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FOR ADM MCCAIN, GENERAL BURCHINAL, ADM McDONALD
FROM VADM MARTIN

PRESS BRIEFING COVERING DAMAGE TO USS LIBERTY AND HEROIC ACTION OF CREW

1. AFTER RETURNING FROM ONE HOUR ABOARD LIBERTY YESTERDAY
AFTERNOON, I VISITED WITH THE EIGHT INJURED LIBERTY CREWMEN IN
LITTLE ROCK SICK BAY. A STORY OF TRULY HEROIC ACTION BY LIBERTY CREW
WAS REVEALED. LATE LAST EVENING CAPTAIN RUSSEL ARTHUR, SIXTH
FLEET MAINTENANCE OFFICER CAME ABOARD FLAGSHIP HAVING JUST LEFT
LIBERTY AFTER MAKING DETAILED ESTIMATES OF DAMAGE. CAPTAIN

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ARTHUR WAS ABLE TO CONFIRM THAT IT WAS ONLY THROUGH THE
MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND HIS CREW THAT
THE SHIP WAS ABLE TO SURVIVE.

2. THIS MORNING ABOARD USS AMERICA, CAPTAIN ARTHUR AND I TALKED TO
THE MEDIA REPS AS LONG AS THEY WANTED TO TALK ABOUT DAMAGE TO
THE SHIP AND THE ENSUING ACTIONS OF THE CREW.

3. WHILE I WAS TALKING WITH COMMANDER WILLIAM L. MCGONAGLE,
SKIPPER OF LIBERTY, MY FLAG LIEUTENANT, LIEUTENANT ROBERT
SUNSHINE, TOOK NOTES. DURING THE PRESS BRIEFING, LIEUTENANT
SUNSHINE WAS ABLE TO GIVE THE NEWSMEN AN INTERESTING ACCTNT OF THE
ACTIONS ABOARD SHIP AFTER LIBERTY WAS ATTACKED.

4. I WAS ASKED SPECIFICALLY BY THE PRESS, QUOT "IS THE LIBERTY AN
AGB SHIP, WAS SHE IN THOSE WATERS COLLECTING INTELLIGENCE
UNQUOTE. I REPLIED, QUOT "EMPHATICALLY NO. LIBERTY WAS UNDER MY
OPERATIONAL CONTROL OPERATING IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS OF THE
EASTERN MED TO ENSURE RELIABLE COMMUNICATIONS RELAY FROM
THREATENED U. S. POSTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST FROM WHICH MASS EVACUATION
OF U. S. NATIONALS MIGHT BECOME URGENT." UNQUOTE. I EXPLAINED ALSO THAT
LIBERTY WAS WHERE SHE WAS BECAUSE THAT WAS JUST THE BEST POSSIBLE
POSITION TO CARRY OUT THIS FUNCTION BECAUSE, QUOTE AFTER AN EMBASSY

SPY

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OR CONSULATE IS ATTACKED THEIR ONLY MEANS OF REQUESTING EVACUATION
MIGHT BE VERY LOW POWERED RADIO SETS.

MANY SUCH SMALL TRANSDUCERS HAVE ONLY LINE OF SIGHT CAPABILITY
UNQUOTE. I SAID THAT LIBERTY POSSESSED EXCELLENT COMMUNICATIONS
CAPABILITY AND PROVED IT BY BEING ABLE TO RIG A VOICE TRANS-
MITTER TO CALL FOR HELP AFTER THE ATTACKS HAD WIPED OUT ALL HER
EQUIPMENT. AS TO LIBERTY'S CAPABILITIES OUTSIDE OF BEING A VERY
RELIABLE RADIO GUARD FOR EVACUATION OPERATIONS, I TOLD THEM THE
SHIP WORKS ON A NUMBER OF PROJECTS, SUCH AS MAGNETIC WAVE
COMMUNICATIONS WHICH ARE OF A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT NATURE ABOUT
WHICH I HAD NO INFORMATION.

5. IN GENERAL QUESTIONING, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAD ORDERED
AIRCRAFT AIRBORNE QUOTE TO PROTECT, AND ONLY TO PROTECT OJS
LIBERTY AS SOON AS I WAS CONVINCED THAT A U.S. SHIP WAS REALLY
UNDER ATTACK, AND CALLED BACK THE AIRCRAFT WHEN I BECAME AWARE
THAT THEY WERE NOT REQUIRED UNQUOTE. THE PRESS WAS ALSO INFORMED
THAT SENIOR COMMANDERS HAD BEEN KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF MY ACTIONS
AND RECEIVED COPIES OF ALL MY MESSAGES.

6. THUS WE WERE ABLE TO GIVE THE NEWSMEN A GREAT DEAL OF GENERAL
INFORMATION AND THEIR APPRECIATION WAS UNMILTAKABLE.