

WHEN ISRAEL ATTACKED AMERICA – ACCIDENTAL OR NOT ???

THE ATTACK ON THE US SPY SHIP USS LIBERTY IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS

MOST US LEADERS / SURVIVORS CALLED IT INTENTIONAL – LBJ COVERUP...AGAIN?

HAPPENED IN JUNE 1967 (49 YEARS AGO) –STILL A MAJOR CONTROVERSY

ANOTHER BENGHAZI????

197



34 KILLED

171 WOUNDED

1 SHIP –HEAVILY DAMAGED

FOUR DECADES OF TWISTING FACTS ABOUT ISRAEL'S ATTACK ON THE USS LIBERTY

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, Israel had established itself as a force to be reckoned with and a state that was here to stay. The hatred between Israel and its neighboring Arab nations kept on mounting in the following years and led to some armed conflicts from time to time. One of these, which had a significant impact on the region's politics, was the 1967 Arab-Israeli War or the Six Day War.

The US has been a longtime ally of the state of Israel and even before its creation provided a major platform for Jewish leaders like David Ben-Gurion for advocating their opinions. After the end of WW2, Europe was busy reconstructing itself out of the ruins and the US and Russia were the only two superpowers left.

The US, to establish its global dominance stationed its military bases all over the country. Having a military base in every ally's territory wasn't feasible; therefore, special emphasis was placed on the development of a comprehensive network of naval vessels. The naval vessels weren't limited to destroyers, cruisers, or aircraft carriers but were composed of state-of-the-art surveillance and spy ships.

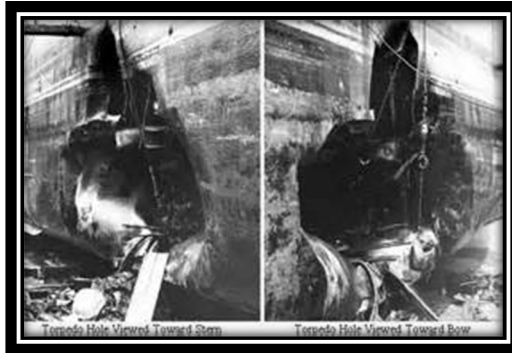


JUNE 8, 1967 – DAY OF THE ATTACK

June 8, 1967 – the fourth day of the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt, Syria and Jordan – was a beautiful day in the Mediterranean. The USS Liberty was in international waters off the coast of Egypt. **Israeli aircraft had flown over the USS Liberty in the morning and had reported that the ship was American.** The crew, close to the war zone, was reassured by the presence of Israeli aircraft. But at 2:00 p.m. sailors sunbathing on the deck saw fighter jets coming at them in attack formation. Red flashes from the wings of the fighters were followed by explosions, blood, and death. A beautiful afternoon suddenly became a nightmare. Who was attacking the USS Liberty and why? The attack on the Liberty was an attack on America.



USS Liberty with the hole from the torpedo visible



Close-up showing the entrance and exit of the torpedo

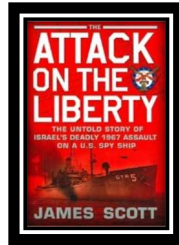
The Liberty was an intelligence ship. Its purpose was to monitor Soviet and Arab communications to warn both Israel and Washington should the Soviets enter the war on behalf of its Arab allies. The Liberty was armed only with four machine guns to repel boarders. Its request for a destroyer escort had been denied.

The assault on the Liberty is well documented. With no warning, the Liberty was attacked by successive waves of unmarked jets using cannons, rockets, and napalm. The attacking jets jammed all of the US communications frequencies, an indication they knew the Liberty was an American ship.

The air attack failed to sink the Liberty. About 30 minutes into the attack three torpedo boats appeared flying the Star of David. The Israeli boats were not on a rescue mission. They attacked the Liberty with cannons, machine guns, and torpedoes. One torpedo struck the Liberty mid-ship, instantly killing 25 Americans while flooding the lower decks. The Israeli torpedo boats destroyed the life rafts the Liberty launched when the crew prepared to abandon ship, sending the message there'd be no survivors.

At approximately 3:15 two French-built Israeli helicopters carrying armed Israeli troops appeared over the Liberty. Phil Tourney could see their faces only 50/60 feet away. He gave them the finger.

Surviving crewmembers are convinced the Israelis were sent to board and kill all survivors.



The Israeli jets destroyed the Liberty's communication antennas. While under attack from the jets, crewmembers strung lines that permitted the ship to send a call for help. The USS Saratoga and the USS America launched fighters to drive off the attacking aircraft, but the rescue mission was aborted by direct orders from Washington.

When the Liberty notified the Sixth Fleet it was again under attack, this time from surface ships, the Fleet commander ordered the carriers America and Saratoga to launch fighters to destroy or drive off the attackers. The order was unencrypted and picked up by Israel, which immediately called off its attack. The torpedo boats and the hovering helicopters sped away. Israel quickly notified Washington that it had mistakenly attacked an American ship, and the US fighters were recalled a second time.



The USS Liberty didn't sink though and was able to keep afloat to Malta where she received a batch of repairs. The destroyers USS Davis and the USS Massey arrived, providing all kinds of assistance but the fact was that it was too late, and whether the attack was intentional or unintentional, US sailors had suffered at the hands of their allies. All in all, 34 crew members were dead while 176 were injured. In May 1968 the Israelis paid a sum of \$22.6 million (converted to today's money) to the families of the dead and \$3 million to the wounded.



