

Significant events relating to the USS *Liberty* Incident presented in chronological sequence

The Time Line lists in chronological order the significant events that occurred from January 1967 through 1995. Normally there is a seven-hour difference in time zones between Washington, D.C. and the Bravo (B) time zone where Israel, the Sinai, and Egypt are located, which is referred to as Sinai Time, and where the USS *Liberty* incident took place on June 8, 1967. However on June 8, 1967 Washington D.C. was on Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), Israel was on Standard Time and Egypt was on Daylight Time. Thus it's important to remember that there was a six-hour time differential between Washington D.C. local time and Sinai Time on June 8, 1967.

The first Time column is in local standard time (Bravo or B) off the coast of the Sinai. The second column is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT, i.e. Zulu or Z.) (All U.S. messages use date/time groups [DTG] in Z or GMT format.) The third column is Eastern Daylight Time which is six hours earlier than local standard Sinai Time and four hours earlier than Greenwich Mean Time. The day number will be displayed above the three displayed Times as the day changes in each of the locations.

In some instances a reference source is not exact, so it may be stated as in "in the morning" or "in the afternoon" or "during the day." In some cases a time has been estimated and indicated by the words "approximate." There are some instances where reports of a time may vary slightly but there are no instances where the variations are important, but where possible, they are noted.

When a time is in the narration and it's in **bold** type it represents Sinai time (or GMT +2.)

Sinai Area: Bravo (B) time zone. The eastern Mediterranean (off the Sinai) is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT, or Z) plus 2 hours.

GMT: Greenwich Mean Time. Z or Zulu time zone.

WDC: Washington, D.C. Washington time is Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) and is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT, or Z) minus 4 hours.

Sinai	GMT	WDC	Event
+2	Z	-4	

1967

January -- April

Terrorist intrusions into northern Israel from Syria across the armistice line increase. Retaliation and counter-retaliation escalates from fire fights to tank and artillery duels. [Eban, *My Country*; UN Office of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1967*.]

7 April

Israel and Syria engage in an aerial confrontation; six Syrian MiG-21 aircraft are downed. [Parker, *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, p. xvii.]

2 May

USS *Liberty*(AGTR-5) departs Norfolk, VA for a scheduled four-month "technical research operations" deployment to the west African region. [Naval Historical Center file - USS *Liberty* 1967 Command History Report.]

11 May

UN Secretary General U Thant speaks of the grave situation in the Middle East as a result of the cross-border raids coming from Syria. Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol and other Israeli officials warn of possible drastic actions if the raids don't cease. [Yost, "The Arab-Israeli War: How It Began," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1968.]

Israeli military intelligence briefed foreign military attache's in Tel Aviv. [Eban, *My Country*, p.199.]

13 May

The Soviets pass inaccurate information, for reasons still not clear, to the Egyptians regarding a massing of some 11 to 13 Israeli brigades for an invasion of Syria. [Parker, *The Politics of Miscalculation*, pp. 3-35.]

14 May

Egyptian armed forces put on full alert. Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk states the forces were mobilized and moved into the Sinai on the 14th. [Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 384; Parker, *The Politics of Miscalculation*, p. 43.]

15 May

Egyptian armed forces begin moving en mass into the Sinai. 30,000 troops, 200 tanks. [Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem*, p. 63.] Israel celebrates Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut). [Eban, *My Country*, p. 195.]

16 May

2200 2000 1600

General Rikhye, UNEF commanding general at Gaza, receives a note from the Egyptian Chief of Staff, requesting immediate withdrawal of the UNEF from Sinai. [Eban, *Ibid.*, p. 201.]

17 May

Egyptian forces reach the UNEF posts at El Sabha and El Kuntilla, located near the Sinai/Israeli armistice line. [UN Office of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1967*, p. 163.] Egyptian UN representative is informed by UNSG U Thant, in writing, that there is no indications of any recent buildup of Israeli armed forces. [Parker, *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, p. xviii.]

18 May

Egypt requests complete withdrawal of the UNEF. [Parker, *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, p. xviii.]

British aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes*(R-12) departs Aden for Singapore. [Howe, *Multicrisis*, p.149.]

19 May 18 May 18 May
0100 2300 1900

U Thant cables Cairo. UNEF will be withdrawn. [Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem*, p.71., Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p.384.] Rusk states the withdrawal was on May 18, 1967 which is correct from his perspective in Washington. It was already May 19 in the Sinai when U Thant ordered the withdrawal.

19 May 19 May 19 May

1700 1500 1100

UNEF ordered withdrawn. Israel advised. Israel orders large-scale mobilization. [Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem*, pp. 72-73.]

20 May

Syrian Defense Minister, Hafez Assad speaks of "a disciplinary blow to Israel." [Neff, *Ibid.*, p. 88.]

US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) issues orders restricting the movements of the US Sixth Fleet, commanded by Vice Admiral Martin, in the Mediterranean. [LBJ Library: NSC "Middle East Chronology Guide, May 12-June 20", Appendix H, DTG 201910Z May 1967, JCS to USCINCEUR.]

21 May

Egypt occupies Sharm El Sheikh and announces total mobilization. Iraq offers to send troops. [Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem*, p. 88.] Israeli Chief of Staff General Rabin informs the cabinet that the Egyptian troop buildup is now at 70,000. Israeli internal crisis relating to a lack of confidence in the Eshkol government surfaces. [Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 113-114.]

22 May

Liberty arrived Abidjan, Ivory Coast for a planned four-day port call. [Naval Historical Center: *USS Liberty 1967 Command History Report*.]

Egypt declared the Gulf of Aqaba closed to Israeli shipping. [Churchill and Churchill, *The Six Day War*, p. 38] Nasser accepts an offer of Iraqi forces. Prime Minister Eshkol proposes a withdrawal of both Israeli and Egyptian forces from the border area. [O'Ballance, *The Third Arab-Israeli War*, p.27.]

23 May

National Security Agency (NSA) requests of the JCS diversion of the *Liberty* to a position off Port Said, Egypt due to the mid-east crisis. [NSA: "USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events", 23 May-8 June 1967: DTG 231729Z May 1967, DIRNSA to JCS/JRC.]

PM Eshkol states before the Israeli Knesset (parliament) that interference with Israeli shipping would be regarded as an act of war. President Johnson declares the Egyptian blockade of an international waterway as an illegal act. US and British nationals are advised to evacuate. [Churchill and Churchill, *The Six Day War*, p. 38; O'Ballance, *The Third Arab-Israeli War*, p. 28.]

24 May

Liberty departs Abidjan under orders to make "best speed" for the 3,000 nautical mile trip to Rota, Spain. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 109 of Exhibit 48: DTG 241732Z May 1967, *USS Liberty to COMSERVRON EIGHT*.]

Israeli Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, leaves for Paris. Meets with President de Gaulle. Goes on to London. Meets with Prime Minister Wilson. [Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem*, p. 120-121.]

UNSG U Thant, UNEF commander General Rikhye and President Nasser meet in Cairo. [*Ibid.*, p. 124.]

Egyptian Minister of War, Shams Badran, leaves for Moscow. [Parker, *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, p. xviii.]

UN Security Council convenes in emergency session in New York at the request of Canada and Denmark. British aircraft carrier HMS *Victorious*(R-38), homeward bound, is ordered to standby at Malta. Jordan announces that Iraqi and Saudi forces have been given permission to enter the

country. [Churchill and Churchill, *The Six Day War*, pp. 43-44.]

25 May

Iraqi troops arrive in Syria. [Eban, *My Country*, p. 211.]

Cairo Radio announces: "The Arab people is firmly resolved to wipe Israel off the map." [From Eban's speech on June 19, 1967 to the UNGA.]

Egyptian Minister of War Badran meets with Soviet leaders in Moscow. [Parker, *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, p. xviii.]

JCS orders the Sixth Fleet Marines amphibious forces to continue towards Malta for a scheduled port call. [LBJ Library: NSC "Middle East Chronology Guide May 12-June 20", Appendix H, DTG 251524Z May 1967.]

USNS *Private Jose F. Valdez*(T-AG-169), a civilian-crewed US Naval Ship configured as a signal intelligence-gathering ship returning to New York, docks for three hours at the US Naval Base, Rota, Spain. She unloads "all available ME tech support" material collected the previous month while she had been in the eastern Mediterranean. [NSA: "USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967": DTG 231729Z May 1967, DIRNSA to JCS/JRC; USNS *Private Jose F. Valdez* Deck Log, 25 May 1967.]

Hermes is ordered to return to Aden. [Howe, *Multicrises*, p.84.]

26 May

FM Eban meets President Johnson at the White House. [Eban, *My Country*, p. 210.]

France proposes four-power action to end crisis. [Marshall, *Swift Sword*.]

27 May

Sixth Fleet operating area is further defined in the eastern Mediterranean. No air operations are to take place within 100 miles of the UAR. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 271052Z May 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to COMSIXTHFLT.]

28 May

Secretary Rusk advises Israel that the US and Britain were working on a naval escort plan and Holland and Canada have promised to join. Israeli cabinet votes in favor of a further short wait. PM Eshkol makes "stumbling" speech to the nation. [Eban, *My Country*, pp. 212-213.] Radio Damascus announces: "The elimination of Israel is the imperative goal." [Soustelle, *Long March of Israel*, p. 241.] Syria and Iraqi sign a military assistance pact. [*New York Times*, May 30, 1967, p. 2.]

29 May

JCS instructs Commander in Chief, Atlantic (Admiral Moorer) to pass operational control of *Liberty* to US Commander in Chief, Europe (General Lemnitzer) when she reaches Rota, Spain. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 104 of Exhibit 48: DTG 291602Z May 1967, JCS to CINCLANT and USCINCEUR.]

NSA transmits to *Liberty's* intelligence-gathering detachment interim collection tasking instructions for her transit to the eastern Mediterranean. [NSA: "USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967": DTG 292201Z May 1967, DIRNSA to USN-855 (sanitized).]

President Nasser tells the National Assembly he has a promise of support from the Soviet Union. [Eban, *My Country*, p. 232; Parker, *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, p. xix.]

UN Security Council convenes in emergency session. The session lasts four and a half hours. [UN document S/PV.1343: 1343rd UNSC meeting.]

30 May

USCINCEUR instructs Commander in Chief, US Naval Forces, Europe (Admiral McCain) to take operational control of *Liberty* when she reaches Rota, Spain. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 101 of Exhibit 48: DTG 300932Z May 1967, USCINCEUR to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

US Defense Department issues repeat instructions that there are to be no public comments on US military activities or the delicate ME crisis without clearance from Washington. [NARA: DTG 302008Z May 1967, SECDEF to USCINCEUR.]

President Nasser declares, "The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are poised on the borders of Israel." King Hussein of Jordan flies to Cairo. Egypt and Jordan sign a mutual defense pact. Jordanian troops are placed under Egyptian command. [Soustelle, *Long March of Israel*, p. 241; Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 154.] PM Eshkol assured President Johnson that Israel would wait as much as two weeks for international action to open the Gulf of Aqaba. [Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 386.] Mossad chief, Meir Amir, travels to Washington to seek further clarification of the US position. He returns to Israel on **3 June**. [Parker, *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, p. xix.]

USSR announces augmentation of her Mediterranean fleet. [Howe, *Multicrises*, p. 149.]

UN Security Council convenes in emergency session. The session lasts two and a half hours. [UN document S/PV.1344: 1344th UNSC meeting.]

31 May

President Nasser announced that his Vice President, Zakarya Mohieddin would visit Washington on June 7, 1967. [Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 386.]

Soviets are reported to be sending additional naval units to the Mediterranean. [Washington Post, June 1, 1967; Howe, *Multicrises*, p. 71.]

CINCUSNAVEUR transmits Movement Orders (MOVORD) 7-67 to *Liberty*. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 111 of Exhibit 48: DTG 311752Z May 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to USS *Liberty*.]

UN Security Council convenes in emergency session. The session lasts three hours. [UN document S/PV.1345: 1345th UNSC meeting.]

1 June

Liberty reaches Rota, Spain at which time she CHOPS from CINCLANT to USCINCEUR then immediately to CINCUSNAVEUR. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 97 of Exhibit 48: DTG 010712Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to COMSERVRON EIGHT.] She receives Change One to MOVORD 7-67. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 95 of Exhibit 48: DTG 011305Z June 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to USS *Liberty*.]

Aircraft carrier USS *Intrepid*(CVS-11), having been held off the western end of Egypt for several days, passes through the Suez Canal on her way to Vietnam. [Washington Post, June 2, 1967, p. A19; Howe, *Multicrises*, p. 70-71.]

A national unity government is formed in Israel. Moshe Dayan is appointed Minister of Defense, with M. Begin and Y. Saphir joining as ministers-without-portfolio. [Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 158; Eban, *My Country*, p. 213.]

The US and British propose a maritime nations declaration on freedom of shipping which omits any backing for Israeli-flag ships in the Gulf of Aqaba. [Washington Post, June 2, 1967.] The often-heard plan of an international naval escort fleet to open the Gulf of Aqaba is no more.

2 June

Following refueling, some temporary repairs and taking aboard additional personnel, *Liberty*

departs Rota “at best speed” for operations in the eastern Mediterranean; scheduled to arrive on station 080300Z June. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 92 of Exhibit 48: DTG 022108Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

NSA transmits further tasking instructions to *Liberty*'s intelligence-gathering detachment for her up-coming period in the Mediterranean. [NSA: “USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967”: DTGs 022333Z and 022335Z June 1967, DIRNSA to USN-855 (sanitized).]

France suspends shipment of arms to the Middle East. [Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 162.]

3 June

Soviet Ambassador in Cairo tells President Nasser that Israel's non-resistance is assured. Iraqi armored division enters Jordan. [Eban, *My Country*, pp. 215, 232, 239; Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 163.]

UN Security Council convenes in emergency session. The session lasts almost four and a half hours. The Israeli representative declares “Israel is determined to make its stand on the Gulf of Aqaba.” [UN document S/PV.1346: 1346th UNSC meeting.]

4 June

Israeli Cabinet votes unanimously to go to war. Iraqi delegation signs mutual defense pact with Egypt in Cairo and with Jordan in Amman. Iraqi troops placed under Egyptian command. Two Egyptian commando battalions flown to Jordan [Eban, *My Country*, p. 211.]

5 June

0715 0515 0115

Israel launches preemptive IAF air strike on Egypt (0815 Egyptian DST.) [Marshall, *Swift Sword*, p. 21.]

0745 0545 0145

Full-scale warfare commences as the IAF strikes multiple Egyptian air bases, destroying the majority of the Egyptian Air Force on the ground. [O'Ballance, *The Third Arab-Israeli War*, p. 62.]

0900 0700 0300

Liberty records her position at 36-32.7N, 13-58.2E on course 106°, speed 17 knots. This places her in the central Mediterranean, just a bit west of Malta. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 5 June 1967.]

0910 0710 0310

The Israeli UN representative informs the UNSC president that Egyptian forces have moved against Israel and are being repelled. [UN document S/PV.1347: 1347th UNSC meeting.]

0930 0730 0330

The Egyptian UN representative informs the UNSC president that Israeli forces have attacked the UAR, including the Gaza strip. States 23 IAF aircraft have been downed. [UN document S/PV.1347: 1347th UNSC meeting.]

1305 1105 0705

White House releases appeal to all parties to bring about cease-fire. [Howe, *Multicrises*, p. 92.]

1347 1147 0747

Soviet Premier Kosygin transmits Hot Line message to President Johnson. It is received at 0759

EDT, translated, and given to the President at 0815. This is the first use of the Hot Line in a crisis situation. The message calls for an immediate cease-fire. [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

1415 1215 0815

The White House transmits to Kosygin via the Hot Line a copy of the earlier message by Secretary Rusk to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko stating “We are astonished and dismayed by ... reports of heavy fighting ...” [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

1447 1347 0847

The President approves a Hot Line message response and it’s transmitted at 0857 EDT. It supports the call for an immediate cease-fire. [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

1530 1330 0930

UN Security Council convenes in emergency session. The session lasts one hour. No agreement for a cease-fire is reached or attempted. [UN document S/PV.1347: 1347th UNSC meeting.]

