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CLIENT:

Dr. A. Jay Cristol

WRITING EXAMPLE:

Media Kit

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New book on the 1967 Israeli attack of the *USS Liberty* based on most extensive investigation yet

“*The Liberty Incident* is the definitive book on the Israeli attack during the Six-Day War...A superb account...A meticulous work...This book ends the debate.”

– *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2002.

On June 8, 1967, at the height of the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats suddenly attacked the intelligence gathering ship, *U.S.S. Liberty*, off the coast of the Sinai Peninsula – resulting in the death of 34 Americans and another 171 wounded.

The controversy over what happened that day continues to rage 35 years later, making it the worst disaster of the first half-century of U.S.-Israeli relations.

The question of whether the Israelis knew if their target was a U.S. ship is finally answered in the new book, *The Liberty Incident*, by Dr. A. Jay Cristol, a federal judge and former Navy pilot and attorney who spent twenty years specializing in naval warfare law. Cristol also holds a Ph.D. in international studies from the University of Miami.

The Liberty Incident is based on fourteen years of intensive research – including a probing analysis of all thirteen official investigations conducted by the U.S. and Israel, more than 500 new interviews, and long-denied access to the Israel Air Force audiotapes recording the actual conversations between the pilots and air controllers. Cristol also has a federal district court lawsuit pending that seeks to compel the National Security Agency under the Freedom of Information Act to release audio tapes recorded by the NSA of the same conversations.

Cristol was the only non-Israeli to speak face to face with the pilots who attacked the *Liberty*. (Staff members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence spoke to them in 1979 behind a screen.) In addition to the pilots, he spoke to the commander of the Air Control South who directed the aircraft; Moshe Oren, the commander of the attacking torpedo boat division, and the commanders of each boat – many of whom he met with on multiple occasions.

Among the others he interviewed during sixteen trips to Israel and three trips to Egypt, beginning in 1988, were:

- Chief of Staff of Israel Defense Force, General Yitzhak Rabin, later Minister of Defense and then Prime Minister. Rabin was assassinated November 5, 1995.
- Then-Ambassador to the U.S. Abraham Harman, and his deputy chief of mission, Ephraim Evron, who later became the Israel Ambassador to the United States and who was a personal friend of five U.S. Presidents.
- Col. Itzhak Nessyahu, Military Secretary to Defense Minister Moshe Dayan
- Brigadier General Rechavam Ze'evi, who was with Moshe Dayan on June 8, 1967. Ze'evi was assassinated on October 17, 2001.
- Col. Ram Ron, who conducted the first Israel Inquiry on the attack;
- Judge Yeshayahu Yerushalmi, conducted the second and most complete Israeli investigation of the incident.
- And numerous members of Israel Defense Forces in charge at the time, including Commander in Chief of the Navy Admiral Shlomo Erell, Commander of the Air Force General Mordechai Hod, Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence Ahron Arele Yariy, Deputy Commander of the Air Force Rafi Har-Lev, Chief of Air Force Intelligence Colonel (later General) Yeshayahu Bareket, Deputy Chief of Staff General Chaim Bar-Lev, Chief of Israeli Naval Intelligence and High Command Operations Officer General Ezer Weizman; later president of Israel.

On the American side, Cristol personally interviewed among others the following individuals:

- **In the United States:** Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, national security advisor W. W. Rostow, special Presidential advisor McGeorge Bundy, chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board Clark Clifford, and Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach – all of whom were present in the White House Situation Room at the first meeting convened by President Lyndon Johnson after the news of the attack was received.

Also: Cyrus R. Vance, Under Secretary of the Defense Department; Eugene V. Rostow, the #3 person at the State Department; Chief of U.S. Naval Operations Admiral David L. McDonald; Assistant Secretary of State Lucius Battle; Senator William Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; CIA Director Richard Helms; Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Jr., president of the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry on the incident; Senator Adlai Stevenson, Jr.; and White House Press Secretary George Christian.

