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April 26, 2024

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Lloyd J. Austin III
U.S. Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Carlos Del Toro
U.S. Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Admiral Lisa Franchetti
U.S. Chief of Naval Operations
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-2000

Dear Mr. President, Secretary of Defense Austin, Secretary of the Navy Del Toro, and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Franchetti:

For fourteen months beginning in 1987, the United States Navy escorted oil tankers transiting the Persian Gulf at the request of Kuwait to deter or repel Iranian attacks. Earlier the United States had urged Iraq to attack Iran in what became a war of great bloodshed.

The case for naval escort of planned humanitarian shipments undertaken by *U.S. Boats to Gaza* carrying 5,000 tons of aid is more urgent than the price of gasoline or further enriching the sovereign wealth funds of Persian Gulf statelets. President Biden's humanitarian Envoy David Satterfield recently elaborated: "There is an imminent risk of starvation for the majority, if not all, the 2.2 million population of Gaza. This is not a point in debate. It is an established fact, which the United States, its experts, the international community, its experts, assess and believe is real."

Moreover, the Israeli armed forces have a history of maritime recklessness or worse. On June 8, 1967, the USS Liberty was attacked by Israeli Air Force jet fighter aircraft and Israeli motor torpedo boats killing 34 crew members and wounding 171. On May 31, 2010, the Israeli navy stormed the Turkish NGO humanitarian aid ship Mavi Marmara in international waters killing 9, including a Turkish American, and wounding 30.

Additionally, the United States has aided and abetted the humanitarian disaster confronting 2.2 million Palestinian civilians by unconditionally providing Israel with weapons and intelligence to turn Gaza into a wilderness, including an Israeli siege earmarked by “no food, no water, no power, no electricity, no shelter, no medicine,” and no viable hospitals. The requested naval escort would alleviate the industrial-scale humanitarian horrors that the United States has fueled and protect American citizens on a peaceful life-saving mission for delivering food for starving Palestinians and their seriously endangered children.

The United States should also contract with security escorts for the delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza provided by *U.S. Boats to Gaza* on the same terms and conditions it provides for other humanitarian assistance. At present, a large volume is purloined because of the absence of local police or equivalent forces that Israel has disbanded. The United States military performed a comparable humanitarian mission through Operation Unified Assistance in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. More than 12,000 Department of Defense personnel were involved in the relief effort. Among other things, the United States dispatched numerous C-5 and C-17 strategic airlifters, 10 C-130 Hercules tactical airlifters, and 9 P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft.

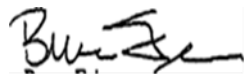
U.S. Boats to Gaza represents a coalition of non-profit NGOS exhibiting a commendable history of non-violent activism. They are dedicated to doing more to alleviate the unspeakable suffering of Gazan civilians with no end in sight.

We suggest that you consider an escort convoy with no fewer than two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers featuring anti-aircraft and anti-submarine capabilities. The U.S. Seventh Fleet consists of more than 70 ships, more than ample to provide the escort convoy.

We urge you to consider expediting authorization as the flotilla plans to leave imminently. History would record the escort as one of the Navy’s finest hours. To the extent the Navy participates in relieving serious suffering, to that extent, the Navy is advancing its highest mission.

We await your reply.

Sincerely,



Bruce Fein, Esq.



Ralph Nader, Esq.



Gene Marx, Naval Aviator, LT/USNR