1552 1352 0952

Admiral McCain instructs Admiral Martin that he can expand the operations area of the Sixth Fleet’s Task Force Sixty (TF60) within the eastern Mediterranean, but not to come closer than 100 miles to the shore line. This is done to put more strain on the logistics base of the Soviet ships and to position the carriers for whatever action higher authority may require as a result of the outbreak in fighting. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 051352Z June 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to COMSIXTHFLT.]

During the day NSA inquired of JCS/JRC if there was any consideration to changing *Liberty*’s closest point of approach in view of the outbreak of hostilities. The response was “no.” [NSA: “USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967.”]

2215 2015 1615

COMSIXTHFLT issues operating instructions to Rear Admiral Geis, Commander, Task Force Sixty (CTF60), based on McCain’s **1552** message. This includes the 100-mile standoff limit to the coast’s of UAR, Israel, Lebanon and Syria. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 052015Z June 1967.]

**6th 6th 5th
0200 0000 2000**

Liberty reports her projected position of 35-20N, 19-11E and has “assumed condition of readiness three modified.” [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 5 of Exhibit 48: DTG 051934Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

0450 0250 2250

Israel intercepts a radio-telephone call between President Nasser and Jordan’s King Hussein in which they agree to announce that both US and British aircraft have directly participated in the fighting. [Churchill and Churchill, *The Six Day War*, p.90.] Soon these charges will be repeatedly broadcast over Radio Cairo and from other Arab capitals. During the day the US Government would deny the charges as being without foundation. By the end of 6 June Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, and Yemen break diplomatic relations with the US and Britain based on these false charges.

6th 6th 6th
0637 0437 0037

Radio Cairo broadcasts charges of US and British carrier-based aircraft are directly supporting Israel. [Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) recording: UAR, 0437 GMT 6 June 1967, p. B1.]

0745 0545 0145

Radio Beirut announces that American and British planes are providing aerial cover over Israel. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 060636Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY (American Embassy) BEIRUT 11241.]

0830 0630 0230

Radio Amman announces that carrier-based American planes are directly supporting the Israelis. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 060655Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY AMMAN 408x.]

1134 0934 0534

Hot Line message transmitted by Premier Kosygin to the President. It arrives at 0543 EDT and after translation given to the President at 0550 EDT. Kosygin links an immediate cease-fire to a “withdraw of troops to behind the armistice line.” [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

1500 1300 0900

Moscow Domestic Radio broadcasts Arab charges of direct American and British involvement in the fighting on the side of the Israelis. [Howe, *Multicrises*, p. 99.]

1557 1357 0957

Admiral McCain informs Admiral Martin that he will take operational control (CHOP) of *Liberty* effective 070001Z (0201 Sinai on 7 June) in order to:

“Facilitate command and control and possible requirement for protection during Mid-East hostilities.”

[US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 6 of Exhibit 48: DTG 061357Z June 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to COMSIXTHFLT.]

1603 1403 1003

Johnson approves a Hot Line message in response to the message received at 0543 EDT. It is transmitted at 1021 EDT. Johnson sends a lengthy response covering not only a need for a cease-fire as soon as possible, but dismay that the false charges of the Arabs are repeated by the Soviet press. [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

2000 1800 1400

Liberty, responding to McCain’s 1557 message as information addressee, states position as 34-18N, 024-06E and on course 107°, speed 16 knots. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 8 of Exhibit 48: DTG 061844Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

2236 2036 1636

Liberty message to COMSIXTHFLT acknowledging CHOP at 070001Z drafted. Admiral Martin does not receive this message until 0217Z on 8 June. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 10 of Exhibit 48: DTG 062036Z June 1967.]

7th 6th 6th

0007 2207 1807

Premier Kosygin transmits Hot Line message to the President regarding a UN cease-fire resolution which would have troops withdraw to positions of June 4. The message is received at 1810 EDT, translated, and given to the President at 1815 EDT. [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

0030 2230 1830

UN Security council meets and votes on a cease-fire resolution not demanding the warring parties return to positions of June 4. US UN representative Goldberg reads DOD news release of 5 June which stated, in part: “all Sixth Fleet aircraft are and have been several hundred miles from the area of conflict.” Remainder of the nearly five-hour session taken up with speeches. [UN document S/PV.1348: 1348th UNSC meeting.]

0145 2345 1945

In response to Premier Kosygin’s 1807 EDT Hot Line message President Johnson approves a Hot Line message which mentions agreeing to a “cease-fire as a first step.” [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

0149 2349 1949

COMSIXTHFLT transmits a set of detailed instructions to *Liberty*. This message referred to the Arab/Israeli situation and cited the unpredictability of UAR actions. It directed her to conduct operations in accordance with her assigned orders. *Liberty* was directed to maintain a high state of vigilance against attack or threat of attack and to report:

“any threatening or suspicious actions directed against her or any diversion from schedule necessitated by external threat. Advise if local situation dictates change in area of operation assigned by reference JCS schedule.”

Contact report requirements were defined. She was also instructed to copy Naval Communication Station (NCS) Morocco teletype fleet broadcast and to utilize TF60 tactical circuits as required “...although not assigned to TF60.” *Liberty* was required to “ACKNOWLEDGE.” [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 9 of Exhibit 48: DTG 062349Z June 1967.]

Two points of interest: *Liberty* was instructed to copy (listen to) the fleet broadcast from NCS Morocco when she earlier had reported she would commence copying the fleet broadcast from NCS Amara at 070001Z. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 54 of Exhibit 48: DTG 021330Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to AIG 240.] The other concerns the question if *Liberty* ever received this message. In the investigations which followed the attacks, NCS Asmara would show that this message was placed on the fleet broadcast at 070529Z June. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 8: DTG 162116Z June 1967, NCS Asmara to CINCUSNAVEUR.] However there was no other record produced which demonstrated delivery, including statements from *Liberty*’s Captain. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

**7th 7th 6th
0201 0001 2001**

Liberty CHOPS from CINCUSNAVEUR TO COMSIXTHFLT. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 10 of Exhibit 48: DTG 062036Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to COMSIXTHFLT.]

0223 0023 2023

The Hot Line message approved by the President at **0145** is transmitted. [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

0459 0259 2259

JCS sends urgent request direct to COMSIXTHFLT requesting confirmation of no Sixth Fleet units having come close to the area of fighting and whether there have been any communications between the fleet and the Israelis. This was done as a result of the false Arab charges that the US had directly participated in the fighting. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 070259Z June 1967.]

7th 7th 7th
0600 0400 0000

The Jordanian Government formally notified UNSG U Thant of its acceptance of a cease-fire - as related to the US ambassador to Jordan by King Hussein. [NARA: DTG 070830Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY AMMAN 4121.]

0800 0600 0200

Liberty position 33-04.5N, 28-32.1E. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 7 June 1967.]

0826 0626 0226

COMSIXTHFLT responds to JCS request of **0459**. Confirms no direct, or indirect, contact between the fleet and any Israeli source. Does state that at the US Embassy Tel Aviv request, did test voice radio circuits. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 070626Z June 1967.]

1000 0800 0400

Liberty reports to COMSIXTHFLT her **1000** position as 33-06N, 28-54E. States her planned intentions are to continue on course 109°, speed 16.5 knots until **0100 8 June**, then to be stationary within 30 nautical miles of 31-45N, 33-30E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 89 of Exhibit 48: DTG 070908Z June 1967.]

1200 1000 0600

Liberty position 32-56.1N, 29-29.1E. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 7 June 1967.]

1418 1218 0818

Kosygin transmits a Hot Line message to the President stating a proposal to have the UN Security Council convene in order to discuss implementation of a cease-fire which would result in an immediate halt to the fighting. The message arrives at 0823 EDT, translated, and given to the President at 0834 EDT. [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

During the day the US Embassy Tel Aviv, Defense Attache Office (USDAO), in a message to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), reported Egyptian shelling attack from sea in Gaza area was reported by the IDF. [USDAO Tel Aviv 0812, 7 June 1967. See US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 64 of Exhibit 48: DTG 082100Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0834 to DIA for reference to the USDAO message 0812 of 7 June 1967.]

In the afternoon Israeli Navy destroyers attack a suspected Egyptian submarine off Rosh Hanikra, near the Israel-Lebanon border. [Israel Ministry of Defense, *The 6 Days' War*, 1967.]

1700 1500 1100

The President approves a response to the Hot Line message of **1418** which agrees to an immediate meeting of the UN Security Council. He also informs Kosygin that not only are the

Arabs silent regarding acceptance of an immediate cease-fire, except for Jordan, but their breaking of diplomatic relations and giving inadequate protection to American officials and private citizens “will lead to a very serious deterioration in the situation.” [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

1703 1503 1103

Admiral Martin expands on his **0826** message and informs the JCS that no Sixth Fleet elements, either surface or air, have been closer than 100 miles to Egypt. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 12 of Exhibit 48: DTG 071503Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to JCS.] This message, along with the **2304** NSA request and public statements from US officials, is the catalyst for generating the following sequence of requests to have *Liberty* not continue on towards her assigned operating area.

1718 1518 1118

The Hot Line message approved at **1700** is transmitted. [LBJ Library: Hot Line Message.]

1749 1548 1148

As information addressee, CNO receives Martin’s message of **1703**. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

1833 1633 1233

As action addressee, JCS receives Martin’s message of **1703**. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

1900 1700 1300

UN Security Council convened at the request of the Soviet’s UN representative. He introduced a second cease-fire resolution, one that sets a specific time and no conditions. Jordan’s formal acceptance of first cease-fire is announced. Council adjourns after 45 minutes. [UN document S/PV.1349: 1349th UNSC meeting.]

2000 1800 1400

Liberty position 32-06.8N, 31-23.1E. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 7 June 1967.]

2020 1820 1420

UN Security Council convened 1350th meeting and within a few minutes vote unanimously on the second cease-fire resolution introduced in the 1349th meeting, to take affect at **2200** hours Sinai, 1600 EDT. Neither Egypt nor Syria accept the call for a cease-fire. [UN document S/PV.1350. See also the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, June 8, 1967, front pages.]

2200 2000 1600

Cease-fire reported to be in effect between Israel and Jordan. [NARA: DTG 080740Z June 1967, SECSTATE 209172; DTG 081455Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4013.]

2304 2104 1704

NSA requested immediate action from the JCS to change *Liberty*’s scheduled operational area from 32-00N, 33-00E/34-00E (Op Area 3) to 32-00N, 31-00E/33-00E (Op Area 2.) The recorded reason was to allow more effective communication coverage of Egyptian forces due to the advance of the IDF into the Sinai. [NSA: “USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967”: DTG 072104Z June 1967, DIRNSA to JCS/JRC; “Attack on a Sigint Collector, the

USS Liberty (S-CCC)", pgs. 20-21.]

It must be remembered commencing on 8 June in the Time Line there are going to be multiple sources reporting and recording basically the same event from different perspectives. There are bound to be conflicts depending on several factors. They can generally be stated as follows:

*Translation from Hebrew to English and accuracy thereof;
Not the same time piece (i.e. clock) being used by all parties to record an event;
When the recording of an event took place;
Different individuals doing the recording or remembrance, whether Israeli or American;
The factor of stress.*

An effort has been made to record the events as accurately as possible, with additional comments regarding time discrepancies made where appropriate.

**8th 7th 7th
0000 2200 1800**

Liberty position 31-59N, 32-24E, speed ten (10) knots, course 090°. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS Liberty DRT Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967; USS Liberty Deck Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967, 00-04 entry.]

0030 2230 1830

*First standoff message, from JCS to USCINCEUR directing initial pullback of *Liberty*, drafted. This Confidential, Priority-level message directed USCINCEUR to order *Liberty* not to approach closer than 20 nautical miles to Egypt and 15 nautical miles to Israel. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971: DTG 072230Z June 67.]*

0041 2241 1841

Message 072230Z released to the Army Communications Center, Pentagon for transmission. [House Armed Services Report, May 10, 1971.] (See 1455 8 June entry.)

0100 2300 1900

Liberty position 31-59N, 32-35E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS Liberty DRT Log, 8 June 1967.]

0149 2349 1949

*The JCS became more concerned about the safety of the *Liberty*. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]*

0150 2350 1950

*Secure telephone call from JCS duty officer, Major D. C. Breedlove, to CINCUSNAVEUR duty officer, Lieutenant E. L. Galavotti, who verbally ordered *Liberty* to be withdrawn to no closer than 100 miles. Breedlove did not have the DTG for the new instructions, but stated a written message would follow. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.] Captain M. J. Hanley, Deputy Chief of Staff, CINCUSNAVEUR, requested issuance of the written message, i.e., the DTG. [US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibit 47.] If Navy Captain Hanley had taken the oral order of a Major, the *Liberty* tragedy might never have occurred. It must however be noted that this phone call order was not in accord with several established procedures. [US Naval Court*

of Inquiry/Document 52 of Exhibit 48: Statement of Captain Hanley.]

8th 8th 7th
0200 0000 2000

Liberty position 31-58.5N, 32-47.8E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT log, 8 June 1967.]

0300 0100 2100

Liberty position 31-58N, 33-00E and changed course to 123°. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT log, 8 June 1967; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967, 00-04 entry.]

0310 0110 2110

Second standoff message, from JCS to USCINCEUR, directing *Liberty* not to approach closer than 100 nautical miles to Israel, Egypt, and Syria drafted and released to the Army Communications Center, Pentagon. This Top Secret, Immediate-level message also canceled 072230Z, the first standoff message. DTG 080110Z June 1967. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.] This is the written message without an assigned DTG that Major Breedlove was referring to in his 2350Z phone call to CINCUSNAVEUR.

0400 0200 2200

Liberty position 31-57N, 33-10E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT log, 8 June 1967.]

0410 0210 2210

Israeli Air Force Nord 2501 morning maritime reconnaissance aircraft, with a navy observer aboard, launches. [Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) History Department: "The Attack on the '*Liberty*' Incident", June 1982.]

0411 0211 2211

Message 080110Z transmitted to USCINCEUR for action and to CINCUSNAVEUR for information. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971; JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

0412 0212 2212

Message 080110Z received by USCINCEUR. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

0441 0241 2241

Sunrise. [Expert Astronomer Computer Program and U.S. Naval Observatory web site (<http://www.usno.navy.mil/>).] Note: Correction from earlier entry of **0514** due to incorrect format entry for *Liberty*'s **0500** position.

0500 0300 2300

Liberty position 31-47N, 33-20E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT log, 8 June 1967.]

0512 0312 2312

Message 080110Z received by CINCUSNAVEUR. [House Armed Services Committee Report,

May 10, 1971.]

0515 0315 2315

Liberty's Officer Of the Deck (OOD), Ensign J.D. Scott testifies a "small flying boxcar" is observed circling off the port beam, in the distance. Using binoculars he can not make out any markings or insignia. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 60.]

0525 0325 2325

Message 080110Z contents relayed by telephone from USCINCEUR in Stuttgart, Germany to CINCUSNAVEUR, London, with instructions to "take for action." [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

0545 0345 2345

A garbled voice message from the IAF Nord 2501 maritime patrol received. [IDF History Department.]

0550 0350 2350

Following clarification, Israeli Navy HQ at Haifa receives a report that the Nord 2501 radioed "probably a destroyer is sailing in the direction of Gaza, course 120." [Israeli Navy HQ War Log.] The ship was designated "Skunk-C" (unidentified), placed on the control table, and marked red. Message 080110Z transmitted by Army Communications Center, Pentagon to *Liberty* and COMSIXTHFLT as information addressees. *Liberty's* copy is mis-routed to the Pacific. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

0553 0353 2353

Liberty changes course to 190° from 123°. Then makes the following additional course changes, **0613** to 060°, **0630** to 123°, **0754** to 130°. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967, 04-08 entry.]