- **Liberty Crew members:** Captain William McGonagle, commanding officer of the USS Liberty (who was awarded the Medal of Honor); Commander Maurice Bennett, member of the NSA detachment on board the USS Liberty (who was awarded the Silver Star); LT

George Golden (the engineering officer; awarded the Silver Star); Chief Machinist Mate Richard Brooks (awarded the Silver Star); and Seaman Steve Richards, among others.

- **USS America Crew:** Commanding Officer Vice Admiral Donald D. Engen, Commander James Kneale (commanding officer of VA-64), Captain Raymond Hill, Chief of Staff to Admiral Geis; Commander K.C. Spayde (executive officer of VA-64)
- **USS Saratoga Crew:** Commanding Officer Captain J.M. Tully, Jr.; Strike Operations Officer Admiral Jerry Johnson, navigator; Rear Admiral Max K. Morris; Brad Knickerbocker (A-4 pilot)
- **USS Davis Crew** (the first destroyer to reach the Liberty after the attack): Commanding Officer Rear Admiral Robert Hilton, Sr., LT (later Rear Admiral) Paul E. Tobin (boarded the Liberty on 6/9/67 and got her underway for which he was awarded the Bronze Star).
- **Sixth Fleet Flagship USS Little Rock Crew:** Vice Admiral William Martin, Commander Sixth Fleet in 1967; Captain Frank Snyder, Sixth Fleet Communications Officer on June 8, 1967.
- **At the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv:** U.S. Naval Attaché Captain E. C. Castle, U.S. Defense Attaché Colonel Anthony Perna, Deputy Chief of Mission William Dale, Assistant Naval Attaché Captain Lynn Blasch and the U.S. CIA Station Chief in Tel Aviv.

Cristol also traveled to Egypt for interviews with such key figures as Amin Hewedi, Chief of Intelligence for the Egyptian Armed Forces in 1967, and Dr. Aly Sadek, an Egyptian foreign ministry international lawyer who was at Egyptian general headquarters with President Nasser at the time.

Contributing to the continuing controversy, Cristol says, was the fact that many of the documents associated with the official U.S. and Israeli investigations were classified. Using the Freedom of Information Act, he has been responsible for getting volumes of classified material released, including the Clifford Report's conclusion on the intent behind the attack. Many of the declassified documents may now be viewed at Cristol's informational web site, www.libertyincident.com

His collection of over 3,000 documents – by far, the most comprehensive in the world on the subject – has been donated to the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at the request of Stanford University, where they will be available to scholars for research.

Cristol's book, *The Liberty Incident*, examines in unprecedented detail every possible factor contributing to the tragedy of June 8, 1967, including...

- The sequence of events in the Middle East leading up to the outbreak of the Six Day War, and a blow-by-blow account of what happened on June 8, 1967.

- Why the *Liberty* was located within the war zone, rather than ~~over~~ hundreds of miles away, as the United States had announced to the world two days before.
- Why five stand-off orders sent by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the *Liberty*, directing her not to approach the area, were not received prior to the attack.
- How a series of explosions in the area of El Arish led Israeli troops to believe they were being shelled from the sea, from a range that matched the *Liberty*'s location offshore.
- How human error led to the removal of the "wedge," denoting the *Liberty*, from the plotting table at Israeli naval headquarters at Stella Maris – suddenly turning her into a target.
- Why both the Israeli navy and air force believed they were attacking an enemy ship, probably Egyptian.
- Why the *Liberty*'s markings could not be read and her flag was not discernable prior to and during the attack.
- Why the *Liberty* did not respond to the MTBs' signal to "identify yourself," and instead opened fire on the Israeli torpedo boats – which prompted their torpedo attack.
- How the *Liberty*'s 1967 state-of-the-art technology for electronic eavesdropping did not permit her to monitor Israeli WHF/UHF message traffic – therefore, her mission could not have been to spy on Israel (the basis of many enduring conspiracy theories). Also, the fact that there were only Arabic and Russian linguists aboard; no one on board could speak Hebrew and thus she had no real time intelligence gathering capability against Israel.
- The rivalry between Israel's elite air force and its nearly-inept navy, and how that affected their decision-making.

