

Navy Officers Break Silence on USS Liberty

by Michele Steinberg

The affidavit of Capt. Ward Boston, U.S. Navy, Judge Advocates General Department (ret.), was released to the public for the first time on Oct. 22, in a hearing room of the House of Representatives Rayburn Office Building, by the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Israeli Attack on the *USS Liberty*. Representing the Commission were Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, USN (ret.), the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Rear Adm. Merlin Staring, USN (ret.), the former Judge Advocate General of the Navy. Moorer and Staring are chairman and director, respectively, of the Liberty Alliance, an organization whose purpose is to bring about “the convening of a new Naval Board of Inquiry,” operating with Congressional oversight, to investigate the Israeli armed forces’ attack on June 8, 1967 on the *USS Liberty*, which was sailing in international waters off the coast of Egypt.

A 36-Year Coverup

Captain Boston’s affidavit states, “For more than 30 years, I have remained silent on the topic of the *USS Liberty*. I am a military man and when orders come in from the Secretary of Defense and President of the United States, I follow them.”

“However, recent attempts to rewrite history compel me to share the truth.”

The affidavit describes how Boston, then the senior legal counsel for the Navy’s Court of Inquiry “into the brutal attack on the *USS Liberty*,” and his superior, the late Rear Adm. Isaac C. Kidd, were given only one week to gather evidence for the Navy’s official investigation into the Israeli attack. The investigation was commissioned by Adm. John S. McCain, Jr., then Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces, Europe (and the father of U.S. Sen. John McCain).

Boston attests: “Despite the short amount of time we were given, we gathered a vast amount of evidence . . . including hours of heartbreaking testimony from the young survivors.”

“The evidence was clear. Both Admiral Kidd and I believed with certainty that this attack, which killed 34 American sailors and injured 172 others, was a deliberate effort to sink an American ship and murder its entire crew.”

The affidavit singles out the recently published book by Jay Cristol, *The Liberty Incident*, as an “insidious attempt

to whitewash the facts.” Boston concludes: “I know from personal conversations I had with Admiral Kidd that President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara ordered him to conclude that the attack was a case of ‘mistaken identity,’ despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.”

“I saw the flag, which had visibly identified the ship as American, riddled with bullets, and heard testimony that made it clear that the Israelis intended there be no survivors. Not only did the Israelis attack the ship with napalm, gunfire and missiles, Israeli torpedo boats machine-gunned three lifeboats that had been launched in an attempt by the crew to save the most seriously wounded—a war crime.”

‘Irrefutable Evidence’

The Commission presentation was introduced by Amb. Edward L. Peck, former Deputy Director of President Reagan’s White House Task Force on Terrorism, former Chief of Mission in Iraq, and former State Department Liaison to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Then came Admiral Moorer, who made an impassioned call for ending the 36-year coverup of the attack. Moorer said that the Commission of Inquiry was founded because the U.S. Congress had failed to do its job in investigating this incident. Moorer insisted that it is “essential” that military history be truthful, and that one “cannot undo” the damage which is done from the “rewrite of history” such as had occurred in the *Liberty* case. Most of all, he said, it must be exposed *why* the rescue planes that took off from the *USS Saratoga* were *called back* by Washington, instead of doing their duty to save the lives of the Americans on board the *Liberty*.

Moorer said that the many interviews conducted with the surviving crew members of the *Liberty* make it “impossible to believe” that the attack was a case of “mistaken identity.” He said that he finds the evidence “more or less ‘irrefutable.’ ”

Moorer said that to investigate this incident requires that Congress overcome “their fear of the pro-Israel lobby.” Moorer received a rousing ovation when he stated that for his part, at 92 years of age, it would be “very, very easy” to keep silent, as many people have advised him, “but I will not do that.”

In answer to an Associated Press reporter who challenged the idea of a coverup, and demanded an explanation as to why Israel would attack the United States, Moorer fired back, “I do not think much of your question,” and proceeded to summarize the magnitude of the two-hour-plus attack by fighter planes, torpedo boat, and helicopter machine-gun fire. If that’s not a coverup, Moorer asked, then what is? He reported that Admiral Kidd had told all the sailors that they would be court-martialed if they ever spoke out.

Admiral Staring detailed his own role in London, in June 1967, when he began to review the 600 pages of evidence that was brought to him by Captain Boston from Malta, where a

hasty investigation of the incident had occurred, including interviews with the survivors. After many hours of reading the details in the first third of the report, Staring reported to Boston that the evidence *did not* support the Malta finding that it was a case of “mistaken identity.” The next day, Staring reported, the 600-page report was taken away from him, and whisked off to Washington. He never saw Captain Boston again.

This was the only case in his distinguished career, in which he rose to the level of Judge Advocate General of the Navy, where he was not asked to submit a report on his findings—which was his duty as legal officer.

The Commissioners also reported that this is the only case in American history of such a major naval attack which was not investigated by Congress.

The coverup continues. In the hallway outside the hearing room, a representative of the publishing company that put out A. Jay Cristol’s book, was lobbying attendees to hear “the other side of the story.” Immediately beneath the title of the press release announcing the book, “1967 Attack on U.S. Spy Ship Was Not Deliberate,” is an endorsement from Senator McCain (R-Ariz.), a Sharonist insider who praises author Cristol for reaching “a similar conclusion” to that of his father, who oversaw the London investigation where the coverup was sealed—but not forever.

COVERUP EXPOSED!

The Israeli Attack On the ‘USS Liberty’



“The Loss of Liberty,” a video by filmmaker Tito Howard, proves beyond any doubt that the June 8, 1967 Israeli attack against the *USS Liberty*, in which 34 American servicemen were killed and 171 wounded, was deliberate. The video includes testimony from Liberty survivors, many Congressional Medal of Honor winners, and from such high-ranking Americans as Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, Adm. Arleigh Burke, Gen. Ray Davis, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

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