

**NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY  
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE**



**(U) CLASSIFICATION GUIDE FOR  
USS Liberty Incident  
*10-10***

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Associate Director for Policy**

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Description of Information	Classification/ Markings	Reason	Declass	Remarks
<p>(U) Guidance regarding activities “during the mission” refers to the time period of <b>24 May 1967 through 8 June 1967</b>. Information declassified in the release of U.S.S. Liberty materials <b>only</b> applies to the time of the Liberty mission.</p> <p>(U) This guide reflects a number of separate OCA decisions made over a period of time.</p> <p>(U) The U.S.S. Liberty was commissioned in May 1945 as a victory ship and later converted into a (TRS) technical research ship (December 1964). She had an overall length of 455 feet, a maximum speed of 18 knots with an allowable personnel complement of 9 officers and 151 enlisted men along with an additional 6 officers and 128 enlisted men from the Naval Security Group.</p>				
<b>(U) A. Targets</b>				
A.1. (U) The fact that a SIGINT Readiness “ALFA” was called by NSA for Middle East targets and terminated three days later (April 1967).	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(S//SI//REL) The fact that NSA declared a SIGINT Readiness ALFA for Yemen (April 1967) and extended it to the Saudi situation (May 1967) remains classified.
A.2. (U) The fact that NSA raised its ALFA to SIGINT Readiness “BRAVO CRAYON” for all Middle East communications (May 1967).	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
A.3. (U) The fact that NSA instituted a SIGINT Readiness ALFA to watch Soviet moves on 5 June 1967.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(C//SI//REL) The fact that the ALFA extended to any other country or to European Communist countries remains classified.
A.4. (U) The fact that NSA extended the BRAVO CRAYON to Soviet targets (10 June 1967).	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(C//SI//REL) The fact that the BRAVO CRAYON extended to any other country or to European Communist countries remains classified.
A.5. (U) The fact of the Liberty targeting Moroccan HF, VHF, UHF	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Details of plain language intercept of Moroccan

So, intercepting communications from all of these countries

and radioprinter communications.				communications related to the USS Liberty incident from 5 – 8 June 1967 may be released.
A.6. (U) The fact of the Liberty targeting Algerian HF, VHF, UHF, and possible VHF multichannel communications.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Details of plain language intercept of Algerian communications related to the USS Liberty incident from 5 – 8 June 1967 may be released.
A.7. (U) The fact that technical summaries of Moroccan and Algerian communications were forwarded to NSA’s Middle East Office, G6.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(C//SI//REL) The fact that information copies of the technical summaries of Moroccan and Algerian communications were sent to USN-24 (Rota) and USN-12 (Morocco) remains classified.
A.8. (U) The fact that the Liberty targeted U.A.R., Algeria and Morocco communications.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Details of plain language intercept of U.A.R., Algerian, and Moroccan communications related to the USS Liberty incident from 5 – 8 June may be released.
<b>(U) B. Miscellaneous</b>				
B.1. (U) The fact that NSA actions to improve SIGINT collection, processing, and reporting in the weeks before the Six Day War included requesting the Liberty’s deployment on 23 May 1967.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.2. (U) The fact that other SIGINT collectors at this time included the U.S.S. Oxford and Jamestown in Southeast Asia, the U.S.S. Georgetown and Belmont in South America, the U.S.N.S. Muller off Cuba, and the U.S.N.S. Valdez enroute to the U.S. from the Mediterranean.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.3. (U) The fact that the NSA action office, G6, began round-the-clock SIGINT operation at Fort Meade	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.4. (U) The fact that the intelligence requirements took on a sense of urgency in late May-early June 1967.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Any further details concerning the growing requirements from U.S. intelligence users remain classified.
B.5. (U) The fact that the choice of ship narrowed between the U.S.N.S. Valdez, then near	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	

