

~~TOP SECRET - TRINE~~



THE JOINT STAFF

THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

9 June 1967
1526 EDT

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Attack on USS LIBERTY (AGTR-5)

1. This memorandum updates and supplements memoranda, same subject, of 1530 EDT 8 June and 0600 EDT 9 June 1967.
2. USS LIBERTY had been directed by JCS to proceed to 32-00N; 33-00E, a point 39 nautical miles north of the UAR coast. She was authorized to conduct operations south of 32-00N and between 33 and 34E, approaching no closer than 12 1/2 nautical miles of the UAR coast and 6 1/2 nautical miles from the Israeli coast. At 1950 EDT 7 June CINCUSNAVEUR was notified by telephone by JRC to modify these instructions and to ensure that LIBERTY would operate no closer than 100 nautical miles to Israel, Syria and Egypt. This was confirmed by message dispatched at 072110 EDT. CINCUSNAVEUR passed this information to COMSIXTHFLT at 080010 EDT by teletype conference and by immediate message at 080055 EDT. At 080517 EDT, COMSIXTHFLT directed LIBERTY to operate within a 25 nautical mile radius of 33-40N, 32-30E until further notice, and to approach no closer than 100 nautical miles to the coasts of the UAR and Israel and 25 nautical miles to the coast of Cyprus.
3. At 080250 EDT, LIBERTY reported she was being orbited by two jet aircraft while at 31-27N, 34-00E, a point 14 nautical miles from the coast and 22 nautical miles northeast of El Arish.
4. LIBERTY reported being under attack by jet fighters at 080805 EDT at position 31-35.5N, 33-29.0E, a point 25 nautical miles northeast of nearest land, and 3 nautical miles outside the 100 fathom (600-foot) curve. She was subjected to about six strafing passes and at 080825 EDT three torpedo boats approached the ship at high speed. The torpedo boats attacked and at 080828 EDT, LIBERTY suffered a torpedo hit on the starboard side and took a 10° list.
5. At 080850 EDT, COMSIXTHFLT ordered USS AMERICA to launch four armed A-4s and USS SARATOGA to launch four armed A-1s and for AMERICA to provide fighter cover. However, before reaching

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LIBERTY, the aircraft were recalled following COMSIXTHFLT's receipt of the Israeli acknowledgement of the attack. At this time, LIBERTY reported she had departed the area and was underway on a northwesterly course at 8 knots. At the same time, two destroyers were dispatched at best possible speed to rendezvous with the damaged ship.

6. USS MASSEY and USS DAVIS joined LIBERTY in position 33-01N, 31-59E at 090025 EDT, and transferred medical personnel to assist LIBERTY's doctor. At this time AMERICA was 138 nautical miles from LIBERTY and estimated a closure speed of 30 knots.

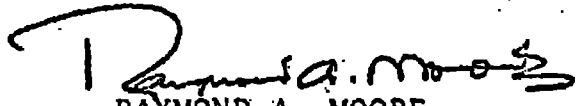
7. Casualties from the attack were 10 killed, 90 wounded, and 22 missing, reported believed to be trapped in flooded compartments near the torpedo hit. However, an intercept of the Israeli pilots transmissions indicates they sighted men jumping into the water from the vessel they had attacked. The Captain of LIBERTY was wounded and the ship's Executive Officer was killed.

8. LIBERTY reported carrying out her emergency destruction bill, which includes the destruction of tapes, technical publications and specialized equipment.

9. The helicopter transfer of wounded and dead to AMERICA is proceeding and a fleet tug will join the formation this afternoon to escort LIBERTY to Souda Bay, Crete. Arrival is estimated at 1800 EDT 10 June.

10. Additional information on this incident will be provided as received.

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Map


RAYMOND A. MOORE
Rear Admiral, USN
Deputy Director for
Operations (NMCC)