

## Flotilla's Agenda Was a Violent Provocation Against Israel

Congressman Rothman: U.S. stands shoulder to shoulder with Israel in our fight against violent extremism

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Washington, DC &ndash; Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ), a member of the House Appropriations Defense, and State and Foreign Operations Subcommittees, released the following statement:

The U.S. stands shoulder to shoulder with Israel in our fight against violent extremism.

I am sincerely regretful for the loss of life that occurred during the incident in the Mediterranean Sea involving the Mavi Marmara ship and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). As we are learning more about the incident it is clear that, while there may have been peace activists on the ship, there were individuals on board who had violent intentions. As Israel's soldiers sought to reroute the ship to Ashdod &ndash; where humanitarian materials could be gathered, screened, and delivered to the people of Gaza &ndash; there was a pre-meditated, planned effort to injure and possibly kill IDF soldiers.

Israel made every attempt to come to a peaceful resolution and avoid violence. However, after repeated warnings from the IDF, the Mavi Marmara ship refused to heed the internationally recognized blockade of Hamas's terrorist-controlled Gaza strip. It is extremely unfortunate that Hamas refuses to pursue peace with Israel and move toward a two-state solution. Hamas is a terrorist organization that regularly suppresses the rights of Gazans &ndash; from women and homosexuals to Christians and anyone who would speak out against their tyrannical rule &ndash; and is surely no friend of any reputable peace activist.

Israel continues to allow trucks loaded with humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza on a daily basis &ndash; amounting to more than 738,000 tons of food and supplies last year. Israel has made numerous efforts to help the people of Gaza and improve their quality of life. Yet, at every step of the way, Hamas refuses to put the well-being of Gazans and the

pursuit of peace over their own terrorist ideology and desire to destroy the Jewish State of Israel.

It is long past time to realize a two-state solution, achieved through direct negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. I pray that this incident does not derail the peace process.

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