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Gibraltar, and the Liberty in port at Abidjan, Ivory Coast.				
B.6. (U) The fact that the Liberty had undertaken five separate missions off the west coast of Africa in the two years prior to deployment to the Mediterranean.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.7. (U) The operational locations of the Liberty in the eastern Mediterranean.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.8. (U) The fact that the Liberty received orders and departed Abidjan at 0530Z, 24 May 1967.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.9. (U) The fact that the SIGINT unit <u>USN-855</u> was on board the U.S.S. Liberty.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) References to all other SIGINT units remain classified.
B.10. (U) The fact that USN-855 had the following equipment: full duplex radiotelephone circuit, a secure one-channel moon-relay system, technical research ship special communications system (TRSSCOMM), and a receive-only terminal.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.11. (U) The fact that the SIGINT collection positions included: one for direction finding, 17 for radiotelephone, 20 for manual Morse, 7 for electronic countermeasures, and 33 for non-morse search and development.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.12. (U) The fact that communications between INSCOM, U.S. Army Communications Support Units and NSA were via U.S. Army Strategic Communication Command facilities and encrypted on KL-7A equipment using the Adonis system (KAK-199).	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.13. (U) The fact that the U.S.S. Liberty was under the management of NSA and control of DIRNSA.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.14. (U) The fact that daily Sitreps were sent to CINC USN Europe and NSA.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.15. (U) The fact that SIGINT managers had designated five operational areas numbered west to east in the eastern Mediterranean near the coastline of the U.A.R., Israel, Lebanon, and Syria to facilitate USN-855's collection management.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Each area measuring about 50-by-50 miles.



B.16. (U) The fact that the Davis, Massey and Papago escorted the Liberty to Malta	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.17. (U) The fact that the Davis, Masey, or Papago trailed in Liberty's wake to recover papers.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Total materials recovered by the Papago weighed eight pounds.
B.18. (U) The fact that by 19 June 1967, all classified matter (including 168 large canvas bags) had been stowed under guard in a secure space aboard the Liberty.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.19. (U) Preliminary estimates indicated that the cost to reconfigure the platform would range between four and six million dollars.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.20. (U) The fact that the Liberty had: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (U) Extensive reserve, on-board cryptographic keying materials.</li> <li>b. (U) TEXTA, Techins (Technical Instructions), Informal Technical Notes (ITNs), MUSSO documents, and COMINT Technical Reports for Middle Eastern countries and the USSR.</li> <li>c. (U) Collection Management records recapitulating intercept assignments by case notation at U. S. SIGINT sites worldwide.</li> </ul>	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.21. (U) The fact that NSA determined that there was only minimal security damage and no compromise had occurred.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.22. (U) The fact that the Israeli attack had taken the lives of 34 Americans – 25 from the SIGINT unit.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.23. (U) The fact that the Liberty held technical materials which would reveal the mission of the ship and that it had electronic equipment which would compromise U.S. success in	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	

demultiplexing VHF and UHF multichannel communications.				
B.24. (U) On 8 June 1967, NSA confirmed that the U.S. airborne collection flights out of Athens would continue without interruption.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
B.25. (U) The fact that <u>Dr. Tordella</u> discussed Liberty's cover story with the Director, Naval Security Group. They agreed that on questions concerning civilians, the first response should be that they were "DoD communications technicians." A second response, if needed, is that they were communications security technicians assisting the USN in its operation of the Liberty.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A		
B.26. (U) The fact that USN-855 held comprehensive documentation and was NSA in microcosm.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Countless records were not specific to USN'855's eastern Mediterranean mission.
B.27. (U) The Liberty's experience, together with the <u>Pueblo capture</u> , led to some emphasis on file reduction and on measures to facilitate destruction of cryptologic materials and equipment.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Fact that NSA had appraised the JCS of SIGINT from North Korean communications portending difficulties for the Pueblo (consistent with the released NK comms in case 41796.)
B.28. (S//SI//REL) Information that would show the use of the Hebrew transliteration system that is used at NSA remains classified.	SECRET//COMINT//REL	1.4(c)	20320108	(S//SI//REL) The Hebrew transliteration system is still in use today and is a system unique to NSA and the intelligence mission.
B.29. (U) The Values, i.e., B VAL and, C VAL (which are terms still in use today and remain classified) shows how well we interpret or do not interpret collected information.	SECRET//COMINT//REL	1.4(c)	20320108	(U//FOUO) SIGINT reports containing these values are classified.
B.30. (U) Intelligence Source Indicators (ISIs), found in product serial numbers, are classified.	CONFIDENTIAL//REL	1.4(c)	20320108	(C//REL) Product serial example: "2/IN/ISA/R146-67" The Producer Designator Digraphs (PDDGs) are U//FOUO, except for "00" and "0". In the above example, the PDDG "IN" is U//FOUO, and the ISI "ISA" is classified. The remainder of the Product Serial is releasable.
B.32. (U//FOUO) Y Routers	UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL	FOIA Exemp-	N/A	