8th 8th 8th
0600 0400 0000

Liberty position 31-41N, 33-30E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT Log, 8 June 1967.]

Israeli Navy HQ orders two motor torpedo boats (MTBs) to standby. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

0603 0403 0003

Second report from the Nord 2501 received. Ship identified as US Navy supply-type ship. [IDF History Department/Navy HQ War Log.]

0615 0415 0015

First standoff message, 072230Z, transmitted by Army Communications Center, Pentagon to COMSIXTHFLT as information addressee five hours, 34 minutes after being released (See **0041** entry.) It had been canceled by the second standoff message, 080110Z. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

0640 0440 0040

COMSIXTHFLT acknowledges receipt via a covered (secure) teletype conference with CINCUSNAVEUR of the 080110Z message contents. Formal, written message of action to be taken follows at **0655**. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 47: CINCUSNAVEUR Contingency

Watch Team Memorandum, 12 June 1967.]

0655 0455 0045

Third standoff message, from CINCUSNAVEUR to COMSIXTHFLT, directed the second standoff message 080110Z, be taken for action, is drafted and released. This Unclassified, Immediate-level message was the formal, written notification for the just completed teletype conference. DTG 08455Z Jun 67. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

0700 0500 0100

Liberty position 31-38N, 33-35E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT log, 8 June 1967.]

0718 0518 0118

Message 08455Z received by COMSIXTHFLT. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

0754 0554 0154

Liberty records steaming on course 130° True, speed ten (10) knots. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.]

Note: Commander W. L. McGonagle, *Liberty's* captain, testified on June 14 1967, pp. 31-54 and was recalled and testified again on June 15, pp. 124-138. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings.] At p. 127, the record reflects:

During your testimony yesterday ... you were asked to develop in conjunction with your ships officers and any other assets available... the best available story... on... what happened.

Thus this testimony was not only the recollection of the captain but subject to input from logs and records and consultation with members of his crew. The document was admitted into evidence as Exhibit 27 and then read into the record by Commander McGonagle.

0800 0600 0200

Liberty position 31-34N, 33-50.8E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT Log, 8 June 1967.]

0825 0625 0225

Fourth standoff message, from USCINCEUR to CINCUSNAVEUR, again directing the second standoff message, 080110Z, be taken for action, is released. This Confidential, Immediate-level message was the formal, written notification of the **0525** telephone conversation. DTG 080625Z June 67. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

0830 0630 0230

Message 072230Z, first standoff, received by COMSIXTHFLT. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

0839 0639 0239

Message 080110Z, second standoff, received by COMSIXTHFLT. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

0849 0649 0249

Liberty records reaching Point Alpha, position 31.27.2N, 34-00E, and changing to course 253° True. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.] *Liberty* has reached what was to be the eastern-most point of her patrol area and has turned westward to start her patrol. *Liberty* is not aware that her eastern-most point of patrol is 60 nautical miles further west to 33-00E (Op Area 2) because message 072104Z June 1967 was not received. (See time line at **2304** Sinai Time, June 7, 1967.)

0850 0650 0250

Liberty records being orbited by two delta-wing jets. No identification is possible due to altitude and distance from ship. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events and Document 88 of Exhibit 48: DTG 080742Z June 1967.]

0900 0700 0300

Israeli Navy Chief, Admiral Erell, is advised of the “Skunk-C” **0603** identification during a break in action with a suspected Egyptian submarine west of Atlit. He orders it marked green (neutral.) [IDF History Department.]

IAF Regional Control 501 receives a pilot’s report that a ship spotted some 20 miles north of El Arish had fired on him as he was returning from the Sinai. As a result Israeli destroyers INS *Jaffa*(D-42) and *Eilat*(D-40) were ordered south to investigate. [IDF History Department.]

Note: The Israeli Navy HQ War Log differs from the IDF History. The HQ War Log shows that two destroyers were ordered south at **0606** or **0608**. This appears to be an error in either the original text or in translation. (See **0940** entry.)

Liberty position 31.27N, 33.54E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT Log, 8 June 1967.]

0905 0705 0305

Liberty reduces speed to five (5) knots. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

0911 0711 0311

Fourth standoff message, 080625Z, transmitted by USCINCEUR. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

0930 0730 0330

Liberty makes visual sighting on minaret at El Arish. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 32; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

0935 0735 0335

Fourth standoff message, 080625Z, received at CINCUSNAVEUR and COMSIXTHFLT. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

Note: The House report refers to this message, 080625Z, as being received on June 7th and then goes on to refer to the information copy for *Liberty* being delayed 11 and 1/2 hours and going on the fleet broadcast for *Liberty* on June 8th at 1646Z. This must be a typographical error of 7th for 8th of June. It is not possible that a message sent on June 8th would arrive on June 7th.

0940 0740 0340

As a result of a more complete debriefing from the pilot making the **0900** sighting there is no certainty that he was fired upon by the ship. The description of the vessel is reported as “colored grey-blue, very wide and the bridge is in the middle.” Both Israeli destroyers are ordered to return to their patrol sectors. [IDF History Department/Navy HQ War Log.]

0942 0742 0342

Liberty reports **0850** sighting of two delta wing jets to multiple addressees, including COMSIXTHFLT. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 88 of Exhibit 48: DTG 080742Z June 1967.]

1000 0800 0400

Liberty position 31-27N, 33-51E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT Log, 8 June 1967.]

1055 0855 0455

Following a detailed debriefing of the navy observer on the returned Nord 2501 maritime patrol craft, Navy HQ is informed the ship spotted earlier is the USS *Liberty*(AGTR-5). [IDF Preliminary Judicial Inquiry, 21 July 1967.]

1056 0856 0456

Liberty records “ANOTHER A/C CIRCLED SHIP-HIGH.” [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.] Commander McGonagle specific testimony was:

“At about **1056** in the morning of 8 June, an aircraft similar to an American flying boxcar crossed astern of the ship at a distance of about three to five miles. The plane circled the ship around the starboard side, proceeded forward of the ship and headed back toward the Sinai peninsula. A locating three report was submitted. It is not known if this report was transmitted. This aircraft continued to return in a somewhat similar fashion approximately at 30 minute intervals. It was not possible to see any markings on the aircraft and the identity of this aircraft remains unknown. This aircraft did not approach the ship in any provocative manner. It made no attempt to signal the ship. The ship made no attempt to signal the aircraft.”

[US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, pp. 32-33.]

Liberty reports to Naval Security Station Command that she has destroyed all superseded May publications and other superseded material “daily due to current situation.” [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 080856Z June 1967.]

1100 0900 0500

Commander Lunz, the operations command duty officer at Israeli Navy HQ gives the order to remove the green-marked wedge from CCC control table at Stella Maris. He is unaware of any additional sightings from the original position report, now some five hours old. [IDF History Department.]

Liberty position is 31-24N, 33-41E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT Log, 8 June 1967.]

1117 0917 0517

Fifth standoff message, from COMSIXTHFLT to *Liberty*, directing her not to approach closer than 100 miles to Egypt, Israel, Syria, or Lebanon and requesting acknowledgment is created. This Secret, Immediate-level message is not transmitted until **1235** and not received by *Liberty* prior to the attack. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 4: DTG 080917Z June 1967.]

1120 0920 0520

Israeli MTB Division 914 consisting of three boats sails from Ashdod to patrol from Ashdod to Ashkelon. The boats were T-203, T-204 and T-206. The division commander was aboard T-204. [IDF History Department/MTB Division War Log.]

1124 0924 0524

Israeli Navy HQ receives report from Air Operations Control that El Arish is being shelled from the Sea. [IDF History Department/Navy HQ War Log.]

1126 0926 0526

Liberty records another unidentified aircraft circled the ship. See **1056** entry for a description of this by the Commanding Officer. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1127 0927 0527

IDF GHQ Tel Aviv receives report from Southern Command that a ship is shelling El Arish. [IDF History Department; US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 1 of Exhibit 48: DTG 181030Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0928 to White House and others.]

1132 0932 0532

Liberty achieves Point Bravo, 31-22.3N 33-42E, changes course to 283° True. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1145 0945 0545

GHQ Tel Aviv receives second report of ship activity off El Arish. [IDF History Department.] *Liberty's* Engineering Officer, Lieutenant G. H. Golden, testified to seeing "a plane flying over" the ship. He gave no other description of the event. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 63.]

1155 0955 0555 (approximate)

Liberty sights explosions at El Arish. [Ennes, *Assault on the Liberty*, p. 56.] Lieutenant J. M. Ennes, the OOD, wrote of seeing explosions "before noon" at El Arish.

1158 0958 0558

[illegible] reports two targets aiming at El Arish. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1200 1000 0600

The Sixth Fleet was operating just south of Crete, near the center of the island. Because of the charges made by Egypt and Jordan on June 6, that the U.S. and Great Britain had participated in the Israeli air strikes, the carriers had been moved farther west, away from the conflict. The fleet was operating under orders which stated no unit was to come closer than 100 nautical miles of countries engaged in the conflict. No aircraft or surface unit had approached within 200 nautical miles. The Commander, Sixth Fleet, Vice Admiral W. I. Martin (flagship the missile cruiser USS *Little Rock*(CLG-4)) had scheduled a press conference on board USS *America*(CVA-66) for the afternoon of June 8, to debunk the charges to the over one dozen media personnel embarked on *America*.

The two carriers had reduced their condition of readiness which they had maintained since the outbreak of the war on June 5. USS *Saratoga*(CVA-60) was at a higher state of readiness with armaments at the ready but was not conducting flight operations. *America* had resumed a normal cycle of flight operations and was conducting training flights which began at **1105** Sinai time.

Liberty's position was 31-22.2N, 33-41.1E. Heading 283°/5 knots. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967.]

America's position was 33-54.6N, 25-20.1E [USS *America* Deck Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967.]

The position was established by celestial, electronic and D.R. navigation.

Saratoga's position was 34-15.2N, 23-39.3E [USS *Saratoga* Deck Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967.]

The position was established by electronic navigation.

Little Rock's position 35-51.5N, 24.5E [USS *Little Rock* Deck Log, Thursday, 8 June 1967.]

Task Group 60.1 (TG60.1), *America*, was steaming on course 270°/22 knots, some 510 nautical miles from *Liberty* and Task Group 60.2 (TG60.2), *Saratoga*, was steaming course 090°/14 knots, some 600 nautical miles from *Liberty*. Vice Admiral Martin was aboard his flagship, near *America*. Although *Liberty* had chopped to the Sixth Fleet, she was operating independently under control of JCS and Sixth Fleet was merely a conduit for control of her. *Saratoga* was 90 miles west of *America* and moving towards *Liberty* while *America* was increasing her distance from *Liberty*. [USS *America* and USS *Saratoga* Deck Logs, 8 June 1967.]

1205 1005 0605

IDF Navy second-in-command, Captain Rehav, issues orders for MTB Division 914 to proceed in the direction of El Arish. [IDF History Department/Navy HQ War Log.]

1215 1015 0615

MTB Division 914 receives orders to patrol 20 miles north of El Arish. [IDF History Department/MTB Division War Log.]

1235 1035 0635

Message 080917Z from COMSIXTHFLT to *Liberty*, ordering her to remain 100 miles clear, transmitted from *Little Rock* for forwarding to *Liberty*. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

1259 1059 0659

Garbled copy of fourth standoff message, 080625Z, from USCINCEUR to CINCUSNAVEUR placed on fleet broadcast as information for *Liberty*. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.] According to the testimony of Rear Admiral F. J. Fitzpatrick before the House Armed Services Committee, if *Liberty* received this message, she probably could not read it and if she could read it, the message referred to another message that she did not have so it would not have provided any information or guidance.

1300 1100 0700

Liberty Deck Log records explosion on coastline, range 13 miles. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 1314 entry, 8 June 1967.] Her position is 31-23N, 33-35E. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 19: USS *Liberty* DRT Log, 8 June 1967.]

1310 1110 0710

Liberty crew ordered to General Quarters for drill. GQ: "All hands man your battle stations." [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1317 1117 0717

Patrolling MTB Division 914 advised by Navy HQ of the shelling of El Arish. [IDF History Department/Navy HQ War Log.]

1318 1118 0718

MTB Division reported to be 22 miles west of Ashdod. [IDF History Department/Navy HQ War Log.]

1330 1130 0730

Liberty records explosion on coast, range 25 miles. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] Navy HQ again advises MTB Division 914 Commander of shelling of El Arish from sea. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1332 1132 0732

IAF plane reports three (3) MTBs in flames off Khan Yunis. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.] The third digit of this time entry is blurred on the Navy HQ War Log. The entry appears between entries of 081330 and 081343 and therefore it could also be **1342**.

1341 1141 0741

MTB Division 914 detected *Liberty* as a target on their Kelvin-Hughes war surplus radar at extreme range. [IDF History Department/MTB Division War Log.]

1343 1143 0743

Navy HQ records report received of MTB Division having radar contact. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1345 1145 0745

MTB Division 914 ordered to go in and identify target. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.] Two Mirage IICJs, *Kursa* Flight, on combat air patrol near the Suez Canal and due to return to base, report turning to a northern direction. [Israeli Air Force audio tapes.]

1347 1147 0747

MTB Division 914 reports target sailing west at 30 knots. Told to double check speed. Division reports they can not overtake it, suggests dispatch of aircraft. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1348 1148 0748

Navy HQ asks Air Force for air assistance. [IDF History Department.] *Liberty* secures from General Quarters drill, sets modified readiness condition III. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] *Liberty* takes radar fix on El Arish minaret, bearing 142 degrees true, 25.5 miles. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 35.]

1349 1149 0749

Commander McGonagle gives the *Liberty* crew a short talk over the PA system regarding the just-completed general quarters battle drill. Reminds the crew of their “potentially dangerous location” by pointing out the black smoke along the beach. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, pp. 33-34.]

1350 1150 0750

MTB Division 914 reports target at 17 miles, speed 28 knots. Division requests air. Aircraft are dispatched. Division told to tune to air frequencies. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.] *Kursa* Flight is to be vectored towards the target’s reported position with instructions: “If it’s a warship, then blast it.” [IAF audio tapes.]

1351 1151 0751

Liberty records three (3) small surface radar contacts, 32,000 yards (16 nautical miles), bearing 082° True. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.]

1354 1154 0754

Kursa Flight reports sighting the target “Affirmative, it looks longer by eyesight.” [IAF audio tapes.]

1355 1155 0755

MTB Division 914 reports target turned to course 300. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.] *Kursa* flight and T-203 of the MTB Division are in communication with each other. [IAF audio tapes.]

1356 1156 0756

Both *Kursa* Flight and T-203 ask each other if they can identify the target. *Kursa* reports “I can't identify it but in any case it's a military ship.” and “Its with one mast and one smokestack.” *Royal* Flight, a pair of Super-Mystères armed with napalm canisters and already airborne, is diverted towards this target from its assigned mission in the Sinai. [IAF audio tapes.]

1358 1158 0758

Liberty records single aircraft seen passing down track of ship, 135 degrees relative, five or six miles distance, approximate attitude 7,000 feet. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.]

1359 1159 0759

MTB Division 914 asked if they can see IAF planes. Response is they hear planes. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1400 1200 0800

Air attack commenced. *Liberty* reported her position as 31-23N, 33-25E [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 87 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081235Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR.] The generally accepted time of the initial attack is **1400** Sinai time. It is the author's opinion that the first Mirage IIICJ rolled into its run at about **1357** and began firing about **1358**. The *Liberty* handwritten CIC Log indicates attack began at **1358** [US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibit 14 (incorrectly marked as *Liberty* Underway Log)] as do copies of her Radio Logs [US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibits 23 and 24.] IAF audio tapes indicate **1358**. IDF History indicates **1400**. MTB Division 914 War Log records “Target is being hit by aircraft” at **1400**. *Liberty* reports the time as **1405**. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 46 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081715Z June 1967.] Follow-on initial releases from the US Government would state **1405** based on *Liberty's* 081715Z message. The 13 June 1967 CIA Report [SC No. 01415/67.] indicates 3:05 P.M., which is **1505** local time of the attack. The Washington time of the CIA Report states 8:05 A.M.(0805) which is essentially correct. It is presumed that the CIA Report, prepared in five days failed to account for the change from seven to six hours of time differential between Washington, which was on daylight time, where the report was prepared and times received in real-time and the Sinai time which was not on daylight time.