"[Cristol's] research is stunningly complete....He reviews the issue in such great detail that it takes seven pages just to deal with the question of the U.S. flag flying on the *Liberty* (Could the pilots have seen it, given the day's winds? How visible was it? What about the possibility of it being a false flag?)," wrote Daniel Pipes in *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2002).

"Judge A. Jay Cristol has reached a similar conclusion to one my father reached in his June 18th, 1957 endorsement of the findings of the Court of Inquiry," Senator John McCain said recently.

* * *

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For Immediate Release

Conclusive New Findings on the 1967 Israeli attack of the U.S.S. Liberty to be Revealed in Washington D.C. Tomorrow (12/17)

LOS ANGELES, CA – December 16, 2002 – During two addresses in Washington, D.C. this week, **Dr. A. Jay Cristol**, the author of the critically-acclaimed new book, **The Liberty Incident**, will reveal conclusive new evidence about what led to the 1967 Israeli attack on the *U.S.S. Liberty* in which 34 Americans died and 171 were wounded during the Six-Day War.

The attack is widely-regarded as the worst disaster in fifty years of U.S.-Israeli relations, and remains as controversial today as it was 35 years ago.

Cristol's determination is based on the most extensive investigation conducted to date, in which he used the Freedom of Information Act to access classified documents, examined the complete files of all 13 U.S. and Israeli official inquiries, made sixteen trips to Israel and three to Egypt, and personally conducted over 500 interviews – including with the pilots of the attacking Israeli aircraft and commanders of the torpedo boats, and Robert McNamara, Clark Clifford, Dean Rush, Admiral Isaac Kidd, and all of the admirals and generals on both sides.

Foreign Affairs magazine has called *The Liberty Incident* “the definitive book...[that] ends the debate.” Daniel Pipes in the Middle East Quarterly wrote: “[Cristol's] research is stunningly complete...” And Rear Admiral Paul Tobin noted in Proceedings: “There is no doubt [Cristol] knows more about this subject than anyone else who has written on it.”

Cristol is a sitting federal judge and veteran Navy pilot who holds a Ph.D in international studies from the University of Miami. He served as Special Assistant Attorney General of Florida during the 1959, 1961, 1963, and 1965 sessions of the Florida Legislature and continues to teach at the University of Miami Law School.

Cristol's addresses in Washington, D.C., are scheduled as follows:

Tomorrow – Tuesday (12/17), Noon – 1 pm: The Navy Museum Educational Center at the Navy Museum, Building 76, Washington Navy Yard. Call (202) 433-3940 for more information.

Wednesday (12/18), noon – 1 pm: Boardman Room of The Middle East Institute, 1761 N Street, NW. Call (202) 785-1141 for more information.

No reservations required; however, seating is limited.

The Liberty Incident by A. Jay Cristol (Brassey's, Inc.; 2002) is available through Brassey's Military (800-775-2518), www.barnesandnoble.com, www.amazon.com, and most bookstores.

* * *

Media contact:

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Dr. A. Jay Cristol – author of the critically-acclaimed book, *The Liberty Incident* – to speak at two public events in Washington D.C. next week:

The Naval Historical Center, Tuesday, 12/17, at noon
The Middle East Institute, Wednesday, 12/18, at noon
Free to the public. See below for details.

Cristol – based on his exhaustive investigation into the 1967 attack on the U.S.S. Liberty – will offer new revelations on the cause of the disaster

On June 8, 1967, at the height of the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats attacked the intelligence gathering ship, *U.S.S. Liberty*, off the coast of the Sinai Peninsula – resulting in the death of 34 Americans and 171 wounded.

Thirty-five years later, the attack of the *U.S.S. Liberty* ranks as one of the most controversial international events of the 20th century. Widely regarded as the worst disaster in fifty years of U.S.-Israeli relations, no other single incident of friendly fire has received the scrutiny given to this tragedy.

To date, the *Liberty* incident has been the subject of 13 official investigations by the U.S. and Israeli governments and featured in more than a hundred books, five television productions, numerous magazine articles and on-going appearances by “experts” on television news shows.

