

IMMEDIATE

302008Z MAY 67

FROM: SECDEF

TO: USCINCEUR

INFO: CINCUSNAVEUR  
CINCSTRIKE  
COMSIXTHFLT  
CTF SIX ZERO  
COMFAIRMED  
NAVSUPPACT NAPLES  
ALUSNA ATHENS  
BASE OPS ATHENS  
ALUSNA ATHENS  
CNO  
STATE DEPT/ZEN  
CINCAL  
CINCLANT  
CINCNORAD  
CINCPAC  
CINCSOUTH  
CINCSAG

UNCLAS EFTO DEF 6610 from ASD(PA) sgd Goulding.

EUCOM for PAO.

REFERENCE: (a) DEF 6567 (U) dtg 292134Z May 67.

In view present delicate juncture Middle East crisis we wish  
to reemphasize importance of not repeat not commenting on any  
aspect of crisis without full coordination with DoD Public Affairs.  
This most definitely includes comment on US military activity,  
ships and shipments of any nature (destined for Arab nations and  
Israel) related to the crisis.

O 311259Z MAY 67  
FM USCINCEUR  
TO CINCUSNAVEUR  
INFO SECDEF  
JCS  
COMSIXTHFLT

BT

UNCLAS E F T O ECAP 08617 FOR PAO.

SUBJ. PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE ON US MILITARY ACTIVITY RELATED TO MIDDLE EAST CRISIS.

REFS: A. DEF 6567 DTG 292134Z MAY 67 FROM ASD(PA) SIGNED GOULDING.

B. DEF 6610 DTG 302008Z MAY 67 FROM ASD(PA) SIGNED GOULDING.

C. UNCLAS ECAP 08317 DTG 251020Z MAY 67.

ALL THOSE WHO ARE LIKELY TO BE IN CONTACT WITH OR BE CONTACTED BY NEWSMEN IN CONNECTION WITH EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. ADDITIONALLY, THE FOLLOWING STANDING GUIDANCE SHOULD BE REEMPHASIZE TO ALL CONCERNED:

A. SECURITY WILL BE MAINTAINED AT THE SOURCE.

B. NO REPEAT, NO CORRESPONDENT WILL BE GIVEN ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WHETHER OR NOT HE INTENDS TO SUBMIT HIS MATERIAL FOR SECURITY REVIEW.

C. DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO MILITARY CAPABILITIES AS DISTINGUISHED FROM MILITARY INTENTIONS. THERE WILL BE NO DISCUSSION OF OR SPECULATION ABOUT MILITARY INTENTIONS—OUR OWN INTENTIONS OR THE INTENTIONS OF OTHERS.

D. FOREIGN POLICY IS A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE. THE MILITARY IS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY AND NOT A MAKER OF FOREIGN POLICY. ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL REFRAIN FROM COMMENTING ON OR SPECULATING ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS, EXCEPT TO ACCURATELY REFLECT WHAT THE PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY OF STATE HAVE ENUNCIATED.

BT

Z 081517Z JUN 67  
FM CINCUSNAVEUR  
TO COMSIXTHFLT  
INFO CINCEUR  
USS AMERICA  
USS SARATOGA

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L

1. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY TELEPHONE AT 081500Z THAT SECDEF  
VANCE STATES THAT ALL NEWS RELEASES ON LIBERTY AFFAIR WILL BE  
MADE REPEAT WILL BE MADE AT WASHINGTON LEVEL. NO RELEASES TO BE  
MADE ON SHIPS.

GP-4

BT

P R 082205Z JUN 67  
FM USS AMERICA  
TO OASD PA  
INFO COMSIXTHFLT  
BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L  
FLEET PAO SENDS

1. FOLLOWING NEWS COPY FORWARDED FOR YOUR ACTION.

2. QUOTE DPR COLLECT TO DETROIT NEWS, DETROIT, MICH TELEX 023-3344  
ABOARD THE CARRIER AMERICA (JUNE 8) THE TORPEDOING AND MACH-  
INE-GUNNING OF A NAVY RADIO MONITORING SHIP OFF THE SINAI PENINSULA  
TODAY CAUSED AN ATTACK SORTEE TO BE LAUNCHED FROM THE CARRIER  
AMER-  
ICA, FLAGSHIP OF THE U.S. TASK FORCE SIXTY PARA  
THE AIR STRIKING FORCE INCLUDING SUPERSONIC PHANTOM JETS, CARRYING  
AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES AND A-4 SKYHAWKS ARMED WITH LARGE BOMBS. PARA  
WORD OF THE ATTACK CAME BY RADIO FROM THE STRICKEN SHIP, THE  
LIBERTY,  
WHICH REPORTED IT WAS IN TROUBLE AND THAT THE GOING WAS HOT. PARA  
THE AMERICA, WHICH HAD JUST RESUMED AIR TRAINING MANEUVERS AFTER  
THREE-DAY HULL [iull], IMMEDIATELY CALLED BACK ITS UNARMED PLANES ALOFT  
AND  
SENT OUT THE ARMED SORTEE. PARA  
THE STRIKE PLANES WERE GONE HARDLY MORE THAN A HALF HOUR WHEN  
THEY  
WERE CALLED BACK. IT WAS LATER LEARNED THAT THE LIBERTY HAD BEEN  
BADLY HIT IN A MISTAKE BY ATTACKING ISRAELI AIRPLANES AND TORPEDO  
BOATS. PARA  
THE LIBERTY WAS REPORTED TO HAVE GONE ON STATION ONLY THIS MORNING  
ABOUT 15 MILES OFF THE COAST OF THE SINAI PENINSULA TO MONITOR RADIO  
REPORTS COMING OUT OF THE ISRAEL EGYPTIAN WAR AREA AND TO RELAY  
INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE EVACUATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS.  
PARA UNQUOTE  
BT