Fifth standoff Message, 080917Z, from COMSIXTHFLT to *Liberty* ordering 100 mile pullback arrived at Army DCS Relay Station Asmara. This message was sent by mistake to NCS Greece instead of NCS Asmara at **1415**. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

Saratoga was heading 90°/17 knots and was close to rendezvousing with *America*. TG60.1 and TG60.2 were about to merge into Task Force 60(TF60). [USS *America* and USS *Saratoga* Deck Logs, 8 June 1967.] The air wing commander from *Saratoga* was aboard *America* for the press conference. *America* was conducting a SIOP (Single Integrated Operational Plan) load and launch drill for the tactical delivery of nuclear weapons. Only A-1 and A-4 aircraft in the Sixth Fleet were

configured to carry nuclear weapons. The concept was an "over the shoulder delivery." The aircraft pulled up at a 45° angle before reaching the target and pitched the weapon towards the target just prior to executing a half-Cuban-eight maneuver in an effort to get away from the blast. The SIOP exercise was a highly regimented, very complex load and launch exercise conducted under severe security, thus tying up the flight deck for a prolonged period of time.

1401 1201 0801

MTB division 914 ordered to proceed fast to target. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1402 1202 0802

Royal Flight is given permission to attack following a brief delay. [IAF audio tapes.]

1403 1203 0803

Liberty records loud explosion portside amidships. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

MTB Division records smoking coming from target. [MTB Division 914 War Log.]

1404 1204 0804

Kursa Flight leaves *Liberty*. *Royal* Flight attacks *Liberty*. [IAF audio tapes.] MTB Division 914 reports two more targets east of previous target. Aircraft hit one target. The two new targets are aircraft. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1405 1205 0805

Liberty sounds General Quarters. Large fire near frame 85-01. All ahead flank (maximum speed) ordered. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

Saratoga changed course to 80° True and speed to 20 knots. [USS *Saratoga* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

IAF HQ attempts to determine if the target had fired on the attacking planes. [IAF audio tapes.]

1406 1206 0806

MTB Division 914 reports range to target 11 miles, requests aircraft leave area. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1408 1208 0808

MTB Division 914 reports range to target 8.5 miles. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.] *Royal* Flight reports "She has some kind of marking, P 30 and something." [IAF audio tapes.]

1409 1209 0809

IAF HQ requests that further effort be made to identify the ship. [IAF audio tapes.]

1410 1210 0810

Saratoga records receiving first word of the attack from *Liberty* over the fleet high command (Hi-Com) HF (High Frequency) voice net, and authenticated who was transmitting. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 78 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081358Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to COMSIXTHFLT.] *Liberty* radio logs reflect that she had been transmitting repeatedly since 1358: "We are under attack." [US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibits 23 and 24.]

1411 1211 0811

MTB Division is advised that the planes are on their final run and now the boats are to attack.

[IDF History Department/MTB Division 914 War Log.] *Royal Flight* reports:

“*Homeland* from *Royal*, do you read me? Pay attention, this ships markings are Charlie Tango Romeo 5. Pay attention, *Homeland*, Charlie Tango Romeo 5. There is no flag on her!”

[IAF audio tapes.]

1412 1212 0812

IAF senior air controller Colonel Kislev orders *Royal Flight* to "leave her." The air attack is over. MTB Division 914 reports it sees aircraft have left. [IAF audio tapes; Navy HQ War Log.] The IDF History at p. 15 indicates the planes left the area at **1416**.

1413 1213 0813

IAF HQ reports two helicopters are going to be sent out to the ship. [IAF audio tapes.]

1414 1214 0814

Aircraft reports seeing "P 30" on ship. MTB range 5 to 6 miles. MTB Div going in. Air Force reports ship marked "C T R 5." [IDF Navy HQ War Log.] *Royal Flight* Leader reported this information to IAF HQ prior to **1412**. [IAF audio tapes.] It apparently is not relayed to and logged by the Navy until another two or three minutes later.

1415 1215 0815

MTB Division 914 records aircraft have departed. [MTB Division War Log.]

Fifth standoff message, 080917Z, sent to NCS Greece instead of NCS Asmara by DCS Asmara. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

1417 1217 0817

IAF reports men jumping over side of ship and sending rescue helicopters. MTB Division 914 told not to attack, possible mis-identification. Might need to give help. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1418 1218 0818

MTB Division 914 Commander, Commander Oren, orders torpedo attack. [IDF History Department.] The MTB Division War Log states **1419** for the order.

1419 1219 0819

Liberty records began making turns for 18 knots (attempting to make flank speed.) [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] *Liberty* had been steaming on only one of two boilers since **1200**, and both would be needed in order to reach flank speed. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, pp. 36, 64.]

1420 1220 0820

IAF Command at *Kiryia* tells Naval Command at *Stella Maris* there is doubt about the target's identification. [IDF History Department.] *Stella Maris* orders MTB Division 914 not to attack. [IDF History Department/MTB Division War Log.] Navy Chief, Admiral Erell, returns to the *Stella Maris* command post, having departed earlier to visit Haifa harbor. [IDF History Department/Navy HQ War Log.]

Saratoga receives *Liberty's* voice message on Hi-Com stating she was under attack, her position and requested assistance. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 87 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081235Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

1423 1223 0823

MTB Division 914 reports no clear eyeball identification. Target range 4 miles (8,000 yards.) [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1424 1224 0824

Liberty records three (3) MTBs sighted abaft starboard beam, distance 3-4 miles. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] The distance is recorded as 4-5 miles in the US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.

MTB Division 914 reports ship may be commercial or a supply vessel. Not sure. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1425 1225 0825

Saratoga received from *Liberty* over the Hi-Com: "Three unidentified gunboats are approaching vessel now." [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 85 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081237Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

1426 1226 0826

Liberty records normal (5x8-ft.) steaming ensign noticed not flying. Holiday-size (7x13-ft.) flag hoisted on port yardarm. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1428 1228 0828

Liberty records "MTB signaling by flashing light from starboard quarter. Light obscured by dense smoke from burning motor whale boat." [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events and Record of Proceedings, p. 39; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] IDF History Department states the MTB signaling time as **1427** with a response from the smoking vessel of "AA." [MTB Division 914 War Log.] The Navy HQ War Log indicates MTBs reported the range as two miles [4,000 yards] while Commander McGonagle's testimony on p. 39 estimated the range as 2,000 yards.

1430-31 1230-31 0830-31

Liberty records starboard .50-caliber machine guns opened fire on MTBs. Captain ordered "hold fire." Word passed to "standby torpedo attack starboard." [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events and Record of Proceedings, p. 39; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

MTBs commence attack run after permission to do so from Naval HQ is granted. The MTB Division 914 War Log records "detected firing flashes" at **1435**, identification of the ship as the *El Quiser* at **1437**, and attack commencing at **1440**.

Dispatched IAF helicopters are informed they are heading towards an attacked "warship." [NSA audio tapes.]

1432 1232 0832

Commander, Carrier Division Four, Rear Admiral Geis, assumed tactical command as Commander, Task Force 60 (CTF60.) [USS *America* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] TF60 is in carrier ready formation. *America* and *Saratoga* are some 6,000 yards (about three nautical miles) apart. Base course is 300° which is sailing away from *Liberty's* position.

1434 1234 0834

One torpedo passed astern logged by *Liberty*. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27:

Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

IAF HQ is informed that the ship is “an Egyptian supply boat” by IAF Regional Control Central based on the information passed by the navy. [IAF audio tapes.] Dispatched IAF helicopters are informed the vessel is “now identified as Egyptian. You can return home now.” [NSA audio tapes.]

1435 1235 0835

Liberty hit by a torpedo and loses electrical power. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] The Israeli Navy records the attack as taking place at approximate **1440**.

Saratoga relays *Liberty* voice message recorded at **1420**. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 87 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081235Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR and copied to Sixth Fleet units.] It is now 20 minutes from when *Saratoga* has been first in contact with *Liberty* over the fleet Hi-Com HF voice communication net. (See **1410** entry.) This message stated:

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM ROCKSTAR
I AM UNDER ATTACK MY POSIT 31 23N 33 25E.
I HAVE BEEN HIT. REQUEST IMMED ASSISTANCE

Since all broadcast messages received from *Liberty* were on a non-secure voice circuit, transmitted repeats by other commands are sent unclassified.

1436 1236 0836

Liberty lost steam pressure and secured engine and boilers. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

IAF Regional Control South passes word to IAF HQ that the dispatched helicopters have been “held” until after the attack by the MTBs is completed. [IAF audio tapes.]

1437 1237 0837

Saratoga transmitted *Liberty's* broadcast message recorded at **1425**. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 85 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081237Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR and copied to Sixth Fleet units.]

1438 1238 0838

Saratoga receives *Liberty's* voice message "Under attack and hit badly." [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 83 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081245Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

The IAF helicopters are ordered to continue towards the area where the attack took place with instructions to pick up assumed Egyptian survivors. There is concern expressed regarding the lack of armed personnel for guarding any Egyptians picked up by the helicopters. [IAF and NSA audio tapes.]

Fifth standoff Message, 080917Z, received by NCS Greece from Army DCS Asmara in error. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 37: DTG 150731Z June 1967, NAVCOMMSTA GREECE to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

1439 1239 0839

The IAF helicopters are informed the vessel is an Egyptian cargo ship. [NSA audio tapes.]

1440 1240 0840

Liberty observes hull number 206 on one MTB. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

IAF Command issued instructions that the assumed Egyptian POWs should be taken to El Arish. [IAF audio tape.]

1441 1241 0841

The IAF helicopters are told “Take the men to El Arish.” [NSA audio tapes.]

1445 1245 0845

Saratoga transmitted *Liberty* broadcast message recorded at **1438**. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 83 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081245Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR and copied to Sixth Fleet units.]

1450 1250 0850

Admiral Martin transmitted directly to *America* ordering her to launch four armed A-4s and provide fighter cover and tankers. He also transmitted directly to *Saratoga* to launch four armed A-1s ASAP same mission.. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081250Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USS *America* and USS *Saratoga*.]

Note: The next day Admiral Martin sent the following message to CTF60, Admiral Geis:

“In the rush of getting the flight off to protect *Liberty*, I went direct to your carriers bypassing you. The action was inadvertent and I apologize [sic] for it.” [Naval Historical Center: DTG 091306Z June 1967, CTF60 to TF60.]

It is also interesting to note that Admiral Martin mentions "the flight" rather than “flights.” It also confirms that bypassing the chain-of-command was not a normal event.

The MTBs are ordered to search for survivors and establish identity. [MTB Division 914 War Log.]

1451 1251 0851

The MTBs report that ship might be Russian: “Based on writing on back [stern] of vessel.” [MTB Division 914 War Log.]

1454 1254 0854

Saratoga transmitted that *Liberty* has broadcast she has been hit by torpedo, is listing badly, and requires immediate assistance. Time of receipt of this message was not recorded. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 82 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081254Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to CINCUSNAVEUR and copied to Sixth Fleet units.] The *Liberty* lost communication ability until **1555**. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

IAF Command understands there is yet another question regarding the nationality of the ship which has been attacked. [IAF audio tapes.]

1455 1255 0855

The Army Communication Center, Pentagon, transmits the first standoff message, DTG 072230Z June 1967, to USCINCEUR for action. It has been **over** 14 hours since receipt in-station. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

1456 1256 0856

IAF HQ is informed that the dispatched IAF helicopters will be asked to determine the language of the sailors picked up. [IAF audio tapes.]

1457 1257 0857

The IAF helicopters commence attempt to contact the MTBs. [IAF and NSA audio tapes.]

1458 1258 0858

The IAF helicopters are instructed to determine the nationality of the first man picked up and to report immediately. [NSA audio tapes.]

1459 1259 0859

The IAF helicopter report they have a vessel sighted 12 miles distance. [NSA audio tapes.]

1501 1301 0901

IAF Command is informed the helicopters report a vessel at a distance of 12 miles. [IAF audio tapes.]

1503 1303 0903

Israeli MTBs offered assistance by flashing light to *Liberty*. Assistance is declined. [USS Liberty Deck Log, 8 June 1967; US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.] The Navy HQ War Log reports MTB Division 914 “closely approaching in order to identify the vessel” at 1505.

The MTBs record two helicopters are coming. [MTB Division 914 War Log.]

The IAF helicopters report coming up on three small vessels and one large vessel. They are informed the three small vessels are “ours.” [NSA audio tapes.]

1504 1304 0904

IAF Command records nationality of the ship is not established. [IAF audio tapes.] One of the dispatched IAF helicopters has established communications with the MTBs. [NSA audio tapes.]

1505 1305 0905

Sixth Fleet transmitted over the Hi-Com HF voice net "SENDING AIRCRAFT TO COVER YOU. SURFACE UNITS ON THE WAY." [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081305Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to *Liberty*.]

IAF Command records helicopters are approaching the ship. [IAF audio tapes.]

1506 1306 0906

The IAF helicopters are instructed to determine the language of any men picked up. If they speak Arabic, take them to El Arish. If English, to Lod airport. [NSA audio tapes.]

1507-08 1307-08 0907-08

Helicopters bearing Star of David markings observed near ship. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

MTB Division 914 ordered to proceed to El Arish and then ordered to remain in place. [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1510 1310 0910

Two helicopters are “going around the target.” [IDF Navy HQ War Log.]

1511 1311 0911

The National Military Command Center (NMCC) in the Pentagon received a phone message from USCINCEUR in Stuttgart, Germany with first word of the attack. [NMCC Memorandum for the Record 1530 EDT, 8 June 1967.]

1512 1312 0912

IAF Command records that the identification of the ship is American. The helicopters are requested to double-check. [IAF and NSA audio tapes; CIA Report SC No. 01415/67, 13 June 1967.] The IDF Navy HQ War Log reports this events as **1513**.

1514 1314 0914

IAF HQ is informed "it's an American flag." The helicopters are instructed to "return home." [IAF and NSA audio tapes.]

1515 1315 0915

The National Security Agency is notified of the attack by telephone from the NMCC. [NSA: "Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)", p. 32.]

The Army Communication Center, Pentagon, transmits the first standoff message, 072230Z, to *Liberty* as information. (See **1455** and **2335** entries.) This message is mis-routed to the Pacific. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

1516 1316 0916

CTF60, Admiral Geis, transmitted text of Admiral Martin's **1450** message to *America* and *Saratoga* adding "ASAP" and "Defense of *Liberty* means exactly that." [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081316Z June 1967, CTF60 to USS *America* and USS *Saratoga*.]

IAF HQ orders the two helicopters to depart the American ship. [IAF audio tapes.]

1519 1319 0919

Liberty records power is restored to the bridge, (except rudder). Fires extinguished. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1520 1320 0920

MTB Division 914 Commander advises Navy HQ at Stella Maris that ship is identified as American and fires are under control. [IDF History Department/MTB Division War Log.]

Admiral Martin transmitted first situation report [SITREP]. The message repeated known situation and launch orders to *Saratoga* and *America*. It declared attacking forces hostile and also stated:

"ETA [estimated time of arrival] FIRST ACFT [aircraft] ON SCENE ONE HOUR AND 30 MINS [minutes] AFTER LAUNCH.

ESTIMATE LAUNCH AT 1345Z.[**1545** Sinai, 0945 Washington]"

[JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081320Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR and other commands.]

