THOUSANDS OF NORTHERN DISTRICT

POLICE OFFICERS ARE PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTING, NORTHERN DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF SHIMON KOREN IS HOLDING TALKS WITH LEADERS OF THE ARAB PUBLIC IN HOPES OF MAINTAINING CALM AND RESTRAINT.

16. ~~(SBU)~~ THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ISRAELI ARAB COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL CALLED FOR A GENERAL STRIKE TO TAKE PLACE ON JUNE 1. THIRTY ARAB WOMEN MARCHING IN JERUSALEM WITH TURKISH FLAGS ON JUNE 1 WERE DISPERSED WITHOUT VIOLENCE BY POLICE AFTER THEY ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK A MAIN ROAD AS THEY MARCHED TO THE TURKISH CONSULATE IN A SHOW OF SUPPORT FOR THE FLOTILLA.

17. ~~(SBU)~~ SEVERAL ISRAELI ARAB LEADERS WERE ON THE FLOTILLA, INCLUDING SHEIKH RAED SALAH, THE LEADER OF THE NORTHERN BRANCH OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT WHO RECENTLY WAS ACQUITTED OF INCITING DISTURBANCES ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT.

TENSIONS WERE VERY HIGH UNTIL THIS MORNING WHEN FALSE RUMORS ABOUT SHEIKH SALAH,S DEATH, INJURY, OR SURVIVAL OF A SUPPOSED ISRAELI ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT WERE DISPELLED. THE LEADER OF THE SOUTHERN BRANCH OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT, HAMAD ABU DAA,BAS, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE ARAB HIGHER MONITORING COMMITTEE, MUHAMMAD ZEIDAN, WERE ALSO ON BOARD THE SHIPS. ALL THREE WERE ARRESTED AND BROUGHT BEFORE THE ASHKELON MAGISTRATES COURT FOR A JUNE 1 HEARING APPROVING THEIR CONTINUED DETENTION AND INTERROGATION. KNESSET MEMBER HANEEN ZOABI (BALAD), WHO HAD ALSO BEEN ON ONE OF THE SHIPS OF THE FLOTILLA, WAS RELEASED DUE TO HER PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY AND PROMPTLY HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE, DECLARING THE FLOTILLA A "VICTORY." MK JAMAL ZALHAKA (BALAD), WHO WAS NOT ON THE FLOTILLA, DESCRIBED THE COMMANDO RAID PUBLICLY AS A "MASSACRE WHOSE RESULTS WERE NOT A MATTER OF CHANCE" AND CALLED FOR NETANYAHU AND BARAK TO RESIGN AND BE PROSECUTED IN AN INTERNATIONAL COURT FOR WAR CRIMES.

PRESS REPORTING

18. (U) THE ISRAELI PRESS HAS BEEN HEAVILY CRITICAL OF ALMOST ALL ASPECTS OF THE GAZA FLOTILLA OPERATION. THE CRITICISM AND COMMENTARY OF THE AFFAIR WERE MAINLY DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS, EACH FOCUSING ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF THE OPERATION: FROM THE SOLDIERS ON THE GROUND, TO THE MILITARY COMMAND, AND ALL THE WAY UP TO THE POLITICAL ECHELON, WITH SOME BLUNT AND UNABASHED CALLS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF DEFENSE MINISTER EHUD BARAK.

19. ~~(SBU)~~ THE ONE, ALMOST-CLEAR CONSENSUS AMONG THE COMMENTATORS WAS THAT THE SOLDIERS SHOULD NOT BE BLAMED FOR THE MISHAP, WHICH WAS ILL-PREPARED BY THEIR COMMANDERS. SEVERAL REPORTERS WHO WERE EMBEDDED WITH THE NAVY FORCES BROUGHT FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF THE ACTIONS, ATTESTING TO THE BRAVERY OF THE SOLDIERS ON THE SHIPS, WHO WERE FACED WITH ODDS MUCH GREATER THAN THEY HAD EXPECTED.