P R 082207Z JUN 67  
FM CHINFO  
TO CINCUSNAVEUR  
COMSIXTHFLT  
COMMIDEASTFOR  
CINCLANTFLT  
CTG SIX ZERO PT ONE  
CTF SIX ONE  
CTF SIX THREE  
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO  
CTF SIX TWO  
INFO CINCPACFLT  
COMSEVENTHFLT

BT

UNCLAS

SIXTH FLEET HEADLINE REPORT 8 JUNE 1967

1. AP AND UPI CARRIED STORIES ABOUT ATTACK ON USS LIBERTY (AGTR-5) BY ISRAELI FORCES. INCIDENT TOOK PLACE ABOUT 0900 THIS MORNING, APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN MILES NORTH OF THE SINAI PENINSULA IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA. LIBERTY DEPARTED ROTA, SPAIN, 2 JUNE 1967, AND ARRIVED AT HER POSITION THIS MORNING TO ASSUME COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN U.S. GOVERNMENT POSTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO ASSIST IN RELAYING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE EVACUATION OF AMERICAN DEPENDENTS AND OTHER AMERICAN CITIZENS FROM THE COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED BY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT THAT THE ATTACK WAS MADE IN ERROR

BY

ISRAELI FORCES AND AN APOLOGY HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM TEL AVIV. INITIAL REPORTS OF CASUALTIES ARE FOUR DEAD AND 5? WOUNDED. LIBERTY IS STEAMING NORTH FROM THE AREA TO MEET U.S. FORCES MOVING TO HER AID. SHE IS REPORTED IN NO DANGER OF SINKING.  
2. AP STORY DATED IN AMERICA IN BALTIMORE SUN TODAY SAYS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ADDED ANOTHER DESTROYER TO SHADOW SIXTH FLEET ...  
3. ALL MEDIA CONTINUED GIVING HEAVY COVERAGE TO ISRAELI SUCCESS ...

BT

IMMEDIATE

DTG 090704Z JUN 67

FROM: COMSIXTHFLT

TO: CINCUSNAVEUR

INFO:

CONFIDENTIAL

MEDIA COVERAGE OF LIBERTY

A. WIRENOTE YOUR CAPT BERGNER TO  
MY CAPT KASTEN

B. COMSIXTHFLT 090546Z JUN 67

C. USCINCEUR 081650Z JUN 67

1. NO LIMITATIONS PLACED ON AMERICA  
REGARDING EXTERNAL MOPIX AND TV COVERAGE  
LIBERTY FROM AMERICA. REFS  
B AND C REFER.

GP-4

IMMEDIATE

DTG 090546Z JUN 67

FROM: COMSIXTHFLT

TO: CTF 60

INFO: CINCUSNAVEUR, USCINCEUR, CHINFO, CTG 60.5

CONFIDENTIAL

MEDIA COVERAGE OF LIBERTY

A. CTF 60 082120Z

B. OPNAV INST 05727.1B OF 1 JUN 66

C. USCINCEUR 081650Z

1. UNODIR BY CINCUSNAVEUR OR HIGHER AUTHORITY INTERVIEWS WITH LIBERTY EVACUEES

MAY BE PERMITTED UNDER FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- A. EVACUEE AGREES TO INTERVIEW
- B. MEDICAL AUTHORITY APPROVES
- C. EVACUEE SIGNS STATEMENT THAT HE HAS READ, UNDERSTOOD AND WILL COMPLY WITH PROVISIONS OF REFS B & C.
- D. USS LIBERTY MAY NOT BE BOARDED BY MEDIA REPS BUT EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF SHIP MAY BE TAKEN WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS.

P R 111607Z JUN 67  
FM CHINFO  
TO CINCUSNAVEUR  
COMSIXTHFLT  
COMMIDEASTFOR  
CINCLANTFLT  
CTG SIX ZERO PT ONE  
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO  
CTF SIX ONE  
CTF SIX TWO  
CTF SIX THREE  
INFO CINCPACFLT  
COMSEVENTHFLT

BT

UNCLAS

SIXTH FLEET HEADLINE REPORT 11 JUNE 1967

1. ALL MEDIA TODAY CARRY EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF END...
2. ALL MEDIA CARRYING REPORT THAT ISRAEL SAYS...
3. ALL MEDIA ARE CONTINUING COVERAGE OF NASSAR'S...
4. AN AP ARTICLE DATELINED CAIRO...
5. NEW YORK TIMES CARRIED THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE, DATELINED USS AMERICA, GIVING SURVIVORS ACCOUNTS OF ATTACK ON USS LIBERTY. ONE SURVIVOR IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "WE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO LOAD THE GUNS BECAUSE THE ROCKETS HIT US SO FAST". THE ARTICLE ALSO GAVE COVERAGE OF VADM MARTIN'S NEWS CONFERENCE CONCERNING MISSION OF USS LIBERTY AND OTHER UNITS OF THE SIXTH FLEET.
6. AP AND UPI CARRY REPORTS THAT ISRAEL HAS OFFERED TO PAY COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF AMERICAN LIVES AND FOR DAMAGE DONE TO USS LIBERTY.
7. ELECTRONIC MEDIA REPORTED LAST NIGHT AND THIS MORNING THAT U.N....

