

NAVY COMMUNICATIONS "FOULUP"
CAUSED U.S.S. "LIBERTY'S" PRESENCE OFF SINAI COAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MATSUNAGA). Under previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HALPERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HALPERN. Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to learn that a Navy communications "foulup" led to the presence of the U.S.S. *Liberty* off the Sinai coast in June 1967, where it was mistaken for an Egyptian vessel and attacked by Israel torpedo boats and planes.

I refer to testimony published by the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee given at hearings in April and May on the Defense Department's 1969 budget. The published text was released only Tuesday, and revealed a series of blunders and misroutings of messages. The *Liberty* never received a message to withdraw from the Sinai war zone. The *Liberty*, a communications ship, was attacked repeatedly by Israeli planes on June 8, 1967, at the peak of the 6-day war. Thirty-four Americans were killed and 75 were wounded. Israel expressed regret at the time and said it was "prepared to make amends for the tragic loss of life and material damage," which it subsequently did. The United States claimed that the ship was 13.6 nautical miles off Sinai when the attack occurred.

According to the testimony, the order to the *Liberty* to move out of Sinai waters was first "misrouted by personnel in the Army communications center at the Pentagon to the Naval communications center in the Philippines. There a second personnel error misrouted the message to the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Md., where it was filed." It was never delivered to the *Liberty*.

Lt. Gen. R. P. Klocko, director of the U.S. Defense Communications Agency, admitted that because of personnel failures, "the message was sent to the Pacific instead of the Atlantic." Additional errors were also revealed. According to published testimony, the "routing clerk aboard the flagship U.S.S. *Little Rock*—flagship of the U.S. fleet in the Mediterranean—failed to detect (that) the *Liberty* was monitoring the fleet broadcast from the naval communications station at Asmara, Ethiopia" and as a result another message was misrouted to the naval communications center in Morocco.

It is significant to note that a distinguished member of the committee, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RHODES) asked General Klocko why a message was not sent directly to the ship to move its position "100 miles from the shore" instead of going "through all this rigamarole to move that ship." Here we are with the most sophisticated communications system ever known to mankind and maybe it is so sophisticated that we do not know how to use it.



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HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Judge A. Jay Cristol of the Southern District of Florida on the completion of his invaluable research on the USS *Liberty* incident. In 1987, Judge Cristol began researching the tragedy that befell the United States Navy ship *Liberty* and her crew on June 8, 1967. Judge Cristol completed a doctoral dissertation on the subject in 1997 and published his book, *The Liberty Incident*, in 2002.

In his continued quest for the truth, Judge Cristol pressed and finally convinced the National Security Agency to release classified transcripts proving that Israel's attack on the USS *Liberty* during the Six Day War was, in fact, accidental.

On June 8, 1967, Israeli troops detected large explosions along the Sinai shore. The United States had announced two days earlier that it had no warships in the combat zone, and Israeli troops believed that they were experiencing an Egyptian naval bom-

bardment. In response, the Israelis attacked the USS *Liberty*, which they mistook for being an Egyptian warship, killing 34 American crewmen and wounding 171.

For 35 years, conspiracy theories have raged and critics have insisted that Israel attacked the American ship deliberately. Finally, just last month, the NSA, under pressure by Judge Cristol, released transcripts of transmissions from two Israeli helicopter pilots that participated in the 1967 attack. These tapes, which have until now remained classified, serve to conclude the evidence that the tragic event was, in fact, a case of mistaken identity.

Judge Cristol's diligent efforts and persistence for the truth over the past sixteen years are to be commended. Through his work, he has helped restore faith in the special relationship that the United States and Israel share. Mr. Speaker, I hope the entire House joins me congratulating Florida Judge Jay Cristol on his achievement.



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House of Representatives

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida
September 23, 2003

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the story of a man who is far more than ordinary, a man who has achieved more than some do in three lifetimes, always compassionate, caring and loving to the community to which he belongs.

Today I am proud to honor Judge Jay A. Cristol, an astonishing man and native of Miami who remains vital, curious, and energetic. This pious man, who is dedicated to his country, put off law school to ultimately earn his distinguished Navy Wings of Gold.

