Questions by General Carroll, Director, DIA
Answers provided by G Group/PØ4 27 June 1967

1. Did Liberty copy any Israeli air/ground communications incidental or related to the attack?

No. However, some twenty-two frequencies were noted as Israeli. These were found in searching for UAR communications in Sinai. None of them were related to the attack.

2. Was Liberty tasked to copy any Israeli air/ground communications?

No.

3. Did Liberty have any Israeli linguists on board?

NSG was not tasked to provide any Israeli linguists on the Liberty. Lack of linguists throughout the community was a factor in omitting Israeli tasking. * see addition →

4. Might the Liberty have any tapes on which Israeli air/ground/ intercept during this period might appear?

Three tapes are on hand. They do contain Hebrew voice but they were recorded prior to the attack and were not related to it.

5. What station copied the transmission which was the source of the NSA report which gave fragments of a conversation between an Israeli control post and someone after the attack? This is the one which mentioned that the target may have been a U.S. ship.

VQ-2 EC121 Airborne copied it and [redacted] processed the tape and reported. The tape was returned to NSA and a full verbatim transcript was published (last week). (2/Ø/[redacted]R1-67)

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Declassified and approved for release by NSA on 02-27-2007 pursuant to E.O. 12958, as amended. ST 51732.

* Addition to par 3.

However, in the search for Arabic linguists, one individual (Navy enlisted man) was sent TDY to the Liberty on the basis of a biography card listing him as Special Arabic (Hebrew). He is a Spanish linguist and had received 24 weeks Hebrew training at NSA 10 years ago. Someone confused Arabic with Special Arabic. Consequently the presence on board was by accident, not design.

Provided to Col. Ainsworth in Gen. Carroll's office 1645 6/27

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At approximately 1135, 10 June 1967, Mr. Hummer, ADPM Watch Office, received a telephone call from LCDR Bienstadt, Duty Officer from Navy PIO. CDR Bienstadt called to report a telephone inquiry he had just received from Reporter Richard Dudman, Washington Representative of the St. Louis Post Dispatch. As described by CDR Bienstadt, Mr. Dudman asked numerous explicit questions relating to NSA interest, activities, or manning of the LIBERTY. CDR Bienstadt further advised Mr. Hummer of his response to these questions which generally seemed to have been in accordance with the approved DoD Cover Story. However, Mr. Dudman's concluding question to CDR Bienstadt based on his failure to acknowledge any NSA involvement or to comment on the alleged presence of linguistic or translator personnel on board was "that this is neither a confirmation or denial." CDR Bienstadt indicated that he answered this question in the affirmative. Following a quick briefing with Mr. J. J. Connelly concerning this call, Mr. Hummer called Mr. Goulding's Office and spoke with General Seidel (?). General Seidel advised Mr. Hummer they had also received a call from Mr. Dudman and in General Seidel's opinion, Mr. Goulding had satisfactorily resolved the matter. General Seidel indicated that the NAV PIO had been instructed to refer such inquiries to DoD PIO, that Mr. Goulding has already discussed the matter with Captain Pickett Lumpkin, Deputy Chief of Naval Information. General Seidel stated that in his opinion, there was no course for further concern over this matter.

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Answer: The National Security Agency is charged with the responsibility for the U. S. Government communications security and cooperates with the Armed Forces in communications and communications relay operations. The National Security Agency technical reps were assisting in the USS LIBERTY's technical research and communications security operations. In this instance, the USS LIBERTY had been diverted from its normal communications research studies to aid in relaying information about the evacuation of American dependents and other American citizens from Mid-East countries.

A United States Navy technical research ship, the U.S.S. Libery, (AGTR-5), was attacked at approximately 9 a.m. eastern daylight time fifteen miles north of Sinai Peninsula in international waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Liberty had departed Rota, Spain 2 June and arrived at her present position this morning to assure for communications between U.S. government posts in the middle east and to assist in relaying information concerning evacuation of American dependents and other American citizens from countries of the middle east.

The United States has been informed by the Israelis that the attack was made in error by Israeli forces and an apology has been received from TEL AVIV. Initial report of casualties indicates four dead and 53 wounded.

The Liberty is steaming north at 8 knots to meet U.S. forces coming to her aid. It is reported the Liberty is not in danger of sinking.