

U.S.S. LIBERTY



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WASHINGTON 99072

July 1, 1991

The Honorable Nicholas Mavroules
United States House of Representatives
2334 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Mavroules:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us concerning the USS Liberty incident during our June 25th trip to Washington.

At your request we have prepared the following list for you to consider. We hope that these items, when coupled with the information we provided during our meeting and that which you may obtain from other sources available to you, will prove sufficient to convince you that the incident does warrant the complete and comprehensive Congressional investigation we are asking you to initiate.

- 0 When USS Liberty crewmen responded to the request from the bridge to "Prepare to abandon ship," life rafts were dropped over the side. Those life rafts were deliberately destroyed by machine gun fire from the attacking torpedo boats.
- 0 After machine gunning our life rafts, the torpedo boats took one life raft aboard and immediately departed the scene without offering any assistance whatsoever. (These first two items have been described as "Grave Breeches" of the Fourth Geneva Convention.)
- 0 Admiral Isaac Kidd who headed the US Navy Court of Inquiry solicited and received statements (both written and verbal) from over 65 USS Liberty crewmen. Those statements do not appear in the US Navy Court of Inquiry Report and have disappeared from US Navy files.
- 0 A detailed deposition by then-Lt. James M. Ennes, Jr. (Officer of the Deck during most of the daylight hours preceding the attack) given from his hospital bed to an officer of the Court does not appear in the US Navy Court of Inquiry Report and has disappeared from US Navy files.
- 0 An audio tape of conversations (in Hebrew and English) between the attacking jets and their headquarters - clearly indicating a correct identification of the ship - which was given to the Court by Lt. George Golden does not appear in the US Navy Court of Inquiry Report and has disappeared from US Navy files.
- 0 The US Navy Court of Inquiry violated Navy Regulations and ignored rules of evidence and procedure. The Court failed to interview bridge lookouts, gunners mates, signalmen, key conning officers, and the ship's surviving second-in-command, and failed to review such vital documents as the ship's deck log, weather log and quartermaster's notebook.

- 0 Although otherwise ignored by the Court, the ship's official deck logs were rewritten and refiled with the Navy without the knowledge or permission of the officers who actually stood the watches. And the ship's weather log was specifically excluded from the record.
- 0 The US Navy Court of Inquiry Report contains Findings of Fact that are not supported (i.e., are speculative) - or are contradicted - by evidence and testimony in the report.
- 0 The legal advisor for the convening authority - Adm. Melvin Starring (later to become the US Navy Judge Advocate General) - rejected the completed Court of Inquiry report as inadequate and advised his boss not to sign it. But his advice was ignored and the report was officially approved.
- 0 We were promised support within ten minutes and were under fire and in need of support for 2-1/2 hours. Yet the support never came. The USS Saratoga sent jets to our assistance at 2:09, nine minutes after the attack started and about 26 minutes before the torpedo explosion. Those aircraft might have arrived in time to save at least 25 lives, but they were recalled while we were still calling for help. And no one in authority has ever wondered why rescue aircraft, dispatched from the carrier Saratoga in time to prevent the torpedo attack, were called back while the ship was still under fire.
- 0 Neither Captain Joseph Tully, Commanding Officer of the USS Saratoga nor his Executive Officer Max Morris have ever been contacted by the US Navy to provide testimony concerning their launch of two flights of rescue aircraft. Indeed, the US Navy denies two flights were launched.
- 0 USS America catapult launch personnel have indicated the aircraft they launched were armed with nuclear weapons. No testimony has ever been solicited by the US Navy from USS America or USS Saratoga personnel.
- 0 In the briefing in preparation for the second launch from the USS Saratoga, briefers used large maps of Egypt, pointing out surface-to-air missile sites, antiaircraft emplacements, port facilities, and other military locations.
- 0 Survivors have twice produced Israeli citizens who claim to have observed the attack from the Israeli side and who have offered to testify that it was deliberate. No government official has ever been willing to listen.
- 0 Glaring discrepancies between the US Navy Court of Inquiry Report and the report prepared by the government of Israel were specifically identified by State Department Legal Advisor Carl Salans in his memorandum of September 21, 1967. No effort has ever been made to resolve those discrepancies.
- 0 Public discussion of the USS Liberty incident by those of us who survived the incident or by members of our families are routinely met with cries of "anti-Semitic" and "NAZI." As are our efforts to memorialize the

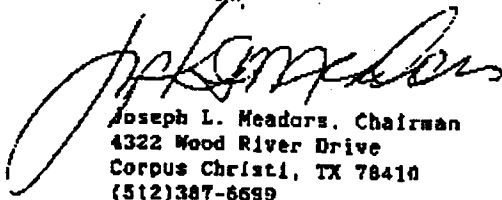
sacrifice of our shipmates and the suffering of their families. And our efforts to enlist the services of Jewish and pro-Israeli organizations (both local and national) to help us remove the incident from the arsenal of people and groups with an agenda that is inimical to the Jewish Community or the State of Israel have proven unsuccessful.

- o Efforts to memorialize our shipmates are routinely met with stiff opposition. The committee coordinating the construction of a memorial in Poughkeepsie, New York commemorating the ultimate sacrifice of its citizens in all this Country's battles doggedly refused to include the name of Richard Keene (KIA-USS Liberty) on its monument until faced with the threat of public humiliation by the USS Liberty Veterans Association. Efforts to memorialize Francis Brown have had to overcome the same resistance in Troy, New York. And a plaque honoring our fallen shipmates was found to be unworthy to be placed in Veterans Park in Flint, Michigan alongside others honoring our country's battle deaths.
- o The citizens of Grafton, Wisconsin were subjected to two years of outrageous and vitriolic condemnation by opponents to their naming their new public library in honor of our shipmates.
- o USS Liberty survivors giving a presentation about the incident to Grafton's Rose-Harms American Legion Post had to be met at the airport and escorted to town by plainclothes police officers and the memorial service held in Grafton prior to the dedication of the library had to be protected by an armed police SWAT team due to terrorist threats to disrupt the ceremony.
- o The United States Naval Academy at Annapolis was unwilling to honor its graduates who were killed on the USS Liberty. It took the direct intervention of the Secretary of the Navy to persuade them to include the names of Philip Armstrong and Steven Toth in their Hall of Heroes which commemorates its alumni who have given their lives for our country.
- o The American Red Cross refused to honor USS Liberty survivors' requests to notify our next of kin as to our condition.
- o The Medal of Honor was presented to the USS Liberty's Commanding Officer William L. McGonagle during a spur-of-the-moment ceremony at the Washington Naval Shipyard instead of at the White House by the President as was customary during the Vietnam War era.

This list is admittedly brief but hopefully sufficient to convince you that the USS Liberty incident does, indeed, warrant a complete and comprehensive public Congressional investigation.

We will be happy to provide you with further information that you may require.

Sincerely,



Joseph L. Meadors, Chairman
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