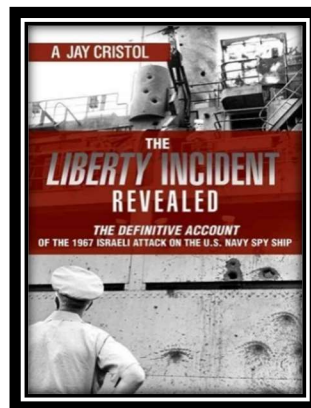
Dead In the water after the attack

The USS Liberty suffered 70% casualties, with 34 killed and 174 wounded. Although the expensive state-of-the-art ship was kept afloat by the heroic crew, **it later proved unsalvageable and was sold as scrap.**



WHY DIDN'T HELP COME?

No explanation has ever been given by the US government for Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and President Lyndon B. Johnson's orders for the Sixth Fleet to abort the rescue mission. Lt. Commander David Lewis of the Liberty told colleagues that Admiral L. R. Geis, commander of the Sixth Fleet carrier force, **told him that when he challenged McNamara's order to recall the rescue mission, LBJ came on the line and said he didn't care if the ship sank, he wasn't going to embarrass an ally. The communications officer handling the transmission has given the same account.**



A BBC documentary on the Israeli raid reports confusion about the attacker's identity almost resulted in a US assault on Egypt. Richard Parker, US political counsel in Cairo, confirms in the BBC documentary he received official communication that an American retaliatory attack on Egypt was on its way.



The US government`s official position on the USS Liberty corresponds with Israel`s: The attack was unintentional and a result of Israeli blunders. This is the official position even though CIA Director Richard Helms, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State Lucius Battle, and a long list of US Navy officers, government officials, and Liberty survivors are on record saying the Israeli attack was intentional.

According to Helms, Battle, and the minutes of a White House meeting, **President Johnson believed the attack was intentional.** Helms says LBJ was furious and complained when The New York Times buried the story on page 29, but that Johnson decided he had to publicly accept Israel`s explanation. "The political pressure was too much," Helms said.

US communications personnel, intelligence analysts and ambassadors report having read US intercepts of Israeli orders to attack the Liberty. In one intercept an Israeli pilot reports that the Liberty is an American ship and asks for a repeat and clarification of his orders to attack an American ship. One Israeli who identified himself as one of the pilots later came to America and met with US Representative Pete McCloskey and Liberty survivors. **The pilot said he had refused to participate in the attack when he saw it was an American ship. He was arrested upon returning to base.**

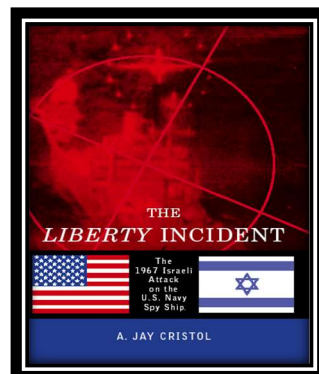
See note directly below **

**** Fifteen years after the attack, an Israeli pilot approached Liberty survivors and then held extensive interviews with former Congressman Paul N. (Pete) McCloskey about his role. According to this senior Israeli lead pilot, he recognized the Liberty as American immediately, so informed his headquarters, and was told to ignore the American flag and continue his attack. He refused to do so and returned to base, where he was arrested.**

Later, a dual-citizen Israeli major told survivors that he was in an Israeli war room where he heard that pilot's radio report. The attacking pilots and everyone in the Israeli war room knew that they were attacking an American ship, the major said. He recanted the statement only after he received threatening phone calls from Israel.

The pilot's protests also were heard by radio monitors at the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon. Then-U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dwight Porter has confirmed this. Porter told his story to syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak and offered to submit to further questioning by authorities. Unfortunately, no one in the U.S. government has any interest in hearing these first-person accounts of Israeli treachery.

The Liberty flew the US flag. The ship`s markings, GTR-5, measured several feet in height on both sides of the bow. On the stern, the ship was marked USS LIBERTY. **Mistaking the Liberty for an Egyptian ship, as Israel claims to have done, was impossible.**



TATTERED FLAGS SHOW FEROCITY OF THE ATTACKS



The Israelis claim the Liberty flew no flag, but two US flags full of holes from the attack exist. When the first flag was shot down, crewmen replaced it with a flag 7 feet by 13 feet. This flag with its battle scars is on display at NSA headquarters at Ft. Mead, Maryland.

Admiral John S. McCain Jr., the father of the current US senator, ordered Admiral Isaac C. Kidd and Captain Ward Boston to hold a court of inquiry and to complete the investigation in only one week. In a signed affidavit Captain Boston said President Johnson ordered a cover-up and that he and Admiral Kidd were prevented from doing a real investigation. Liberty survivors were ordered never to speak to anyone about the event. Their silence was finally broken when Lt. Commander Jim Ennes published his book, Assault on the Liberty.

It is now a fact that the attack on the Liberty was intentional and was covered up by President Johnson and every administration since. There has never been a congressional investigation, nor has the testimony of the majority of survivors ever been officially taken. Moreover, testimony that conflicted with the cover-up was deleted from the official record.

Disgusted by the US government's official stance discounting the survivors' reports, Admiral Tom Moorer, retired Chief of Naval Operations and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, organized the Moorer Commission to make public the known facts about the attack and cover-up. The Commission consisted of Admiral Moorer, former Judge Advocate General of the US Navy Admiral Merlin Staring, Marine Corps General Raymond G. Davis, and former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James Akins.

Actual Proportions



USS Liberty

455 feet in length, 10,680 tons displacement



El Quiser

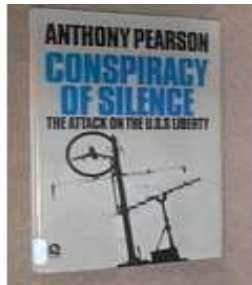
275 feet in length, 2,750 tons displacement

THEY COULDN'T IDENTIFY THE DIFFERENCE IN THESE TWO SHIPS ????

THE COMMISSIONS REPORT CONCLUDED:

"That there is compelling evidence that Israel's attack was a deliberate attempt to destroy an American ship and kill her entire crew.