Judge Cristol braved active duty as an aircraft carrier combat pilot during the Korean Conflict, in addition to flying operational flights during the Cuban missile crisis. His commitment to our Nation was also seen in his volunteering to perform airlift missions to Vietnam, his affirmation being, "I am proud to be an American and I love my country." Judge Cristol who was later made an honorary professor of the Naval Justice School, was assigned by the Department of Defense to lecture abroad concerning law of naval warfare. After retiring from the Navy in 1988 and dutifully practicing law for 25 years, Judge Cristol was appointed to the bench of the U.S. bankruptcy court where he continues to serve in Florida's Southern District. If that were not enough, it is noteworthy to state that Judge Cristol also an adjunct professor at the University School of Law.

Always positive and with a smile on his face, Jay's inquisitiveness for international terrorism led him right into the university's graduate school of international studies. Interested in naval history, he began to research the 1967 incident with the USS *Liberty* where Israeli air and naval forces erroneously engaged the ship in international waters off the Sinai Peninsula. His meticulous analysis formed the basis for his book, "The Liberty Incident," and earned him his Ph.D. His studies and his experience in the field have made him a sought-after scholar, appearing on national broadcasts such as CNN's "Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer."

Mr. Speaker, what more could be said about the man who refused to see Pan Am Airlines shattered and who told the owners to "kick the tires, light the fires and get those planes in the air," or the man who donates his aircraft and his time to perform angel flights, bringing children in need of medical aid who are in difficult-to-reach areas.

In his humility, Judge Cristol attributes everything simply to being lucky and always believing that we have to make peace for mankind, love instead of hate, as there we find the promise of a better humankind.

Indeed, it is an honor to speak of a man who pioneered in all of his endeavors and who continues to motivate others to do as well. Judge A. J. Cristol is a brilliant, concerned individual who has put ripples in time with his profound dedication to a Nation that deserves him well.

Congratulations, Judge A. J. Cristol



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House of Representatives

PRAISING A. JAY CRISTOL'S BOOK
"THE LIBERTY INCIDENT"

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Judge A. Jay Cristol of the Southern District of Florida on the completion of his invaluable research on the USS *Liberty* incident. Judge Cristol's doctoral dissertation details the tragedy that befell the U.S. Navy ship USS *Liberty* in 1967 when Israeli aircraft fired upon the ship, killing 34 sailors and wounding 171 others.

Judge Cristol's dogmatic search persuaded the National Security Agency to release classified transcripts proving that Israel's attack on the USS *Liberty* was an accident. Judge Cristol's research shows the Israeli forces attacked the American USS *Liberty* ship because they believed it was an Egyptian ship firing upon their coastline.

Through his diligent work and dedication, Judge A. Jay Cristol has assisted in strengthening the relationship between the United States and Israel and resolving unanswered questions about this unfortunate tragedy. I applaud his efforts, and commend him for this important work.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in applauding Florida's Judge A. Jay Cristol on this important achievement.



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House of Representatives

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT — (Extensions of Remarks - July 29, 2005)

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SPEECH OF
HON. JERROLD NADLER
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2005

- Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain famously said that one of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only nine lives. This is certainly the case with respect to one of the most persistent slanders against the State of Israel: the contention that on June 8, 1967, the Israel Defense Forces intentionally attacked a U.S. Naval Intelligence vessel, the USS *Liberty*.
- Fortunately that lie has been put to rest once and for all by the careful and exhaustive research of the Honorable A. Jay Cristol, a distinguished judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Florida. His careful research of the *Liberty* incident clearly demonstrates that this tragedy was the result of mistaken identity at the height of the Six Day War, when Israel's very survival was at stake.
- This conclusion is in line with the conclusions of 10 official U.S. investigations--including five congressional investigations--that there was never any evidence that the attack was made with knowledge that the target was a U.S. ship. There is substantial evidence the attack was a tragic mistake caused by errors on the part of both the U.S. and Israel.
- On June 8, 1967, at the height of the Six Day War, a U.S. Naval intelligence vessel, the USS *Liberty*, strayed into the waters 14 miles off the Sinai Peninsula, near El Arish. The Israel Defense Forces, having incorrectly identified it as an Egyptian vessel engaged in an attack of Israeli forces, attacked the *Liberty*, killing and wounding some of the crew.