

DECLARATION OF JAMES RONALD GOTCHER

I, JAMES RONALD GOTCHER, DO DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IS TRUE AND COMPLETE, AND BASED ENTIRELY UPON MY PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE GAINED THROUGH DIRECT OBSERVATION, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY STATED OTHERWISE:

1. My true, full, and correct name is James Ronald Gotcher, III.
2. I am a resident of the State of California.
3. On June 8, 1967, I was a Sergeant in the United States Air Force, assigned to the 6924th Security Squadron, Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam.
4. During the early evening (local time) of June 8, 1967 we received a CRITIC message, informing us that USS Liberty was under attack by Israeli aircraft. Shortly thereafter, we began receiving rough translations of the Israeli air to air and air to ground communications.
5. The next day, we received the final translations of the intercepts. There will virtually no difference between the two versions.
6. While I have a clear recollection of reading transcripts of conversations between pilots and controllers, I do not recall ever reading anything similar to the transcripts recently released by the National Security Agency concerning Israeli helicopter pilots.
7. It was clear from the explicit statements made by both the aircraft crews and the controllers that the aircraft were flying a planned mission to find and sink USS Liberty.
8. My understanding of what I read led me to conclude that the Israeli pilots were making every effort possible to sink USS Liberty and were very frustrated by their inability to do so.
9. Approximately ten days to two weeks later, we received an internal NSA report, summarizing the Agency's findings. The report stated, in no uncertain terms, that the attack was planned in advance and deliberately executed. The mission was to sink USS Liberty.

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- 10. A few days after the report arrived, another message came through directing the document control officer to gather and destroy all copies of both the rough and final intercept translations, as well as the subsequently issued report.
- 11. After the destruction of those documents, I saw nothing further on this subject.
- 12. I have read the translated transcripts, released by the Israeli government, which purport to be actual transcripts of the air to ground communications between the controllers and the attacking aircraft. I know this document to be a fabrication because I have read the actual intercepts and they were nothing like this. It is not possible that the differences could be due to different translations being used.
- 13. If called upon to testify, I am competent to testify to all of the foregoing on the basis of direct observation and personal knowledge.

Dated: September 2, 2003