"Fearing conflict with Israel, the White House deliberately prevented the US Navy from coming to the defense of USS Liberty by recalling Sixth Fleet military rescue support while the ship was under attack.



“That surviving crew members were threatened with `court-martial, imprisonment or worse` if they exposed the truth; and [the survivors] were abandoned by their government.” That there has been an official cover-up without precedent in American naval history. “That a danger to our national security exists whenever our elected officials are willing to subordinate American interests to those of any foreign nation.”

Why did Israel attack the Liberty? Was something super-secret going on that is so damaging it must be protected at all costs?

Some experts believe Tel Aviv decided to sink the Liberty because the ship`s surveillance capability would discover Israel`s impending invasion and capture of Syria`s Golan Heights, an action opposed by Washington. Others believe Israel was concerned the Liberty would discover Israel`s massacre of hundreds of Egyptian POWs, a war crime contemporaneous with the attack on the US ship. Still, others believe that Israel intended to blame the attack on Egypt to bring America into the war. It is known the US was providing Israel with reconnaissance and that there were joint US-Israeli covert operations against the Arabs that Washington was desperate to keep secret.

Survivors with whom I spoke said the attack was the easy part of the experience. The hard part has been living with 40 years of official cover-up and betrayal by the US government. *One survivor said* that he was asked to leave his Baptist church when he spoke about Liberty because the minister and fellow church-goers *felt more loyalty to Israel than to a member of the congregation* who had served his country. His church`s position was that if our government believed in Israel, the survivors should also.

Survivor Phil Tourney said that “being forced to live with a cover-up is like being raped and no one will believe you. “Survivor Gary Brummett said he “feels like someone who has been locked up for 40 years on a wrongful conviction.” Until the US government acknowledges the truth of the attack, Brummett says the survivors are forced to live with the anger and dismay of being betrayed by the country they served.

Survivor Bryce Lockwood has been angry for 40 years. The torpedo that killed his shipmates wrecked his ship, and damaged his health was made in the USA.

Survivor Ernie Gallo told me he “has been haunted for four decades” by the knowledge that his commander-in-chief recalled the US fighters that could have prevented most of the Liberty`s casualties.

Every American should be troubled by the fact that the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense prevented the US Sixth Fleet from protecting a US Navy ship and its 294-man crew from foreign attack. They should also be troubled that the President ordered the Navy to determine the attack was unintentional.

FIRST REPORT FILED AFTER THE INCIDENT (JULY 18, 1967)

President Lyndon B. Johnson directed Clark M. Clifford to examine the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty in his capacity as Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. Clifford submitted his report on July 18, 1967. *Copies of the original report are below:*

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD

July 18, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR HONORABLE W. W. ROSTOW

SUBJECT: The Israeli Attack on the USS Liberty

In accordance with your request, I have reviewed all available information on the subject.

Based thereon, I submit the enclosed memorandum which deals with the question of Israeli culpability. In the event additional significant information is received concerning the foregoing, I will submit a supplementary report.

Other questions involving U. S. command and control of the Liberty are being investigated by responsible officials in the Executive Branch.

Because of discussions held on this subject within the Special Committee, I am sending copies of this memorandum to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NY 79-389
By Cb, NARA, Date 8/30/96

Clark M. Clifford
Clark M. Clifford
Chairman

Attachment

cc: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

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PAGE 2: TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON

Sent By: LBJ LIBRARY;

512 916 5142;

Nov-16-01 1:51PM;

Page 3/3

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~~TOP SECRET - CODE WORD~~

Pres file

Tuesday, July 18, 1967
5:40 p.m.

Mr. President:

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.

Conclusions are on page 5.

W. W. Rostow

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 94-387
By ue, NARA Date 6-25-98

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD

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E.O. 12356, Sec 3.4

July 18, 1967

REF 14-329

By CB, NARA, Danbury

The Israeli Attack on the USS Liberty

The Attack

On the afternoon of June 8 (2:05 p.m., Israeli time), the USS Liberty while in international waters in the Eastern Mediterranean suffered an attack by Israeli aircraft and motor torpedo boats. When attacked the Liberty was approximately 15.5 nautical miles north of Sinai and was traveling in a westerly direction at a speed of five knots.

The initial attack consisted of five or six strafing runs by jet aircraft and was followed twenty-four minutes later with an attack by three motor torpedo boats.

The attack was executed with complete surprise, remarkable efficiency, devastating accuracy and deeply tragic results.

Israel's Explanation of the Attack

Israel's explanation of the attack is summarized as follows:

- a. The attack was an "innocent mistake--no criminal negligence was involved."
- b. Israel's Navy and Air Force had received a number of reports that El Arish was being shelled from the sea. These reports were later determined to be erroneous but, at the time they were received, they were accepted at face value by Israeli Naval and Air Force headquarters.
- c. Israeli officers who knew the Liberty had been identified earlier the same day did not connect her with the unidentified ships said to be shelling El Arish (and apparently the fact that a U. S. flag vessel was in the area was not communicated to subordinate elements of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)).