“There are many conspiracy theories about what really happened,” writes Dr. A. Jay Cristol in his book, *The Liberty Incident*, published by Brassey’s, Inc. this summer. “Generally, they start with the premise that the Israeli attack on the *Liberty* was a premeditated, malicious act perpetrated by the Israelis against a ship that they knew was an American vessel. These theories then go on to explain why it was done. They all ignore the numerous official American and Israeli investigations that, without exception, concluded that the Israeli attack was intentional (as all attacks are by definition), but that it was a tragic case of mistaken identity.”

Cristol – a sitting federal judge and former veteran Navy pilot who holds a doctorate in international studies – has conducted the most exhaustive investigation to date in search of the answer to the question: *Did the Israelis know that their target was a U.S. ship?*

Over a period of 14 years, he made 16 trips to Israel (including to the site) and three trips to Egypt, studied the complete files of all 13 official investigations (much of it classified and available to the public for the first time through Cristol's frequent use of the Freedom of Information Act), and interviewed more people involved with the incident (over 500) than any other researcher. Among them were the pilots of the attacking Israeli aircraft and commanders of the torpedo boats, intelligence officers from both sides, and such pivotal officials as Yitzhak Rabin (Israel's chief of staff in 1967), former Defense Secretaries Robert McNamara and Clark Clifford, former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Admiral Isaac C. Kidd Jr. (president of the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry on the incident), and all of the admirals and generals on both sides (such as Vice Admiral Donald Engen, commanding officer of the carrier *America* stationed with the 6th Fleet on June 8, 1967).

The book was completed just after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Cristol's collection of over 3,000 documents – representing the world's largest on the subject – has been donated to the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at the request of Stanford University, where it will soon be available to scholars. Many of the documents are currently posted at www.libertyincident.com

“[*The Liberty Incident*] is the definitive book on the Israeli attack during the Six-Day War...A superb account...A meticulous work...This book ends the debate.” – *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2002.

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“There is no doubt [Cristol] knows more about this subject than anyone else who has written on it,” wrote Rear Admiral Paul Tobin, U.S. Navy (Retired) in *Proceedings* (August 2002).

“Judge A. Jay Cristol has reached a similar conclusion to one my father [Rear Admiral John S. McCain Jr, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, who ordered Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Jr. to convene a U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry to investigate the attack] reached in his June 18th 1957 endorsement of the findings of the Court of Inquiry,” Senator John McCain said recently.

Cristol will share revelations on the attack from his book during two public speaking engagements in Washington, D.C. next week at:

**The Navy Museum Educational Center at the Navy Museum
Building 76, Washington Navy Yard
Noon – 1 pm, Tuesday, December 17, 2002
*Call (202) 433-3940 for more information***

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1761 N Street, NW
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Both events are free. No RSVP's required; however space is limited.

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Biography

Dr. A. Jay Cristol **Author of *The Liberty Incident***

A. Jay Cristol was uniquely qualified to research and write about the 1967 attack of the American intelligence gathering ship, *USS Liberty*, by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats off the coast of the Sinai Peninsula during the Six-Day War.

During a 38-year career with the U.S. Navy, he served as a Navy pilot for 18 years and an attorney in the Judge Advocate General's Corp for almost two decades. As a member of the Corps, he specialized in international law and the law of naval warfare and lectured on the subject at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Italy.

Cristol holds a Ph.D. in international studies from the University of Miami (his doctoral dissertation became the basis for the book, *The Liberty Incident*) and a J.D. from the University of Miami Law School.

Following a 25-year private practice in commercial civil law, he was appointed to the federal bench in 1985, and currently serves as the Chief Judge Emeritus of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida.

Cristol's lifelong fascination for aviation began early. In 1945, at the age of fifteen, he made his first flight in a Piper J-3 on floats from Biscayne Bay in Miami, Florida, then joined the U.S. Navy as an aviation cadet in 1951.

