

NNNN04VZCZCEUK037YEC762  
PP RUEPJS  
DE RUQMVL 0900/1 1661623  
ZNY SSSSS  
P 151615Z JUN 67  
FM USDAO TEL AVIV ISRAEL  
TO RUDLKD/CINCUSNAVEUR  
INFO RUEPKS/DIA  
BT

15 JUN 67 23 52z

~~SECRET~~  
~~NOFORN~~

~~SECRET NOFORN 0900/1~~, 67.

SECTION 1 OF 2

SUBJ: (U) USS LIBERTY INCIDENT.

REFERENCES:

- A. YOUR 141250Z JUN 67.
- B. USDAO 0825 JUN 67.
- C. USDAO 0827 JUN 67.
- D. USDAO 0834 JUN 67.
- E. USDAO 0845 JUN 67.
- F. USDAO 0849 JUN 67.
- G. USDAO 0852 JUN 67.
- H. USDAO 0858 JUN 67.
- I. USDAO 0884 JUN 67.
- J. USDAO 0886 JUN 67./
- K. USDAO 0892 JUN 67.

Declassified and approved for release by NSA on  
12-11-2006 pursuant to E.O. 12859, as amended. ST case  
51652.

FOR RADM KIDD, PRESIDENT OF COURT OF INQUIRY. FOLLOWING IS

PAGE 2 RUQMVL 0900/1 ~~SECRET NOFORN~~

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS SURROUNDING USS LIBERTY INCIDENT AS OBSERVED  
AND RECORDED BY ALUSNA TEL AVIV CDR E.C. CASTLE, USN:

1. (C) ALUSNA CALLED TO ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCE FOREIGN LIAISON  
OFFICE (IDF/FLO) AT APPROX 081400Z. MET THERE BY LT COL MICHAEL  
BLOCH, ASSISTANT IDF SPOKESMAN WHO SAID ISRAEL AIRCRAFT AND MTB'S  
HAD ERRONEOUSLY ATTACKED AN UNIDENTIFIED U.S. SHIP AT 081200Z  
PGIT 3125N 3333E. SAID MAYBE SHIP WAS U.S. NAVY. SAID HELI-  
OPTERS IN RESCUE OPERATIONS. HAD NO OTHER INFO. MADE APOLOGIES  
AND REQUESTED INFO OF OTHER U.S. SHIPS NEAR WAR ZONE COASTS. USDAO  
SENT FLASH MESSAGE, REF B.
2. (C) ALUSNA REPORTED INCIDENT TO U.S. AMBASSADOR WHO HAD JUST  
RECEIVED REPORT FROM ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY (FONMIN). AMBASSADOR  
SUGGESTED ALUSNA COULD BE FLOWN TO SITE OF INCIDENT TO ATTEMPT  
IDENTIFY SHIP AND REQUESTED HELO FLIGHT FROM DIRECTOR OF UNITED  
STATES DEPARTMENT OF ISRAEL FONMIN.
3. (C) AT APPROX 081530Z DEPUTY RWYECTOR OF U.S. DEPT ISRAEL  
FONMIN CALLED ALUSNA AND SAID IDF HELOS HAD PUT U.S. SURVIVORS  
ABOARD ISRAELI NAVY SHIPS AND THAT ALUSNA COULD BE FLOWN TO MEET  
THEIR ARRIVAL IN PORT. BEFORE DEPUTY DIRECTOR COMPLETED HIS  
STATEMENT LT COL BLOCH CAME ON SAME PHONE AND SAID THE REPORT OF

PAGE 3 RUQMVL 0900/1 ~~SECRET NOFORN~~

PICKING UP SURVIVORS WAS COMPLETELY INACCURATE AND THAT NO SUCH  
ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE. BLOCH THEN SCSNNG

BEEN IDENTIFIED AS USS LIBERTY AND THAT FLO WAS ARRANGING HELO  
FLIGHT FOR ALUSNA TO FLY TO SHIP AND COMMUNICATE WITH ELECTRIC  
MEGAPHONE WITH C.O. OF LIBERTY. USDAO SENT FLASH MESSAGE, REF C.