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d. A second "mistaken report" -- that the Liberty was steaming at thirty knots--was received by the IDF. When the Liberty was identified on the morning of June 8, the IDF determined from Janes Fighting Ships that the Liberty's maximum speed was eighteen knots. The second "mistaken report" led to the conclusion that the earlier identification of the Liberty was erroneous and that the vessel allegedly traveling at thirty knots was an enemy ship.

e. IDF standing orders provided that any ships in the area cruising at speeds above twenty knots may be brought under attack without further identification. Thus the air attack was launched.

f. A "third mistake" resulted in the execution of the second (motor torpedo boat) stage of the attack. This third error of the IDF was its mistaken identification of the Liberty as the Egyptian supply ship El Quseir.

g. Immediately following the air attack, serious doubts began to arise concerning the true identity of the ship, but these doubts were not communicated to the commanding officer of the motor torpedo boats before he launched the second stage of the attack.

h. Prior to launching the torpedo attack one of the Israeli boats sent an "A-A" signal (meaning "What is your identity?") to the Liberty. The Liberty, instead of identifying herself, responded with an "A-A" signal. Officers on the Israeli boats interpreted the return signal as an evasion and concluded that the vessel in question was Egyptian, whereupon the torpedos were launched.

i. The Liberty acted with lack of care by approaching excessively close to shore in an area which was a scene of war, without advising the Israeli authorities of its presence and without identifying itself elaborately. The Liberty tried to hide its presence and its identity both before it was discovered and after having been attacked.

Our Findings of Fact

Based upon a thorough review of all information on the incident which has become available thus far, I wish to submit the following findings of fact:

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a. At all times prior to, during, and following the attack, the Liberty was in international waters where she had every right to be. As a noncombatant neutral vessel she maintained the impartial attitude of neutrality at all times prior to the attack.

b. Prior to the attack no inquiry was made by the Israeli Government as to whether there were U.S. flag vessels in the general area of the Eastern Mediterranean adjoining Israel and the United Arab Republic.

c. The weather was clear and calm in the area at the time of attack and throughout the preceding hours of June 8. Visibility was excellent.

d. At all times prior to the attack the Liberty was flying her normal size American flag (five feet by eight feet) at the masthead. The flag was shot down during the air attack and was replaced by a second American flag (seven feet by thirteen feet) five minutes prior to the attack by motor torpedo boats. The Liberty did not endeavor to hide her identity or her presence in international waters at any time prior to or during the attack.

e. The Liberty's U.S. Navy distinguishing letters and number were printed clearly on her bow. The Liberty's name was painted clearly in English on her stern. (Egyptian naval ships such as the El Quseir, with which the Liberty was allegedly confused, carry their names in Arabic script.)

f. The ship's configuration and her standard markings were clearly sufficient for reconnaissance aircraft and waterborne vessels to identify her correctly as the non-combatant ship Liberty.

g. At the time she was attacked, the Liberty was making only five knots. Her maximum capability is eighteen knots, a fact which had been ascertained by IDF personnel when she was identified on the morning of June 8.

h. Prior to the torpedo attack the Liberty neither received nor dispatched an "A-A" signal. The Israeli claim that the Liberty transmitted an "A-A" signal prior to the torpedo attack is demonstrably false. The Liberty's signal light capability was totally destroyed in the air attack which occurred some twenty minutes before the torpedo boats appeared on the scene. Intermittently prior to the attack Liberty personnel observed a flashing light coming from the center boat. The first

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intelligible signal received by the Liberty was an offer of help following the torpedo attack.

1. The Liberty was reconnoitered by aircraft of unidentified nationality on three separate occasions prior to the attack--5 hours and 13 minutes before the attack, 3 hours and 7 minutes before the attack, and 2 hours and 37 minutes before the attack. Personnel on the Liberty, who observed and in some instances photographed the reconnaissance aircraft, were unable to identify them fully. Positive evidence concerning their nationality is still lacking, however, there are several grounds for assuming they were Israeli: (1) when the aircraft orbited the Liberty on three separate occasions the Arab-Israeli war was in its fourth day, the Egyptian Air Force had been substantially destroyed, and the Israeli Air Force was in effective control of the air space in the area; (2) [redacted] received information from a reliable and sensitive Israeli source reporting that he had listened to IDF air-to-ground transmissions on the morning of June 8 indicating Israeli aircraft sightings of a vessel flying the U.S. flag; (3) in the course of advancing its explanation for the attack, the Israeli Government acknowledged that the Liberty had been identified by IDF officers early on the morning of June 8.

1.3(a)(4)

j. [redacted] shortly after the torpedo attack, the Israelis began to have doubts as to the identity of the vessel and efforts were intensified to verify its identification. Ten minutes after the torpedo attack an Israeli ground controller still believed it to be Egyptian. Identification attempts continued, and forty-five minutes after the torpedo attack, helicopters were checking the masts, flag and bow number of the Liberty. By this time, there appears to have been no question in Israeli minds as to what had happened. The weight of the evidence is that the Israeli attacking force originally believed their target was Egyptian.

1.3(a)(4)

Conclusions

Based upon a thorough review of all information on the incident which has become available thus far, I wish to submit the following conclusions:

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.

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b. The evidence at hand does not support the theory that the highest echelons of the Israeli Government were aware of the Liberty's true identity or of the fact that an attack on her was taking place. To disprove such a theory would necessitate a degree of access to Israeli personnel and information which in all likelihood can never be achieved.

c. That the Liberty could have been mistaken for the Egyptian supply ship El Quseir is unbelievable. El Quseir has one-fourth the displacement of the Liberty, roughly half the beam, is 180 feet shorter, and is very differently configured. The Liberty's unusual antenna array and hull markings should have been visible to low-flying aircraft and torpedo boats. In the heat of battle the Liberty was able to identify one of the attacking torpedo boats as Israeli and to ascertain its hull number. In the same circumstances, trained Israeli naval personnel should have been able easily to see and identify the larger hull markings on the Liberty.

d. The best interpretation from available facts is that there were gross and inexcusable failures in the command and control of subordinate Israeli naval and air elements. One element of the Israeli air force knew the location and identification of the Liberty around 9:00 a.m., and did not launch an attack. Yet, hours later, apparently a different IDF element made the decision to attack the same vessel that earlier flights had identified and refrained from attacking.

e. There is no justification for the failure of the IDF--with the otherwise outstanding efficiency which it demonstrated in the course of the war--to ensure prompt alerting of all appropriate elements of the IDF of the fact that a U.S. ship was in the area. There was ample time to accomplish such alerting because the Liberty had been identified as a U.S. flag vessel five hours before the attack took place.

f. The unprovoked attack on the Liberty constitutes a flagrant act of gross negligence for which the Israeli Government should be held completely responsible, and the Israeli military personnel involved should be punished.

