

## GAZA FLOTILLA FOIA PRODUCTION GUIDE: U.S. Actions Related to Blocking Flotillas to Gaza Following the May 31, 2010 Attack

Last updated: September 2104

*This CCR-produced guide provides a summary of information gathered from documents released by the United States government pursuant to Freedom of Information requests being litigated in CCR v. Dep't of Defense, et al. Documents produced by the United States agencies are referred to below by the name of the U.S. agency that produced the document and the Bates-number assigned to the relevant page; all documents are available [here](#). A compilation of documents referenced herein can be accessed [here](#). An overview of the attack on the Flotilla and the FOIA case is available [here](#) and a legal analysis of the attack [here](#).*

In the year following Israel's May 2010 attack on the humanitarian flotilla to Gaza, a number of other flotillas were planned by activists working to lift the siege of Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid. Documents released pursuant to CCR's FOIA request reveal that the U.S. worked with Israel to prevent or discourage these flotillas from travelling to Gaza. In response to organizers' plans to sail additional ships, various elements of the U.S. government, including the State Department, Department of Defense, DIA, the Navy, and the Coast Guard took action.

### **The U.S. Sought to Block a 2010 Asian Caravan to Break the Blockade and Deliver Humanitarian Aid**

In November and December of 2010, the U.S. State Department ("State" or "DOS") sought international support in blocking a land caravan to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza.

- A démarche<sup>1</sup> sent from Washington and signed "Clinton," asks embassy officials in New Delhi, Islamabad, and Ankara to seek information on the upcoming "Asia to Gaza Solidarity Caravan" which consisted of roughly 500 activists from India who would travel through Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Jordan, board ships in Turkey or Syria, and then sail for Gaza to arrive on the anniversary of Israel's Operation Cast Lead.<sup>2</sup>
- Recommended talking points of the démarche note that "[t]he United States believes strongly that aid flotillas that aim to deliver goods directly to Gaza by sea are irresponsible and intentionally provocative."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A démarche is "a request or intercession with a foreign official, e.g., a request for support of a policy, or a protest about the host government's policy or actions", Department of State Foreign Service Institute, *Protocol for the Modern Diplomat*, Glossary, available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/99260.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> *Action Request: Demarche on Planned Asia to Gaza Aid Caravan*, 10 State 119883, November 19, 2010, StateDept03949-52

<sup>3</sup> Id.

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- Talking points for officials note that, “We urge you to take whatever steps you can to prevent this convoy from taking this approach.”<sup>4</sup>
- On December 20, 2010, a follow up démarche on the same issue was sent via cable from the Secretary of State’s Office to the US Embassies in Amman, Beirut, and Damascus.<sup>5</sup> At that time, the aid caravan had changed its plans, intending only to sail to Egypt and then deliver goods to Gaza through the land border, rather than break the maritime blockade. However, with concern that the group would follow its earlier plan, the U.S. reiterated its talking points against seeking to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza in this second démarche.<sup>6</sup>
- Following the dissemination of this cable, it was forwarded by Tel Aviv Political Military Officer for the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, Jason Grubb, who wrote that he, “followed up with [Israel’s] MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], [redacted] on our latest efforts detailed below regarding the “Asia to Gaza Aid Caravan”, [redacted] appreciated the information.”<sup>7</sup> The MFA alerted Grubb to internet reports that an Iranian American citizen who was participating in the flotilla had been denied entry to Turkey, and wanted to know “if we knew the reasons for the denied entry, or if we had asked the Turkish authorities to intervene.”<sup>8</sup> All responses to this email have been redacted.

### **The U.S. Government Engaged Countries Around the World in an Effort to Block the 2011 “Stay Human” Anniversary Flotilla to Gaza**

In 2011, a flotilla was planned for the anniversary of the 2010 Israeli attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. In response to the efforts of hundreds of participating activists from across the world who sought to stand in solidarity with Gazans and break the blockade, the U.S. government acted on Israel’s request to campaign to stop the flotilla before it even launched.

*Israel sought assistance from the U.S. in countering plans for a 2011 flotilla internationally*

- A March 23, 2011 cable from the U.S. Ambassador to Israel in Tel Aviv, sent across the Department of State and to officials in the U.S. Air Force Base Incirlik, Turkey,

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<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> Action Request: Follow up Demarche on the Asia to Gaza Aid Caravan, Dec. 20, 2010, StateDept04020-21.

<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> FW: FW: Action Request: Follow up Demarche on the Asia to Gaza Aid Caravan, Dec. 22, 2010, StateDept04022-26.