1522 1322 0922

Saratoga transmitted that four armed A-1s due to launch at **1600** and ETA target **1900**, Sinai time. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081322Z June 1967, USS *Saratoga* to COMSIXTHFLT.]

MTB Division 914 records receiving orders to "standby for instructions." [MTB Division War Log.]

1530 1330 0933

Admiral Martin reports position of TF60 as 34-20N 24-34E, course 110°, speed 27 knots. Moving towards *Liberty*'s last reported position. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081330Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to CTF63 and CTF67.]

1533 1333 0933

MTB Division 914 records "sailing to El Arish." [MTB Division War Log.]

1534 1334 0934

Liberty listing to starboard 9° degrees. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1535 1335 0935

Saratoga received via Hi-Com from Admiral Martin a request to pass to *Liberty*: "Can you identify nationality of gunboat?" The request was broadcast in the "blind" via the Hi-Com HF voice net. The DTG on this message is two minutes after the message was reported received by *Saratoga*. [Naval Historical Center/USS *Saratoga* file: DTG 081337Z June 67, COMSIXTHFLT to USS *Saratoga*.]

Director, US Naval Security Group, Europe (DIRNAVSECGRUEUR) transmits to DIRNAVSECGRU, with copy to NSA, the exact quote of *Saratoga*'s 081237Z message. (See 1425 and 1437 entries.) [NSA: "USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967": DTG 081335Z June 1967.]

1536 1336 0936

Admiral Martin issued instructions that pilots are not to fly over land. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081336Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USS *America* and *Saratoga*.]

MTB Division 914 records orders to reverse back towards the ship. [MTB Division War Log.] DIRNAVSECGRUEUR transmits to DIRNAVSECGRU, copy to NSA, exact quote of *Saratoga*'s 081235Z message. (See 1420 and 1435 entries.) [NSA: "USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967": DTG 081336Z June 1967.]

1537 1337 0937

Three MTBs approach starboard side at high speed to range of 5 miles. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] The US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events, shows this event one minute earlier at 1536.

1538 1338 0938

Commander, Carrier Division Four (Admiral Geis' assigned command billet) transmits to NSA that over the voice CI net *Saratoga* reports *Liberty* has been torpedoed and states her reported position. [NSA: "USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967": DTG 081338Z June 1967, COMCARDIV FOUR to DIRNSA.]

DIRNAVSECGRUEUR reports to DIRNAVSECGRU, copy to NSA, the copied contents of *Saratoga*'s voice message which has no DTG assigned, but is the same contents as *Saratoga* DTG 081235Z June 1967 message. (See 1420 and 1435 entries.) [NSA: "USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967": DTG 081338Z June 1967; US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 84 of Exhibit 48.]

1539 1339 0939

Admiral Martin transmitted: "Use of force is authorized to defend *Liberty*." and gave rules of engagement. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081339Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USS *America* and *Saratoga*.]

1540 1340 0940

MTB Division 914 records boat T-203 picked up an empty liferaft. Marked "made in USA." [MTB Division War Log.]

Liberty hoisted code INDIA LIMA flags (not under command and maneuvering with difficulty;

keep clear.) [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967; US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 40.]

1542 1342 0942

MTB Division 914 records that “vessel is sailing at slow speed to the northwest.” [MTB Division War Log.]

1546 1346 0946

MTB Division 914 ordered to sail to El Arish. [MTB Division War Log.]

1548 1348 0948

Premier Kosygin transmits a Hot Line message to the President dealing with the UN Security Council cease-fire resolutions. It is received at 1015 EDT. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967 and Hot Line message.]

1549 1349 0949

Admiral Martin retransmitted his **1539** message to CNO and CINCUSNAVEUR. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081349Z June 1967.]

National Security Advisor W. W. Rostow advises President Johnson by telephone that *Liberty* has been attacked. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967; NSA: “Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC).” Confirmed by personal interview with W. W. Rostow at Austin, Texas, March 7, 1990.]

COMSIXTHFLT transmits to NSA a CRITIC message. (A message containing information indicating a situation or pertaining to a situation which affects the security or interests of the U.S. to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the President.) It repeats the first paragraph of his **1520** message (i.e., current known situation.) See also **1617** entry. [Naval Historical Center: “Naval Security Group File on U.S.S. *Liberty*”: DTG 081349Z June 1967 (sanitized); NSA: “USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967.”]

1550 1350 0950

Rostow memo to President containing contents of **1549** event. [NSA: “Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)”]; LBJ Library.]

1555 1355 0955

Liberty records “Reestablished communications.” [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] Her Radio Log records she regained Hi-Com HF transmission-only capability at **1556**. [US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibit 24.]

1559 1359 0959

Admiral Martin instructs any airborne VQ-2 flights launched from Athens to be recalled and no further launches until further advised. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081359Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to FAIRECONRON TWO [VQ-2] and others.]

1600 1400 1000 (approximate)

Lt. Colonel Michael Bloch of the IDF Foreign Liaison Office advises Commander Ernest E. Castle, US Naval Attache' of mistaken attack. Castle is driven to the IDF CHQ for a short meeting and then driven back to the embassy. Castle immediately prepares a Flash-level message to White House, Sixth Fleet and others. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 45 of Exhibit 48: DTG 151615Z June 1967, USDAO TEL AVIV 0900 to CINCUSNAVEUR. Actions by Lt. Col.

Bloch and Commander Castle confirmed by personal interviews with both.]

NSA receives the CRITIC message from Martin (from **1549**.) The NSA "Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)" report, (p. 57), states the message was received "at about 0900" EDT. This is a typographical error in the narration since **1549** Sinai is 0949 EDT. The time should be "about 1000" EDT. (See **1645** entry for further explanation.)

1602 1401 1002

Saratoga commences launching of four aircraft and recovery of one. [**USS *Saratoga* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.**] The launching of *Saratoga's* A-1s occurred within one half hour of *America's* scheduled launch of her strike group. The ETA over *Liberty* was ninety minutes for *America's* jets and three hours for *Saratoga's* A-1s.

Liberty Radio Log records both transmitter and receiver are now available on the Hi-Com HF voice net. [**US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibit 24.**]

Commander Oren, MTB Division commander, is ordered to return to the vessel and via loudspeaker ask if she needs help. [**Naval HQ and MTB Division 914 War Logs.**]

1605 1405 1005

Liberty transmitted, via HF, voice message condition of ship, and initial casualty report. [**US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.**]

1610 1410 1010

CTF63 recommends that fleet ocean tug USS *Papago*(ATF-160) be sent to aid *Liberty*. [**JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081410Z June 1967.**]

1611 1411 1011

Liberty hoisted her international identification signal flags. [**US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 14: *Liberty* CIC Log (incorrectly marked as Underway Log) and Record of Proceedings, p. 41.**]

It is now nearly two hours since small unidentified boats were visually observed closing at high speed. (See **1424** entry.)

1612 1412 1012

Naval Communication Station (NCS) Morocco transmitted received *Liberty* voice message: "unable to identify attacking boats," and "after attack helicopter circled the ship believed to be Israeli." [**US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 76 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081412Z June 1967, NAVCOMMSTA MOROCCO to CINCUSNAVEUR.**]

1614 1414 1014

US Defense Attache' Office [USDAO] Tel Aviv transmitted a Flash-level message to White House, Sixth Fleet, JCS, CNO, and others advising that Israelis report mistakenly attacking a U.S. ship at **1400**. Rescue efforts are underway and they apologize. [**US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 75 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081414Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0825.**]

Rostow phones President but call not taken. [**LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.**]

CTF60 orders *Saratoga* to launch four F-4s:

“WHEN NECESSARY TO PROVIDE COVER OF YOUR
A1'S FROM FIFTY MILES WEST OF
31-23N9/33-25E3.” (*Liberty's* reported **1400** position.)

[**Naval Historical Center: DTG 081414Z June 1967.**]

1615 1415 1015

Rostow memo to President. [NSA: "Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)"; LBJ Library.]

State Department advised Soviet Chargé in Washington by phone of attack on *Liberty* and dispatch of aircraft to scene. [LBJ Library: DTG 081536Z June 1967, SECSTATE WASHDC 209218 to AMEMBASSY MOSCOW.]

Liberty records two unidentified jet aircraft observed. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1616 1416 1016

JCS transmitted that use of force was authorized. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081416Z June 67, JCS to USCINCEUR.]

1617 1417 1017

COMSIXTHFLT retransmits his 081349Z [1549] CRITIC. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 79 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081417Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR and multiple other commands.]

1620 1420 1020

Admiral Martin receives via NCS Greece the same message as transmitted by NCS Morocco at 1612 advising Israeli helicopters were observed over ship following attack. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 73 of Exhibit 48: NO DTG, USS *Liberty* to COMSIXTHFLT (Endorsement on copy of message received by COMSIXTHFLT.)]

Liberty records attempting to clear the area to the north and small boat observed closing. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1624 1424 1024

Rostow talks to President by telephone. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]

1625 1425 1025

COMSIXTHFLT advises USCINCEUR in SITREP Two: "unable to communicate with *Liberty* on any circuit" [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 72 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081425Z June 1967.] The message also relayed an exact quote of the Rules of Engagement issued to the pilots en route to *Liberty*.

1626 1426 1026

Admiral Martin transmitted SITREP Three and advised communications reestablished with *Liberty* through NCS Greece. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 71 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081426Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR.]

1628 1428 1028

Admiral Martin received USDAO Tel Aviv 081414Z [1614] message. [Endorsement on copy of message received by COMSIXTHFLT.]

1630 1430 1030

Admiral Martin received word from *Liberty*, over the Hi-Com HF voice net, that she was underway, course 340°/8 knots. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 68 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081455Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR.] *Liberty* records this event at 1633. [US

Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 6: *Liberty* Quartermaster Log and Exhibit 24: *Liberty* Radio Log.] Secretary of Defense McNamara is provided detailed information including *Liberty's* allowance of personnel and her unclassified mission from OPNAVINST 05727.1B via unsecured telephone by Assistant Director, Naval Security Group (NSG) Command, Captain W. E. Thomas. This call lasts until 1637. [Naval Historical Center: "Naval Security Group File on U.S.S. *Liberty*" (sanitized), OP-94G1 memo of 21 June 1967.]

1631 1431 1031

The President receives the translated Hot Line message transmitted at 0948 EDT. [LBJ Library: Hot Line message.]

1633 1433 1033

MTB T-204 and two others approach *Liberty* close abeam on port side. C.O. said: "Boats are believed to be Israeli." [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] Israeli MTBs made voice offer of assistance to *Liberty* through a megaphone. It was declined. [MTB Division 914 War Log; US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 6: *Liberty* Quartermaster Log and Exhibit 14: *Liberty* CIC Log (incorrectly marked as Underway Log).] The MTB Division log records the event took place at 1640 and the ship's name is *Liberty*.

1638 1438 1038

Admiral McCain (CINCUSNAVEUR) received the USDAO Tel Aviv 081414Z [1614] message. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967 - Endorsement on received message copy.]

1639 1439 1039

Admiral Martin transmitted to Admiral McCain, referencing the USDAO 081414Z [1614] message, advised that all aircraft are being recalled and gave *Liberty's* condition. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081439Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

1640 1440 1040

Admiral Martin transmitted to the carriers: "Recall all strikes repeat recall all strikes." [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081440Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USS *America* and USS *Saratoga*.]

1645 1445 1045

Liberty received, via HF voice, message from COMSIXTHFLT: "Assistance is on the way." [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] USDAO Tel Aviv 081414Z [1614] message reporting the Israeli involvement received at NMCC. [NMCC Memorandum for the Record 1530 EDT, 8 June 1967.] The NSA "Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)" report, (p. 57), states "Some 45 minutes later, the directorate learned that the attack had been by the Israelis." This confirms that the CRITIC message was received around 1000 EDT, and not 0900 EDT. (See 1600 entry.)

1652 1452 1052

MTB Division 914 records that "Target changed course to 350." in a report to Naval HQ. [MTB Division 914 War Log.]

1655 1455 1055

Liberty list has increased to 10 degrees. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

Admiral Martin transmitted SITREP Five. The USDAO Tel Aviv message of 081414Z [1614] was repeated and *Liberty* status as of 1630 was reported. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 68 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081455Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR.]

1656 1456 1056

It is estimated that the USDAO Tel Aviv 081414Z [1614] message addressed to the White House reached the Situation Room at this time.

1700 1500 1100

President Johnson approved a Hot Line message to Premier Kosygin which advised that the *Liberty* had been torpedoed apparently by Israeli forces in error and aircraft were being sent to investigate. Requested Kosygin inform proper parties (the Egyptians.) This message was transmitted from the White House at 1117 EDT and received by the Soviets in Moscow at 1124 EDT. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967; NSA: "Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)".]

Liberty stops all engines. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

Rostow talks to President by telephone. McGeorge Bundy calls on telephone for President but he is talking to Rostow. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]

Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance informs Admiral McCain by phone that all news releases on the *Liberty* affair will be made by Washington, and not aboard the ships. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081517Z June 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to COMSIXTHFLT.]

1701 1501 1101

State Department phoned Soviet Chargé and informed him that Israel had hit the ship and apologized. [LBJ Library: DTG 081536Z June 1967, SECSTATE WASHDC 209218 to AMEMBASSY MOSCOW.]

1702 1502 1102

Admiral Martin transmitted SITREP Six. It stated: "All SixthFlt aircraft recalled." It also advised of *Liberty's* position, course, and speed and that two destroyers were being detached to proceed to *Liberty* at maximum sustained speed. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081502Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR.]

1704 1504 1104

MTB Division 914 ordered to return to Ashdod. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 62 of Exhibit 48: DTG 091815Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0849; IDF History Department/MTB Division War Log.] USDAO message indicates Israeli helicopters and MTB's continued to search the area until 1704 which coincides with the *Liberty* Deck Log report of the withdrawal of the MTB Division at 1713.

Liberty all engines back 1/3. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

President Johnson to Oval Office accompanied by Press Secretary George Christian. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]

1705 1505 1105

Liberty all engines back 2/3, 17 fathoms under keel. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1706 1506 1106

President arrived at White House Situation Room meeting which had been in session for some

time. Present were:

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara,
Secretary of State Dean Rusk,
Chairman, Foreign Intel Adv Bd Clark Clifford,
Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach,
Ambassador to Russia Llewellyn Thompson,
Special Consultant McGeorge Bundy,
National Security Advisor W. W. Rostow

[LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]

Fifth standoff message, 080917Z from COMSIXTHFLT to *Liberty*, received back from NCS Greece by Army Relay Station DCS Asmara for relay to NCS Asmara after having been mistakenly sent to NCS Greece at **1415**. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967.]

1708 1508 1108

Admiral Martin directs Admiral Geis to detach two destroyers to “proceed ahead at max sustained speed” to render aid to *Liberty*. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081508Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to CTF60.]

1709 1509 1109

Admiral Martin cancels his restrictions of VQ-2 flights. See **1559** entry. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081509Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to FAIRECONRON TWO [VQ-2] and others.]

1710 1510 1110

Ambassador Barbour in Tel Aviv sends message to Secretary of State. "... Israelis obviously shocked by error ..." [LBJ Library: DTG 081510Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4014.] Fifth standoff message, 080917Z, finally received by NCS Asmara from DCS Asmara. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

1713 1513 1113

Liberty logs torpedo boats "have now retired from sight." [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1715 1515 1115

CINCUSNAVEUR transmits a summary of the latest known situation to higher authority. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 66 of Exhibit 48: DTG 01515Z June 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to JCS, CNO and USCINCEUR.]

1717 1517 1117

Hot Line Message from **1700** is transmitted to Moscow. [NSA: “Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)”.]

CINCUSNAVEUR transmits to COMSIXTHFLT contents of **1700** phone call from Deputy Secretary Vance which stated that all news releases will be made in Washington. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081517Z June 1967.]