4. (U) AT APPROX 081540Z, FLO CALLED ALUSNA AND SAID TO PROCEED  
TO FLO TO PICK UP ESCORT FOR HELO FLIGHT. ASTALUSNA ACCOMPANIED  
ALUSNA.

5. (C) AT 081610Z (TIME RECORDED BY ASTALUSNA), HELO WAS AIRBORNE  
FROM DOV HOSS AIRFIELD ON NORTHERN EDGE OF TEL AVIV. HELO PROCEEDED  
INDIRECT INTERCEPT TO SHIP. AT 081625Z, HELO PASSED OVER THREE IDF  
MTB RUNNING NORTH. AT 081635Z, HELO WAS OVER USS LIBERTY BUT HAD  
NEITHER ELECTRIC MEGAPHONE OR HAND HELD SIGNAL LIGHT. ALUSNA HAD  
PLANNED TO BE LOWERED ABOARD LIBERTY FOR BRIEF CONFERENCE WITH  
C.O. ALUSNA IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND NOT ABLE TO CONVEY HIS  
IDENTITY TO BRIDGE OF LIBERTY. LIBERTY MADE PREPARATIONS TO  
RECEIVE ALUSNA ABOARD ON FORECASTLE. SPEED OF SHIP (WHICH IT IS ASSUMED  
COULD NOT BE REDUCED FOR DAMAGE CONTROL REASONS) CAUSED HELO  
PILOT TO SAY HE COULD NOT MAKE TRANSFER. SHIP THEN WAVED OFF  
TRANSFER ATTEMPT. ALUSNA WROTE NOTE INQUIRING AS TO CASUALTIES



REF 35 EUN 61 ENEA 7 21  
RUMVL 0900/2 1661745  
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151615Z JUN 67 ZFG  
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~~SECRET NOFORN~~ 0900/2 JUN 67.  
SECTION OF TWO

WERE AN OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF THE INCIDENT. LCOL BLOCH  
COULD NOT SUPPLY A PREAMBLE ON HIS OWN AND ALUSNA REQUESTED HE  
CONSULT WITH SOME AUTHORITY WHO COULD BLOCH CALLED BACK AND  
GAVE ABOVE NON-COMMITAL HEADING. USDAO SENT IMMEDIATE MSG REF  
DESCRIBING ABOVE EXCHANGE AND COMMENTING ON UNLIKELYHOOD OF  
PROFESSIONAL NAVAL OFFICERS CONFUSING LIBERTY AND EL GUSEIR  
AND EVALUATING NAVY'S ERRONEOUS ATTACK AS RESULT OF EAGERNESS  
OF IDF NAVY TO GLEAN SOME PORTION OF GREAT VICTORY BEING WON  
BY IDF ARMY AND AIR FORCE.

10. (C) AT APPROX 091400Z, ALUSNA RECEIVED PHONE CALL FROM  
RADM MOORE AT NMCC REGARDING TYPE AND EXTENT OF SEARCHES FOR  
SURVIVORS MADE BY IDF NAVY. RADM MOORE PUT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS  
BUT PHONE CONNECTION VERY POOR. ALUSNA STATED HE UNDERSTOOD

PAGE 2 RUMVL 0900/2 ~~SECRET NOFORN~~

TENOR OF QUESTIONS AND WOULD ACT ON THAT BUT REQUESTED MSG  
BACKUP WITH DETAILED QUESTIONS. ON QUERY ALUSNA TOLD RADM MOORE  
THAT IN VIEW GENERAL RECENT NON-COOPERATION OF FLO REGARDING USDAO  
REQUESTS FOR INFO ON HOSTILITIES, SLOWNESS OF REPLY TO QUERY  
REGARDING POSSIBLE SURVIVORS, AND THE JUST RECEIVED QUOTE SEVEN  
POINTS UNQUOTE THAT U.S. REQUESTS FOR ISRAELI SEARCH ACTION  
WOULD PROBABLY GET BETTER RESPONSE AT LEVEL HIGHER THAN USDAO  
TO FLO. REQUESTS FOR INFO AND RENEWED SEARCH WERE PASSED TO  
FLO IMMEDIATELY.

11. (S) AT 091830Z, LCOL BLOCH TELEPHONE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS  
TO ALUSNA.