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VIDEO'S CONCERNING THE ATTACK ON THE USS LIBERTY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWyjkrLbvU> Time 11:26 (This portrays a cover-up in the Johnson administration)

THOUGHTS OF OTHER HIGH-RANKING MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS

There is detailed evidence from Liberty crewmen and other military and intelligence personnel that the Israeli attack was intentional. Numerous extremely high US military, intelligence, and diplomatic officials have espoused this view. Among them are:

Dean Rusk, Secretary of State under LBJ

Richard Helms, Director of the CIA

Rufus Taylor, Deputy Director of the CIA

Clark Clifford, special assistant to the President

Louis W. Tordella, National Security Agency (NSA) Deputy Director

General Marshall Carter, former director, NSA

Lucius Battle, former presidential advisor

Major General John Morrison, US Air Force, Deputy Chief NSA Operations

Oliver Kirby, former deputy director for operations/production, NSA

Lieutenant General William E. Odom, former director, NSA

Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, USN, Director NSA 1977-1981

Paul C. Warnke, Undersecretary of the Navy and later general legal counsel to the Department of Defense

Rear Admiral Merlin Staring, Staff Legal Office for Commander in Chief US Naval Forces Europe and later Chief Judge Advocate General of the Navy

George Ball, Under Secretary of State

Dwight Porter, US Ambassador to Lebanon

Lloyd M. "Pete" Bucher, US Navy, Commanding Officer USS Pueblo

Captain Ward Boston, senior legal counsel for the Naval Court of Inquiry

Rear Admiral Clarence "Mark" Hill, co-founder of the Naval Aviation Foundation

Admiral David McDonald, Chief of Naval Operations

Vice Admiral Jerome King, Jr., Deputy Chief of Naval Operations

In 2003 the Moorer Commission, an independent commission headed by Admiral Moorer, reported on Capitol Hill: "There is compelling evidence that Israel's attack was a deliberate attempt to destroy an American ship and kill her entire crew." The Moorer report went on to state, "In attacking the USS Liberty, Israel committed acts of murder against U.S. servicemen and an act of war against the United States." He also stated from his former position as Chairman Of The Joint Chiefs Of Staff "Those men were then betrayed and left to die by our government." The survivors are still awaiting justice.

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER

For the Israelis, the tight U-turn by the U.S. warplanes over the Mediterranean was proof positive that the Israeli government could get away with murder, including killing U.S. servicemen, and that Official Washington and its servile media could be counted upon to cover up the deliberate nature of the attack.

John Crewdson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the Chicago Tribune, asked McNamara about this many years later.

Crewdson has written the most detailed and accurate account of the Israeli attack on the Liberty; it appeared in the Chicago Tribune, and also in the Baltimore Sun, on Oct. 2, 2007. Read it and you'll understand why Crewdson got no Pulitzer for his investigative reporting on the Liberty. Instead, the Tribune laid him off in November 2008 after 24 years.



WHAT I SAW THAT DAY

Israel's June 8th, 1967 Holocaust
of US Servicemen
Aboard the USS LIBERTY
and its Aftermath

PHILIP F. TOURNEY, USS LIBERTY Survivor
and MARK GLENN

Several of the Liberty survivors have become friends of mine. I have listened to their stories, as Crewdson did. When June 8 comes around each year I remember them. And on special occasions, as when Terry Halbardier was finally awarded the Silver Star for his bravery, I write about them.

The mainstream U.S. media has avoided the USS Liberty case like the plague. I just checked the Washington Post and - surprise, surprise - it has missed the opportunity for the 46th consecutive year, to mention the Liberty anniversary.

On the few occasions when the mainstream U.S. media outlets are forced to address what happened, they blithely ignore the incredibly rich array of hard evidence and still put out the false narrative of the “mistaken” Israeli attack on the Liberty.



Shaking hands as the blood flows

And they attempt to conflate fact with speculation, asking why Israel would deliberately attack a ship of the U.S. Navy. Why Tel Aviv wanted the Liberty and its entire crew on the bottom of the Mediterranean remains a matter of speculation, but there are plausible theories including Israel's determination to keep the details of its war plans secret from everyone, including the U.S. government.

But there is no doubt that destroying the Liberty and its crew was the mission assigned to Israel's warplanes and torpedo boats. One Navy Admiral with a conscience, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (and before that Chief of Naval Operations) Thomas Moorer, has “broken ranks,” so to speak. Moorer helped lead an independent, blue-ribbon commission to investigate what happened to the Liberty.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE FROM THE COMMISSION'S FINDING MADE PUBLIC IN OCTOBER 2003

1. That the attack, by a U.S. ally, was a “deliberate attempt to destroy an American ship and kill its entire crew”
2. That the attack included the machine-gunning of stretcher-bearers and life rafts
3. That “the White House deliberately prevented the U.S. Navy from coming to the defense of the ship ... never before in naval history has a rescue mission been canceled when an American ship was under attack”
4. That surviving crew members were later threatened with “court-martial, imprisonment, or worse” if they talked to anyone about what had happened to them; and were “abandoned by their government.”

DOING JUSTICE

Will the USS Liberty survivors ever enjoy the opportunity to know and to tell the real story with all its evil cruelties? Or will silence continue to reign? In a different context, Russian dissident author Alexandr Solzhenitsyn wrote this warning about what silence about evil does to the foundations of justice:

“In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will rise a thousandfold in the future. When we neither punish nor reproach evildoers, we are not simply protecting their trivial old age, we are thereby ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations.” Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago.