He received his "wings of gold" in April 1953, after completing basic flight training at Pensacola, Florida, and advanced training in Kingsville, Texas. "Basic" included acrobatics, instruments, night flying, formation flying and air-to-air gunnery in the SNJ (the Navy equivalent of the AT6), and qualification in aircraft carrier landings. During "advanced," he was trained to fire rockets, drop bombs, and execute carrier landings in a Grumman Avenger (the same plane President George Bush was flying when shot down in World War II). Six weeks of additional training followed at Corpus Christie, Texas, to qualify for an instrument rating in the SNB.

Cristol was then assigned to the VS-37 Squadron with the Pacific Air Force Fleet, based out of Los Alamitos, Calif. While training aboard JEEP aircraft carriers, he transitioned from the TBM to the AF (Grumman Guardian), performing 'hunter-killer' exercises flying the AF2S and AF2W.

During the Korean conflict, Cristol was part of an AF squadron stationed aboard the aircraft carrier *Princeton* (CV-37) in the South China Sea. He flew day and night

missions as both a hunter and killer pilot while patrolling for Chinese and Russian submarines, and participated in the evacuation of over 60,000 Chinese nationals from the Tachen Islands near the mainland to Taiwan – an operation involving a half dozen carriers.

Upon his return to the U.S., Cristol was attached to the Fleet All Weather Training Unit, Pacific at San Diego, where he served as an instrument flight instructor and taught maneuvers for the delivery of nuclear weapons.

In September 1956, after five years of active duty, Cristol returned home to South Florida and joined the Naval Air Reserve. He qualified as a four-engine Navy transport plane commander and flew transports (the two-engine DC-3, non-pressurized four-engine DC-4, and pressurized four-engine DC-6) for the next 13 years.

During that time, he participated in operational flights during the Cuban missile crisis and volunteer airlift missions to Vietnam. For the latter, he made the 12-day round-trip every few months between Jacksonville, Florida, and Subic Bay, Saigon or DaNang.

After obtaining his law degree in 1959, Cristol opened a private practice and served as a special assistant attorney general during the 1959, 1961, 1963, and 1965 sessions of the Florida legislature.

In 1969, he transferred to the Judge Advocate General's Corps. For the next 20 years, he served as a Naval Reserve attorney, specializing in international law and the law of naval warfare. He has performed special active duty in the office of the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations. In the 1980s, the Department of Defense sent him to the International Institute of Humanitarian Law at San Remo, Italy, to lecture on Law of Naval Warfare to senior foreign military officers from around the world.

Each summer, for many years, he also served as an administrative officer and law of war instructor for the Reserve lawyer-training program at the U.S. Naval Justice School in Newport, Rhode Island. In 1983, he was named an honorary professor, and in 1988 became the senior-most captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve Law Program.

As a federal bankruptcy judge, Cristol has presided over such well-publicized cases as the swift reorganization of Pan American World Airways in 1998. A Boeing 727 was later renamed the "Clipper A. Jay Cristol" by Guilford Transportation Industries in his honor for having saved the company. At the christening ceremony, he piloted the plane in the skies above South Florida and landed it twice.

In 1987, Cristol was headed to Washington to assist in preparations for the Incidents at Sea Conference between the U.S. and Soviet Navies, when news broke that an Iraqi jet had fired Exocet missiles into the U.S. Navy destroyer *Stark*, killing 37 U.S. sailors. As

one of two lawyers in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations at the Ocean Policy Desk, OP-616, he was intensively involved in the subsequent two-week investigation.

Cristol retired from the military in 1989, with 38 years of active and reserve service – for which he received more than a dozen military decorations, including the Meritorious Service, Navy Commendation, and Navy Achievement Medals.

He continues to teach courses in bankruptcy reorganization at the University of Miami, and has published articles in scholarly publications on law, aviation, history and other subjects.

In his spare time, Cristol is a volunteer pilot for Angel Flight America, a non-profit program that ferries the sick and injured to hospitals around the country. His enduring passion for aviation led him to become a founding member of both the National Museum of Naval Aviation at Naval Air Station Pensacola and the Wings Over Miami Military and Classic Aircraft Museum. He has also personally piloted a Ford Tri-Motor, the Goodyear Blimp, a Soviet MiG-15, and many other unique and/or historic aircraft.