1718 1518 1118

Liberty has 26 fathoms under keel. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

Destroyers USS *Davis*(DD-937) and USS *Massey*(DD-778) detached to proceed under verbal orders of CTF60. [USS *America* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.] *Davis* Deck Log records the detachment at **1719** and *Massey* Deck Log states **1715**.

1721 1521 1121

Admiral Martin transmits one and only follow up to his **1549** CRITIC. Restates the USDAO Tel Aviv 081414Z [1614] message reporting the Israeli involvement and that he's sending assistance. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 74 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081521Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR and multiple other commands.]

1724 1524 1124

Hot Line Message from **1717** is received in Moscow. [LBJ Library: Hot Line message; NSA: "Attack on a Sigt Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)".]

1725 1525 1125

Fifth standoff message, 080917Z, transmitted, at last, on fleet broadcast from NCS Asmara. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

It is estimated that Secretary McNamara telephoned the Pentagon at about this time and directed recall of aircraft. He was probably advised when he called that the aircraft had already been recalled because the JCS message [081529Z] generated shortly does not mention recall. [Telephone interview of Robert S. McNamara by this author on December 17, 1993. McNamara was in Washington, D.C.] This general recollection is reenforced by the last sentence of SECSTATE WASHDC 209218 [081536Z]: "PLANES HAVE NOW (11:25 AM) BEEN CALLED BACK TO CARRIER."

1729 1529 1129

JCS transmitted that force was no longer authorized. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081529Z June 1967, JCS 7354 to USCINCEUR.]

1730 1530 1130 (approximate)

Defense Department issues initial news release (No. 542-67) on *Liberty* incident. [Naval Historical Center: CNO *Liberty* file; DTG 081638Z June 1967, CHINFO to multiple commands.]

1732 1532 1132

COMSIXTHFLT generates rendezvous instructions and: "escort on the way" message to be passed to *Liberty* via the Hi-Com HF voice net. (See **1750** entry) [Naval Historical Center: USS *Saratoga* file, DTG 081532Z June 1967.]

1735 1535 1135

The President approves a Hot Line message in response to Kosygin's message of 0948 EDT. It is transmitted at 1201 EDT. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967 and Hot Line message.]

1736 1536 1136

State Department message to the American Embassy, Moscow advising of the information passed to the Soviet Chargé in Washington and requesting that the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs be notified of the latest developments; i.e., Israeli responsibility and aircraft enroute to *Liberty* had been recalled. [LBJ Library: DTG 081536Z June 1967, SECSTATE WASHDC 209218.]

1743 1543 1143

COMSIXTHFLT received his copy of the JCS message (**1729** entry) of force no longer authorized. [Naval Historical Center: endorsement on received message copy.] It has been just over an hour since Admiral Martin's recall of aircraft.

1745 1545 1145

President leaves Situation Room. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]
Ambassador Nolte, in Cairo, sends message: "We better get our story on torpedoing of USS *Liberty* out fast and it had better be good." [LBJ Library: DTG 081545Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY CAIRO 8705 to SECSTATE WASHDC.]

1750 1550 1150

Liberty recorded COMSIXTHFLT message transmitted by *Saratoga* over the Hi-Com HF voice net that escort (CTG60.5, Captain H. G. Leahy) was on the way and rendezvous instructions. (See 1732 entry.) [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

MTB Division 914 records "Target has disappeared." [MTB Division War Log.]

1755 1555 1155

CNO OP-33 (Rear Admiral L. V. Swanson, Assistant CNO (ACNO) for Fleet Operations) over Single-Side Band/HF, via NCS Greece, talked with the TF60 Chief of Staff regarding the possible use of USAF SA-16 search and rescue amphibians out of Wheelus AB, Libya to get aid to *Liberty*, and the possibility of "hot" in-flight fueling of *America's* helicopters on 9 June at a greater range from the two closing destroyers. [Naval Historical Center/CNO *Liberty* file: Memorandum for the Record 081400Q June 1967; US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 20 of Exhibit 48: DTG 091257Z June 1967, NCS Greece to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

1757 1557 1157

Liberty recorded a Sixth Fleet message transmitted by *Saratoga* over the Hi-Com HF voice net that advised escort were proceeding at maximum speed of destroyers. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log; USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1800 1600 1200

Liberty experiences great difficulty in controlling ship. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]
(For the next several hours *Liberty* would change her speed and vary her course as she slowly withdrew in the general direction of the northwest.)

1802 1602 1202

NCS Greece transmits to *Liberty* via the Hi-Com HF voice net a request from COMSIXTHFLT that she provide her estimated 1800Z [2000] position. This is done at 1811. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

1809 1609 1209

COMSIXTHFLT transmitted: "force no longer authorized" and canceled his 081339Z message (1539 entry). [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081609Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to CTF60, USS *America*, and USS *Saratoga*.]

1810 1610 1210

Commander Castle departed from Sde Dov airfield by Super Frelon helicopter bound for *Liberty*. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 45 of Exhibit 48: DTG 151615Z June 1967, USDAO TEL AVIV 0900 to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

1812 1612 1212

Detached destroyers (CTG60.5) generate instructions to *Liberty* regarding direction,

communication circuits being monitored and estimated rendezvous time of **0600 9 June**. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081612Z June 1967, CTG60.5 to USS *Liberty*.]

1820 1620 1220

Hot Line message from Kosygin to President transmitted. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967 and Hot Line message; NSA: "Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCC)".] The NSA report states the message from Kosygin to Johnson as 1210 EDT. The Daily Diary shows only one Hot Line message from Kosygin in this time frame and it is 1220 EDT and that is the referenced source by the NSA report. Most likely the NSA report is a typographical error.

CTF60 passes to *Liberty*, via the Hi-Com HF voice net, estimated rendezvous time as stated at **1812** by CTG60.5. The rendezvous time is recorded in *Liberty's* Radio Log to take place at **0900 9 June**. This may be either an error when *Liberty* copied the voice message, or by CTF60 when transmitted. (See **2000** entry.) [US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibit 24.]

1821 1621 1221

The Super Frelon pilot approaching *Liberty* asks IAF HQ if he should attempt to take aboard any wounded from the ship. He is instructed to consult with his passenger (Commander Castle.) [IAF audio tapes.]

1825 1625 1225

When queried, *Liberty* transmits, via the Hi-Com HF voice net, that she does not acknowledge receipt of the second standoff message, JCS 080110Z. Files have been destroyed. (See also **2010** entry.) [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

1826 1626 1226

Saratoga transmitted four A-1s had launched at **1602** and were diverted to Souda Bay. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081626Z June 1967, *Saratoga* to COMSIXTHFLT.] (The armed A-4s from *America* were also diverted to Souda Bay.)

1830 1630 1230

President received the translated Hot Line message from Kosygin transmitted at **1820**. In the text Kosygin acknowledges receipt of the Hot Line message from **1700** and that its contents have been passed to President Nasser. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Dairy, 8 June 1967.]

1835 1635 1235

IAF Helicopter carrying Commander Castle arrives over *Liberty*. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 45 of Exhibit 48: DTG 151615Z June 1967, USDAO TEL AVIV 0900 to CINCUSNAVEUR.] The *Liberty* Deck Log has helicopter marked "SA 321K" on the tail approaching *Liberty* at **1840**.

1840 1640 1240

COMSIXTHFLT transmits to CTG60.5 current status and situation regarding *Liberty*. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081640Z June 1967.]

1846 1646 1246

Fourth standoff message, 080625Z, placed on fleet broadcast at NCS Asmara for transmission as information copy to *Liberty*. [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.]

1847 1647 1247

Sunset. [Expert Astronomer Computer Program and U.S. Naval Observatory web site (<http://www.usno.navy.mil/>) web site.] Note: See “The *Liberty* Incident”, Chapter 5, endnote 40 for calculated position.

1849 1649 1249

Admiral Martin transmitted SITREP Nine. All aircraft have been recalled and are accounted for. [JCS Fact Finding Team Report, June 1967: DTG 081649Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR.]

1852 1652 1252

Castle in helicopter drops short message to *Liberty*. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967; US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 27: Chronology of Events.]

1900 1700 1300

Helicopter carrying a frustrated Commander Castle departs *Liberty* for Sde Dov airfield. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 45 of Exhibit 48: DTG 151615Z June 1967, USDAO TEL AVIV 0900 to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

Liberty records “Continuing various courses.” [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1910 1710 1310

PM Eshkol convened the Ministerial Defense Committee in Tel Aviv. The agenda is an attempt to reach an agreement on seizing the Golan Heights from the Syrians to protect the northern settlements and occupy the sources of the Jordan River. Defense Minister Dayan, and others, opposed the plan and there is no agreement. [Oren, *Six Days of War*, pp. 275-277; Brecher and Geist, *Decisions in Crisis*, pp. 277-278; Bregman and El-Tahri, *The Fifty Years’ War*, pp. 109-111.]

1911 1711 1311

CINCUSNAVEUR inquiries of NCS Asmara the status of 080110Z (second standoff message) and 080917Z (fifth standoff message) as it related to whether *Liberty* received either, and any acknowledgment from her of same. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 27 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081715Z June 1967.]

This may well be the first recorded inquiry of how was it possible *Liberty* was still steaming within sight of the Sinai. This basic question is the start of multiple investigations to come relating to the attack on the *Liberty*.

1915 1715 1315

Liberty sends detailed SITREP report. The message is transmitted over the Hi-Com HF voice net to NCS Greece for further forwarding to CNO and other commands. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 46 of Exhibit 48: DTG 081715Z June 1967, *Liberty* to NAVCOMMSTA GREECE.] In the report a different estimated **1400** position (31-35.5N, 33-29E) of the ship is reported. It is in error as determined by the established points of *Liberty*’s patrol area and her reported **1300** position.

1918 1718 1318

Liberty records 26 fathoms under the keel. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 8 June 1967.]

1930 1730 1330

Radio Cairo claimed that *Liberty*, being “only 15 miles north of Sinai”, was clear proof of the US directly helping the Israelis. [State Department *Liberty* file: Arab-Israel Situation Report, 2400, June 8, 1967; FBIS recording: UAR, 1730 GMT 8 June 1967, p. B2.]

2000 1800 1400

NCS Greece transmits and *Liberty* acknowledges, via the Hi-Com HF voice net, the contents of message generated at **1820** by CTG60.5. The same information is passed to *Liberty* at **2012** by *Saratoga* over the Hi-Com HF voice net. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

2010 1810 1410

When queried, *Liberty* transmits, via the Hi-Com HF voice net, that she does not acknowledge receipt of the fifth standoff message, COMSIXTHFLT 080917Z. Files have been destroyed. (See also **1825** entry.) [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

2012 1812 1412

NSA Station [deleted] transmits to NSA the copied contents of *Liberty*'s **1915** SITREP. The message ended with: “This station monitoring Sixth Fleet.” [NSA: “USS *Liberty*, Chronology of Events, 23 May-8 June 1967”: DTG 081812Z June 1967, [deleted] to DIRNSA.]

2034 1834 1434

Foreign Minister Eban cables “deep and respectful condolences” regarding the tragic loss of American lives to Secretary Rusk. [State Department *Liberty* file: FM Abba Eban cable, 8 June 1434 EDT.)

2100 1900 1500 (approximate)

Regular scheduled weekly background meeting of top Defense Department officials and Pentagon press corps. The contents of the message transmitted by *Liberty* at **1915** are released to the press prior to this meeting. [Goulding, *Confirm or Deny*, pp. 114-115.]

UN Secretary General U Thant reads UAR acceptance of cease-fire during Security Council 1351st session. [UN document S/PV.1351.]

2113 1913 1513

COMSIXTHFLT, referencing CTG60.5's **1812** message, transmits to CTG60.5 additional status and situation information regarding *Liberty*. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081913Z June 1967.]

2130 1930 1530

IDF press statement of *Liberty* incident released. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 64 of Exhibit 48: DTG 082100Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0834.]

2136 1936 1536

The President approves a Hot Line message to Kosygin, thanking him for passing to President Nasser the earlier message (see **1700** entry) and that *Liberty* has suffered 10 killed from the Israeli attack, “for which they have apologized.” The message is transmitted at 1558 EDT. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967 and Hot Line message.]

2153 1953 1553

Admiral Martin directs Admiral Geis to have airborne an E-2A Hawkeye for communication and navigation support for *Liberty* and the closing destroyers.. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 081936Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to CTF60.]

2200 2000 1600

Radio Israel broadcasts the IDF press statement of the mistaken attack on the *Liberty*. [FBIS recording: Israel, 2000 GMT 8 June 1967, p. H2.]

2223 2023 1623

From NCS Greece *Liberty* is informed, over the Hi-Com HF voice net, that at **2300** an E-2A will be airborne to assist with communications and navigation. *Liberty* acknowledged at **2230**. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

2236 2036 1636

CTG60.5 transmits first SITREP as to situation regarding *Liberty*'s course, speed and rendezvous instructions. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 082036Z June 1967, CTG60.5 to COMSIXTHFLT.]

2238-40 2038-40 1638-40

Station "BlueCat" (command identity unknown) passes to *Liberty* via the Hi-Com HF voice net request from CNO that she provide list of dead and wounded. *Liberty* acknowledges. (See **0002 9 June** entry for *Liberty*'s transmission of dead and missing.) [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

2241-42 2041-42 1641-42

CTG60.5 and *Liberty* conduct a radio check over the Hi-Com HF voice net. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

2245 2045 1645

White House Situation Room receives report on *Liberty*'s condition from the NMCC. It mirrors *Liberty*'s **1915** detailed report regarding casualties as well as the estimated time the racing destroyers should reach her as expressed at **1812**. [LBJ Library: White House Situation Room Telephone Memorandum, 1645 8 June 1967.]

2311 2111 1711

President Johnson enters an "off the record" meeting of the Armed Services Policy Council in the Cabinet Room. He departs at 1800 EDT. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]

2312 2112 1712

Admiral Martin asks Admiral Geis status of getting the E-2A airborne in support of *Liberty* and CTG60.5. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 51 of Exhibit 48: DTG 131620Z June 67, USS *Massey* to COMDESRON 12 (CTG60.5). Message contains a small portion of the Hi-Com HF voice net copied by *Massey* on 8 June.]

2322 2122 1722

Admiral Geis informs Captain Leahy that aircraft on 10-minute alert and ready to launch should the destroyers rendezvous with *Liberty* inside the 100-mile standoff line. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 082122Z June 1967, CTF60 to CTG60.5.]

2335 2135 1735

First standoff message, DTG 072230Z June 1967, on NCS Asmara fleet broadcast for *Liberty* as information addressee after having been re-routed from the Pacific. (See **1515** entry.) [House Armed Services Committee Report, May 10, 1971.] (It is **9 1/2 hours** following the attack and **23 hours** since the message was drafted.)

9th 8th 8th
0002 2202 1802

Liberty transmits to COMSIXTHFLT, via the Hi-Com HF voice net, personnel casualty report of then known dead, missing-in-action and known next-of-kin. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 082202Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to SECNAV (Secretary of the Navy); US Naval Court of Inquiry/Exhibit 24: Radio Log.]

0030 2230 1830

Admiral Martin sends SITREP to Admiral McCain regarding current situation as it relates to getting help to *Liberty* and her current communication capabilities. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 082230Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to CINCUSNAVEUR.]

0110 2310 1910

President Johnson to the Situation Room where he met with:

- Secretaries Rusk, McNamara and Fowler
- Under Secretaries of State N. deB. Katzenbach and E. V. Rostow
- Assistant Secretary of State L. D. Battle
- General George Wheeler, Chairman, JCS
- CIA Director Richard Helms
- FIAB Chairman Clark Clifford
- National Security Advisor W. W. Rostow
- Assistant NSA Harold Saunders
- Special Consultant McGeorge Bundy

The President left the meeting at 1940 EDT. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]

9th 9th 8th
0240 0040 2040

CTG60.5 reports in SITREP Two that *Liberty* is tentatively identified (via radar) at a distance of 85 miles and ETA is **0630**. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 090040Z June 1967, CTG60.5 to COMSIXTHFLT and CTF60.]