<sup>8</sup> Id.

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Department of Justice, and Drug Enforcement Agency was titled "Israel Alarmed by Plans for May Flotilla."<sup>9</sup>

- This cable notes that “senior officials in the Israeli MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], MOD [Ministry of Defense], and NSC [National Security Council] approached us in a coordinated effort to get U.S. help on a public campaign to discourage the flotilla.”<sup>10</sup> *Note: the cable includes roughly one page of redacted text, which may have provided more information on the Israeli request.*
- On April 6, 2011, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv Deputy Chief of Mission, Thomas Goldberger, sent a cable titled “MFA Asks for Specific USG Assistance to Counter May Flotilla” to the Secretary of State, the U.S. Embassies in Cairo, Ankara, and Jerusalem, the U.S. Mission to the UN Headquarters in New York, the Political-Military Action Team, and officials at the Incirlik Air Force Base.<sup>11</sup>
- The cable reports that Israel officials “asked us April 6 for specific assistance following on [the March 23rd cable] to support their efforts to counter plans for another flotilla in late May.”

*In response to Israeli requests for assistance, the State Department ordered staff across Europe to take action to prevent the 2011 Flotilla*

On April 15, 2011, the U.S. Department of State sent a démarche cable drafted by Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Political/Military Affairs Official Jim Sindle, and signed by “Clinton,” requesting that U.S. Embassy officials throughout Europe contact their host governments, seek information about the upcoming flotilla, and deliver U.S. talking points deriding the flotilla and urging its “prevention.”<sup>12</sup>

- In asking nations for assistance in “preventing” the flotilla, the U.S. notes “another violent incident poses significant political risk and also a real risk to safety of life at sea.” The démarche notes that the U.S. government was in discussions with Israel, in which U.S. officials were “expressing the need for careful planning in how it might intercept flotilla vessels, and restraint in dealing with civilians...”<sup>13</sup> *Comment: This position appears to indicate a State Department presumption that another flotilla to Gaza would*

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<sup>9</sup> DOS, Cable: *Israel Alarmed by Plans for May Flotilla*, March 23, 2011, **StateDept2014-2016**.

<sup>10</sup> Id.

<sup>11</sup> DOS, Cable: *MFA Asks for Specific USG Assistance to Counter May Flotilla*, April 6, 2011, **StateDept02017-19**.

<sup>12</sup> DOS, Cable: *Demarche: The Free Gaza “Anniversary Flotilla,”* April 15, 2011, **StateDept0099-0106**; see also, DOS, Email: *STATE 36240; Flotilla Demarche Delivered*, April 22, 2011, **StateDept2023**.

<sup>13</sup> DOS, Cable: *Demarche: The Free Gaza “Anniversary Flotilla,”* April 15, 2011, **StateDept0099-0106**.

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*inevitably result in a boarding by Israeli forces, and, as there is no evidence of a challenge, assent to that course of action.*

- The U.S. called on other nations to “do everything legally possible to prevent another flotilla confrontation.”
- Recommended steps to “prevent flotilla ships originating in your country from departing for Gaza,” include imposing safety or other inspections of vessels. Alternatively, nations may adopt one of the tactics that the U.S. was “...considering utilizing in this matter, such as suspension and/or revocation of mariner credentials, termination of voyage, and **criminal or civil penalties** for negligent operation of vessels.”<sup>14</sup> (emphasis added)
- The government also requested information on flotilla plans and lists of participants and required embassies to report back on the results of their suppression activities. *Commentary: The démarche does not seek assurances of non-violence, international inspection of vessels, or other reasonable steps, but rather provides as the only solution to this risk of violence a complete prevention of the flotilla to Gaza. This position is in line with the U.S. tacit acceptance of the legality of the on-going Israeli blockade.*<sup>15</sup>

*Responses to the Flotilla "Prevention" Démarche, Israeli Appreciation*

Upon receiving the démarche, Embassy officials around Europe contacted their host government to deliver the U.S. message on preventing the anniversary Free Gaza Flotilla. Their responses reveal split opinion among nations on preventing the flotilla, while Israel expressed its “appreciation” for the effort. Each host government response was reported back to the State Department in Washington, D.C. by the embassy that made the contact.

- A number of States agreed with the U.S. stance, albeit to varying degrees:
  - **Canada** reported that potential statements on the flotilla would be made following Canadian federal elections. The source explained that the government “cannot make sensitive public statements during the campaign” but once the election was over, it would likely make an announcement. Further, the representative noted that they

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<sup>14</sup> Id.

