

**NINETY-NINTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Reno, Nevada
August 22, 23, 24, 2017**

Resolution No. 40: USS Liberty

Origin: Washington

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As amended)

WHEREAS, On June 8, 1967, while operating in support of the National Security Agency (NSA) in international waters, properly marked as to her identity and nationality, and in calm, clear weather in the eastern Mediterranean, the USS Liberty (AGTR-5) was the target of an unprovoked attack by Israeli military forces that killed 34 members of the Liberty's crew and wounded 173; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of their heroic efforts during and after the Israeli onslaught, Liberty crew members were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, 2 Navy Crosses, 12 Silver Stars, 20 Bronze Stars, more than 200 Purple Hearts, and the ship's captain, Navy Commander William L. McGonagle, was awarded the Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, The June 28, 1967 public summary of proceedings of the Navy Court of Inquiry into the attack stated: "It was not the responsibility of the Court to rule on the culpability of the attackers and no evidence was heard from the attacking nation"; and

WHEREAS, According to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) information reports from June and October, 1967, sources in Tel Aviv reported: "Israel's forces knew exactly what flag the LIBERTY was flying" and Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan "personally ordered the attack" on the Liberty over the objections of senior uniformed military personnel, one of whom characterized the attack as "pure murder"; and

WHEREAS, Richard Helms (Director of Central Intelligence, 1966-1973), stated in a 1984 CIA interview: "Everything possible was done to keep from the American public really the enormity of this attack on an American naval vessel" and, "since this is for the Agency's record, I don't think there can be any doubt that the Israelis knew exactly what they were doing ... any statement to the effect that they didn't know that it was an American ship ... is nonsense"; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant General Marshall S. Carter, USA (ret.) (Director of the NSA, 1965-1969), recalled in a 1988 NSA interview that he stated at a Congressional hearing in 1967 that the attack on the Liberty: "Couldn't be anything else but deliberate. There's just no way you could have a series of circumstances that would justify it being an accident" and Carter indicated this remained his belief in 1988; and

WHEREAS, In a 2003 affidavit published in the Congressional Record, Captain Ward Boston, Jr., JAGC, USN (ret.), legal counsel for the 1967 Navy Court of Inquiry stated: "I know from personal conversations I had with Admiral Kidd [president of the Court of Inquiry] that President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara ordered him to conclude that the attack was a case of 'mistaken identity' despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary"; and

WHEREAS, According to the findings, published in the Congressional Record, of the 2003 Independent Commission of Inquiry, chaired by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN (ret.): "There is compelling evidence that Israel's attack was a deliberate attempt to destroy an American ship and kill her entire crew" and, "the White House deliberately covered up the facts of this attack"; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, the Veterans of Foreign Wars adopted Resolution No. 423 calling "Upon Congress to immediately investigate the attack on the USS Liberty by the armed forces of Israel on June 8, 1967, in order to determine the truth behind the attack, and to bring closure to the families and crew"; and

WHEREAS, In August 1967, after the conclusion of the Navy Court of Inquiry, The American Legion adopted Resolution No. 508 (rescinded in 1984 without being first reviewed) declaring the published report of the Navy Court of Inquiry: "Fails to provide the American public with a satisfactory answer as to the reason for the attack" and stating that, "The American Legion denounces and condemns Israel's irresponsible attack" and demanding, "A complete and thorough investigation of the incident"; and

WHEREAS, According to Gurney Williams III, writing in The American Legion Magazine ("Death Strikes the Liberty", July 1997), Congress has never investigated the Israeli attack on the Liberty; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, August 22, 23, 24, 2017, That The American Legion calls upon the 115th United States Congress to publicly, impartially, and thoroughly investigate the attack on the USS Liberty and its aftermath and to commence its investigation before the end of 2017, the 50th anniversary year of the attack.