0320 0120 2120

The Syrian Government, over Radio Damascus, announced it accepted a cease-fire, contingent on Israel's observation of the truce. [State Department *Liberty* file: Arab-Israel Situation Report, 2400, June 8, 1967.] The record is not clear if Syrian artillery continued to shell northern Israel following this announcement. Given the decision by DM Dayan at **0700**, it is probably a moot point. [Oren, *Six Days of War*, p. 278; Brecher and Geist, *Decisions in Crisis*, pp.279-281; Bregman and El Tahri, *The Fifty Year' War*, pp.110-112.]

0440 0240 2240

Liberty sights Russian merchant ship identified as *Proletrsk*. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, Friday, 9 June 1967.] *Proletrsk* in Russian means Proletariat.

0550 0350 2350

President Johnson goes to bed. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 8 June 1967.]

0555 0355 2355

Liberty transmits update to her message of **0002** by adding one name to those known dead and

two listed as missing. [Naval Historical Center/CNO *Liberty* File: DTG 090355Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to SECNAV.]

0625 0425 0025

CTG60.5 reports reaching *Liberty*, location 33-01.0N 31-59.0E. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 090430Z June 1967, CTG60.5 to COMSIXTHFLT.] *Liberty* records rendezvous with *Davis* and *Massey* at **0627**. [USS *Liberty* Deck log, 9 June 1967.]

0636 0436 0036

Syrian Government message agreeing to a cease-fire received by UNSG U Thant in New York. [UN document S/PV.1352: 1352nd UNSC meeting.]

0700 0500 0100

Liberty Radio Log records her Hi-Com HF voice circuit (11256.5 KCS) watch is secured. *Davis* will handle all communication for *Liberty*. [US Naval Court of Inquiry: Exhibit 24.]

Approximate time DM Dayan directly orders IDF Northern Command to attack the Syrian Golan Heights. [Dayan, *Story of My Life*, p. 380; Rabin, *Rabin Memoirs*, pp. 115-117.]

Radio Israel issues an additional update on the *Liberty* attack, stating in part that:

“The United States received the news of the mistake with understanding.”

[FBIS recording: Israel, 0500 GMT 9 June 1967, p. H2.]

0712 0512 0112

CTG60.5 reports two medical teams aboard *Liberty* and *Davis* maneuvering to go alongside. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 090512Z June 1967, CTG60.5 to COMSIXTHFLT.]

0715 0515 0115

Liberty hove to, *Davis* alongside. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 9 June 1967.]

0725 0527 0125

Davis records moored portside to *Liberty*. [USS *Davis* Deck Log, Friday, 9 June 1967.]

Throughout the morning personnel from *Davis* and *Massey* assist the *Liberty* crew and the three ships slowly steam to rendezvous with TG60.1. When the closing TG60.1 is within helicopter range, *Liberty*'s most seriously wounded are air-lifted off.

1010 0810 0410

US Embassy Tel Aviv transmits message which quotes condolences and sympathies regarding the tragic loss of life aboard the *Liberty* from PM Eshkol and his request that it be sent to the President. [State Department *Liberty* file: DTG 090810Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4024.]

1100 0900 0500

Radio Israel broadcasts the contents of the condolence message from Eshkol to President Johnson. [FBIS recording: Israel, 0900 GMT 9 June 1967, p. H2.]

1130 0930 0530

Israeli UN Representative informs the UNSC President that Syrian artillery had resumed heavy shelling from the Golan Heights “and Israeli forces have advanced to silence the Syrian guns.”

[UN document S/PV.1352: 1352nd UNSC meeting.]

1216 1016 0612

Liberty stops all engines. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 9 June 1967.]

1250 1050 0650

Liberty reports the names of two additional individuals to be added to those missing. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 091050Z June 1967, USS *Liberty* to SECNAV.]

1300 1100 0700

TG60.1 rendezvous with *Liberty* and the destroyers. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 091134Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR.]

During the afternoon *Liberty's* dead and remaining wounded are lifted off. Admiral Martin visits the ship as does the Sixth Fleet Service Force Material Officer, Captain R. L. Arthur, to evaluate the situation and make recommendations.

1533 1333 0933

Liberty records all ahead 1/3. [USS *Liberty* Deck Log, 9 June 1967.]

1610 1410 1010

Liberty reports to SECNAV a detailed listing of those wounded. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 091410Z June 1967.]

1630 1430 1030

Pentagon news release of additional information on *Liberty* which covered events up to approximately 1300. [Naval Historical Center/CNO *Liberty* file: DTG 091812Z June 1967, SECDEF to USCINCEUR and other commands; Goulding, *Confirm or Deny*, p. 119.]

1710 1510 1110

Fleet tug *Papago* rendezvous with TG60.5. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 091635Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT to USCINCEUR.] The task group of *Liberty*, *Davis* and *Papago* are directed to proceed to Souda Bay, Crete. Early on the 10th the decision is made to change *Liberty's* destination to Malta, where a drydock is available. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 100025Z June 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR to USCINCEUR.]

10 June

Via Diplomatic Note Israel officially apologizes and states "Israel is prepared to make amends for the tragic loss of life and material damage." as a result of the attack on the *Liberty*. In response, via Diplomatic Note, the US officially protests the attack in very strong terms. [State Department *Liberty* file.] (The US Note contains errors based on incomplete information. See 11 July.)

Wounded *Liberty* crewmen Yeoman 3rd Class Virgil L. Brownfield and Seaman William E. Casper are interviewed by embarked national press representatives aboard *America*. Various newspapers carried AP dispatches on June 10 and 11 of remarks made by Brownfield. The *New York Times* carried a fairly detailed story on June 11, quoting from both crewmembers.

1430 1230 0830

Liberty reports to SECNAV a detailed listing of those killed. [Naval Historical Center: DTG

101230Z June 1967.]

1448 1248 0848

Hot Line message transmitted to the President from Premier Kosygin. The translated message is given to Johnson at 0905 EDT. Kosygin's message mentions the possible use of military action if the Israelis don't halt their advance into Syria. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary 10 June 1967 and Hot line message; Howe, *Multicrises*, p. 111.]

1457 1257 0857

The President enters the White House Situation Room. Also present are:

Defense Secretary McNamara

Under Secretary of State Katzenbach

CIA Director Helms

FIAB Chairman Clifford

National Security Advisor Rostow

Ambassador to Russia Thompson

Special Consultant Bundy

[LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 10 June 1967.]

1530 1330 0930

President approves Hot Line message to Kosygin which is transmitted at 0939 EDT. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 10 June 1967 and Hot Line message; NSC "Middle East Chronology Guide, May 12-June 20".]

1544 1344 0944

Hot Line message from Kosygin to the President. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 10 June 1967.]

1600 1400 1000

The President departs the Situation Room for a short period. Most likely no more than 10-15 minutes. During his absence, his advisors discuss the idea of moving the Sixth Fleet eastward as a signal to the Soviets in response to the Hot Line message of 0848 EDT. When Johnson returns, he agrees to the idea and instructs McNamara to give the order. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary 10 June 1967 and Memorandums for the Record, October 22, and November 4, 7, 1968.]

1722 1522 1022

JCS orders USCINCEUR to move the Sixth Fleet carriers closer to Syria. [LBJ Library: NSC "Middle East Chronology Guide, May 12 - June 20", Appendix H, DTG 101522Z June 1967.]

1650 1450 1050

Hot Line message from the President to Kosygin. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 10 June 1967.]

1731 1531 1131

A Hot Line message from Kosygin to the President. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 10 June 1967.]

1854 1554 1154

Hot Line message from the President to Premier Kosygin. [LBJ Library: White House Daily

Diary, 10 June 1967.]

1855 1555 1155

The President departs the White House Situation Room. [LBJ Library: White House Daily Diary, 10 June 1967.]

1830 1630 1230

Israel and Syria agree to final cease-fire arranged with the UN. The third Arab-Israeli war ends. [Marshall, Swift Sword; Lall, *The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967*, p.87.]

2030 1830 1430

Cease-fire reported to be fully in effect between Israel and Syria. [LBJ Library: CIA Intelligence Memo, 10 June 1967, 4:30 p.m. EDT.]

2123 1923 1523

Sixth Fleet carriers ordered to halt movement towards Syria. [LBJ Library: NSC "Middle East Chronology Guide, May 12-June 20", Appendix H, DTG 101923Z June 1967, JCS to USCINCEUR.]

2305 2105 1705

W. W. Rostow sends to President Johnson a preliminary copy of the NSA intercepts recorded from **1429** to **1528** (1229Z to 1328Z) on 8 June. His cover memo states, in part: "These intercepts--showing some honest ambiguity about the ship after the attack--suggest that there may have been a breakdown of communications on the Israeli side; ... We shall, of course, analyze this affair further." (See **22 June 1967**.) [Foreign Relations, 1964-1968: Vol. XIX, Document 258.]

11th 10th 10th

0114 2314 1914

US Naval Court of Inquiry, ordered by CINCUSNAVEUR, opens in London CINCUSNAVEUR HQ. Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd as President. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 1.]

11 June

Communications Technician Seaman Kenneth P. Ecker, 18, a wounded *Liberty* crewman, answered questions and described his experience to embarked members of the national press during an interview aboard *America*. Of interest is the following passage:

"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 any marks on them or anything,' he said."

[*American Spirit*, July 1967, V.3 N.6, p. 8. (USS *America*(CVA-66) newsletter.)] (Ecker's story regarding being saved by wearing his helmet was carried by a UPI dispatch in the *Washington Post* of June 13, 1967.)

12 June

General Rabin orders an Inquiry Commission of one individual to investigate the IDF attack on the USS *Liberty*. Colonel Ram Ron is appointed. [IDF Inquiry Commission Report (AKA "Ram

Ron Report”); Naval Historical Center: DTG 131335Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0886.]

Via Diplomatic Note Israel strongly rejected the charges in the **10 June** US Note and again offered to make amends. [State Department *Liberty* file.]

13 June

CIA Intelligence Memorandum SC No. 01415/67, “The Israeli Attack on the USS *Liberty*” is prepared at the request of President Johnson. On p. 2 it states that *Liberty*, despite the size difference, could be mistaken for the smaller *El Quseir* by an overzealous pilot. (See **13 August 1977, 27 February 1978** and **12 January 2004**.) [Foreign Relations, 1964-1968: Vol. XIX, Document 284.]

DIA memo to the JCS Chairman states, in part: “[T]he best interpretation we can make of the available facts is that Israeli command and control in this instance was defective.” [Foreign Relations, 1964-1968: Vol. XIX, Document 317/FN 2]

14 June

Liberty and her escorts arrive in Malta. She CHOPS from COMSIXTHFLT to CINCUSNAVEUR. [Naval Historical Center/CNO *Liberty* file: DTG 161815Z June 1967, AMEMBASSY Valletta 556 and DTG 120546Z June 1967, COMSIXTHFLT.]

The US Naval Court of Inquiry reconvenes aboard *Liberty*. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 12.]

Defense Department announces that a naval court of inquiry is in session at Malta. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 141747Z June 1967, SECDEF to multiple commands.]

15 June

Israel expresses regret over deaths and wounding of Indian UNEF troops on 5 June 1967 by the IDF and offers humanitarian compensation. [UN Documents S/7957, 8 June 1967 and S/7989, 15 June 1967.]

US Naval Court of Inquiry adjourns in Malta after taking two days of testimony from nine officers and five enlisted men of the *Liberty*. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 138.]

16 June

US Naval Court of Inquiry reconvened in London at CINCUSNAVEUR HQ for the final set of witnesses. Testimony ended at 1645 local. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Record of Proceedings, p. 160.]

Colonel Ram Ron completes his investigation of the IDF attack on the *Liberty* and sends it to General Rabin. Rabin in turn forwards the findings to the Military Advocate General, Colonel Meir Shamgar, for a legal review. [IDF “Ram Ron Report”; Naval Historical Center: DTG 210910Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0948.]

Egyptian editor Mohammad Haykal, and President Nasser confidant, charged that *Liberty* had jammed the UAR radar network and:

“This ship and its role were exposed when it was hit by an Israeli torpedo boat which mistook it for an Egyptian naval unit.”

[State Department *Liberty* file: Arab-Israel Situation Report, 1800, June 16, 1967; FBIS recording: UAR, 2300 GMT 16 June 1967, p. B9.]

17 June

Commander Castle in Tel Aviv is given an oral synopsis of Colonel Ron’s findings. The synopsis omits the reference to the “30-knot” speed error for *Liberty* as having come from a mistake in

reading of a radar return by the MTBs. [US Naval Court of Inquiry/Document 1 of Exhibit 48: DTG 181030Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0928.]

18 June

US Naval Court of Inquiry completed its work and the Record of Proceedings were sent to Admiral McCain for review. Two major findings are:

1. Available evidence combines to indicate the attack on *Liberty* on 8 June was in fact a case of mistaken identity.
6. There are no available indications that the attack was intended against a U. S. Ship.

McCain's endorsement takes place this date. The Record of Proceedings are labeled Top Secret as a number of exhibits are messages classified as such. [US Naval Court of Inquiry: 18 June 1967 letter from Commander in Chief, US Naval Forces, Europe to Judge Advocate General, first endorsement.]

20 June

Preliminary Judicial Inquiry ordered by the IDF Military Advocate General, after reviewing the findings of Colonel Ron. Lt. Col. Yeshayahu Yerushalmi, member of the IDF highest military court, the Military Court of Appeals, is appointed to conduct an inquiry to determine if any persons should be bound over for a court martial trial. A IDF press statement is made of this decision and broadcasted. [Naval Historical Center: DTG 210910Z June 1967, USDAO Tel Aviv 0948; FBIS recording: Israel, 2000 GMT 20 June 1967, p. H2; *New York Times*, June 29, 1967.]

21 June

CIA Intelligence Memorandum SC No. 08384-67, "The Israeli Statement on the Attack on the USS *Liberty*" dealing with the Israeli attack is prepared as a result of the IDF "Ram Ron Report." The conclusion states, in part: "The attack was not made in malice toward the US and was by mistake, but the failure[s] of the IDF ... were both incongruous and indicative of gross negligence." (See 12 June and 16 June 1967, 27 February 1978, and 12 January 2004.) [Foreign Relations, 1964-1968: Vol. XIX, Document 317.]

22 June

NSA transmits to the White House detailed Secret message of 8 June intercepts recorded from 1429 to 1528 (1229Z to 1328Z) in the aftermath of the attacks. Formally states "There are no COMINT reflections of the actual attack itself." [2 July 2003 NSA FOIA lawsuit release: Aftermath of Israeli Attack on U.S.S. *Liberty*, 22 June 1967, 1454Z.]

27 June

Israeli Ambassador Harman sends letters of condolences to the families of the 34 men killed aboard *Liberty*, expressing "heartfelt sympathy." [State Department *Liberty* File: Memorandum of Conversation, June 28, 1967; USS *Liberty* Veterans Association Newsletter, March/June 1991, p. 38.]

28 June

The Defense Department released a nine-page summary of the proceedings of the Naval Court of Inquiry and a 19-page "Unclassified Transcript of Testimony." The testimony was, for the most part, an edited release of Commander McGonagle's testimony. [DOD News Release No. 594-67.] The release was also given to the Israeli Ambassador. [State Department *Liberty* file: Memorandum of Conversation, June 28, 1967.]

DIA addendum to its **13 June** memo states that additional information has clarified the sequence of events, but failed to show the attack was premeditated. [Foreign Relations, 1964-1968: Vol. XIX, Document 317/FN 2.]

30 June

Admiral McCain forwards to CNO his recommendation that the *Liberty* was entitled to receive the Presidential Unit Citation. [Naval Historical Center/CNO *Liberty* file: DTG 301304Z June 1967, CINCUSNAVEUR.]