BT



P R 112005Z JUN 67  
FM USS AMERICA  
TO CHINFO  
INFO CTF SIX ZERO  
COMSIXTHFLT

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L

PUBLIC AFFAIRS INTERVIEW OF LIBERTY CREWMAN

A. OPNAV INST. 05727.18

B. USCINCEUR 081650Z JUNE 1967

C. CHINFOINST 5720.25

1. ON 11 JUNE 1967 NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES EMBARKED ABOARD AMERICA WERE PERMITTED TO INTERVIEW CTSN KENNETH ECKER B513648/USN A CREW-MAN OF USS LIBERTY RECOVERING ABOARD AMERICA FROM WOUNDS RECEIVED IN THE RECENT ISRAELI ATTACK AND CDR. J.J. GORDON MC USN AMERICA MEDICAL OFFICER. THE INTERVIEW WAS REQUESTED BY NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES. PRESENT AT THE INTERVIEW WERE: ROBERT GORALSKI OF NBC, HARRY STATHOS OF UPI REPORTING UNDER THE PSEUDONYM OF JAMES STAFFORD FOR CBS RADIO, HELMUT SORGE OF DER SPIEGEL, GENE SHERMAN OF COPLEY NEWS SERVICE, D.C. TRENARY OF MILWAUKEE JOURNAL, BOB HORTON OF AP AND WILLIAM GILL OF ABC. THE INTERVIEW WAS NOT FILMED BY TV MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES BUT WAS RECORDED IN PART BY CBS RADIO. PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER AMERICA HAS A TAPED RECORDING OF THE INTERVIEW WHICH WILL BE FORWARDED UPON REQUEST.

2. SEAMAN ECKER WAS BRIEFED IAW REF A AND B. CLEARED BY THE MEDICAL OFFICER WHO SIGNED A STATEMENT AGREEING TO THE INTERVIEW. AMERICA PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER MONITORED THE INTERVIEW. ECKER WAS INTRODUCED AS A RADIOMAN ABOARD LIBERTY.

3. WHILE NOT REQUIRED THIS REPORT SUBMITTED IAW REF (C) P3-73 OF THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF THE LIBERTY INCIDENT.

4. THE INTERVIEW DEALT WHICH [WITH] ECKER'S EXPERIENCES DURING THE ISRAEL ATTACK. HE WAS ASKED TO RECOUNT IN DETAIL HIS OWN ACTIONS DURING THE ATTACK. MUCH ATTENTION HAD BEEN FOCUSED ON HIM BECAUSE OF HIS BATTLE HELMET, WHICH HE RETAINS. THE HELMET HAS BEEN CREDITED WITH SAVING HIS LIFE. IT HAS SEVERAL SHRAPNELL HOLES AND A PART OF ONE ROUND REMAINING LODGED IN THE HELMET AT A POSITION NEAR THE TEMPLE

5. NO UNEXPECTED PROBLEM AREAS WERE ENCOUNTERED IN THE INTERVIEW. AT ONE POINT, WHEN ASKED OF THE GENERAL FEELING AMONG LIBERTY CREWMEN AS THEY SPENT THE NIGHT IN DISTRESS, ECKER ANSWERED RATHER PASSIONATELY QUOTE WE WANTED TO GET THEM SONS OF BITCHES WHOEVER ATTACKED US UNQUOTE. WHEN PRESSED FOR THE FEELING AFTER IT BECAME KNOWN THAT THE ATTACKERS WERE ISRAELIS, ECKER REPLIED AFTER QUOTE WE STILL WANTED TO GET THEM. WE DIDN'T CARE WHETHER THEY WERE FRIENDS OR ENEMIES. THEY HIT OUR SHIP AND WE WANTED TO MAKE THEM PAY UNQUOTE.

GP-4

BT

*'I Am Just Glad To Be Alive'*

## Wounded LIBERTY Crewman Ecker Tells Of Attack

One of 75 wounded crewmen of the stricken U.S. Navy communications ship, USS LIBERTY (AGTR-5), Seaman Kenneth Ecker, 18, answered questions of newsmen of the national press during an interview aboard USS AMERICA (CVA-66) on June 11. The interview covered Seaman Ecker's actions and observations during the mistaken attack upon the LIBERTY by Israeli forces on June 8 which cost the lives of 34 men.

Seaman Ecker, fatigued but alert, responded with sullen reflection as he described the events of the attack he had experienced. Ecker, of Wateska, Ill., reported aboard the LIBERTY in March 1967. He is striking for radarman.

The LIBERTY sailor told newsmen he was on the ship's fantail when the attack began. "I looked up and a plane was coming right over the bow with his guns blazing," he recalled.

"I headed for my general quarters station...I got my helmet, my life jacket and put down a hatch and got ready to follow instructions from the damage control officer."

Ecker, assigned as stretcher bearer during general quarters, was soon called to the bridge, an area of the ship under heavy aircraft attack. Upon reaching the bridge, he found that a lieutenant was crippled by a leg wound and was unable to move.

"He was in the passageway and wanted to be moved to a stateroom so he could get out of the way of fire parties. Me and my fellow picked him up and put him in a rack and just as I was going to leave the stateroom I got hit in the back of the head," Ecker said.



Photo By PH3 Gordon  
Seaman Ecker sits, life-saving helmet in lap, as he describes the attack upon his ship.

Ecker was struck by shrapnel in the head and neck. During his interview aboard AMERICA, he sat cross-legged, exhibiting in his lap the helmet he had worn during the attack. The helmet was pierced and dented in several places, testifying to the force of the metal that pelleted Ecker. Abrasions and scratches trailed down his neck, but the fiercest blow was blunted by the steel helmet and produced a large wound on the back of his head.

Asked by newsmen if the helmet had been the factor that saved his life, Ecker emphatically said, "Yes."