<sup>15</sup> For more information on the legality of the Israeli-imposed blockade, see CCR’s Fact Sheet, *Legal Aspects of the Gaza Flotilla Attack* (2010) at <http://www.ccrjustice.org/files/Center%20for%20Constitutional%20Rights%20Legal%20Analysis%20September%202010.pdf>.

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didn't think approaching flotilla organizers in Canada would be useful, as "they probably wouldn't listen to us anyway."<sup>16</sup>

- **Spain** included a warning about flotillas in its travel advisory on Palestine, and the Government advised citizens not to sail to Gaza.<sup>17</sup> Media reporting indicated Israeli PM Netanyahu called Spanish President Zapatero, who later made public statements that "diplomacy is more useful" than flotillas in seeking the end of the blockade.<sup>18</sup>
- **Italy** replied that it would be holding an interagency meeting "to assess the risk of a Gaza 'Anniversary Flotilla' ship" and "to coordinate preventive strategies."<sup>19</sup>
- In a cable titled, "GOF [Govt' of **France**] Actively Opposes French Participation in Gaza Flotilla," Embassy officials in France reported that the government had "taken steps to dissuade French citizens from participating" including speaking directly to flotilla organizers and delivering a "stern" warning, making a statement in the UN Security Council, and issuing an official travel warning.<sup>20</sup> A further public declaration was planned for a few days later on May 9, 2011.
- **Cyprus**, a stopping point for flotilla vessels traveling to Gaza, "confirmed that the ROC (Republic of Cyprus) would maintain in force the decision it made last year to prevent ships setting sail for Gaza from ROC ports."<sup>21</sup>
- **Norway's** representative claimed "there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza today" and that "there is no need for a flotilla."<sup>22</sup> Open source reporting from Norway revealed that a number of activists were planning on joining the flotilla despite their government's warnings, and "will pursue a non-violent strategy if attacked."
- **Belgium** delivered information on the organizations involved in planning the flotilla, and updated the U.S. government on the status of the passengers and vessels. The government was at that time "considering whether to do more than it has already done, which is to issue a travel warning advising against travel to Gaza."<sup>23</sup> *Note: additional information is redacted.*

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<sup>16</sup> DOS, Cable: *Canada Possibly to Express Concern About Gaza Flotilla After Canadian Elections*, 11 Ottawa 125, April 26, 2011, **StateDept3980**.

<sup>17</sup> DOS, Cable: *Spain: Spanish Response to Flotilla Demarche*, May 20, 2011, **StateDept03685**.

<sup>18</sup> DOS, Cable: *Spain: Gaza Flotilla participation*, 11 Madrid 540, May 13, 2011, **StateDept03686-87**.

<sup>19</sup> DOS, Cable: *Italy: Free Gaza "Anniversary Flotilla" Response*, April 22, 2011, **StateDept3987-88**.

<sup>20</sup> DOS, Cable: *GOF Actively Opposes French Participation in Gaza Flotilla*, 11 Paris 431, May 6, 2011, **StateDept3981**.

<sup>21</sup> DOS, Cable: *Cyprus: Anniversary Flotilla Response*, 11 Nicosia 129, April 26, 2011, **StateDept3976-77**.

<sup>22</sup> DOS, Cable: *Norway Agrees Free Gaza Flotilla Unnecessary*, 11 Oslo 189, April 29, 2011, **StateDept3978-79**.

<sup>23</sup> DOS, Cable: *Belgians Likely to Accompany Gaza Flotilla, But Not on Their Own Ship*, 11 Brussels 225, April 20, 2011, **StateDept4002**.

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- **The Netherlands** noted it had “taken a series of steps, publically and privately, to communicate the danger and ineffectualness of attempting to deliver uninspected goods directly to Gaza, and undertaking any provocations that would invite and escalate a confrontation.”<sup>24</sup> The Dutch government representative also provided information on the groups organizing the flotilla.
- Although there was no information to suggest Croat participation in the flotilla, the Government of **Croatia** reported that it, “understands and shares [U.S.] concerns.”<sup>25</sup>
- Similarly, although **Luxembourg** knew of no participation from its citizenry, the government contact “promised to share the U.S. message with his MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] colleagues to ensure his government was doing everything it could on this issue.”<sup>26</sup>
- **Czech Republic** did not know of any flotilla organizing happening among its citizens, but noted its agreement with the U.S. position, and that although the government supports opening the borders to Gaza, it was concerned about weapons smuggling, and “sees the flotilla as a political statement.”<sup>27</sup>
- **Ukraine** knew of no participation from its citizens, but “shared our concerns regarding the possibility of participants sustaining injury or death during the flotilla.”<sup>28</sup>
- Other nations provided mixed or inconclusive responses:
  - **England**’s representative reported there would be a meeting with Ministers that week, and expected a warning against travel would be released.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the contact requested more information on the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, which the U.S. recommended using to prevent ships from sailing. Despite those statements, the contact also reminded the U.S. official that the government is “broadly sympathetic” to the goal of ending the blockade and noted

