

NATO Could Not Have Been Unaware

By [Manlio Dinucci](#)

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[Centre: Lt. General Gabi Ashkenazi \(Chief of Defence, Israel\) Right: Lt. General David Bill \(UK Military Representative to NATO\)](#)

Totally hazed over by the media, NATO is central to the Israeli aggression on the high seas as well as to the Israeli's retraction with regard to its takings. In this article, written just before the Alliance requested the release of the prisoners and vessels, Manlio Dinucci observes that, given the close ties between the Israeli forces and NATO, it is inconceivable that the latter had no foreknowledge of the operation.

"Mediterranean Dialogue" is the name of the NATO operation involving the navies of seven non-NATO members to "contribute to the security and stability in the region." The greatest effort is made by the Israeli Navy, the same that perpetrated a massacre of pacifists by waging a terrorist-like attack in international waters. The navy, as well as other Israeli armed forces, have become increasingly entangled with NATO; last November, during the visit of Admiral Di Paola, Chairman of the NATO military Committee, it was established that in the course of the year an Israeli missile unit would also participate in NATO's "Active Endeavor" operation, whose mission is "to protect the Mediterranean against terrorist activities.

This series of joint operations falls within the framework of the "Programme of individual cooperation" with Israel, ratified by NATO on 2 December 2008, about three weeks before the Israeli's blitz against Gaza. It encompasses a wide range of sectors where "NATO and Israel cooperate fully": counter-terrorism, including exchange of information between intelligence services; Israel's connection to NATO's electronic system; cooperation in the armaments industry; increased joint military maneuvers; broader cooperation against nuclear proliferation (overlooking the fact that Israel – the only nuclear power in the region – refuses to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and has just rejected the UN proposal for a Middle East denuclearization conference). It is therefore not plausible that NATO and especially the United States, who is in command, were not aware that the Israeli naval operation planned in every instance to open fire against the pacifists.

In the circumstances, the "deep regret for the loss of life" expressed by the White House reeks of hypocrisy, despite its stated desire to "understand the circumstances surrounding this tragedy." The same applies to the statement by Italian Foreign Minister Frattini to the effect that "Israel must provide an explanation to the international community." In the meantime, Frattini should brief us on what is going on with the military co-operation

between Italy and Israel which was instituted by Act No. 94 of 17 May 2005, of which Frattini himself was the chief architect. Cooperation between the Ministries of Defence and the armed forces of both countries includes the import, export and transit of military equipment, the organization, training and coaching of the armed forces. To this effect, plans are underway for meetings between defense ministers and commanders of both countries, the exchange of experiences among experts, and the organization of training activities and maneuvers. In this context, in 2005, the Italian navy headed the fleet that executed in the Red Sea the first joint NATO-Israeli naval maneuver. Who knows if, on that occasion, they also trained for launching an assault on pacifists' unarmed vessels?

Manlio Dinucci is geographer and geopolitical scientist. His latest books are [Geograficamente. Per la Scuola media](#) (3 vol.), Zanichelli (2008) ; [Escalation. Anatomia della guerra infinita](#), DeriveApprodi (2005).

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