* * *

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Talking with Dr. A. Jay Cristol

Author of *The Liberty Incident*

Of all the books, articles and television specials done on the subject, what makes *The Liberty Incident* different?

Most of the other writers have just studied the situation in the United States. They didn't talk to any Israelis. They didn't go to Israel. The only people who have gone over there were the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Thames Television, and me.

In addition, no one else has ever interviewed as many of the participants on both sides of the incident. And there's a lot of new material in the book, based on a number of classified documents I got released through the Freedom of Information Act – such as parts of The Clifford Report. In fact, I just filed a law suit the other day for what I believe is the last significant piece of information, the translations of the audio tape transcriptions of Israeli pilots and controllers talking during and after the attack recorded by the National Security Agency.

Why is it important?

When I interviewed Clark Clifford, he told me that what convinced him the attack was a mistake was that he had studied a large amount of electronically recorded material – and, of course, I presumed he was talking about the Israeli tapes, because that's all I knew of at the time.

The U.S. Navy had an EC-121 aircraft (an old Constellation – a four engine prop plane) operating near the scene of the attack. It was dispatched from Rota, Spain, to Athens, Greece, and flew missions near the combat zone all through the Six Day War.

Now, this is something of an embarrassment to the United States, because the U.S. told the world it had no military aircraft there – which was not true. Marvin Nowicki, an NSA Hebrew linguist, and a second Hebrew linguist heard transmissions of Israeli pilots and controllers and recorded them. The tapes were sent back to NSA headquarters, where a third Hebrew linguist studied them. He also says the tapes conclusively establish that the attack was a mistake. So this is what I now believe Clifford listened to although at the time of the interview I thought he listened to the Israeli air force tapes.

From what the NSA Hebrew linguists told me about the contents of the tapes, they match the Israel air force audio tapes which I had declassified and which are printed as Appendix 2 of "The Liberty Incident."

What was the state of U.S./Israeli relations prior to the attack?

Some people believe that the special relationship between Israel and the United States goes back fifty some years. It does not. The relationship really didn't start to develop until 1966/1967 – just about the time of the Six Day War and the attack.

The history of it is: in 1948, Israel declared itself a state. The President of the United States, Harry Truman, recognized Israel immediately on behalf of the United States. The Soviet Union then became the second nation to recognize Israel. The United States then enforced the neutrality act – denying shipments of arms. No financial aid or other support whatsoever was sent to Israel until the 1960s, when President Kennedy authorized the purchase by Israel of a few Hawk missile batteries, a defensive anti-aircraft system.

Prior to 1967, Israel was shopping around the world for its military hardware. Its principal supplier was France. At the time, France was fighting the Arabs in Algeria. All of the Israeli aircraft and almost all of its weapons were French. The U.S. supplied nothing. Then, Charles de Gaulle made peace with the Arabs and dumped Israel.

In 1966, an interesting event occurred, which I mention in the book. The Israeli Mossad was able to compromise and acquire a MiG 21 from Iraq. That was the number one state-of-the-art frontline Soviet jet fighter.

After Israel checked out the MiG, they gave it to the United States, creating much gratitude. And so with that, President Johnson invited the Prime Minister of Israel to Johnson City, Texas, and they had a meeting.

So there was Israel in 1966/67 without any friends whatsoever. Then President Johnson warmed up a bit in late 1966 and agreed to send Israel some weapons – but none arrived before the '67 war. But that was the transition, the changeover from French to U.S. weaponry, and that's when the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel really began to develop.

It's been basically a good relationship. It's been up and down diplomatically, but almost solid on the intelligence and military levels. Israel has since voted with the U.S. in the United Nations more than any other country in the world. There is very little that the Arabs have to attack in the relationship. Thus, the *Liberty* incident has become a primary lightning rod for attempting to drive a wedge in the U.S.-Israel relationship.

How did you gain access to the individuals you spoke to in the Israeli Navy and Air Force in 1967?