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<sup>24</sup> DOS, Cable: *Netherlands/Gaza: Dutch Government Warns NGOs of Flotilla Confrontation, To no Avail*, 11 The Hague 183, April 20, 2011, **StateDept3990-93**.

<sup>25</sup> DOS, Cable: *Demarche Response: Gaza Anniverary (sic) Flotilla*, April 22, 2011, **StateDept3995**.

<sup>26</sup> DOS, Cable: *Demarch Delievered On Gaza "Anniversary Flotilla,"* April 20, 2011, **StateDept3975**.

<sup>27</sup> DOS, Cable: *Czech Response to Demarche: The Free Gaza 'Anniversary Flotilla'*, **StateDept3987-85**.

<sup>28</sup> DOS, Email: *Demarche Delievered on Free Gaza Anniversary Flotilla : MFA Relates Further Info on [redacted]*, **StateDept3968-69**.

<sup>29</sup> DOS, Cable: *Gaza Flotilla Demarche Delievered London*, April 20, 2011, **StateDept3973-74**.



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“last year's 'clearly political' flotilla had actually resulted—in addition to the many clearly negative impacts—in a positive easing of the restrictions on Gaza.”<sup>30</sup>

- **Egypt** was asked if it would allow assistance to be delivered through the port of al-Arish, but as of May 10, 2011 no decision had been made.<sup>31</sup> Also in May 2011, as a result of a change in government following the Arab Spring, Egypt opened the Rafah border crossing into Gaza, albeit with restrictions on the goods and persons permitted to cross.<sup>32</sup>
- The Government of **Turkey** was urged by the U.S. Ambassador “to forestall Turkish participation in or support for the anniversary ‘Free Gaza’ flotilla.”<sup>33</sup> Other documents show pressure exerted on Turkey by the U.S. in the form of statements from diplomats and even a letter from members of congress.<sup>34</sup> It is unclear what the response was at the time of the demarche, however later reports from the Department of Defense indicate that the Mavi Marmara did not sail in the anniversary flotilla “possibly also due to Turkish gov’t pressure.”<sup>35</sup>
- **Denmark's** representative gave the impression that “the Danes know they need to make a decision after the Easter break.”<sup>36</sup>
- **Ireland** reported on the plans for Irish citizens to participate in the flotilla, but the unredacted portion of the cable does not reveal the government's position on preventing the flotilla.<sup>37</sup>
- Others simply responded that they had no knowledge of participation in the flotilla by their citizens or by vessels registered there. These include **Moldova**,<sup>38</sup> **Lebanon**,<sup>39</sup> **Macedonia**,<sup>40</sup> **Jordan**,<sup>41</sup> **Latvia**,<sup>42</sup> **Portugal**,<sup>43</sup> and **Sweden**.<sup>44</sup> **Austria's** Middle East

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<sup>30</sup> Id.

<sup>31</sup> DOS, Cable: “Anniversary Flotilla” Demarche Delivered, May 10, 2011, **StateDept4004**.

<sup>32</sup> Egypt to open Rafah border permanently, AL JAZEERA NEWS, May 25, 2011, available at, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/05/2011525174117897741.html>

<sup>33</sup> DOS, Cable: *Anniversary Flotilla: IHH Plans to Postpone Past Elections*, April 25, 2011, **StateDept3997-98**.

<sup>34</sup> DOS, Emails: *FW: Bipartisan Letter urging Turkey to Stop Another Flotilla from departing for the Gaza Strip*, May 12, 2011, **StateDept3548-53**; *Media Monitoring, Thurs, 5/19, 8pm*, May 19, 2011, **StateDept2290-91**.

<sup>35</sup> DOS, Cable: *Israel: Freedom Flotilla II Update*, June 23, 2011, **DeptofDefense000271**.

<sup>36</sup> DOS, Cable: *Gaza Flotilla: Demarche Delievered*, 11 Copenhagen 175, April 20, 2011, **StateDept03965-66**.