President Obama, the crew of the USS Liberty has been “left behind” for way too many years. Do the right thing by them. Face down those who warn that you cannot risk Israel's displeasure. And add more substance to your rhetoric about our “pretty sacred rule” that we do not leave anybody wearing the American uniform behind.

AWARDS GIVEN TO CREW MEMBERS (FOR ACTIONS THAT NEVER HAPPENED ????)

2 Navy Crosses

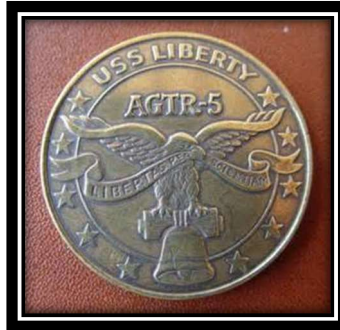
13 Silver Stars

20 Bronze Star

9 Navy Commendation Medals

1 National Security Agency Exceptional Service Civilian Award (Awarded to a civilian who was KIA)

The crew was awarded a Presidential Citation and 208 Purple Hearts



Sits dead in the water after the attack as help arrives

AFTER THE ATTACK – SUMMARY

The Mirages, after emptying their caches, left the area, but this wasn't the end. Two Dassault Mysteries took their places and these aircraft were armed with napalm bombs. The Mysteries dropped their payloads over the ship and within seconds, much of the ship's structure was set ablaze. There were reports that the ship's distress signal was repeatedly being blocked by "external means", a war crime under the Geneva Convention.

The Mysteries were once again ready to give the Liberty all they had but the Israeli Navy ordered the attack to be stopped due to the lack of return fire. They moved closer to identify the ship's markings, whatever was left of it, and read the words "GTR-5". The attack was called off immediately as it was inferred the ship was American.

General Yitzhak Rabin sent two Hornet Helicopters to look for survivors within the ship and ordered all operations be cease. **For some reason, one of the torpedo boats didn't get the message and fired a torpedo that hit the Liberty.**

Even though the crew had started displaying huge American Flags, it was unclear as to why the hostilities were taking place. Once the distress signal was unblocked, the Sixth Fleet dispatched the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga while 8 aircraft were sent down as well.

The Israeli torpedo boats approached the Liberty for assistance, however, Captain McGonagle had manned the .50 Caliber Machine Guns and ordered his men to shoot any approaching entity. Upon seeing the Israeli flag, he ordered his men to stand down but the *order was received too late, and a short burst was fired. This short burst made the Israelis paranoid once again, and another torpedo was fired upon Liberty.*



Israeli reconnaissance aircraft circling USS Liberty before the attack, from Liberty survivor file images.

There was now a 12m wide hole in the ship and 25 more servicemen had been killed. Four more torpedoes were fired as well but they missed the ship.

Confusion still loomed over the identification of the ship and episodes of firing continued until 1530. As soon as it was established that the attack had been based on error, a lengthy apology was issued to the US Naval Attaché. Back in Washington, President Johnson was shocked when he found out the attack was carried out by the Israelis since he thought the Soviets were behind it. Within 48 hours of the attack, compensation was offered to the victims & their families.

The USS Liberty didn't sink though and was able to keep afloat to Malta where she received a batch of repairs. The destroyers USS Davis and the USS Massey arrived, providing all kinds of assistance but the fact was that it was too late, and whether the attack was intentional or unintentional, US sailors had suffered at the hands of their allies. All in all, 34 crew members were dead while 176 were injured. In May 1968 the Israelis paid a sum of \$22.6 million (converted to today's money) to the families of the dead and \$3 million to the wounded.

REFERENCES / COMMENTS

Two 12-page articles have appeared in AMEU's bimonthly publication The Link:

["The USS Liberty Affair,"](#) by James E. Ennes, Jr. This issue is available in PDF download from the AMEU website. Search by author or year (1984).

["Remember the Liberty,"](#) by John Borne, with an introductory memorandum by Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This issue is available in PDF download from the AMEU website. Search by author or year (1997).

Ennes, James, Assault on the Liberty, 2002 edition. Available from AMEU, \$25.00 Ennes was the lieutenant on watch at the time the Israelis first attacked the Liberty. A full chapter is devoted to Israel's motives for knowingly attacking the ship.

Bamford, James, Body of Secrets, 2001 edition. Available from AMEU, \$19.95. Bamford offers several important pieces of information previously classified.

On page 226, e.g., he tells of President Johnson's reaction:

At 11:29 A.M. (5:29 P.M.), Johnson took the unusual step of ordering the JCS to recall the fighters while the Liberty still lay smoldering, sinking, fearful of another attack, without aid, and with its decks covered with the dead, the dying, and the wounded. Onboard the flagship of the Sixth Fleet, Rear Admiral Lawrence R. Geis, who commanded the carrier force in the Mediterranean, was angry and puzzled at the recall and protested it to Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara.

Admiral Geis was shocked by what he heard next. According to information obtained for Body of Secrets, "President Lyndon Johnson came on with a comment that he didn't care if the ship sank, he would not embarrass his allies." Admiral Geis told Lieutenant Commander David Lewis, the head of the NSA group on the Liberty, about the comment but asked him to keep it secret until after Geis died. It was a promise that Lewis kept.

Tito, Howard. The Loss of Liberty. This is a 50-minute video made in 2001 and includes graphic footage of the attack and interviews with high-ranking naval personnel. The video is also available through AMEU for \$22.50.