After receiving his wounds, Ecker explained, he walked to the LIBERTY's sickbay for treatment. There were 10 men in the sickbay when he arrived and some were in "fairly

serious condition."

"It was pretty calm," he reflected upon the sickbay's activities during the attack. "No one panicked on the whole ship from what I saw and from what I heard from the other men. Everyone did their job like they were supposed to. That is what saved the ship."

After a torpedo struck the ship, LIBERTY's crew prepared to abandon ship. Coming above decks to report to his abandon ship station, Ecker observed three torpedo boats steaming approximately 100 yards off the LIBERTY's stern. He could not recognize the nationality of the craft.

"They were too far off. They were real small and you couldn't make out anything, mark on them or anything," he said.

Ecker learned several

hours later, after returning to sickbay, that the torpedo boats and aircraft were Israeli. The fact was received in the LIBERTY's radioroom over a British Broadcasting Company program.

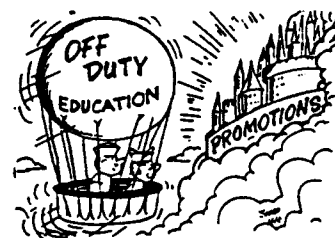
"That night, before we were evacuated, many of the men who hadn't been wounded came around giving us shots," Ecker said. "We only had two corpsmen and one of them had been shot; but he was aiding the wounded and several of the unwounded were coming around making us more comfortable and giving us the shots. One of the best shots I've had so far was by one of the men back on the ship. He was not a corpsman."

On June 9, the charred and listing communications ship, with a twisted and shattered superstructure, was along side AMERICA. Ecker and his wounded shipmates were transferred aboard AMERICA to be treated. The radarman and his helmet were brought aboard the carrier in one of AMERICA's helicopters.

At the interview, a newsman asked, "What are you going to do with your helmet with the holes in it?"

"I am going to keep it," replied Ecker, fondly gripping the helmet. "Nobody is getting that."

Aftereffects? Ecker admitted to the press that he still had a slight headache but "other than that I am just glad to be alive."



O 120950Z JUN 67  
FM CINCUSNAVEUR  
TO COMSERVLANT  
COMSIXTHFLT  
COMFAIRMED  
COMSERVFORSSIXTHFLT  
DIRNAVSECGRUEUR  
USS LIBERTY  
AMEMB MALTA  
COMNAVSTA ROTA  
INFO USCINCEUR  
CINCLANTFLT  
CTG SIX ZERO PT FIVE  
CTF SIX ZERO  
CNO  
DIRNAVSECGRU  
DIRNSA  
HQ NSAEUR  
NAVCOMMSTA (CAMS) MOROCCO  
JCS  
SECDEF  
BT

SECRET FINAL SECTION OF TWO  
SECDEF FOR OSD (PA)  
CO NAV STA ROTA NOT AN ADDEE. DELIVER TO RADM RENKIN AS HE PASSES THROUGH ROTA. O ADDRESSEES WHO REQUIRE IT. COMSIXTHFLT 101345Z IS QUOTED IN PART AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE I WAS ASKED SPECIFICALLY BY THE PRESS, QUOTE IS THE LIBERTY A SPY SHIP? WAS SHE IN THOSE WATERS COLLECTING INTELLIGENCE? UNQUOTE. I REPLIED, QUOTE EMPHATICALLY NO. LIBERTY WAS UNDER MY OPERATIONAL CONTROL, OPERATING IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS OF THE EASTERN MED TO ENSURE RELIABLE COMMUNICATIONS RELAY FROM THREATENED U.S. POSTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST FROM WHICH MASS EVACUATION OF U.S. NATIONALS MIGHT BECOME URGENT. UNQUOTE. I EXPLAINED ALSO THAT LIBERTY WAS WHERE SHE WAS BECAUSE THAT WAS JUST THE BEST POSSIBLE POSITION TO CARRY OUT THIS FUNCTION BECAUSE QUOTE AFTER AN EMBASSY OR CONSULATE IS ATTACKED THEIR ONLY MEANS OF REQUESTING EVACUATION WOULD BE VERY LOW POWERED RADIO SETS. MANY SUCH SMALL TRANSMITTERS HAVE ONLY LINE OF SIGHT CAPABILITY. UNQUOTE. I SAID LIBERTY POSSESSED EXCELLENT COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY AND PROVED IT BY BEING ABLE TO RIG A VOICE TRANSMITTER TO CALL FOR HELP AFTER THE ATTACK HAD WIPED OUT ALL HER ANTENNAS. AS TO LIBERTY'S CAPABILITIES OUTSIDE OF BEING VERY CAPABLE RADIO GUARD FOR EVACUATION OPERATIONS, I TOLD THEM THE SHIP WORKS ON A NUMBER OF PROJECTS, SUCH AS MAGNETIC WAVE PROJECTIONS WHICH ARE OF A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT NATURE ABOUT WHICH I HAD NO INFORMATION IN GENERAL QUESTIONING, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAD ORDERED AIRCRAFT AGEORINE [airborne] QUOTE TO PROTECT AND ONLY TO PROTECT USS LIBERTY AS SOON AS I WAS CONVINCED THAT A U.S. SHIP WAS REALLY UNDER ATTACK, AND CALLED BACK THE AIRCRAFT WHEN I BECAME AWARE THAT THEY WERE NOT REQUIRED. UNQUOTE. THE PRESS WAS ALSO INFORMED THAT SENIOR COMMANDERS HAD BEEN KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF MY ACTIONS AND RECEIVED COPIES OF ALL MY MESSAGES. UNQUOTE.