20. ~~(SBU)~~ THE CRITICISM INTENSIFIES AS THE PUNDITS AND COMMENTATORS CLIMB UP THE RANKS AND BEGIN ANALYZING THE IDF PREPAREDNESS FOR THE MISSION. LT. GEN. GABI ASHKENAZI, USUALLY A MEDIA FAVORITE, WAS TODAY ONE OF THOSE BLAMED FOR THE LACK OF EFFECTIVE PLANNING. THE CRITICISM RANGED FROM LACK OF INTELLIGENCE ON WHAT THE PROTESTORS WERE PREPARING ON BOARD THE "MAVI MARMARA," THE RELATIVELY SMALL SIZE OF THE FORCE THAT BOARDED A SHIP CARRYING 600 PASSENGERS, AND THE NAVY'S DECISION TO EQUIP THE SOLDIERS WITH LESS-THAN-LETHAL WEAPONS (PAINTBALL GUNS).

21. ~~(S)~~ BUT THE HARSHTEST CRITICISM WAS SAVED FOR THE POLITICAL ECHELON, AND IN PARTICULAR THE DEFENSE MINISTER.

SENIOR COLUMNISTS AND COMMENTATORS ASKED WHETHER THE MILITARY-POLITICAL ECHELON, HEADED BY EHUD BARAK, HAD MADE THE RIGHT DECISION TO CONFRONT THE FLOTILLA IN SUCH A WAY, RATHER THAN LETTING THE FLOTILLA PASS THROUGH TO GAZA, OR PLACING THE BRUNT OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HUMANITARIAN AID TO GAZA IN THE HANDS OF THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT.

CUNNINGHAM

BT
#7538
8579

NNNN

MEMORANDUM

Israeli options

Israel consistently has appealed with little result to foreign governments to prevent Free Gaza ships from approaching the Gaza Strip, and since 2009 has used the Israeli Navy to divert the vessels. Israeli defense officials as of Tuesday had not yet decided how to handle another attempt to breach the blockade, but indicated that no ships would be allowed to reach the Gaza Strip,

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

- Israel asked Ireland to prevent the Irish-flagged M/V Rachel Corrie, a Free Gaza ship that probably will attempt to run the blockade as early as tomorrow, from approaching the Gaza Strip, but Ireland instead pressed Israel to allow the ship to reach the Gaza Strip, according to press reports.²³
- Israeli military forces almost certainly would board and seize a ship that ignored warnings to stay away from the Gaza Strip. The Israeli Navy could use a variety of tactics to redirect or halt a ship depending on the type of vessel, including blocking, bumping, or ramming a ship to force it to change course or stop, fouling the propellers with nets, disabling the engine with cannon fire, or spraying water into the exhaust stacks. (S//NF)

159-1

~~TOP SECRET~~

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

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

² [OSC | GMP20100601739011 | 20100601 | (U) | CIRAS ID: FB6818013]

³ [OSC | EUP20100602097003 | 20100602 | (U) | CIRAS ID: FB6822418]