A. FOLLOWING ATTACK, 31 84-3)8 .57'S OFFERED HELP TO LIBERTY  
BUT WERE REFUSED.

B. S CONTINUED SEARCH IN ATTACK AREA UNTIL 081504Z WITH  
NEGATIVE RESULTS EXCEPT FOR RECOVERY OF RUBBER LIFE BOATS AND  
OTHER EQUIPMENT.

C. MTB PERSONNEL STATE THEY SAW NO ONE JUMP INTO THE SEA OR  
IN SEA.

D. IDF HELICOPTERS WERE OVER LIBERTY 081305Z TO 08131-Z AND  
WERE WAVED OFF. HELOS CONDUCTED SEARCH UNTIL 081504Z.

PAGE 3 RUMVL 0900/2 ~~SECRET NOFORN~~

E. LCOL BLOCH HAD INTERVIEWED ALL PILOTS OF ATTACKING  
AIRCRAFT EXCEPT ONE. ALL STATED THEY HAD SEEN NO ONE IN OR  
ENTERING WATER.

F. IDF HAD INSTITUTED LIGHT PLANE SEARCH UPON RECEIPT OF  
QUESTIONS REGARDING SEARCHES AND WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL DARK  
NESS OF JUNE.

G. IDF NAVY ESTIMATED STANDARD WIND AND CURRENT CONDITIONS  
WOULD CARRY SURVIVORS OR DEBRIS TO POINT ON GAZA STRIP  
COAST OPPOSITE CITY OF RAFAH.

H. IDF AGREED TO CONDUCT SEARCH ATTACK AREA AND WATERS TO  
GAZA COAST LINE BEGINNING FIRST LIGHT, 0 JUNE.

I. AS ABOVE BEING DRAFTED AS USDAO FLASH MSG; REF F, LTCOL  
BLOCH TELEPHONED INFO THAT LAST PILOT HAD BEEN INTERVIEWED.  
THAT PILOT THOUGHT HE SAW SIX TO TEN YELLOW BOATS WITH  
PEOPLE IN WAKE OF LIBERTY. BLOCH DISCREDITED THIS REPORT.

10. (S) 1-5 100730Z, LTCOL BLOCH REPORTED AIR SEARCH WITH  
NEGATIVE RESULTS. BEGAN AT 100300Z AND THAT SURFACE SEARCH WOULD  
BEGIN IN AFTERNOON. ALUSNA RECOMMENDED TO US AUTHORITIES THAT IF NO  
RESULTS DEVELOPED BY NIGHT ALL TERMINATION OF SEARCH BE AUTHORIZED.  
USED THIS PARA SENT AS USDAO FLASH MSG, REF G.

13. (S/NFD) AT APPROX 020930Z, USDAO SOURCE REPORTED SECONDARY SOURCE GAVE INFO GATHERED BY OVERHEARING IDF AF AIR TO CONTROL FREQUENCIES INFO SUGGESTED THAT IDF AIRCRAFT MADE TWO OR THREE IDENTIFICATION PASSES OVER A SHIP SOMETIME PRIOR TO ATTACK ON LIBERTY AIRCRAFT REPORTED SHIP HAD U S FLAG BUT NO PERSONNEL ON DECK INFO THIS PARA FORWARDED TO LIMITED ADDRESSEES INCLUDING CNO AND DIA IN USDAO 0854 JUN 67.

14. (S) AT APPROX 01915Z, IDF SPOKESMAN REPORTED NEGATIVE RESULTS FROM DAY LONG AIR AND SURFACE SEARCH BUT SAID IDF NAVY STILL OPERATING IN AREA AND WOULD CONTINUE ALERT WATCH FOR SURVIVORS THIS INFO SENT IN USDAO IMMEDIATE MSG, REF H.

