~~SECRET~~

PRIORITY NONE ~~HANDLE VIA COMINT CHANNELS/PRIVACY~~

FROM: DIRNSA 12 JUNE 1967 DIR

TO: NSAEUR

Declassified and approved for release by NSA on 11-29-2006 pursuant to E.O. 12958, as amended. ST case 51665.

~~SECRET/COMINT CHANNELS/PRIVACY~~
DIR 56 D/F2-662
EXCLUSIVE KELLER FROM CARTER.

1. JCS FACT-FINDING TEAM HEADED BY MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH R. RUSS, USA, AND COMPRISED OF RADM FRANCIS J. FITZPATRICK, USN, COL. WILLIAM A. GARRETT, USAF, CAPT. WILLIAM D. OWEN, USN, AND MAJOR HARLAN E. PRIDDLE, USAF, EXAMINING CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE COMMAND AND CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS AND PROCEDURES ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS PRECEDING ATTACK ON USS LIBERTY. RUSS, FITZPATRICK AND RIDDLE VISITED NSA MORNING 12 JUNE EN ROUTE TO NAVEUR, CINCEUR, SIXTH FLT AND LIBERTY (JCS 7642, DTG 102140Z JUNE TO CINCEUR REFERS).

2. GENERAL RUSS WAS PROVIDED COPY OF REPORT PREPARED FOR DIRNSA BY AD HOC GROUP ESTABLISHED BY DIRNSA TO EXAMINE ALL INFORMATION LEADING UP TO AND INVOLVING INCIDENT. WHILE REPORT IS COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUDES INFORMATION ON SIGINT POSTURE IN MIDDLE EAST, DESCRIPTION AND CAPABILITY OF LIBERTY, AND OPERATIONAL AND TECHNICAL RESPONSIBILITIES NSA VIS-A-VIS

Lt Gen Marshall S. Carter, USA
Director

~~HANDLE VIA COMINT CHANNELS ONLY~~

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JCS, GUTS OF REPORT IS CONTAINED IN CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 23 MAY - 8 JUNE BASED ON FACTS AVAILABLE TO NSA AS FOLLOWS:

A. ON 23 MAY NSA REQUESTED JCS/JRC AUTHORIZE DIVERSION OF LIBERTY FROM IVORY COAST TO ROTA TO PREPARE FOR DEPLOYMENT TO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN IN VIEW MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

B. ON 25 MAY, ACTION INITIATED TO PROVIDE ARABIC LANGUAGE CAPABILITY. TASKING DEVELOPED SAME DAY WAS LATER PASSED TO LIBERTY ON 29 MAY and 2 JUNE.

C. JCS APPROVED NSA REQUEST 29 MAY, REQUESTED CINCLANT CHANGE OPCON OF LIBERTY FROM CINCLANT TO CINCEUR UPON SHIP'S ARRIVAL AT ROTA O/A 31 MAY, AND REQUESTED CINCEUR MAKE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS FOR EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT OF LIBERTY IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. NSA REQUESTED SAME DAY JCS APPROVAL OF OPERATIONAL AREAS FOR LIBERTY AND PROPOSED AREA 3 AS INITIAL AREA SUBJECT TO QUOTE ADJUSTMENT AS NECESSARY FOR OPERATIONAL OR SAFETY REASON UNQUOTE (NSA DTG 292013Z.)

D. JCS REQUESTED CINCEUR 1 JUNE TO DEPLOY LIBERTY ON 2 JUNE FROM ROTA TO AREA 3 AND STIPULATED CLOSEST POINT OF

APPROACH (CPA) TO ALGERIA, LIBYA AND UAR OF 13 NAUTICAL MILE DURING TRANSIT, AND CPA 12.5 NM TO UAR AND 6.5 NM TO ISRAEL UPON ARRIVAL AREA 3 O/A 9 JUNE.

E. LIBERTY DEPARTED ROTA 2 JUNE FOR AREA 3.

F. IN VIEW OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES, AND RECOLLECTION OF REPOSITIONING OF OXFORD DURING CUBAN CRISIS, NSA CALLED JCS/JRC 5 JUNE WHETHER CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT OF LIBERTY WAS CONTEMPLATED. JRC ADVISED NO ACTION CONTEMPLATED AT THAT TIME.