Triplett, William, "Death on the USS Liberty," in "VVA Veteran," Sept-Oct. 2002. Offers chilling interviews with survivors. Larry Weaver, a 21-year-old bosun's mate on the Liberty, who was not expected to live, was airlifted to the USS AMERICA, where he immediately underwent the first of 26 major surgeries. He was subsequently flown to American hospitals in Crete, Italy, and Germany, and then sent to the Philadelphia Naval Hospital for recovery. He recalls:

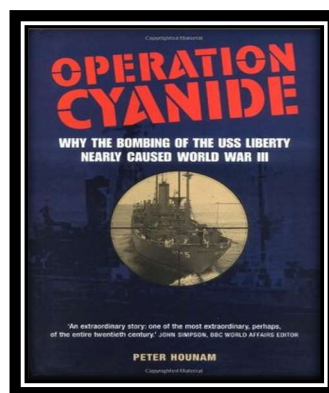
"I was four days in intensive care in a wheelchair in Philadelphia, and I was told an admiral wanted to talk to me," Weaver recalls. "I went to meet him in a room and he closed the door and deadbolted it, which kind of scared me. He then took his stars off, saying, 'I'm not an admiral now. Tell me what you know.'" Weaver told him, emphasizing, among other points, that throughout most of the attack, because of his position on the ship, he had had a clear view of the Stars and Stripes flying off the ship's bow, clearly identifying the Liberty as American.

The Israelis claim the spy ship was flying no flag. "The admiral then said, 'Okay,' and put his stars back on and he pointed at me. And he said, 'Larry, if you repeat this or talk to anyone about this you'll be put into prison and we'll throw away the key.'"

Green, Stephen. i>Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel. Published in 1984 by William Morrow and Company, Inc., this work remains a primary source on the attack and cover-up

Borne, John. The USS Liberty: Dissenting History Versus Official History. Published in 1995, this book focuses on the contradictions in the various official explanations that have been given for Israel's attack on the Liberty.

The official website for the USS Liberty is: www.ussLiberty.org



A SUMMARY WITH QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (?) ABOUT THE ATTACK ON JUNE 8, 1967

TAKEN FROM AN INTERNET POSTING DTD JUNE 9, 2014

TRUE OR FALSE?

June 8 was the anniversary of the treasonous Israeli attack on the USS Liberty, and it is a day upon which every freedom-loving American should stop and remember the 34 sailors who were killed and the 174 who were wounded in this Jewish Supremacist false flag operation.

1. What happened to the USS Liberty?

The USS Liberty was a virtually unarmed American navy ship that was attacked by Israeli planes and torpedo boats on June 8, 1967.

2. What were the American casualties?

34 American sailors were killed and 172 injured that day, a casualty rate of 70%. This is among the highest casualty rates ever inflicted upon a U.S. naval vessel.

3. What was Israel's explanation for the attack?

Israel claimed the attack was "a case of mistaken identity"; and that they didn't know it was an American ship.

4. Why would we question that explanation more than 30 years later

The ship's survivors were afraid to speak out in the early years because of threats of "court martial, prison or worse" if they did not remain silent. However, as time passed, they stepped forward to say the attack was deliberate. Recently, high government and military officials have suggested that not only was the attack deliberate, but that the US government covered up the incident. Today, an Independent Commission of Inquiry has found that Israel committed "an act of war" against the United States. In addition, the Navy's chief attorney to the original 1967 military Court of Inquiry has stated that orders to cover up the incident were issued by President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

5. Did Israel have reason to believe the USS Liberty was an Egyptian ship?

Israel says its pilots and torpedo boat commanders confused the USS Liberty with the El Quseir, an Egyptian ship allegedly firing upon its forces in the Sinai. But there was no Egyptian naval bombardment that day; nor did the El Quseir (an unarmed 1920s-era horse carrier out of service in Alexandria) bear any resemblance to the Liberty.

6. Isn't it difficult to identify a ship if you're in an airplane?

In 1967, the USS Liberty was the most sophisticated intelligence ship in the world, with dozens of large antennas, including a large moon-bounce "satellite dish" mounted on a tall structure near the stern. It may have been one of the most easily identifiable ships of any navy in the world. With a displacement of 10,000 tons, it was four times the size of the antique Egyptian transport it is claimed to have resembled. Freshly painted, the Liberty carried large white identification numbers on its bow. Egyptian hull numbers are painted black.

7. Doesn't Israel say that the Liberty flew no flag?

According to American survivors, a 5-by-8-foot American flag was hoisted early that morning and was flying all day until it was shot away by attacking aircraft. Within several minutes, it was replaced by the giant 7-by-13 feet holiday ensign, which flew for the duration of the attack.

8. Could Israel have thought the ship was in a war zone, acting suspiciously?

According to surviving crewmembers, Israeli reconnaissance aircraft closely studied the Liberty over eight hours before the attack, one flying within two hundred feet of the ship. At all times the Liberty was a marked American ship in international waters, proceeding at a speed of only 5 knots.

9. What was the weather like on the day of the attack?

Weather reports confirm that it was a clear day with unlimited visibility. The Israeli reconnaissance planes could have seen the Liberty's crew sunbathing on the upper decks just before the attack. The flag was flying in a 12-knot breeze for most of the afternoon.

10. Doesn't Israel say they ended the attack the minute they saw someone hoist an American flag?

The Israeli attack by combined air and naval forces spanned two hours — as long as the attack on Pearl Harbor. The air attack alone lasted approximately 25 minutes: consisting of more than 30 sorties by approximately 12 separate planes using napalm, cannon, and rockets which left 821 holes in the ship. Following the air attack, three Israeli motor torpedo boats torpedoed the ship, causing a 40'x 40' wide hole in her hull, and machine-gunning firefighters and stretcher-bearers attempting to save their ship and crew. More than 3,000 machine-gun bullet holes were later counted on the Liberty's hull. After the attack was thought to have ended, three life rafts were lowered into the water to rescue the most seriously wounded. The Israeli torpedo boats returned and machine-gunned these life rafts at close range. This was followed by the approach of two large Israeli Army assault helicopters filled with armed commandos carrying what appeared to be explosive satchels (they departed after hovering over the ship for several minutes, not attempting to communicate).

