



The Meir Amit Intelligence and
Terrorism Information Center

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Western pro-Palestinian activist who participated in the fighting aboard the Mavi Marmara, claimed in an interview in Haaretz that it was clear that the resistance aboard the ship would not be passive and that if Israelis boarded the ship the confrontation would end in "disaster."



Kenneth O'Keefe, a former Marine and Irish citizen (who renounced his American citizenship), took part in the fighting aboard the Mavi Marmara shoulder to shoulder with the hard core of IHH operatives. The picture was taken in Antalya, apparently before he boarded the ship (From Kenneth O'Keefe's website, June 13, 2010).

1. Kenneth O'Keefe is a former Marine and an American who renounced his citizenship. He is currently an Irish citizen and lives in Britain. He participated in the fighting aboard the Mavi Marmara and has been widely interviewed concerning it. In an interview with the Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz*, he spoke at length about the events aboard the ship and his active participation in them. He presented the IHH narrative, which is completely contradictory to the Israeli position.

2. Since O'Keefe cannot be suspected of being biased in favor of Israel, and because of his military background, **it is particularly significant that he stated that from the beginning IHH operatives had no intention of using passive resistance but rather were planning to exert great force in a confrontation with the IDF and that it would end in "disaster."** His statements completely contradict the claims made by IHH and the other flotilla organizers that they intended to use only passive resistance, at the utmost.

3. The following are the relevant passages from the interview (conducted by Noam Sheizaf in Belfast, *Haaretz*, September 24, 2010):¹

A. Question: **Were you present when Bülent [Yildirim] said the flotilla participants would struggle to defend the ship?**

Answer: **"I knew before we set out that the Turks are not like the other Westerners, that there would be no passive resistance in this case.** The Turks are a tough people. **They are people you don't mess with too much.** In the United States or Britain people are asleep, there is no danger of rebellion. The Turks are different. **I knew that if the Israelis boarded that ship, it would be a disaster. Not only from the aspect of the people who would be killed, but that it would also be a disaster for the Israelis."**

B. Question: **Did you see them sawing the beams in preparation for the attack?**

Answer: "I knew we would defend the ship. That was stated publicly a great many times. **You have to be an idiot to board that ship and think it will be a ship of passive resistance."**

C. Question: So the same things would have happened even if the confrontation had taken place in the territorial waters of Gaza?

Answer: **"If they thought we were a group of passive peace activists and that there would be no resistance to boarding the ship,** what was the logic in coming in the middle of the night and using grenades? It's an insult to the intelligence to say that. Is Israeli intelligence so useless that they didn't even bother watching international newscasts, **in which the leader of IHH said explicitly that we would defend the**

¹ <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/rough-passage-1.315481>

ships bodily? Did they know so little about the mood on the Turkish street that they thought boarding the ships would be an invitation to tea? Or did they know all that and because of it came at night, with stun, gas and smoke grenades and sought to gain a tactical advantage, in the clear knowledge that there would be a confrontation?" (**Note:** ITIC emphasis throughout)