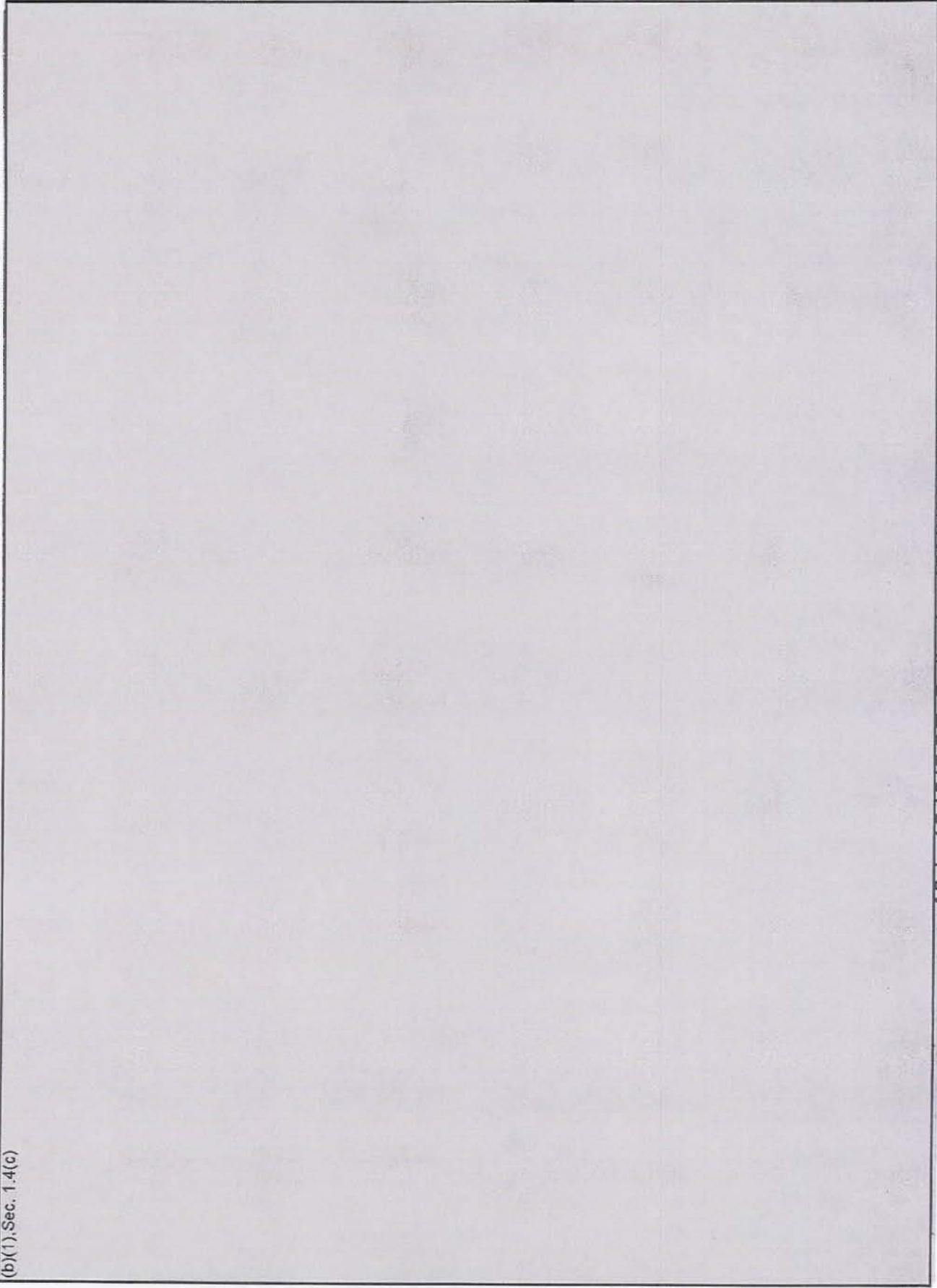
159-2

~~TOP SECRET~~

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

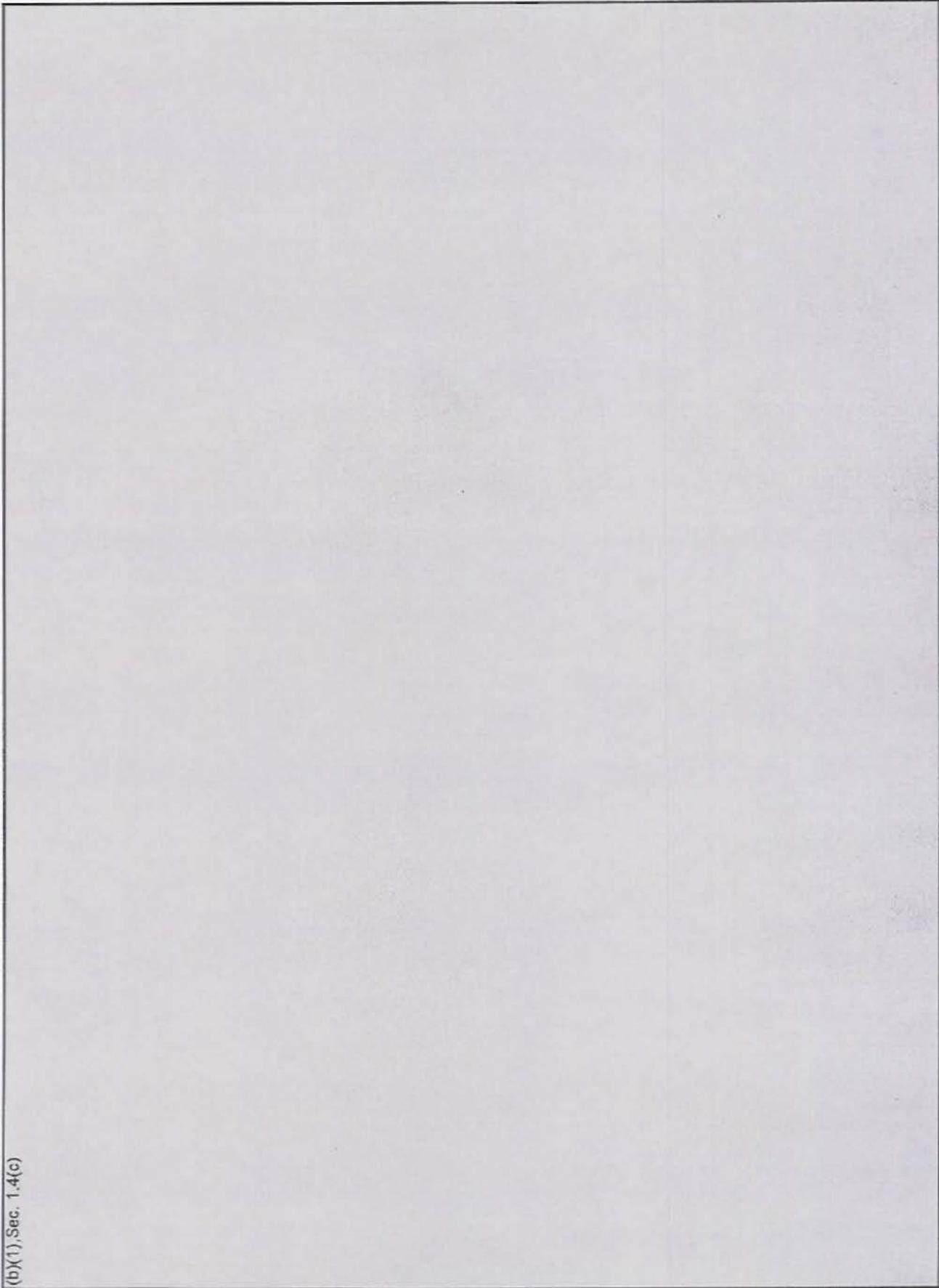
10-L-1242/CCK Gallagher/ONI/000541

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



10-L-1242/CCR Gallagher/ONI/000542

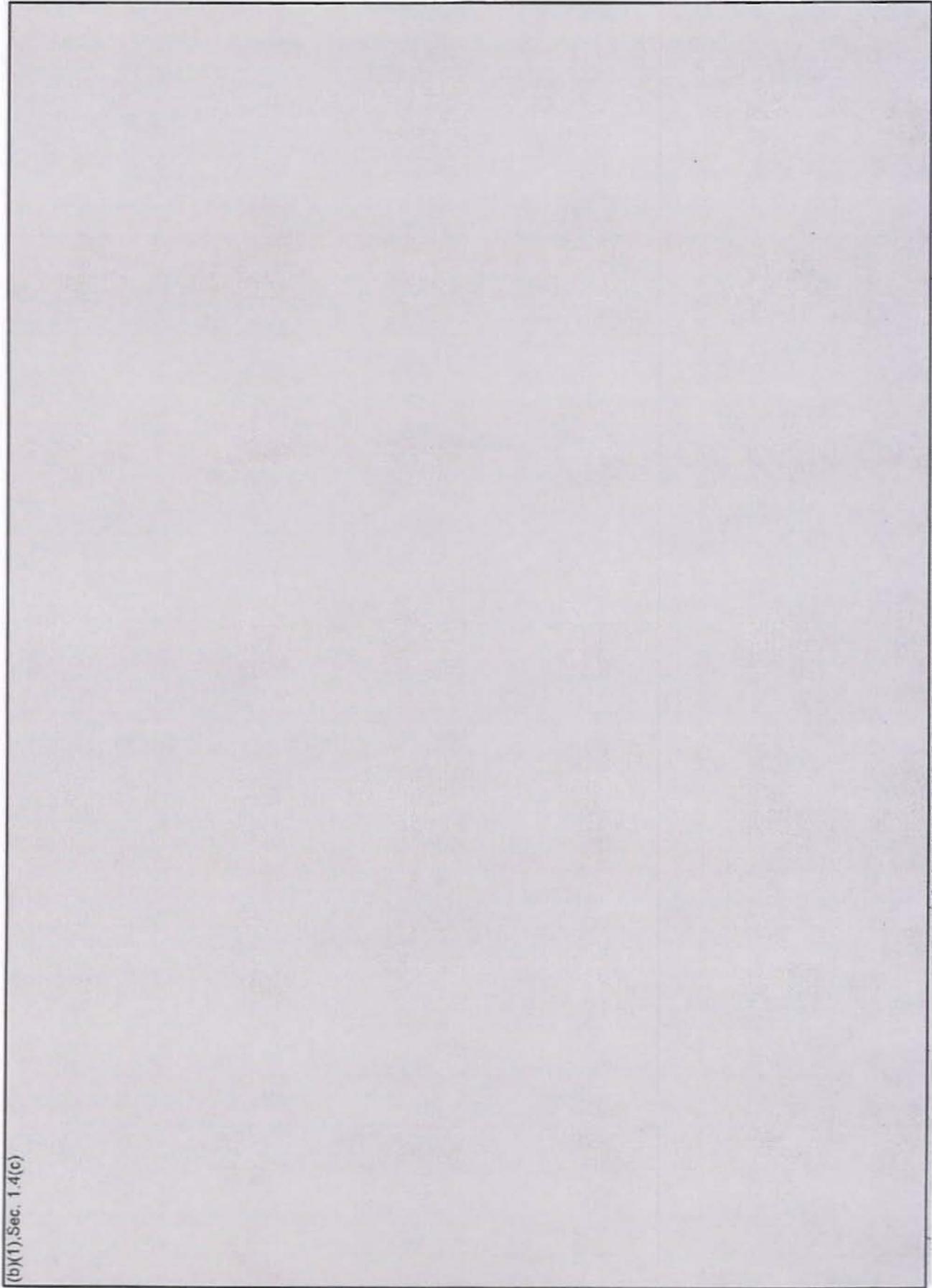
(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)



159-4

10-L-1242/CCR Gallagher/ONI/000543

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



159-5

10-L-1242/CCR Gallagher/ONI/000544

~~(U//FOUO)~~ IHH EXPECTS FREE GAZA FLOTILLA TO APPROACH GAZA ON 5/28 OR 5/29

10ISTANBUL195 (Consulate Istanbul)

Thu May 27 10:41:00 GMT 2010

References these messages: 10ISTANBUL187

[View Header](#)

