

INTERVIEW OF AMBASSADOR WILLIAM N. DALE

Conducted 25 February 1992

A. Jay Cristol in Miami, Florida - Ambassador Dale in Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Ambassador Dale was born in 1919. He served as a foreign service officer in the U.S. State Department for thirty years. He advised that he went to Tel Aviv in the summer of 1964 and was serving as Deputy Chief of Mission under Ambassador Barbour on June 8, 1967. He was not classified as an Arabist. He served in Denmark and also in Canada. He served on the National Security Council staff in Washington, DC and at the NATO Defense College in Paris. He worked in London 1955-56. He worked in the British Affairs section of the State Department (North). He attended National War College in 1960. He was in Turkey for four years. He worked in the State Department Policy department and was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. He served as Ambassador to the Central African Republic from 1973 to 1975.

AJC: Prior to learning of the attack on the Liberty, did you or anyone at the Embassy, to your knowledge, know that the Liberty was off El Arish?

WND: No.

AJC: How did you learn of the attack?

WND: From Ernie Castle.

AJC: Did you have any part in the investigation of the attack?

WND: No.

AJC: What can you tell me about Ambassador Barbour or any staff that would make me understand the Tel Aviv Embassy operations better?

WND: On the scene at that time we set up an operational War Room in a staff room or conference room. Many officers had no work such as the economic officer. Also many Orthodox Jews wanted to go back to the U.S. and we had heavy evacuation schedules. It was a very busy time for the Embassy. Ambassador Barbour also spent a lot of time with the Israelis.

AJC: Did you have any discussions about the Liberty with any Israelis?

WND: No, not at that time, but later I had discussions in connection with the paying of reparations.

AJC: Did you have any discussions about the Liberty with any Americans?

WND: Ernie Castle was the main source. We talked about it but no outside sources. Colonel Anthony Perna was also at the Embassy serving as Defense and Air Attaché.

AJC: Did the Embassy keep a log of its activity? If so, where was, or is, it kept? Is there public access to the log?

WND: To my knowledge no such log was maintained.

AJC: Do you know Ambassador Porter?

WND: Yes, I know Ambassador Porter.

AJC: Did you see any messages or transcripts relating to Israeli aircraft intercepts or audiotapes of intercepts?

WND: I never saw any such material.

AJC: Is there any one that you could suggest that I should interview in connection with this research?

WND: No, I have seen the list of your interviews and I think you covered every one that I could think of.

NOTE: Ambassador Dale advised that he sent a letter to the New York Times stating that the Embassy never received any information about the presence of the USS Liberty in the Eastern Mediterranean. I asked if he could provide a copy of the letter but apparently he was unable to locate it.