G. ON 6 JUNE CINCNAVEUR DIRECTED COMSIXTHFLT TO TAKE OPCON OF LIBERTY TO QUOTE FACILITATE COMMAND AND CONTROL AND POSSIBLE REQUIREMENT FOR PROTECTION DURING MID-EAST HOSTILITIES UNQUOTE, AND ALSO DIRECTED LIBERTY TO CHANGE OPCON TO COMSIXTHFLT. MESSAGE ALSO AUTHORIZED MODIFICATION OF INITIAL JCS PLAN OF OPERATIONS (SEE PARA D ABOVE) SHOULD SAFETY REASONS DICTATE.

H. NSA REQUESTED JCS ON 7 JUNE FOR CHANGE IN OPERATING AREA FROM AREA 3 TO AREA 2 IN VIEW UAR TARGETS MOVING WEST. LIBERTY REPORTED SAME DAY SHE WOULD REMAIN STATIONARY WITHIN 30 NM OF POINT ABOUT 68 NM NORTHEAST OF PORT SAID

UPON ARRIVAL AREA 3. THAT AFTERNOON, NSA REP AT JRC CALLED AND ASKED NSA COLLECTION SPECIALISTS, BECAUSE OF DISCUSSIONS UNDER WAY BETWEEN NAVY AND JCS/JRC TO ADVISE ON POSSIBILITY OF CHANGING LIBERTY'S CPA BECAUSE LIBERTY WAS 350-400 NM FROM CLOSEST SIXTH FLT SHIPS. AT SAME TIME JRC WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ADVERSE EFFECT ON LIBERTY's MISSION IF CPA WERE CHANGED. NSA DECLINED ANY STATEMENT REGARDING REPOSITIONING SINCE CPA CHANGES FOR OPERATIONAL OR SAFETY REASONS WERE MILITARY DECISION. BEFORE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, NSA REP AT JRC SAW JCS MESSAGE CHANGING CPA TO 20 NM FROM UAR AND 15 NM TO ISRAEL AND ORDERING CHANGE IN LIBERTY'S OPERATING AREA TO AREA 2 AS PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED BY NSA ON 5 JUNE. TRANSMITTED MESSAGE HOWEVER DID NOT CHANGE OPERATING AREA BECAUSE JRC DECIDED TO DO ONE THING AT A TIME.

I. LATER EVENING OF 7 JUNE, NSA REP AT JRC RECEIVED CALL FROM JRC REQUESTING CONCURRENCE IN MESSAGE CHANGING CPA TO 100 NM, PRIMARILY BECAUSE US AMBASSADOR TO UN HAD STATED NO U.S. NAVY SHIPS WITHIN 350-400 NM OF UAR/ISRAEL. DURING NIGHT COMSIXTHFLT ADVISED JCS THAT NO SURFACE SEA/AIR OPERATIONS WERE PERMITTED WITHIN 100 NM OF ISRAEL,

SYRIA OR EGYPT. JCS REACTED BY SENDING MESSAGE TO CINCEUR, INFO LIBERTY, CANCELLING 20 NM MESSAGE AND DEFINING NEW CPA AS QUOTE NO CLOSER THAN 100 NM FROM ISRAEL, SYRIA, EGYPT AND 25 NM TO CYPRUS (JCS 080110Z). LIBERTY WAS ATTACKED AT 081205Z.

4. WHILE WE COVERED MOST POINTS IN PARA 2, THE DISCUSSION CENTERED LARGELY ON COMMAND AND CONTROL RESPONSIBILITIES AS THEY CONCERN TECHNICAL RESEARCH SHIPS, AND THE JCS 080110 MESSAGE WHICH WAS MISROUTED. I EMPHASIZED THE WELL-DEFINED RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH I HAVE CONCERNING OPERATIONAL AND TECHNICAL CONTROL OVER SIGINT ACTIVITIES ON BOARD THE SHIP AND REVIEWED THE BIDDING FROM 23 MAY TO 8 JUNE TO DEMONSTRATE HOW NO NSA ACTION EXCEEDED THESE RESPONSIBILITIES. THE DISCUSSION ON THE JCS MESSAGE WAS DETAILED BUT IT SURFACED NO IMMEDIATE SOLUTIONS.

4. I AM SATISFIED THAT THE REPORT PREPARED FOR ME IS FACTUAL AND THAT IT SEEKS NO HEADS. FOR THIS REASON I LOANED GENERAL RUSS A COPY FOR HIS USE. IF YOU ARE CONTACTED BY HIM IN CONNECTION WITH HIS MISSION, PLEASE OFFER HIM EVERY ASSISTANCE.