11. Did the Liberty send out a distress signal when it was under attack?

Throughout the air attack, the Liberty's radio operators found it difficult to transmit a distress signal because the attacking Israeli aircraft jammed all five of the Liberty's American, not Egyptian, emergency radio channels. However, a call for help did reach the U.S. Navy command in the Mediterranean.

12. What was the American response time?

Although American carrier-based air support was only 40 minutes away, help did not reach the USS Liberty for 17 hours. Navy fighters were launched from the aircraft carriers America and Saratoga while the Liberty was under attack. However, they were quickly recalled by the White House. This is the only instance in American naval history where a rescue mission was canceled when an American ship was under attack.

13. Why would Israel have deliberately attacked an American ship?

Israel's motive for launching the attack has never been determined with certainty. This is why an impartial investigation is critical. One hypothesis is that Israel intended to sink the ship (with no survivors) and blame Egypt because this might have brought the United States into the 1967 war. Another hypothesis is that the Liberty was gathering intelligence about activities that Israel did not want to be revealed. Examples might include the massacre of Egyptian prisoners of war that was then occurring in the Sinai, as well as Israel's impending invasion of Syria.

14. Has the incident been investigated in the past?

Some people say that there have been "thirteen official investigations" all concluding the attack was a case of mistaken identity. Several were conducted by Israel. Upon examination, however, everyone is based upon the conclusions of the original 1967 US Navy Court of Inquiry, which accepted the Israeli version, but which has been exposed and discredited by its chief attorney as a cover-up.

15. Did the surviving crewmembers testify in the other investigations?

In not one of these "investigations" were any of the Liberty's surviving crewmembers permitted to publicly testify.

16. Why would the White House prevent the rescue of an American ship?

This is, perhaps, the most disturbing question arising out of Israel's attack. It is why there needs to be a thorough investigation of the actions taken by the White House and the Secretary of Defense. Why did they order the recall of the planes that had been sent to rescue the Liberty? Why did they order that the survivors be silenced and the facts be withheld from the American people?

17. Why is this significant for the American people 36 years later? We have a duty to the crew of the USS Liberty, while the survivors are still alive to testify, and while the perpetrators can be brought to justice. Furthermore, any policies that paralyze our elected leadership to the extent they become unable or unwilling to protect Americans and American interests, endanger not only the safety of all Americans but also the national security of the United States.

18. Doesn't America have a special relationship with Israel?

No nation or people should be above the law; nor should American interests be subordinated to the interests of any foreign nation. Those Israelis responsible for ordering the attack and the resulting murder of American sailors must be held accountable for their actions.

IS ANYTHING STILL BEING PURSUED TODAY? This article was written in 2012

June 8 marks 40 years since Israeli air and naval forces attacked the USS Liberty, killed 34 men, wounded 174 more, disabled the ship, and lied about it. Israel is still lying and survivors still work tirelessly to tell the story but remain powerless, frustrated, and ineffective.

One can liken the Israeli government to the spoiled child of an unscrupulous dictator. Uday or Qusay Hussain, sons of Saddam, come to mind—cruel, unscrupulous, ruthless, and free to commit every conceivable outrage with impunity because they were protected by their all-powerful father.

Similarly, the government of Israel can with impunity abuse Palestinians or other neighbors, and even attack Americans, confident that the U.S. government will protect them. After all, most Israeli crimes, no matter how outrageous, go unreported in the American press, including the attack on the Liberty; repeated bombings of refugee camps, U.N. forces, ambulances, and news reporters; the killing of Rachel Corrie; the violation of U.N. accords; the shooting of children; the murders of innocent civilians, and other heinous crimes. Never are they discussed in the sacred halls of Congress, and never are the criminals sanctioned in any way, or even called to explain.

Nothing has changed in more than 40 years.

USS Liberty survivors will gather in Washington, DC this year for a 40th anniversary reunion to honor our lost shipmates and discuss tactics and progress. Two years ago we filed with the Department of Defense a detailed Report of War Crimes committed against us by the armed forces of Israel (see <www.usliberty.org/report/report.htm>). Even though the United States is required by international law and treaty to investigate any such charge, when the government of Israel is involved these rules are routinely ignored, as they have been in this case. **To no surprise, our fully documented and detailed report has never been investigated as required—or even acknowledged.**

This year Liberty survivors asked the Navy Judge Advocate General to send a representative to the reunion to explain the Navy's position. He declined. Again, no surprise.

Even though unanswered and ignored, however, our report remains active.

More than a decade ago we wrote in these pages that Israeli forces shot and killed 150 or more Egyptian prisoners of war at the town of El Arish while the USS Liberty passed just 12 miles offshore (see "Did Israel's Armed Forces Commit One War Crime to Hide Another?" in the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, May/June 1996 Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, p. 28).

The story of the massacre originally came from Israeli eyewitnesses, was reported in Israel's Yediot Ahronot and again, recently, by Israeli journalist Ran Adelist on Israeli television. Yet, then and now, it has largely been ignored in the American press and by the American government, even though this massacre was a serious war crime and could well have been the reason for the attack on Liberty.

Indeed, according to Israeli historian Michael Oren, "Ennes's report cannot be true" —for if it were there would be an international uproar and it would disrupt relations between Israel and Egypt.

Behold: There is now an uproar, and it is in full steam. A recent Reuters report indicates that an account of the massacre has reached Egypt and that the Egyptian public is outraged. Cairo has recalled its ambassador to Israel, and there are calls to sever relations and terminate the Camp David Accords.

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