3. (U) PRESS RELEASE OR ANSWER TO INQUIRIES ON COURT OF INQUIRY;  
A. ADMIRAL JOHN S. MCCAIN, JR., COMMANDER IN CHIEF, U.S. NAVAL FORCES, EUROPE HAS CONVENED A COURT OF INQUIRY TO LOOK INTO CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ATTACK ON USS LIBERTY IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN JUNE 8. ...  
B. ANSWERS TO ADDITIONAL INQUIRIES:  
(1) WILL COURT SESSIONS BE OPEN TO PUBLIC? NO.  
(2) WHY NOT? USS LIBERTY WAS OPERATING IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS. AS SUCH, SHE WAS PART OF THE OVERALL UNITED STATES COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM, WHICH CANNOT BE DISCUSSED IN ANY DETAIL ON AN UNCLASSIFIED BASIS. SO MUCH EVEN OF PURELY ROUTINE NATURE WHICH THE COURT WILL HAVE TO GO INTO WILL BE CLASSIFIED THAT IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICABLE TO ATTEMPT TO HOLD AN OPEN HEARING.  
(3) WILL THE COURT'S FINDINGS BE MADE PUBLIC? AFTER NORMAL REVIEW BY THE CONVENING AUTHORITY AND HIS NAVAL SUPERIORS, IT IS LIKELY THAT ANY UNCLASSIFIED FINDINGS WILL BE RELEASED.  
(4) WILL THE CONVENING ORDER BE MADE PUBLIC? IT IS RELEASABLE.  
(5) IS THE COMMANDING OFFICER GOING TO BE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW AT MALTA? ARE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CREW? NOT AT THIS TIME.  
(6) WHY NOT? ALL MEMBERS OF THE CREW ARE POTENTIAL WITNESSES BEFORE THE COURT. IT IS THE DESIRE OF THE CONVENING AUTHORITY AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE COURT THAT THEIR RECOLLECTIONS REMAIN AS FRESH AS POSSIBLE AND NOT BE INFLUENCED IN ANY WAY BY QUESTIONS PUT TO THEM OUTSIDE THE COURT OR BY ANSWERS OF OTHER MEN BEING INTERVIEWED.  
(7) CAN THEY BE INTERVIEWED ON UNCLASSIFIED MATTERS, AFTER THE COURT HAS COMPLETED ITS WORK? YES, IF THEY WISH TO BE.  
(8) WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS OF THE COURT MEMBERS? CAPTAIN ATKINSON IS THE SURFACE OPERATIONS OFFICER, AND LCDR FEINGERSCH IS A COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER ON THE STAFF OF CINCUSNAVEUR.

GP-1  
BT

P 291156Z JUN 67  
FM CNO  
TO CINCUSNAVEUR  
COMSIXTHFLT  
NSA NAPLES  
CINCLANTFLT  
COMSERVLANT  
USS LIBERTY  
COMFIVE  
BT

UNCLAS E F T O

PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE OF USS LIBERTY

1. PRESS RELEASES CONSISTING OF A NARRATIVE ACCOUNT OF THE COURT OF INQUIRY AND STATEMENT BY C.O., USS LIBERTY, WAS RELEASED TO THE PRESS BY OASD(PA) 28 JUNE.
2. IF MEMBERS OF CREW NOW DESIRE TO GIVE INTERVIEWS AND RESPOND TO PRESS QUERIES ABOUT THE ATTACK ITSELF THEY ARE AUTHORIZED TO DO SO BY OASD(PA). OTHER SUBSTANTIVE QUERIES ABOUT ATTACK WILL BE HANDLED BY OASD(PA). NARRATIVE AND TESTIMONY REFERRED TO ABOVE ARE ONLY PORTIONS OF COURT OF INQUIRY THAT HAVE BEEN DECLASSIFIED.

NORMAL SECURITY PROCEDURES ARE OTHERWISE APPLICABLE.

3. FOR NSA NAPLES. REQUEST OAO ADVISE RADM KIDD AT CINCSOUTH.

BT

O 301401Z JUN 67  
FM CINCUSNAVEUR  
TO USS LIBERTY  
INFO USCINCEUR  
COMSIXTHFLT  
NAVSUPACT NAPLES  
SECDEF  
SECSTATE  
AMEMB MALTA  
CHINFO  
CINCLANT  
CINCLANTFLT  
COMSERVLANT  
COMSERVRON EIGHT  
USDOCOSOUTH  
COMFAIRMED  
BT

UNCLAS E F T O

SECDEF FOR OASD(PA). USDOCOSOUTH FOR REAR ADMIRAL KIDD.  
USS LIBERTY PRESS QUERIES/INTERVIEWS

A. USS LIBERTY 291005Z JUN 1967 PASEP

B. SECDEF 9078 DTG 282051Z JUN 1967 NOTAL

1. COMMANDING OFFICER AND ANY MEMBER OF LIBERTY  
CREW WHO SO DESIRES ARE AUTHORIZED TO RESPOND TO QUERIES  
AND GIVE INTERVIEWS AT MALTA AT TIME CONVENIENT TO  
COMMANDING OFFICER. NARRATIVE AND TESTIMONY  
REFERRED TO IN REF B ARE ONLY PORTIONS OF COURT OF  
INQUIRY THAT HAVE BEEN DECLASSIFIED. NORMAL SECURITY  
PROCEDURES ARE OTHERWISE APPLICABLE. CREW MEMBERS  
ARE LIMITED TO RESPONSES SET FORTH IN PRESS RELEASE DIS-  
CUSSED REF B. ANY SUBSTANTIVE QUERIES CONCERNING  
ATTACK OR ANY OTHER PHASE OF LIBERTY INCIDENT MUST BE  
REFERRED TO OASD(PA) FOR RESOLUTION, AS DIRECTED PARA  
TWO REF B.