<sup>37</sup> DOS, Cable: *Ireland: Gaza Flotilla -- Neither Yes nor No*, April 28, 2011, **StateDept3966-67**.

<sup>38</sup> DOS, Cable : *Anniversary Flotilla Demarche Passed to Government of Moldova*, April 21, 2011, **StateDept4005-06**.

<sup>39</sup> DOS, Cable: *The Free Gaza “Anniversary Flotilla” – Lebanon Response*, April 19, 2011, **StateDept4001**.

<sup>40</sup> DOS, Cable: *Macedonia: No Known Participation in Gaza Anniversary Flotilla*, April 26, 2011, **StateDept3989**.

<sup>41</sup> DOS, Cable: *Jordan Claims No Knowledge of Gaza Flotilla*, April 21, 2011, **StateDept3996**.

<sup>42</sup> DOS, Cable: *Latvia: No Known Gaza Flotilla Participation*, April 19, 2011, **StateDept3986**.

<sup>43</sup> DOS, Cable: *Portugal: The Free Gaza “Anniversary Flotilla,”* April 27, 2011, **StateDept3972**.

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office reported that they had “heard rumors that one Austrian citizen was planning to travel with the flotilla, but had no information on that person's identity.”<sup>45</sup>

- Four days after the release of the prevention démarche, the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv reported on **Israel**'s appreciation of U.S. efforts in a cable titled “Initial Israeli Response on Anniversary Flotilla Demarche,” based on conversations between officials from the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This cable was sent to various State Department, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, and Department of Justice recipients.
- As reported by the cable, the Israeli MFA representative “welcomed reftel [Démarche] points, and **thanked Washington for this ‘important effort’**” (emphasis added).<sup>46</sup> The remainder of the substantive portion of the document is redacted.
- A May 27, 2011 email titled, “Gaza Flotilla Update / new GOI Asks” was sent by Paul Sutphin, the Director of State’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs/ Israel Palestine Affairs to State recipients including legal advisers, and recipients at Office of the Secretary of Defense, Office of the Joint Staff, and National Security Council.<sup>47</sup>
- The Sutphin email included a significantly redacted “follow up to our discussions regarding stopping/impeding the prospective Mavi Marmara anniversary flotilla.” Including sections, “Update from the GOI,” “Next Steps” “Re GOI’s new requests.” U.S. government action noted in the email included working to release a Notice to Mariners warning U.S. vessels not to attempt to break the blockade.<sup>48</sup>
- Unredacted portions of the email note high level engagement with the Government of Turkey, “including recent calls from Secretary Clinton to [Foreign Minister] Davutoglu” and encouraging Egypt to let the flotilla offload cargo in the E-Arish port and then ship it overland to Gaza.<sup>49</sup>
- Another document, an email with the subject heading, “FW: SOC from IPC on Flotilla Prevention (4/1) [SECRET, Record]” has all substantive text redacted.

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<sup>44</sup> DOS, Cable: *Gaza Flotilla: Update on Swedish Participantes*, May 12, 2011, **StateDept03688**.

<sup>45</sup> DOS, Cable: *Austria: Response to Free Gaza Flotilla Demarche*, April 27, 2011, **StateDept03689-90**.

<sup>46</sup> DOS, Cable: *RE: FW: Initial Israeli Response on Anniversary Flotilla Demarche*, April 18, 2011, **StateDept4027-31, 2020-22**.

<sup>47</sup> DOS, Cable: *Gaza Flotilla Update / new GOI Asks*, May 27, 2011, **StateDept0029-31**.

<sup>48</sup> Id.

<sup>49</sup> Id.



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### The U.S. Actively Monitored the Planning of Flotillas, including the Vessels, Organizers, and Participants

While flotilla organizers attempted to overcome hurdles to launching a second wave of flotilla vessels in the summer of 2010, the U.S. Embassy conducted surveillance of their activities.

