



Making NGOs Accountable

1 Ben-Maimon Blvd.
Jerusalem, Israel 92262
Phone: +972-2-566-1020
Fax: +972-77-511-7030
mail@ngo-monitor.org
www.ngo-monitor.org

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The War Against Israel

Terror, lies and slander are the main tools of the Leftist-Islamist alliance against the Jewish state.

GERALD M. STEINBERG

Jerusalem

June 7, 2010

The blurring of terrorist-activists and civilians that characterizes 21st century warfare took on a new dimension in the violent confrontation between the "Free Gaza Flotilla" and the Israeli Navy last week. Ostensibly, the hundreds of passengers on a ship carrying a large Turkish flag were "peace activists" on a "humanitarian" mission to bring aid to Palestinians "trapped behind the Israeli blockade." But this moral façade hid a strategy of engaging Israel in a bloody confrontation to exploit the "halo effect" (automatically granted to groups claiming moral missions) and to reinforce the image of Israelis as "war criminals."

Despite all the misreporting, Gaza is not starving as Israel allows tons of food, drugs and humanitarian aid to reach Gaza every day. The entirely legal naval blockade is designed to prevent arms, primarily from Iran, from reaching the terrorists in Gaza, from which Israel withdrew in 2005. The flotilla's aim was not to feed ordinary Palestinians, but to help Hamas break the embargo so that it can bring in weapons.

The "Free Gaza" group is a potent example of how the new alliance between radical-left Western groups and Jihadists is waging this new war. In 2001, 1,500 organizations, both Islamic and Western, participated in the NGO Forum of the United Nations Durban Conference on Racism. They declared Israel to be "a racist, apartheid state" and "a crime against humanity," while calling on the "international community to impose a policy of complete and total isolation." To advance this hate agenda, Israel's enemies would use terror attacks to provoke an inevitable response, and then strip away the context to highlight allegations of "war crimes."

defeated by Muhammad's army in 628. The battle marked the end of Jewish presence in Arabia.

One participant told Al Jazeera, "Either the Israelis let us reach Gaza, or they can stop us We can also die as martyrs and never return, which is okay with us."

For the IHH, as in the case of other Islamist charities, the "humanitarian relief" dimension is a cover, or at best, a side show. IHH is a prominent member of the "Union of the Good," which was designated by the U.S. government as "an organization created by the Hamas leadership to transfer funds to the terrorist organization." In 1997, before the Islamist AKP came to power in Turkey, a police raid on an IHH building in Istanbul found weapons, explosives, and instructions for making improvised explosive devices widely used by insurgents and terror groups.

At a 2001 U.S. Federal trial emanating from the Millenium plot to bomb the Los Angeles airport, Jean-Louis Bruguiere, the leading French counter-terrorism investigating magistrate, gave evidence on the IHH's "important role" in obtaining weapons, documents and dispatching fighters in various al-Qaida operations. A 2006 report published by the Danish Institute for International Studies quotes from Mr. Bruguiere's legal depositions, including revelations that Turkish authorities had uncovered IHH links to Al-Qaeda in Milan and to Algerian terrorists in Europe, as well as having had a major role in recruiting militants sent to Bosnia, Chechnya, and Afghanistan.

Thus, the IHH was a logical vehicle for the Islamist-led Turkish government, headed by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to turn against its former ally Israel. While embracing Syria and Iran, Mr. Erdogan is fueling anti-Israel hatred in his country and throughout the region.

The second partner in this violent "humanitarian" confrontation was the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) which promotes Palestinian "resistance" and fuels the violence. On April 30, 2003, a suicide terrorist blew himself up at the entrance to Mike's Place, a popular bar on the Tel Aviv beach promenade. Three Israelis were murdered, and over 50 wounded. Just a few days before the attack, the terrorists (British citizens) had spent time with a group of ISM members.

Indeed, ISM declares on its own website that its mission is to "support and strengthen the Palestinian popular resistance" through direct confrontation with the IDF. In 2002, ISM co-founder Adam Shapiro and his Palestinian-born wife promoted both "non-violent and violent" tactics in support of the Palestinian resistance. "Yes, people will get killed and injured," but these deaths are "no less noble than carrying out a suicide operation" and "would be considered shaheed," using the Arabic word for "martyr," usually applied to suicide bombers.

The ISM's Caoimhe Butterly—a prominent Irish participant in the Free Gaza campaign—has had many run-ins with the IDF. In April 2002, following a series of Palestinian terror bombings that led to the IDF's operation "Defensive Shield," she spent 16 days as a "human shield" in Yasser Arafat's compound.

The hysteria, extreme hatred for the West, and for Israel, in particular, is a trademark of many ISM members. According to ISM media coordinator Flo Rosovski, "'Israel' is an illegal entity that should not exist." For the ISM, like IHH, labels like "peace activists" and "humanitarian aid workers" are convenient masks for this hatred.

In addition, this Leftist-Islamist alliance is supported and legitimized by mainstream NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Notwithstanding embarrassing exposes on how, in May 2009, HRW solicited funds from the Saudis by touting the need to counter Jewish and "pro-Israel pressure groups," and the documentation of its systematic anti-Israeli bias, this organization immediately joined in the condemnations of Israel. These once-respected watchdogs have become an integral part of the efforts to criminalize legitimate responses to terror through false allegations of human rights violations.

For the "peace activists" aboard the Free Gaza Flotilla, the deaths and the images of violence from their excursion are viewed as a great success. As an IHH official in Istanbul declared, "We are very thankful to the Israeli authorities." Once again, Israel is on the front lines of this strategy, but NATO and the West are next in line in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere.

Mr. Steinberg teaches political science at Bar Ilan University and heads NGO Monitor.