2. COPIES OF AFOREMENTIONED PRESS RELEASE ARE BEING  
HAND DELIVERED THIS DATE TO COMMANDING OFFICER, USS LIBERTY,  
AND TO AMEMB MALTA.

3. IRVING R. LEVINE, NBC ROME, HAS REQUESTED INTERVIEW  
WITH LIBERTY COMMANDING OFFICER AND REAR ADMIRAL  
KIDD. INTERVIEW WITH REAR ADMIRAL KIDD PLANNED PM  
30 JUNE. A COPY OF PRESS RELEASE WILL BE GIVEN TO  
LEVINE TODAY IN ORDER TO DETERMINE IF HE WILL STILL BE  
INTERESTED IN INTERVIEW WITH LIBERTY COMMANDING OFFICER  
AFTER SEEING THE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF ATTACK ON  
LIBERTY WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO  
THE PRESS. ALL CONCERNED WILL BE ADVISED OF RESULT  
OF THIS DISCUSSION.

4. IF PRESS INTERVIEW IS REQUIRED. COMMANDER COONEY.  
COMSIXTHFLT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER, WILL ASSIST  
AS NECESSARY.

BT

O 301853Z JUN 67  
FM NAVSUPACT NAPLES  
TO CINCUSNAVEUR  
INFO USS LIBERTY  
COMSIXTHFLT  
SECDEF  
SECSTATE  
AMEMB MALTA  
CHINFO  
CINCLANT  
CINCLANTFLT  
COMSERVLANT  
COMSERVRON EIGHT  
COMFAIRMED  
USCINCEUR  
USDOCOSOUTH  
BT

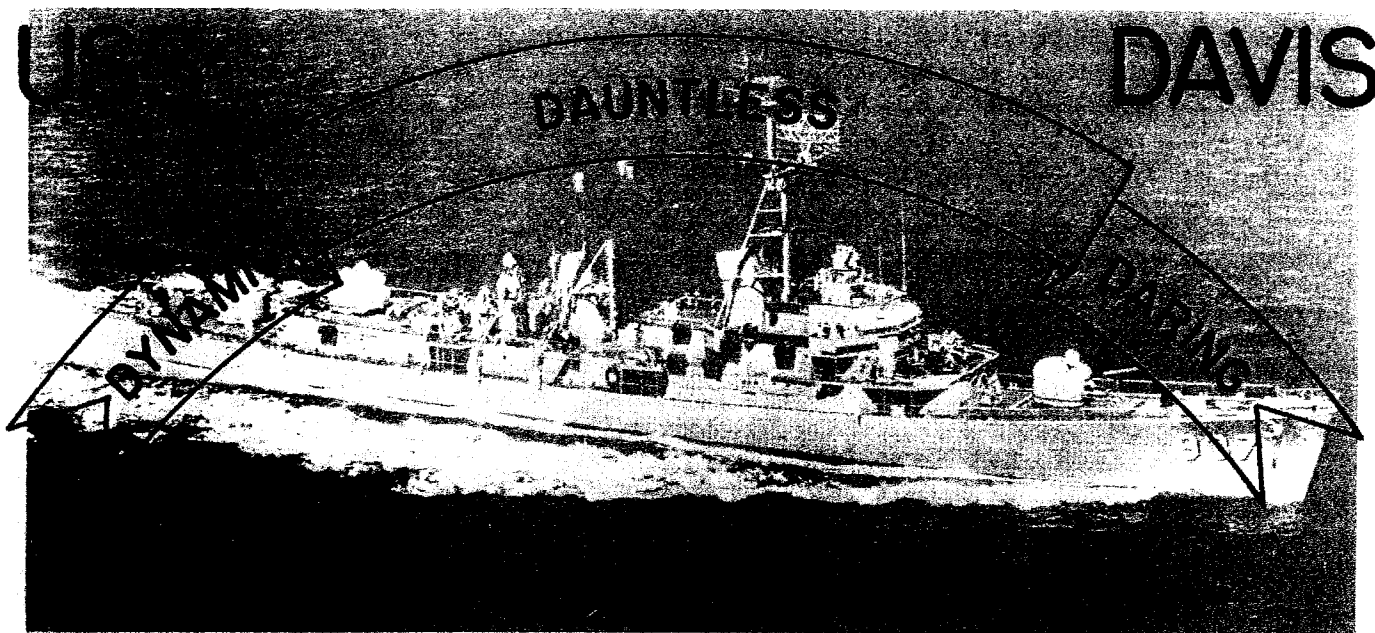
UNCLAS E F T O

SECDEF FOR OASD(PA). USDOCOSOUTH FOR REAR ADMIRAL KIDD.  
USS LIBERTY INTERVIEWS

A. CINCUSNAVEUR 301401Z JUN 67

1. INTERVIEW OF ABOUT ONE HOUR DURATION OF RADM KIDD CONDUCTED BY IRVIN R. LEVINE OF NBC IAW PARA 3 REF A. INTERVIEW REQUESTED BY NBC. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THE FRAMEWORK OF DOD LIBERTY NEWS RELEASE, OR STATEMENTS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED.
2. AT CONCLUSION OF INTERVIEW AND UPON READING DOD RELEASE MR. LEVINE STATED THAT HE CONSIDERED INTERVIEW MORE THAN SATISFACTORY AND THAT HE WOULD RECOMMEND TO HOME OFFICE THAT CREW NOT PROCEED TO MALTA FOR INTERVIEW OF LIBERTY C.O. NBC WAS TOLD C.O. AVAILABLE, BUT DID NOT SEEK PUBLICITY.
3. AT PRESENT NO OTHER REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS ARE PENDING.
4. UNEDITED TAPE RECORDING OF TOTAL INTERVIEW AND ALL CONVERSATION ASSOCIATED THERE WITH FORWARDED TO CINCUSNAVEUR AND CHINFO BY CERTIFIED AIR MAIL.
5. CDR COONEY SENDS.