15. (S/NFD) ON QUERY FROM DIA, USDAO TEL VIV IMMED MSG, REF I, REPORTED INABILITY TO RECHECK STORY OF SECONDARY SOURCE CITED PARA 13 ABOVE. HOWEVER USDAO WAS ABLE PROVIDE IN REF I INFO ON MTB ATTACK RECEIVED BY EMBASSY OFFICER FROM IDF NAVAL OFFICER WHO SAID HE WAS ABOARD MTB. SAID MTB'S LAUNCHED TORPEDOS AT LIBERTY WHEN THEY SAW HER UNDER ATTACK BY AIRCRAFT. MTB CREW SAW U 1. FLAG AFTER TORPEDO LAUNCH. SAID FLAG HAD BEEN OBLSCURED BY SMOKE. IN SAME REF ALUSNA OFFERED PROBABLY BUT NOT CERTAIN SERIES OF EVENTS AS FOLLOWS.

- A. IDF AIRCRAFT REPORTED AND IDENTIFIED LIBERTY AS U.S.
- B. IDF AF HQ MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BROADCAST INFO TO ALL UNITS BUT PROBABLY UNIFORMED AIRCRAFT RETURNING FROM STRIKE IN EGYPT HAD ATTACKED LIBERTY
- C. MTB'S SAW AIRCRAFT ATTACKING LIBERTY AND PRESUMED HER TO BE EGYPTIAN SHIP THEY EAGERLY RACED INTO ACTION WITHOUT WAITING TO IDENTIFY OUR SHIP

16. (S) AT APPROX 031200Z WHEN ALUSNA VISITED FLO ON OTHER BUSINESS, LTCOL BLOCH OPENED CONVERSATION BY SAYING HE WAS HEARING MALICIOUS UNTRUE STORIES ABOUT INCIDENT FROM U.S. (PRESUMABLY NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE ITEM). ALUSNA SAID ATED IN QUOTE MALICIOUS REMINDED BLOCH THAT SOME MONTHS EARLIER WHEN USN AIRCRAFT HAD ACCIDENTALLY PENETRATED THE ISRAELI AIR CONTROL ZONES, THE IDF AF CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE HAD ARROGANTLY ALTHOUGH FACETIOUSLY SUGGESTED THAT NEXT TIME HE MIGHT HAVE TO ATTACK THE PLANES OR SHIP BLOCH SAID THAT THAT OFFICER TALKS QUOTE A LOT OF NONSENSE UNQUOTE AND THAT HE HOPED ALUSNA DIDN'T THINK OTHER IDF OFFICERS WERE LIKE THAT ALUSNA REPLIED HE JUST WANTED IT TO BE CLEAR THAT HE WANTED TO HEAR NOTHING BUT

OFFICIAL COMMENTS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE LIBERTY INCIDENT

17. (S) AT 031255Z, LTCOL BLOCH CALLED ALUSNA TO REPORT IDF COFS GENL RABIN HAD APPOINTED AN OFFICIAL COURT OF INQUIRY IN THE INCIDENT INVOLVING USS LIBERTY. THIS INFO SENT AS USDAO IMMEDIATE MSG, REF J.

18. (CWL ON 14 JUNE, ALUSNA WAS ASKED TO MEET IDF NAVY COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMMODORE ERELL, AT FLO IN EARLY EVENING. COMMODORE ERELL PRESENTED APOLOGIES TO U.S. NAVY ON BEHALF OF IDF NAVY. ERELL STATED HE DID NOT WANT TO COMMENT ON ELEMENTS OF THE MISTAKE UNTIL AFTER COURT OF INQUIRY REACHED ITS FINDINGS. ON QUERY ERELL SAID HE PRESUMED FINDINGS WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO USG. THIS INFO AND AMPLIFYING DETAILS SENT IN USDAO PRIORITY MSG, REF K.

19. COMMENT: A ABOVE DOES NOT INCLUDE EXCHANGES BETWEEN U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT AND GOI OF WHICH U.S. MILITARY ATTACHES WERE AWARE BUT IN WHICH THEY TOOK NO PART

B. DESPITE THE LENGTH AND DETAIL OF ABOVE IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT IT DOES NOT ADD SIGNIFICANTLY TO REFERENCED MESSAGE REPORTS FROM INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO USDAO TEL AVIV IT CAN BE PRESUMED THAT ONLY THE IDF KNOWS WITH CERTAINTY THE EXACT SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT LED TO THE TRAGIC INCIDENT.

C. COORDINATED WITH EMBASSY. GP\_3.

BT

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