There were a number of different ways. For example, in 1976, following the Bicentennial celebration of Tall Ships and war ships in New York Harbor, the two Israel missile boats that participated in New York came to Miami. I met the Israeli Naval attaché and we developed a friendship. This was long before I had any idea of this project. He had come to Miami with Israeli missile boats and I was part of the U.S. Navy delegation that greeted them. At the time Grumman was building a hydrofoil for Israel at Lantana. He would come to Miami or I would go to Washington. We would have lunch and became friends. When he moved on, he introduced me to his successor. And so over the years I developed friendships with a number of senior Israeli Navy officers who, by the time I started the research, were in very high positions in the Navy of Israel. When I went to Israel and contacted the Navy, the doors opened for me very easily and nicely.

It was much more difficult to open a door with the Air Force. I had to go back to Israel five times before I finally was able to meet the Chief of the Air Force, and convince him I was a serious researcher. Finally, he approved of what I was doing. Up until then, Air Force people wouldn't talk to me.

It was very difficult to obtain interviews with the Israeli air controllers until finally I got help from the Chief of the Air Force. Then people became more cooperative. But it took years of persistent effort.

Socially, I knew the U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela, Nicholas Morley, who had friends in Israel. He introduced me to people there who helped me locate people and opened doors on the diplomatic level.

Through the University of Miami I became acquainted with Dr. Haim Shaked, the Director of the Middle East Studies Institute. He had been an Israeli intelligence officer. He put me in touch with people who were able to help in that community. As to some of the very important folks, I couldn't get to them until finally – through just a huge amount of persistence – I was able to get an interview with Yitzhak Rabin [the Army Chief of Staff in 1967 who masterminded the Six Day War; Rabin later became Prime Minister and was assassinated in 1995 by an extremist]. His approval of my research opened a lot of other doors.

So there were numerous routes that were traveled. In each case, it was a different approach. I contacted a large number of people. I'd say persistence was a *big* factor.

How were you able to get the attacking pilots to talk to you?

There were four pilots who attacked. Initially, I was able to identify two of the pilots with the help of the Thames TV research editor, Adrian Pennick, and through a friend of Ambassador Morley. Through other sources I found the third pilot and learned that the fourth pilot had died in a plane crash. Eventually I interviewed all three of the surviving pilots. The fourth pilot, who I name in the book, and who had already died in an airplane crash long before I got started, was the wingman for Royal flight.

The first flight was known as Kursa, or sofa or armchair flight. I worked and I worked and I worked to finally get to a breakthrough where I got the number one pilot – the one who fired the first shot and whose gun camera film we have in the book – to agree to talk to me. That was a long, long struggle. I attempted to approach him through numerous people. Finally, I had become friendly with the chief test pilot [Colonel Danny Shapira] of the Israeli Air Force – and through him, I sent a personal letter to this pilot, in which I enclosed my Navy wings and a plea to talk to me. That broke it. He sent me back my wings and said he couldn't take my wings, but he would agree to talk to me. Then I went to Israel and met with him. Not only did we talk, he gave me pictures of his flight log and strips of his gun camera film.

The second flight was called Royal flight. The Royal flight leader, for various reasons, also did not wish to be identified. Of course, I knew who he was and I kept faxing him, writing him, calling him. I learned who his relatives were and tried to communicate through them. Finally the Chief of the Navy – who was a mutual friend convinced him to talk to me.

Who else outside of Israel has talked to the pilots?

Only the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which sent staffers over to Israel in 1979. But they were only permitted to talk to them on the other side of a screen. The pilots would not talk to the Thames TV people.

Did you have trouble getting anyone else to talk?

There were several people who were very difficult to get to, because they weren't anxious to talk about it. For example, Admiral Isaac Kidd [President of the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry on the attack] wasn't talking to anyone until our mutual friend, Vice Admiral Don Engen [the Commanding Officer of the *USS America* on the day of the attack], introduced us. Ike then agreed to talk to me and we became good friends and met numerous times at the Army Navy club, at restaurants where we both enjoyed lobsters, and frequently at his home.