BT



AT SEA

June 29, 1967

#### DAVIS FAMILYGRAM 4-67

As you can easily guess from watching TV newscasts, listening to the radio and reading newspapers, the past few weeks have been extremely busy for those of us assigned to the U.S. Six Fleet.

Our Atlantic transit, beginning in Newport on 2 May and ending at Gibraltar 10 May, was busy but relatively routine. We had a full scheduled of exercises, refuelings and individual training drills. All of this training has stood us in good stead, as the tempo of operations picked up noticeably after our departure from Gibraltar. We had a sort but enjoyable stop in Gibraltar, not realizing at the time that it was to be our only port for over a month!

We operated as a unit of the Sixth Fleet, increasing our readiness as the Middle East crisis increased in intensity. We continued to enhance our overall capability by participating in exercises involving antisubmarine warfare, anti-air warfare, seamanship, navigation, engineering, damage control, communications and all the myriad of complex skills that it takes to form a smoothly operating, effective man-of-war.

Late on the afternoon of June 8, while steaming with our task force, word was received that USS LIBERTY (AGTR 5) had been strafed and torpedoes off the coast of Egypt. These accidental attacks had been conducted by Israeli forces, and had left LIBERTY with over 30 dead, approximately 75 wounded and listing heavily to starboard. Captain H.O. Leahy, Commander Destroyer Squadron TWELVE, embarked in DAVIS, was directed to proceed to the scene with DAVIS and USS MASSEY (DD 778) to render assistance.

DAVIS and MASSEY rendezvoused with LIBERTY at 6:00 A.M. June 9, following a run of twelve hours in excess of 30 knots. Both ships immediately put their motor whaleboats in the water with medical and damage control personnel. After

they had boarded LIBERTY, DAVIS went directly alongside. About 100 of our crew went aboard to render all assistance possible. We helped to remove the dead and wounded to helicopters, restored electrical power, started to shore-up bulkheads in the vicinity of the torpedo hole, gave the survivors hot food and coffee and assisted in many other ways. When we cleared her side three hours later, we left four officers and sixteen men aboard to help bring the stricken ship into port.

LCDR. William PETTYJOHN, Chief Staff Officer for COMDESRON TWELVE, stayed aboard LIBERTY as acting Executive Officer. Lt. John UTZ, Squadron Medical Officer, also remained aboard. Lt Paul Tobin and ENS Dave BREUER remained to supervise emergency damage control and repair efforts. Also assisting to bring LIBERTY into port were: EMCS Robert P. DICKEY, BTCS William F. MASON, PN1 John P. CONROY, EMC Linton J. COATNEY, DC1 Raymond T. RICHARDS, HM1 Anker I. MATHISEN, HM2 John W. LIBBY, SM3 David CARMICHAEL, SN Daniel O'NEIL, SN Alton GRIFFIN, SN William MURRAY, SN Robert FEIT, SA Thomas DUNN, EM1 Max BAKER, EM3 Stanley ZAMBER, EMFN Larry BROYLES and EM3 Raeburn POST.

During the five day transit to MALTA these men from DAVIS remained aboard LIBERTY, either filling in for her dead and injured or performing highly complex damage control and engineering repair functions to keep LIBERTY afloat and moving toward her destination. The fleet tug PAPAGO accompanied us, available for towing assistance is required. In my own opinion, it was the magnificent efforts of the DAVIS crew that allowed LIBERTY to reach port without further damage. Also deeply involved in assisting LIBERTY were our radio gang, since she had lost almost all communications capability. We acted as LIBERTY's ears and voice until our departure from MALTA June 19. Much credit goes to Lt Glenn SMIT, LTJG John FARRELL, RM1 Guilford PERRY, RM2 Kenneth INGRAM, RM3 Richard TANGUAY, just to name a few.

I was very proud of the entire crew during this tragic period and have written letters of Commendations for the Officers and men who were most directly involved.

We escorted LIBERTY into MALTA at daylight June 14 and remained there until the 19<sup>th</sup>. We had an enjoyable five day visit, although it was necessary to spend a great deal of time and effort in shipboard maintenance after 30 days of grueling operations. As usual, conduct ashore by the entire crew was exemplary. The weather was excellent throughout the visit and we were all able to relax a bit ashore.

Hopefully, the Middle-East will stay cooled off, our future schedule will not be as intensive and we will get to visit some of the more interesting and colorful ports of the Mediterranean.

Of more immediate interest to many of you, the schedule ASW modernization of DAVIS has been delayed. We were scheduled to be decommissioned on November 1 for this modernization. At this stage, I have no information on the length of delay nor on future employment of the ship, after our scheduled return to Newport about 22 September. I imagine that the delay will be for several months, but we will inform everyone as soon as more is known.

Our mail has been coming through frequently, but don't stop now! Mail is the single, most important morale factor when we are deployed - so remember, WRITE to your loved one in DAVIS.

Sincerely,

ROBERT P. HILTON



NAVAL SECURITY GROUP

FILE ON

U.S.S. LIBERTY

SANITIZED VERSION

Reviewed for declassification as authorized by  
Executive Order 12356 on 11 April 1985  
(Date)

Present Classification and Special Handling Requirements:

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ON U. S. S. LIBERTY

NDW NAVSECGRU 5510/4 (REV 8-82)

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Annex I

News Media Coverage

When news of the LIBERTY attack reached the Pentagon, CINCUSNAVEUR was advised by telephone that Deputy Secretary of Defense VANCE had directed that all news releases would be made at the Washington level.