- Daily and weekly Situation Reports on the “Lebanese Flotilla” were sent by the U.S. Embassy in Beirut’s Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas Daughton or Political Chief Officer Jeremy Cornforth to officials in the National Security Council, Ambassadors and Embassy officials in the region, State officials in Washington, and often, officials in the Department of Defense.<sup>50</sup>
- Situation Reports were based on information retrieved by investigators and a security team from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut reporting on the locations of the ships, and the status of paperwork preparing for the ships’ launch.<sup>51</sup> Reports often included photos of the vessels.<sup>52</sup>
- The U.S. Navy also circulated notices about the flotilla, noting that open source and Beirut Embassy reporting “corroborates Israeli Claims that the Lebanese-flagged M/V Mariam has been identified as one of the vessels supporting the ‘Freedom Flotilla Two’ Anti-blockade voyage to Gaza” and had been classified as a “contact of interest.”<sup>53</sup> *Note, a contact of interest, although not explicitly defined in this context, has been described as “any type of threat, from weapons of mass destruction to terrorists to piracy.”*<sup>54</sup>
- The U.S. Embassy was also tracking reports that four U.S. nuns would be participating.<sup>55</sup>
- Investigations into the flotilla appear to have included significant surveillance. For example, a cable from the Embassy reports, “**There was no activity of any kind around**

<sup>50</sup> *SitREP: Lebanese Flotilla as of COB June 23, StateDept03878-80; SITREP: Lebanese flotilla as of 1345 Beirut time on June 24, StateDept03881-82; August 20 Mariam flotilla update; Lebanese Gaza Flotilla Update – June 17, 2010, StateDept03890-93; SITREP: Lebanese Flotilla as of COB June 22, StateDept03617-18; Mariam Gaza flotilla update for August 21, Organizers seeking a new destination, August 21, 2010, StateDept03619-20; Mariam Gaza flotilla update #2 for 8/21: No departure on August 21 or 22, StateDept03621-22.*

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*

<sup>52</sup> *SitREP: Lebanese Flotilla as of COB June 23, StateDept03878-80; Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for 8/26: No activity, StateDept03627; Maraiam Gaza Flotilla Sitrep for September 20, StateDept03633; Mariam Gaza Flotilla Sitrep for the week of October 4, StateDept03635-36;*

<sup>53</sup> Motor Vessels (M/V) Mariam and (U/I Vessel) Naji al ali Designated MR Subj/ Motor Vessels (M/V) Mariam and (U/I Vessel) Naji al Ali Designated, June 17, 2010, Department of Defense 240.

<sup>54</sup> “Restructuring Boosts Navy Information Sharing,” December 2006, Maryann Lawlor, Signal Online, <http://www.afcea.org/content/?q=node/1228>

<sup>55</sup> Lebanese Gaza Flotilla Update – June 17, 2010, StateDept03890-93; SITREP: Lebanese Flotilla as of COB June 22, StateDept03617-18; FW: Background information on some of the upcoming flotillas, June 18, 2010, StateDept04049-55.

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the ship during the several hours we were watching it during the day.”<sup>56</sup> Most situation reports reflect at least several hours of direct surveillance.

- Embassy monitoring of the flotilla progress also included diplomacy. The U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon spoke with an unnamed representative of Lebanon, who stated that “We have a handle on the situation,” and the government believes a flotilla from Lebanon to Gaza “is not in our interest.”<sup>57</sup>
- Further tracking of the Lebanese flotilla included outreach across the Lebanese government, including the Customs, General Security, Lebanese Armed Force’s G-2, and the Internal Security Force at Sidori, Beirut, and Tripoli ports.<sup>58</sup>
- Contact with the Lebanese “Surete Generale” intelligence agency in June included the U.S. sharing that the vessel *Julia* is licensed to only carry 16 passengers but may have been attempting to include more. Surete Generale contacts also promised to notify the U.S. Embassy if any American citizens are identified on manifests.<sup>59</sup>
- A June situation report notes the U.S. had not, “been able to obtain additional information concerning reports that the ship is probably not seaworthy.”<sup>60</sup>
- Although the information leading to this action has been redacted, the August 20<sup>th</sup> situation report concluded with the statement that, “We are currently reaching out to the Lebanese Armed Forces, as well, to urge that the ship’s departure be prevented. We will send a team to observe the port all day on August 21 and 22 to report on the situation”
- By August 21, Cyprus had refused to allow the *Mariam* to dock in Cypriot ports while en route to Gaza. As such, the Lebanese authorities noted that the ships must name a port that would receive the ship.<sup>61</sup>
- On August 22, the organizers of the *Mariam* ship to Gaza announced the postponement of its sailing to Gaza, citing as a reason the refusal of access to Cypriot ports.<sup>62</sup> U.S. Embassy Beirut continued to surveil the port and monitor the flotilla through media reports after this announcement.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> SitREP: *Lebanese Flotilla as of COB June 23*, StateDept03878-80.

<sup>57</sup> SITREP: *Lebanese flotilla as of 1345 Beirut time on June 24*, StateDept03881-82.

