

APPENDIX IV

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE NAVY OF ISRAEL
Letter of Admiral Michael Ram
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As General Officer in Command of the Navy of Israel, I read with pain and sorrow the article published in the June issue of the Naval Reserve Association Newsletter. On June 8, 1967, the U.S.S. Liberty sailed into the middle of our Six Day War. That she did so was a mistake on the part of the U.S. Navy, as has been thoroughly established by an extensive investigation of the House Armed Services Committee of the Ninety Second Congress, under authority of H. Res. 201, published by the Superintendent of Documents in 1971. It is undisputed that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Agency believed that it would be dangerous for Liberty to approach the Sinai Coast, and sent at least five Naval Messages to her directing her to remain clear of the area. These messages were misdirected by the Naval Communications system, and were not received by Liberty until after the tragedy had occurred. The next mistakes were ours, and a series of blunders on our part resulted in our attacks on a naval vessel of our best friend in the world at that time.

We immediately accepted humanitarian responsibility, offered our apology and condolences and paid humanitarian reparations to the dead and the wounded in amounts set by the United States Government.

Thereafter we settled the remaining issues regarding Liberty with the United States at the diplomatic level.

Mere words can never ease the pain of young lives lost in their prime. We sent you our words of condolence in 1967 full knowing that words are not enough, Still today, twenty five years later, we share your grief and pain. Again I express to you our apology and condolences. I regret the tone of the author of your June 1992 article. I fully understand his bitterness, and my sympathy for him and his shipmates is in no way diminished by his perhaps less than objective perspective.

We made the mistake, we admitted it and we remain extremely sorry and distressed.

There have been at least ten official investigations of the incident both in Israel and in the United States. Every official investigation, yours and ours, has concluded that the event was a tragic mistake. There have also been numerous unofficial investigations, such as those conducted by Thames TV, ABC News, and NBC News, to name a few. These unofficial

investigations, after examining the evidence, have also concluded that the event was a tragic mistake. The published article confirms this with the words "after filming was completed...(the) producers slanted the story to favor the Israeli version." The "story" does not favor Israel. An examination of the facts merely confirms the tragic mistake.

Confirmation of the true version of events is readily available in the record of the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry or the CIA report, both of which are now declassified and available to you.

Israel and the Navy of Israel have a great debt to the United States and the United States Navy. Our first General Officer in Command of the Navy of Israel, the equivalent of your CNO, was a U.S. Naval Academy graduate. Your traditions are our traditions. In this case, your grief and your loss are also our grief and our loss.

With my deepest respect,

Michael Ram
Commander in Chief
Israel Navy