The U.S. Naval attaché in Tel Aviv in 1967, Ernie Castle had talked to Thames Television and didn't like the fact that they only played 30 or 40 seconds of the interview, so he said he was never going to talk to anybody about the attack again. Then his friend, the CIA Chief of Station, who had become my friend, said, "You really ought to talk to this guy, Cristol." So Ernie talked to me for seventeen hours. We also became good friends and ultimately I got him to go to Israel with me.

Robert McNamara – I met him at a conference at the University of Miami. He was very cooperative. Most people were very cooperative and not difficult.

Was it difficult getting Commander William McGonagle, the commanding officer of the *Liberty*, to talk?

For thirty some years, he had refused to talk about anything but the courage and professionalism of his crew in saving the ship. All he would say was what a gallant job his crew did in fighting the fires and saving the ship. And it was basically in the last several years of his life, starting just before he had a relapse of lung cancer, that he decided to talk.

I had met him at a reunion of *Liberty* veterans in the suite of the president of the Liberty Veterans Associations, George Golden. George had been number three in command as the engineering officer of the *Liberty* and became number two when the Executive Officer was killed. George invited me to the reunion.

When Bill and I met we learned that we had a lot in common. We were both Navy captains. We both liked to fly. He retired from the Navy and decided to become a commercial pilot, got his license. Then his eyes failed and he couldn't maintain his flight physical. He was a nice guy. We became friends but for years I respected his position that he didn't want to talk about the *Liberty* incident.

Over a period of time, we kept in touch and I kept him informed about my research. Then, little by little, he opened up until we started talking about the incident. Ultimately he talked to me at great length. On one occasion, I arranged a three-way call between the two of us and the CIA Chief of Station, because McGonagle had heard a conspiracy tale about the CIA and wanted to know if it was true. At his request I supplied him with two copies of my Ph.D dissertation and he passed one to the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University. I tried to persuade him to go with me to Israel to meet some of the Israeli naval officers involved, but his lung cancer prevented us from making that trip.

Why didn't you interview all of the *Liberty's* surviving crew members?

The significant testimony of crew members with the most complete knowledge was taken by the Court of Inquiry several days after the attack. There are 155 pages of sworn testimony from fourteen of the crew members who were most intimately involved. Furthermore, Admiral Kidd instructed the commanding officer of the ship to gather his crew and make a chronology of everything that happened, and it was read into the record on the second day of testimony. What else is there to say that's not included in the record? If a crewman was not on the deck or the bridge during the attack, all he could possibly contribute is secondhand information.

I did talk to a number of the crew members. Initially I tried to interview James Ennes, who had served as an officer on the *Liberty* and wrote a book about it. When I started my research, I wrote to Ennes and told him I was looking into this, and we wrote back and forth for a while. He suggested I might be interested in the Liberty Veterans newsletters, which he could supply me for about a hundred dollars. So I sent him a check. Then I said I'd like to interview him, and that I'd be in Seattle for a day in July, 1988. He said, "Okay, I'll meet with you, call me when you get here." I wrote him a letter in advance, giving him an outline of the questions I wanted to ask him.

When I got to Seattle, I called and asked for him, but he wouldn't talk to me. In a letter afterwards, he said he didn't have the time to talk to me, but he might answer one or two questions. So I sent him two questions in writing. He never responded.

One of the interesting revelations in your book is how the Israeli Defense Forces referred to *Jane's Fighting Ships* in their attempts to identify the *Liberty*.

Identifying ships at sea is not easy. There are thousands of ships. No one knows what they all are. To give you an example, which I mention in the book – during World War II, the British Navy was chasing the German battleship *Bismarck*. The British cruiser, *Sheffield*, was in a position a few miles behind the *Bismarck*. The British carrier *Ark Royal*, which had been cruising with the *Sheffield* for weeks, launched its Swordfish torpedo bombers. They dove down through the clouds and launched their torpedoes at the *Sheffield*, a vessel that does not look like the *Bismarck*. Fortunately, the British pilots' aim was no better than their ship identification. In the book I provide numerous other examples of misidentification of ships at sea during war time.

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