5 July

In an interim decision, Lt. Col. Yerushalmi decides that as a “prima facie” fact, IDF Navy Commander Lunz (see **1100 8 June** entry) may have committed an offense of negligence. The hearing was adjourned. Thereafter, as an accused, Lunz called three witnesses, made a statement under oath and produced five exhibits. [IDF Preliminary Judicial Inquiry, p. 8.]

7 July

Egypt’s leading newspaper, *Al Ahram*, stated American officials had admitted that Israel got intelligence information from the *Liberty*. [UPI dispatch, *Washington Post*, July 8, 1967, p. A7.]

11 July

US Government submits to the Israeli Government a corrected copy of its **10 June** Diplomatic Note. It contains details learned as a result of the US Naval Court of Inquiry. [State Department *Liberty* file: Memorandum for the Secretary, July 11, 1967.]

14 July

Secretary of State Rusk testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Questions were not only asked by the Chairman, Senator Fulbright, regarding receiving the complete transcript of the Naval Court of Inquiry on a confidential basis but also a full report of the attack. The transcript of the Senate hearing states:

“The information referred to is classified and in the committee files.”

[Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninetieth Congress, First Session on S. 1872, A Bill to Amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as Amended, and For Other Purposes. June 12, July 14 and 26, 1967. US Government Printing Office, Washington: 1967, pp. 233-234; State Department *Liberty* file: July 24, 1967 letter from Secretary Rusk to Secretary McNamara.]

18 July

President Johnson receives from his National Security Advisor W. W. Rostow the “so called Clifford report” from the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board Chairman Clark Clifford. Rostow’s cover memo states:

Herewith Clark Clifford’s brief but definitive analysis of the attack on the *Liberty*.

It is based on the study of literally thousands of pages of evidence.

The bottom-line conclusion from Clifford’s investigation was:

- a. The information thus far available does not reflect that the Israeli high command made a premeditated attack on a ship known to be American.

[LBJ Library: SC No. 07445/67 (“Clifford Report”); Clifford, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, pp. 445-447.]

21 July

IDF Preliminary Judicial Inquiry completed by Lt. Col. Yerushalmi. To the seven counts brought by the Chief Military Prosecutor, Yerushalmi declared (in closing):

“... whoever peruses the ample evidence presented to me, may conceivably draw some lesson regarding the relations between the two arms of the Israel Defence Forces, which were involved in the incident, and the operational procedures in times of war, particularly between the different branches of the Navy — but all this is certainly not within the scope of my inquiry. Yet I have not discovered any deviation from the standard of reasonable conduct which would justify the committal of anyone for trial. In view of what has been said above, I hold, that there is no sufficient amount of prima facie evidence, justifying committing anyone for trial.

[IDF Preliminary Judicial Inquiry, 21 July 1967, pp. 18-19.]

24 July

Colonel Shamgar, IDF Military Advocate General, endorses the Preliminary Judicial Inquiry findings. [IDF MAG Report, 24 July 1967.]

26 July

Defense Secretary McNamara testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. In a wide-ranging exchange between a number of senators and McNamara, he states:

“In the case of the attack on the *Liberty*, it was the conclusion of the investigatory body headed by an admiral of the Navy in whom we have great confidence that the attack was not intentional.”

As well as:

“The attackers, so far as we could tell, had not recognized the ship and in any event, had not recognized it as a U.S. ship.

“Beyond that, as best we can tell, there were inadequate communications between the aircraft and/or ships reconnoitering and the attacking vessels. I think it is an inexcusable weak military performance.”

[see 14 July for source; pp.266-270.]

29 July

Liberty, temporally repaired, returns to the US, docking at the Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base near Norfolk, VA. Her Captain, Commander McGonagle, partakes in a press conference aboard ship. [Virginian-Pilot, July 30, 1967.]

14 August

IDF Preliminary Judicial Inquiry presented to the State Department. Israeli Government requested the document be kept restricted and confidential, but had no objections to it being shown to interested members of Congress with the forgoing conditions. This is done, with copies going to various committees. [State Department *Liberty* file: August 15 and August 30, 1967 (drafted) memos.]

17 August

The Navy determines, from a materials standpoint, that *Liberty* can be fully repaired and returned to duty. [Naval Historical Center: USS *Liberty* 1967 Command History Report.]

18 August

Assistant Secretary L. D. Battle lays out in a briefing memo to Under Secretary N. deB. Katzenbach the practical implications of the Israeli request in the handling of the IDF Preliminary

Judicial Inquiry, and that if the report becomes public it would be viewed as a “whitewash.” Additional points deal with the aspect of public awareness of the diplomatic note exchanges and ends up with a series of recommendations regarding the actions expected by the US when the Under Secretary calls in Minister E. Evron of the Israeli embassy. [Foreign Relations, 1964-1968: Vol. XIX, Documents 424 and 433.]

1 September

Liberty placed in a reduced manning level status until, and if, restoration funds can be obtained. [Naval Historical Center: “Naval Security Group File on U.S.S. *Liberty*” (sanitized), referencing CNO DTG 182115Z July 1967 message.]

21 September

State Department lawyer Carl F. Salans submits his analysis of the Israeli Judicial Inquiry (see **21 July**), the Naval Court of Inquiry (see **18 June**), and the Clifford Report (see **18 July**). His report draws no further conclusions from the three reports, but notes a number of discrepancies. [State Department *Liberty* file: September 21, 1967 Information Memorandum (the “Salans Report.”)]

3 November

Judge Advocate General endorses the Naval Court of Inquiry. The endorsement’s closing paragraph stated:

“8. The proceedings in this Court of Inquiry have been conducted in substantial compliance with the requirements of the Manual of the Judge Advocate General and are therefore legal.”

The endorsement also contained a 23-page “Summary of Events” enclosure.

[US Naval Court of Inquiry: 3 November 1967 letter from Judge Advocate General to Chief of Naval Personnel.]

22 November

During the 1382nd meeting, the UN Security Council adopted unanimously Resolution 242.

29 December

The State Department formally submits claims of \$3,323,500 to the Israeli Government to compensate the families of the 34 men killed on 8 June 1967. [*New York Times*, January 6, 1968, p. 4; State Department *Liberty* file: US Diplomatic Note No. 26 of December 27, 1967.]

1968

12 January

Liberty selected for caretaker status. [Naval Historical Center: USS *Liberty* 1968 Command History Report.]

23 January

USS *Pueblo*(AGER-2), a smaller but similar type signal intelligence-gathering ship, is fired on, boarded and seized by Communist North Korea in international waters off the Korean coast. This act, along with drastic FY1968, FY1969 and FY1970 Defense Department budget cuts, was the deathblow to the sea-going dedicated Technical Research Ship program. [See Trevor Armbrister’s *A Matter of Accountability: The True Story of the Pueblo Affair*.]

4 March

Liberty's decommissioning process commenced. [Naval Historical Center: USS *Liberty* 1968 Command History Report.]

25 March

The Office of Chief of Naval Operations approves the Naval Court of Inquiry Record of Proceedings. Last paragraph states: "Retain the report for historical purposes." [US Naval Court of Inquiry: 25 March 1968 letter from Chief of Naval Operations to Judge Advocate General.]

8 April

In hearings before the House Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations which dealt with the Defense Department budget, the following additional information was provided in response to why messages, which didn't reach *Liberty* prior to the attack, had to go through channels:

"At the time of transmission of JCS message 080110Z June 1967, there was nothing to indicate hostile action would be taken against the *Liberty* by any country. The repositioning [sic] of the *Liberty* was taken as a matter of prudence to insure conformance with instructions to other Sixth fleet ships in the area. ..."

[Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Ninetieth Congress, Second Session, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1969, Part 4, Operation and Maintenance. April 8, 1968. US Government Printing Office, Washington: 1968, pp. 393-396.]

27 May

The Israeli Government paid, in full, the claims submitted on **29 December 1967** for the 34 deaths. [Department of State Bulletin, published June 17, 1968.] The *New York Times* reported on May 29:

"Officials said the amount of compensation for each of the casualties was determined in accordance with domestic and international damage laws."

[*New York Times*, May 29, 1968, p. 4.]

11 June

Captain McGonagle, former *Liberty* CO and since promoted from Commander, awarded the nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor, at a Washington Navy Yard (Naval HQ for the Washington area) ceremony. The medal was presented by the Secretary of Navy for the President in the name of The Congress. [Multiple newspaper articles, June 11 and 12, 1968; Naval Historical Center: USS *Liberty* 1968 Command History Report.]

14 June

The *Liberty*, and her crew, received the Presidential Unit Citation "for exceptionally meritorious and heroic achievement during an armed attack on June 8, 1967" in ceremonies at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. In addition, 13 individual medals were presented to *Liberty* crewmembers. [DOD News Release No. 544-68; *Virginian-Pilot*, June 15, 1968; Naval Historical Center: USS *Liberty* 1968 Command History Report.] The PUC is the highest military unit award and *Liberty's* came prior to such an award being granted to any Navy ship for service in Vietnam.

28 June

Liberty is decommissioned. [Naval Historical Center: USS *Liberty* 1968 Command History Report.]

3 July

US Government presents to the Israeli Government a claim of \$7,644,146 for the damage to the *Liberty* as a result of the 8 June 1967 attack. [State Department *Liberty* file: Diplomatic Note #74, July 1, 1968 and American Embassy Airgram A-1009 of July 6, 1968.]

5 August

Israeli Government rejects the claim submitted on **3 July** in a Diplomatic Note of this date. [State Department *Liberty* file: DTG 061125Z August 1968, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4798.]

3 September

Israeli Government requests that Diplomatic Note of **5 August** be returned as it did not represent the government's position and that a new note would be submitted in response to the US Note received on **3 July**. This is agreed to. [State Department *Liberty* File: DTG 031130Z September 1968, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 5171 and DTG 091810Z September 1968, SECSTATE 234813.]

30 September

Israel Government submits a new Diplomatic Note which asks that the claim for the ship damage be held until all other damage claims (for those wounded) are resolved. [State Department *Liberty* file: DTG 011144Z October 1968, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 5539.]

23 December

The *Pueblo* crew released by the North Koreans, but the ship remains in North Korean hands.

1969

28 March

The US Government delivered to the Israeli Government claims of \$3,566,457 to cover the cost for treating the wounded, government expenses, and government costs to reimburse personal property damaged or destroyed in the 8 June 1967 attack. [State Department *Liberty* file: DTG 291000Z March 1969, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 01187.]

28 April

The US Government received \$3,566,457 from the Israeli Government in full payment for the claims submitted on **28 March**. [Department of State Press Release 116, May 13, 1969, published June 2, 1969.]

1970

1 June

Liberty stricken from the Naval Vessel Register [Naval History Center: USS *Liberty*, Ships History file.]

1971

10 May

"Review of Department of Defense Worldwide Communications, Phase 1, a Report of the Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, House of representatives, Ninety-Second Congress, First Session, Under Authority of H. Res. 201, May 10, 1971" is published. [US Government Printing Office, Washington: 1971, pp. 6-11.]

6 August

US Ambassador to Israel informs the State Department of the Israeli offer to settle the final

outstanding claim of damage to the *Liberty* for a token \$100,000. [State Department *Liberty* file: August 6, 1971 letter from W. Barbour to A. Atherton, Deputy Assistant Secretary.]

9 September

The Israeli Government offer of a token payment to settle the damage claim for *Liberty* is rejected by the State Department. [State Department *Liberty* File: September 9, 1971 letter from H. Stackhouse to J. Zurhellen, Charge d’Affaires, US Embassy, Tel Aviv.]

1976

29 June

The classified US Naval Court of Inquiry Record of Proceedings file is declassified and released. [OPNAV Memo Serial 007D32/T31 of 21 June 1976, signed 29 June 1976.]

1977

13 August

CIA Intelligence Memorandum SC No. 01415/67, “The Israeli Attack on the USS *Liberty*,” declassified in redacted form. [CIA *Liberty* File.]

1978

22 February

Following a suggestion from Israeli Foreign Ministry, the State Department formally issues a new Diplomatic Note, requesting the renewal of negotiations relating to the claim of damages to *Liberty*. [State Department *Liberty* file: DTG 180340Z February 1978, SECSATE WASHDC 43537 and DTG 230701Z February 1978, AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 2440.]

27 February

CIA Director Stansfield Turner, in a letter of this date to Senator James Abourezk, restates the CIA position:

“It remains our best judgment that the Israeli attack the USS *Liberty* was not made in malice toward the United States and was a mistake.”

Turner makes reference to both the **13 June 1967** and **21 June 1967** IMs, and that Abourezk is welcome to view the second IM in unfiltered form and Turner is making it available to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. [CIA *Liberty* file.]

1979/1980

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence conducts an investigation into the charge that the IDF attack on *Liberty* was done with the knowledge that the ship was American. Staff were sent to Israel to interview a number of the Israelis who participated in the attack. Nothing was uncovered which supported the charge. [Author interviews with a number of those former IDF members interviewed; IDF History Department, p. ii.]

1980

26 November

Following delays caused by awaiting the appointment of Ephraim Evron as Israeli Ambassador to the US (considered the principal Israeli authority on the *Liberty* case), concentration on the Camp David peace process, and State Department efforts to formulate a comprehensive negotiating position, the US Government presents to the Israeli Government a new Diplomatic Note that requested \$17.1 million to settle the *Liberty* damage claim. This was considered as a beginning position to negotiate, as it included \$9.4 million for interest accumulated since the

original **1 July 1968** claim. [State Department *Liberty* file: 26 November 1980 cable from Secretary of State to American Embassy, Tel Aviv.]

4 December

In a conversation between Israeli Ambassador Evron and Under Secretary Newsom, it was discussed that a figures of \$6 million might be possible in order to settle the damage claim. Both parties would need to seek approval. [State Department *Liberty* file: December 4, 1980 Memo of Conversation.]

16 December

The State Department accepts Israeli Government Note No. AO/315 of December 15, 1980 as "full and final" settlement concerning the *Liberty* matter. Israel agrees to pay \$6,000,000 without prejudice to the question of the liability for the tragic event. [State Department *Liberty* file: December 16, 1980 letter from Secretary of State.]

1981

April

NSA publishes a classified study of the *Liberty* incident. From the material which has been released over the years there's no indication that NSA concluded the IDF attacked the *Liberty* knowing she was an American ship. [NSA: "Attack on a Sigint Collector, the USS *Liberty* (S-CCO)", 1981.] The latest declassification review and release took place in 2003.

1983

24 January

The **21 September 1967** Salans Report declassified. [State Department *Liberty* file.]

1991

25 June

Based on a request from the USS *Liberty* Veterans Association, the House Sub-Committee on Investigations of the Armed Services Committee chairman, and staff, commence an investigation of the *Liberty* incident. [Author interviews with chairman Nicholas Mavroules (D-MA), and staff members Roy Kirk and Warren Nelson.]

1992

29 April

The investigating staff of the House Sub-committee on Investigations of the Armed Services Committee conclude that there's no basis to believe that the *Liberty* was attacked by the IDF knowing the ship was American. The chairman so notifies the *Liberty* Veterans Association. [Author interviews with chairman Nicholas Mavroules (D-MA), and staff members Roy Kirk and Warren Nelson.]

1995

25 October

The **18 July 1967** Clifford Report is declassified [LBJ Library.]

2003

2 July

As result of successful FOIA lawsuit, NSA declassifies and releases copies of tapes and transcripts of intercepted conversations between IAF helos, MTBs and an IAF controller. In

addition, further redacted portions of the April 1981 NSA classified report are released.
[<http://www.nsa.gov/Liberty/index.cfm>]

2004

12 January

State Department releases Volume XIX of the Foreign Relations, 1964-1968 series for the Johnson Administration, *Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967*. Included are previously declassified copies of many *Liberty* incident-related documents as well as four previously unknown documents. In addition the two CIA Intelligence Memorandums of **13 June** and **21 June 1967** are included, completely declassified.

[<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xix/>]

updated: 10 January 2005