

Exhibit 4-64

attack, the visibility of the flag, and the intensity of the attack itself.

~~(C-CCO)~~ Speculation as to Israeli motivation varied. Some believed that Israel expected that the complete destruction of the ship and killing of the personnel would lead the U.S. to blame the U.A.R. for the incident and bring the U.S. into the war on the side of Israel. Ironically, even though the *Liberty* had no specific mission against Israeli communications, others felt Israeli forces wanted the ship and men out of the way in order to deny the U.S. any Sigint on Israel's preparations to attack Syria — an attack the U.S. might try to prevent.

~~(S-CCO)~~ Authors of the several books now in print about the *Liberty*, whether members of the *Liberty's* complement or not, have not had access to [redacted] Sigint reports on the Israeli helicopter pilot voice communications, nor have they had access to the confidential Israeli Government's explanation given to the U.S. Department of State.

~~(C-CCO)~~ In part because of the press speculation at the time, President Johnson directed the Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms, to prepare a report by 13 June, five days after the attack, assessing the Israeli intentions. The CIA assessment drew heavily upon the Sigint reports referred to above. While these reports revealed some confusion on the part of the pilots concerning the nationality of the ship, they tended to rule out any thesis that the Israeli Navy and Air Force deliberately attacked a ship they knew to be American.

Denouement (U)

(U) On 11 June 1968, exactly one year and three days after the attack on the *Liberty*, her commanding officer, Captain William Loren McGonagle (promoted after the attack), was presented the Congressional Medal of Honor by the Secretary of the Navy for gallantry and courage displayed during *Liberty's* hours of trial. Following that award, the Presidential Unit Citation was conferred upon the *Liberty* and crew on 14 June 1968 at Portsmouth, Virginia.

~~(C-CCO)~~ Scores of individual decorations (Bronze Star, Silver Star, etc.) were given to crew members, and 170 Purple Hearts were earned by *Liberty's* complement, including two NSA civilians, Donald L. Blalock and Allen M. Blue (the latter, posthumously).

(U) Claims against the government of Israel for compensation concerning deaths and injuries of U.S. personnel and damage to the *Liberty* were

initiated by the Department of State. In May 1968, Israel paid the U.S. Government \$3,323,500 as full payment on behalf of the families of the 34 men killed in the attack.¹³ Eleven months later, Israel paid \$3,566,457 in compensation to the men who had been wounded.¹⁴ The U.S. claim of \$7,644,146 for material damage to the *Liberty* itself was not settled until 18 December 1980 when Israel agreed to pay \$6 million.

(U) After returning to Norfolk in July 1967, the *Liberty* languished there while NSA tried unsuccessfully to obtain DoD budgetary approval to restore her to Sigint operational status; the proposed budget figure was \$10,200,000. When this effort failed, the *Liberty* was decommissioned on 28 June 1968. In 1970 the ship was turned over to the Maritime Administration and sold for scrap for \$101,666.66. In 1973 the ship came to an ignominious end as she was cut up in Baltimore's Curtis Bay shipyard.

(U) There was one aspect of the *Liberty* tragedy which should not go unnoted. This was its adverse and lingering affect on the *Liberty's* survivors. Oral interviews with USN-855 personnel some 13 years after the event, show that time has not healed all the scars.¹⁵ Apart from bitterness toward the Israeli Government, there still remains dismay that the U.S. Government or Sixth Fleet did not come to *Liberty's* aid in timely fashion.

(U) The contributions of technical research ships to this nation's Sigint production also should not go unnoted. These were unique in their time, often irreplaceable, often unheralded. That the TRS program came to an end in 1969 was not for lack of competence and dedication of the men who served or for lack of NSA's appreciation for their contributions, but rather for budgetary considerations by the Department of Defense.

Notes

Source documents are in the "Crisis Collection" of the NSA History Collection.

¹(U) The Russ Report, pp 9-10; Richard Harvey interview, 16 Jul 1980.

²(U) Walter Deeley, Memorandum for the D/DIR - "U.S.S. *Liberty*," 14 Jun 1967.

³(U) DIRNSA msg to JCS/JRC, 081503Z Jun 1967.

⁴(U) CINCLANT msg to JCS, 121414Z Jun 1967.

⁵(U) Interview with Gene Sheck, 11 Aug 1980.

~~(C-CCO)~~ NSA Staff, "Critique-Sigint Readiness Bravo Crayon," pp. 24, 29.

⁷(U) NSA Staff, Memorandum for the Record, "Telephone Conversation with Mr. Morton A. Brill, OCCE, 5 Jul 1967; NSA, [redacted] 14 Jul 1967.