<sup>58</sup> SITREP: *Lebanese flotilla as of 1345 Beirut time on June 24*, StateDept03881-82.

<sup>59</sup> SITREP: *Lebanese Flotilla as of COB June 22*, StateDept03617-18.

<sup>60</sup> Id.

<sup>61</sup> *Mariam Gaza flotilla update for August 21, Organizers seeking a new destination*, StateDept03619-20

<sup>62</sup> *Mariam flotilla sitrep: Flotilla departure postponed indefinitely*, StateDept03623-24

<sup>63</sup> *Mariam flotilla update: No activity*, StateDept03625-26; *Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for 8/26: No activity*, StateDept03627; *Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for August 27*, StateDept03628; *Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for*, StateDept03629; *Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for August 31*, StateDept03630; *Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for*

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In addition to applying diplomatic pressure on states with citizens or vessels participating in the “Lebanese” flotilla, documents reveal that the U.S. actively monitored flotilla plans and the vessels themselves in advance of the 2011 “Stay Human” Flotilla. It is unclear how the substantial amount of information gathered on the flotilla, its vessels, and passengers, was used.

*Note: for a full analysis of the tracking of U.S. boats to Gaza and discouraging or impeding American participation, please see CCR’s guide [here](#).*

- The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and its sub-office the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) identified boats taking part in the flotilla from Greek ports and relayed this information to the Defense Intelligence Agency.<sup>64</sup> One cable, related to “Location, Pictures, Current Activity and Possible Schedule for Possible Gaza Freedom Flotilla II Participants IVO Pireaus, Greece,” notes that “ship blueprints are highly valued by ONI.”<sup>65</sup> *Note, the full context of the request for blueprints is unclear due to redactions.*
- DOD updates featuring photos of multiple flotilla vessels are accompanied by significantly redacted text.<sup>66</sup> Reporting emails, also heavily redacted, include day by day summaries of the progress of the flotilla including summaries of organizers’ press conferences and tracking of vessels in port and at sea.<sup>67</sup>

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September 7, **StateDept03631**; Mariam Gaza Flotilla Sitrep for September 13, **StateDept0632**; Mariam Gaza Flotilla Sitrep for September 20, **StateDept03633**; *Mariam Gaza Flotilla Sitrep for September 27*, **StateDept0634**; *Mariam Gaza Flotilla Sitrep for the week of October 4*, October 4, 2010, **StateDept03635-36**; *Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for October 13*, October 13, 2010, **StateDept03637**; *Mariam Gaza flotilla sitrep for October 18*, **StateDept03638**.

<sup>64</sup> Department of Defense, cables: *Identification of ships participating in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II from Greek Ports*, June 24, 2011, **DeptofDefense204-06, 250-52**; *Identification of ships participating in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II from Greek Ports, Follow-up one*, June 27, 2011, **DeptofDefense0243-44**; *Identification of ship participating in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II from Greek Ports, Follow up two*, **DeptofDefense253-55**; *Identification of Ships Participating in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II from Greek ports, Follow-Up Three*, **DeptofDefense213-15**; *Identification of ships participating in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II from Greek Ports, Follow-up four*, July 1, 2011, **DeptofDefense0245-47, 216-17**; *Identification of Ships Participating in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II from Greek ports. Follow-Up Seven*, July 8, 2011, **DeptofDefense220-22**; Re: “Freedom Flotilla II” *Gaza aid convoy update (Sitrep #8a)*, June 30, 2011, **DeptofDefense0264-69**

<sup>65</sup> DOD, Cable: *Consumer IIR Evaluation/OIC-621Location, Pictures, Current ACITIVYTY AND POSSIBLE SCHEDULE FOR POSSIBLE Gaza Freedom Flotilla II Participants IVO Pireaus, Greece—Update One*, July 6, 2011, **DeptofDefene00218-19**

<sup>66</sup> DOD, Document: *Freedom Flotilla Update/Photos of Participating Ships, Stay Human*, **DeptofDefense278, 283, 290-92, 297-99, 306-08, 314-16, 323-24, 329-32, 334-37**

<sup>67</sup> DOD, Documents: *Redacted Subject, Redacted Date* **DeptofDefense 273-77, 279-82, 284-88, 300-305**; *Freedom Flotilla II “Gaza Aid Convoy Update 4 Jul,”* July 4, 2011, **DeptofDefense309-13**; *Freedom Flotilla II “Gaza Aid Convoy Update 5 Jul,”* July 5, 2011, **DeptofDefense317-21**; *Freedom Flotilla II “Gaza Aid Convoy Update – 6 Jul,”* July 6, 2011, **DeptofDefense325-27**; *Freedom Flotilla II “Gaza Aid Convoy Update – 8 Jul,”* July 8, 2011;

