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Joe Meadors
Vice President
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BY FAX

Dear Joe,

The Liberty Affair

Terry
This is a copy of a letter
faxed to Joe Meadors. But
it does give an answer to
four questions as well.
Best wishes
Ahron

I understand from your letter (31 Jan 2003) that according to Dr. Jay Cristol the only difference between my and his interpretation of the conversations of the pilots before and during the attack on *USS Liberty* is the "tone" of those conversations. Yes, the tone seems to be one issue on which we disagree, but then the tone is very important for in these tapes the tone sometimes makes the music. It is sufficient to listen to the tone of Robert (here I am using the names used by Cristol in his book) at 1353 where he says: "What do you say?" to realize that, in fact, he refers to the previous suggestion of L.K. that it might well be that the ship is American. It seems that when it suits him Cristol himself refers to the tone of conversations. At 1412, according to Cristol, Kislev says: "Leave her!" and Cristol then adds in brackets: "There is a dramatic change in the tone of Kislev's voice". So here we are. The tone is indeed a matter that should be taken into consideration when analysing the tapes.

But it seems that Cristol and me differ on substance as well. You see, Cristol is not a plumber, or a mechanic but rather a Judge - a Federal Judge - and as such his is the world of words and he fully understands - I am pretty sure - the meaning of words and the need to be accurate when using them. But when it comes to the audiotapes it seems as if Cristol no longer understands the importance of words and in his text there are omissions and the text itself is sometimes heavily edited. Here is an example (and for the sake of accuracy I am not even quoting from *A History of Israel* but rather straight from the tapes):

Cristol's version:

13:54

L.K.: What is that? Americans?

Shimon: What Americans?

Kislev: Robert, what did you say?

[No one answers.]

Bregman's version:

13:53

L.K.: What is it? American?

Shimon: How do you mean, American?

Kislev: Robert, what do you say? [namely: what's your opinion and clearly a reference to the query just raised regarding the ship's identity - AB]

Robert: I didn't say (the tone: I don't want to know - AB)

Why did Cristol edit the text by saying that "no one answers" where in fact Robert *does* answer by saying "I didn't say" in a tone which suggests "I don't want to know" or "no comment"?

Another critical moment in the audiotapes comes a bit later.

Cristol's version:

14:13

Menachem: Kislev, what country? [Menachem has become concerned.]

Kislev: Possibly American.

Bregman's version:

14:14

Menachem: Kislev, what state?

Kislev: Probably American

Menachem: What?

Kislev: Probably American.

Why did Cristol shorten this passage?? In order that the word "American" will not ring in our ears for too long? True, this latter passage is far from being a "Smoking gun", but why to edit such a critical moment in the event??

If Judge Cristol was chosen to be the messenger whose task it is to put an end to a terribly painful debate then - in my opinion - the opposite was achieved.

Best wishes,

Yours,


Ahron Bregman