UNCLAS ISTANBUL 000195

~~SENSITIVE~~

SIPDIS
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR EUR/SE
PLEASE PASS TO CA/OCS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: CASC, PREL, MOPS, TU, IS
SUBJECT: IHH EXPECTS FREE GAZA FLOTILLA TO APPROACH GAZA ON 5/28 OR 5/29

REF: 10 ISTANBUL 187

1. ~~(S//FOUO)~~ IHH informed post that it expects its passenger ship, the Mavi Marmara, to depart Antalya around 5:00 pm today. The ship will head towards the "Free Gaza" flotilla rendezvous point off of Cyprus (reflet). IHH expects the flotilla to approach Gaza on the evening of May 28 or morning of May 29.

ONE AMCIT HAS JOINED IHH GROUP. TWO MORE MAY ARRIVE TODAY

2. ~~(S//FOUO)~~ IHH said that one American citizen (b)(6) has arrived in Antalya and will be aboard its passenger ship when it departs. Two other American citizens, one believed to be named (b)(6) may also board the ship. However, IHH said it is unsure they will arrive before the ship departs. The IHH said it will submit a final list of passengers to their headquarters in Istanbul after their ship's passengers pass through passport control. The list will contain the names of the American citizens on board their ship. IHH said they will share those names with post.

3. ~~(S//FOUO)~~ IHH has confirmed that it will have three ships in the flotilla. The Mavi Marmara, as well as two cargo ships, named the Gazze and the Defne. The cargo ships will only have IHH officials on board and no foreigners.
Wiener

348-1