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- The State Department also collected information on a regular basis, in advance of what it called “D-day”<sup>68</sup> (the launch date), and circulated the information across the agency.<sup>69</sup>
- Tracking related to the upcoming flotilla included receiving updates from the Government of Israel on their preparations, in addition to discussions on prevention.<sup>70</sup>
- The Department of State maintained close communications with Greek authorities, including discussing the Greek Coast Guard blocking flotilla vessels from departing. When the Greek Ambassador to the U.S. informed the U.S. Embassy that the U.S. Boat to Gaza, the *Audacity of Hope*, was ordered to return to port, he “asked if we could do anything to keep this from becoming a media circus.”<sup>71</sup>

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*Israel: Freedom Flotilla II Update*, June 23, 2011, **DeptofDefense0271**; *FW: “Freedom Flotilla II” Gaza Aid Convoy Update (Sitrep #8a)*, June 30, 2011, **DeptofDefense293-96**

<sup>68</sup> DOS, Email: *FW: Flotilla Update...*, June 24, 2011, **StateDept3780**

<sup>69</sup> DOS, Emails: *Flotilla News*, June 29, 2011, **StateDept3781-85**, **StateDept3786-87**; *Flotilla Update – July 1 Open Source*, **StateDept3789-90**; *FW: EUR/SE - NEA/IPA - S/CT Meeting re Gaza Flotilla*, April 5, 2011, **StateDept2462**; *Mavi Marmara Anniversary Flotilla's Timing Still Unclear*, May 5, 2011, **StateDept3999-4000**; *FW: FPD IIR Gaza Freedom Flotilla*, June 24, 2011, **StateDept4073**; *Announcement by Flotilla Organizers*, June 27, 2011, **StateDept3805-06**; *Flotilla Updates*, June 28, 2011, **StateDept3702-04**; *FW: FPD IIR Gaza Freedom Flotilla Follow-up Two*, June 28, 2011, **StateDept4074-75**; *Flotilla News*, June 29, 2011, **StateDept3781-85**; *Flotilla News*, June 29, 2011, **StateDept3786-87**; *FW: (C) [redacted] Tomorrow's Flotilla*, June 29, 2011, **StateDept4112-17**; *RE: (SBU) No IHH Participation in Freedom Flotilla 2*, June 30, 2011, **StateDept2031**; *(SBU) No IHH Participation in Freedom Flotilla 2*, June 30, 2011, **StateDept4094**; *Irish Group Claims Sabotage Forces Flotilla Cancellation*, July 1, 2011, **StateDept550-52**; *FLOTILLA SITREP: Greta Berlin on Projected Departures – IL Radio*, July 1, 2011, **StateDept3727**; *Flotilla Update – July 1 Open Source*, July 1, 2011, **StateDept3789-90**; *FW: Gaza flotilla boat departs from Greek port (AP)*, July 1, 2011, **StateDept3812**; *FW: Additional Flotilla Update - July 1 Open Source*, July 1, 2011, **StateDept3789-90**; *FLOTILLA SITREP: HOISTING THE FLAG BUT NOT THE SAIL -- IL RADIO & YNET*, July 3, 2011, **StateDept3725-26**; *NEA/IPA OI for July 5*, July 5, 2011, **StateDept3674-75**; *Today's Reporting*, July 5, 2011, **StateDept3691**; *FW: Greece Bans Departure of Flotilla Vessels to Gaza, Offers to Deliver Aid*, July 6, 2011, **StateDept4084-88**; *French yacht from grounded flotilla sails for Gaza*, July 18, 2011, **StateDept3753**; *FW: (S/NF) FRENCH BOAT HEADING FOR GAZA [redacted]*, July 18, 2011, **StateDept4089-91**; *FW: Israeli Navy boards French M/V Dignite/Karama of the Gaza Flotilla*, July 19, 2011, **StateDept2277**; *Greece Bans Departure of Flotilla Vessels to Gaza, Offers to Deliver Aid*, July 19, 2011, **StateDept3910-13**

<sup>70</sup> DOS, Cable: *FW: FW: Israeli MFA Updates on Flotilla Preparations*, June 13, 2011, **StateDept3957-60**

<sup>71</sup> Department of State, Email: *Re: Gaza flotilla – Ops call*, July 1, 2011, **StateDept5285-87**.