At midday on 8 June 1967, the Department of Defense announced that a U. S. Navy technical research ship, the USS LIBERTY, had been attacked at about 0900 EDT that day. The release reported LIBERTY's movements for the preceding two days and stated the ship's purpose for being positioned 15 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula was to assure communications between U. S. government posts in the Middle East and to assist in relaying information concerning the evacuation of U. S. dependents and other U. S. citizens from the Arab-Israeli war area. Ship's characteristics and personnel allowance were included in the announcement. The story was published that evening in the late-edition newspapers with little deviation from the DOD release.

Morning editions on 9 June carried essentially the same story reported the previous evening. The Washington Post carried an additional story concerning use of the hot line to inform Moscow that U. S. Sixth Fleet aircraft were being scrambled to protect a U. S. ship which was under attack. That evening, late editions began to hint that LIBERTY was used for electronic snooping. Such speculation was undoubtedly prompted by an Associated Press story of 9 June "Aboard the Carrier America" by Bob HORTON which stated that an officer had said, "to put it bluntly, she was in there to spy for us. Russia does the same thing. We moved in close to monitor the communications of both Egypt and Israel. We have to. We must be informed of what's going on in a matter of minutes." The USS AMERICA claimed that the alleged statement quoted by Mr. HORTON was not based on any contact with an official spokesman nor was it attributable to any of AMERICA's officers. AMERICA expressed the belief that the copy was not transmitted via naval communications and that it probably was sent ashore by COD flight which departed AMERICA for Athens at 091030Z.

Newspapers on 10 June seized upon the snooper story and thereafter speculation was rampant concerning the LIBERTY mission. An aggravating influence was an honest account in the Baltimore Sun concerning the death of Allen M. BLUE which identified him as an NSA employee.

Three official press interviews were conducted aboard AMERICA: four walking wounded LIBERTY crew members were interviewed on 9 June; SN Kenneth P. ECKER, another injured crewman, on the 11th; COMSIXTHFLT, VADM W. I. MARTIN, held a press conference on the 15th subsequent to his visit to the LIBERTY. The ECKER interview was widely publicized on 12 June, most newspapers giving it human-interest treatment, stressing that ECKER's life was saved because he was wearing a steel helmet.

NOTES ↑  
INTERVIEWS

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Beginning 12 June, newspapers carried the story of LIBERTY's progress en route Malta and gave extensive coverage to the ship's arrival there on the 14th. Photographs of external damage appeared and reports attributed to crewmen were published, claiming that the attack was not accidental and that the ship had been reconnoitered by the Israelis prior to the attack.

On 16 June, syndicated columnist Drew PEARSON wrote that the LIBERTY was a CIA ship.

An article by George WILSON in the Washington Post on 18 June stated that "NSA was running things in the bowels of the ship." WILSON erroneously described the functions of most of LIBERTY's antennas.

The Washington Post, on the 20th quoted a story from an Arab newspaper which charged that LIBERTY took active part in the fighting on the side of the Israelis.

On 28 June, DOD released a summary of the proceedings of the U. S. Navy Court of Inquiry which investigated the circumstances surrounding the attack on LIBERTY. The same day the text of a letter from crew member SA Robert REILLY to his mother, giving a colorful account of the attack, was published in the Navy Times.

The 6 July issue of the Washington Post included a letter to the editor from Admiral George W. ANDERSON, USN (Ret.), former CNO, which took exception to the Post editorial of 30 June entitled "Not Good Enough." (See Appendix I.) The letter pointed out that the editorial failed to acknowledge that operating forces are assigned to unified commands and joint agencies which would not in this case be under command of the Navy. Also, that communications channels involved no longer are under control of the Navy but, often, and in this case did, pass through non-naval links; thus, LIBERTY paid part of the cost of excessive centralization. The admiral's final remarks were that the important point which should have been emphasized by the editorial was that LIBERTY definitely was operating in international waters and was attacked without provocation, in violation of any valid concept of international law, and, further, that the editorial itself was "not good enough."

From mid-July until her arrival in Norfolk, Virginia, on 29 July, LIBERTY passed from the news scene. Her return to the U. S. sparked renewed press interest as reflected by a long article in the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot on 30 July, the James J. KILPATRICK write-up in the Washington Star on 1 August and a short item in the August 9th issue of the Navy Times.

A seven-page article, "June 8, at 1400 hours", by James Jackson KILPATRICK, appeared in the 5 September issue of the National Review. The story is based largely on the summary of proceedings of the Navy Court of Inquiry released to the press. KILPATRICK has many unanswered questions which he states "nag for answers."

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A collection of articles clipped from the following newspapers and periodicals is appended:

Alexandria Gazette  
Baltimore News-American  
Baltimore Sun  
Boston Globe  
Chicago News  
Chicago Tribune  
Cleveland Plain Dealer  
Electronic News  
Laurel News Leader  
Life  
Los Angeles Times  
Louisville Courier-Journal & Times  
Malta News  
Malta Times  
The National Observer  
National Review  
Navy Times  
New Rochelle Standard Star

Newsweek  
New York News  
New York Times  
Norfolk Virginian-Pilot  
Philadelphia Inquirer  
Portland Oregonian  
Portland (Me.) Times  
Providence Journal  
San Diego Union  
San Francisco Examiner  
Seattle Times  
Stars and Stripes  
Time  
U. S. News & World Report  
Washington News  
Washington Post  
Washington Star

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