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<b>(U) C. Second Party Cooperation</b>				
C.1. (S//SI//REL) The fact of GCHQ/U.K. involvement with the U.S.S. Liberty.	SECRET//COMINT//REL	1.4(c)	20320108	
C.2. (S//SI//REL) U.S. - U.K. overt collection sites during 1967 remain classified.	SECRET//COMINT//REL	1.4(c)	20320108	(U) Any further details concerning the activities and locations of the collection sites remain classified.
C.3. (S//SI//REL) U.S. - U.K. overt and covert ground sites remain classified.	SECRET//COMINT//REL	1.4(c)	20320108	(U) Any further details concerning the activities and locations of the ground sites remain classified.
<b>(U) D. Collection</b>				
D.1. (U) The fact that U.S. intelligence had growing requirements for information on military subjects.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Applies to the time preceding the Liberty mission. Any further details regarding requirements remain classified.
D.2. (U) The fact that NSA increased the EC-121 and C-130 collection flights to daily instead of the usual eight flights a month.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Details regarding the Airborne Collection Reconnaissance Program (ACRP) remain classified. Level depends on the specific information.
D.3. (U) The fact that VHF/UHF was collected from intercept sites near the transmitters and by airborne collectors.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.4. (U) The fact that the U.S. SIGINT system had knowledge of Middle East VHF/UHF communications.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Any further details regarding VHF/UHF communications remain classified.
D.5. (U) The fact that the U.S. SIGINT system produced COMINT during May and early June 1967 on the U.A.R. and merchant shipping via ground and air collection.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Details regarding airborne collectors remain classified.  (U) Details relating to the U.A.R. and merchant shipping remain classified (except as indicated in Remarks for items A.5 and A.8 above.)
D.6. (U) The fact that there were technical limitations in the collection of VHF/UHF communications in the Middle East.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.7. (U) The fact that SIGINT planners felt that the average orbit time of the C-130s and EC-121s was too short for the desired sustained collection.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	



D.8. (U) The fact that a technical research ship (TRS) was the equivalent of 13 airborne collectors and was more economical to operate.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.9. (U) The fact that the Liberty had VHF/UHF multichannel collection capability.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.10. (U) The fact of 6 Arab linguists on board to work on U.A.R. communications.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.11. (U) The fact that NSA performed backup processing on Arabic language materials, retained full responsibility for processing intercepted Israeli communications, and that courier time was 72 hours.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.12. (U) The fact that the Navy's VQ-2 and EC-121 and Air Force's C-130 intercepted in daily flights off the Israeli and U.A.R. coastline.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.13. (U) The following items concerning intercept of Israeli communications are releasable:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (U) The fact that on 8 June 1967 VHF search positions produced three tapes of Israeli air traffic. (See Remarks).</li> <li>b. (U) Details of plain language intercept of Israeli communications related to the USS Liberty incident from 5 – 8 June 1967 may be released as well.</li> </ul>	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Only the portion of the tapes dealing with the Liberty incident has been declassified (Israeli helicopter to ground communications).  (S//SI//REL) Other information that has not been declassified and released is Israeli Helicopter and navigational air activity unrelated to the Liberty incident. .
D.14. (U) The fact that USN-855 identified 22 frequencies as Israeli.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
D.15. (U) The fact that one of the airborne platforms collected voice conversations between two Israeli helicopter pilots and the control tower at Hazor Airfield.	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	
<b>(U) E. Releasable Names of NSA Employees and Assignees</b>				
E.1 (U) The following names of NSA employees and assignees have been released and are considered unclassified:  Julie Alger	UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	N/A	(U) Donald L. Blalock, Allen M. Blue, and Robert L. Wilson were NSA civilians aboard the USS Liberty.

Lt. Maury H. Bennett Donald L. Blalock Allen M. Blue Col. Leslie J. Bolstridge John Connell Charles Cowardin Benjamin G. Cwalina Walter Deeley Lt. Allan Deprey Billy Durham Robert D. Farley William D. Gerhard Lt. Col. Robert T. Green Richard Harvey William Holleran BG William Keller Clarence R. Klumfoot Lt. Cmdr., Edward Koczak Lt. Cmdr., D. E. Lewis CTC Terry L. McFarland Lt. John McTighe Henry W. Millington Henry Schorreck Eugene Sheck Clyde Wesley Way Robert L. Wilson Vincent J. Wilson, Jr.				
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