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12958, as amended ST 51667

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NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

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CNO
ASD (PA)
CINCLANTFLT
CONSERVLANT
CONSERVRON EIGHT
USS LIBERTY

~~NOT TO BE CONFIDENTIAL~~

USS LIBERTY DRYDOCKING AT MALTA SITREP FOUR

1. SHIP ENTERED DRYDOCK AT 1400A. AT 1530 CANVAS HAT IN PLACE AND
COMMENCED PUMPING OUT. DRYDOCK DRY AT 1915. SEVERAL DELAYS
BUT NO MAJOR DIFFICULTIES WERE ENCOUNTERED. MODERATE AMOUNT OF
FLOATING MATERIAL, SOME OF WHICH WAS CLASSIFIED, WAS RECOVERED IN
DOCK BY US NAVY SWIMMERS AND RAFT WATCH.

2. TORPEDO DAMAGE AS FOLLOWS:

- A. SHELL DAMAGE: HOLE CENTERED AT FR. 60 AND EXTENDING 24 FT DOWNWARD
FROM JUST BELOW SECOND DECK AND LONGITUDINALLY FROM FRAME 53 TO FRAME
66 (39 FEET). HOLE TEARDROP IN SHAPE, LARGER AT BOTTOM.
- B. INTERIOR STRUCTURAL DAMAGE: OUTBOARD 15 FEET OF FIRST PLATFORM
AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURE BADLY DAMAGED. LESSER DAMAGE TO SECOND
PLATFORM DECK (TANK TOP). SECOND DECK AND FRAMES BUCKLED FROM FR. 57
TO FRAME 62 AND EXTENDING INBOARD 15 FEET.
- C. MAJOR DAMAGE TO ALL INTERIOR JOINER BULKHEADS BELOW SECOND DECK.
FRAME 52 TO 78, ENTIRE WIDTH OF SHIP.
- D. KEEL STRAIGHT AND APPARENTLY NOT DAMAGED.

3. MISSING MEN, SEARCH AND REMOVAL OF BODIES COMMENCED AT 1830.

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SEARCH EXTREMELY DIFFICULT DUE TO MASSES OF DEBRIS THROUGHOUT FLOODED AREAS. AS OF 2200 TWELVE BODIES ACCOUNTED FOR AND ENCASED AND WILL BE DELIVERED TO NAPLES TONIGHT FOR FINAL IDENTIFICATION AND PREPARATION. SEARCH CONTINUES FOR REMAINING THIRTEEN BODIES. BEST ESTIMATE FOR FINAL ACCOUNTING AND AIR SHIPMENT TO NAPLES IS 0800 15 JUNE.

4. PUBLIC RELATIONS,

A. STILL AND MOPIX OF LIBERTY ENTERING PORT, PREPARATIONS FOR DRYDOCKING, TOPSIDE EXTERNAL DAMAGE, AND COMMANDING OFFICER POINTING OUT DAMAGE ON BRIDGE AND IN STATEROOMS HAS BEEN FORWARDED NAVPHOTOCEN BY COURIER. DELIVERY EXPECTED APPROX MIDNIGHT (LOCAL) WED.
B. ONE ROLL 35MM BLACK AND WHITE CONTAINING ABOUT SIX STILLS OF COMMANDING OFFICER AS ABOVE WAS DELIVERED UNDEVELOPED TO ASSOCIATED PRESS: HALFA AT 141400Z FOR POOL TO ALL.
C. NBC AND CBS HAVE SHIPPED OWN EXTERNAL DISTANT PHOTOGRAPHY TO LONDON FOR SATELLITE TRANSMISSION. TF PAO DID SHORT INTERVIEW AT REQUEST OF CBS.
D. PAO PROVIDING EMBASSY FREQUENT PROGRESS REPORTS FOR USE IN ANSWERING LOCAL INQUIRIES. CHIEF QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, ARE: "WHEN CAN WE INTERVIEW CAPTAIN? WHEN CAN WE VISIT SHIP? AND HOW MANY BODIES ARE ABOARD", NONE OF WHICH CAN BE ANSWERED AT THIS TIME.
E. EXISTENCE OF TF 100 HAS NOT ATTRACTED PUBLIC NOTICE. DO NOT RPT NOT INTEND TO MENTION PRESENCE OF ADM RENKEN UNLESS DIRECTLY QUERIED.
F. AS WRAP-UP, PRESENTLY INTEND TOMORROW MORNING INVITE NEWSMEN INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHERS, FOR RIGIDLY CONTROLLED TOUR TOMORROW AFTERNOON OF TOPSIDE AREAS PLUS ONE OR TWO COMPARTMENTS ON LOWER DECKS, NEAR POINT OF IMPACT, FROM WHICH ALL CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN REMOVED.
PLAN TO PERMIT PHOTOGRAPHS OF EXTERIOR DAMAGE AND INTERIOR SHOWING AT THIS TIME, BUT EXTERIOR OF HOLE IN HULL WOULD BE COVERED BY CANVAS. COMMANDING OFFICER WOULD MEET NEWSMEN AND BE PHOTOGRAPHED, BUT ASIDE FROM PAYING TRIBUTE TO CREW HE WOULD MAKE NO RPT NO COMMENTS ON INCIDENT AND WOULD NOT RPT NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS REGARDING IT. BELIEVE THAT IF NEWSMEN KNOW CAPTAIN WILL CONTINUE TO BE UNAVAILABLE FOR SOME TIME. THIS TOUR WILL CLOSE OUT STORY HERE AND OUT OF TOWN NEWSMEN WILL DEPART.

5. BY WORKING THROUGH THE NIGHT EXPECT TO CLEAR TORPEDO DAMAGED AREA OF ALL REMAINS AND CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT BY 151100Z.

6. IN SUMMARY, THE USS LIBERTY PERFORMED MAGNIFICENTLY, COMMANDING OFFICER TO SEAHAM, FROM ARRIVAL IN EASTERN MED OPERATING AREA, THROUGH THE ATTACKS UNTIL SAFELY DRYDOCK TODAY. WITHOUT SUCH PERFORMANCE THE SHIP MIGHT EASILY HAVE BEEN LOST IN RELATIVELY SHALLOW WATER.

7. ANTICIPATE NEXT AND FINAL SITREP BY 150200Z. UNODIR PLAN DISSOLVE

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IF 100 AND DEPART 151300A IN P3A AIRCRAFT WITH CAPTAIN SMITH,
 CDR PLATZKE, LCDR HOYD, LT LEVESQUE, CWO WICKMAN, LT LEE, AND
 LT EDHISTEN. THE FOLLOWING WILL STAY WITH SHIP FOR PURPOSE INDICATED:
 CAPT ARTHUR ABOUT 3 WEEKS TO SUPERVISE MALTA AND NNSY PLANNED
 DESIGNERS WHO ARRIVED TODAY.
 CAPT HORNE SEVERAL DAYS FOR ADMIN.
 CAPT CASTILLO ONE TO TWO DAYS TO WIND UP PA.
 CDR KAUDER AND LCDR UNDERHILL FOR SEVERAL DAYS FOR SUPPLY MAT.
 COMDESRON 12 UNTIL 19 JUNE FOR COMMUNICATIONS.
 GP-4 (FOR U.S. ADDEES ONLY)K

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