

## Betrayal and Indifference

From the  
USS Liberty  
to MinabSelf-deception as an  
American art form

By Skip Kaltenheuser

A press briefing, Imminent Threat – or Ruse? Intel on Iran a Flashback to Iraq?, was organized by former career CIA officer Ray McGovern and presented at the National Press Club on March 26, 2026.

McGovern closed the event with a quote from the late civil rights activist Rabbi Abraham Heschel, “When injustice occurs, we are not all guilty but we are all responsible. Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself.”

The ten speakers, all military veterans and/or intelligence professionals, were far from indifferent. For over five and a half hours they emphatically warned that America was duplicating the invasion of Iraq, thus far the most tragic foreign policy disaster since Vietnam. A new contender is in the works, engineered by many of the same vested interests.

Presenters brought a wide range of personal experiences encompassing the Cold War, Vietnam, the 1967 Six-Day War in the Middle East, the Forever Wars and Gaza.

Their revelations were profoundly disturbing, not least because of what should be well-known by the public but isn't, and of incidents indicating a complete collapse of American ideals as most understand them.

Due to the presentation's length, this writeup is limited to overall themes and a few of many unsettling examples of grotesque deceptions.

Picking a dominant theme, betrayal does nicely. Betrayal of Americans, of those in foreign nations we professed to help, and of those serving in American military now at severe risk.

The danger the military faces is amplified by a mainstream media that fails to properly enlighten the public. An American presidency soaked in breathtaking corruption, recently underscored by insider trading apparently tipped to the cha-cha of President Trump's bewildering statements on Iran, meshes easily with a Secretary of War with an end of times theology

and with a foreign power and its American proxies that have long influenced the White House, Congress and the press.

Speakers explored the creation of the “other” as a motive to go to war, cultivated by politicians and greased by companies that profit. It's a long tradition. As Communism faded it fell to Muslims to personify “the other,” continuing the reordering of national spending priorities to first and foremost support military ventures, including nearly 800 military bases in over 80 countries for forward deployment, while shirking desperate needs like health care, education and infrastructure.

The program, presented by the Eisenhower Media Network, can be found on YouTube and at ConsortiumNews.com. About fifty minutes in, one of the few remaining survivors of Israel's attack on the USS Liberty during the 1967 Six-Day War provided a riveting account of the struggle to survive a catastrophe at sea.

It is a damning failure of journalism that such accurate eye-witness accounts, initially suppressed by shocking government coverup, are largely unknown.

Ray McGovern noted that there is no greater proof of Israeli influence than public ignorance over the USS Liberty.

GySgt Bryce Lockwood, Chief, USMC Deal, was part of a large intelligence force detailed to the Liberty, which on June 8th, 1967 was in international waters 13.5 miles off the Sinai Peninsula when its communications were jammed and it was attacked by unmarked Israeli Air Force jet fighters and Israeli motor torpedo boats.

The latter inflicted 3,100 strikes from heavy caliber machine guns, as well fired five tor-

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Ray McGovern hands the mic to Bryce Lockwood, National Press Club, Washington, D.C., March 26, 2026

Photo: Skip Kaltenheuser

pedos, one of which hit, killing 34 American crew members and injuring 174.

Lockwood's account puts the lie to every aspect of the Israeli explanation that it mistook the American flag bearing ship for a particular Egyptian ship, the Al-Qasir, a WWI horse transport ship. Egyptian ships are painted black, not grey, the Al-Qasir was in dry dock for twenty years awaiting conversion to scrap.

What becomes obvious is that this was an attempt to sink a US ship with all hands and blame it on Egypt, bringing the US into the war, an early example of the false flag operations Israel excels at.

One Israeli pilot radioed that the ship carried an American flag and refused to fire on it. He was courtmartialled and imprisoned.

The USS Liberty had been told it had no need for an escort because air cover was ten minutes away. The ship had been under attack for over an hour when a May Day got out, causing the attack to cease.

US rescue planes, moments away, were called back by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The officer dispatching the planes, the Skipper of the USS Saratoga, Captain Joseph Tully, assumed it was because they carried nukes.

He relaunched aircraft with conventional weapons. McNamara called them back as well. Admiral Lawrence Guis of the US Sixth Fleet demanded to hear that order from higher authority.

LBJ came on, saying, “Get those aircraft back, I will not

have my allies embarrassed.”

Draw your own conclusions as to how LBJ knew which country had the unmarked planes when the USS Liberty didn't. Those who thought that but for Vietnam, LBJ would've have been one of our greatest presidents, might reassess.

Lockwood says survivors were ordered to silence and told if they said anything they'd be sent to Ft. Leavenworth and forgotten.

There has never been a Congressional investigation of the attack on the USS Liberty. Lockwood concludes that the USS Liberty was set up.

“Israel realized it could do whatever it wanted, and the US Congress, the US government, would do nothing,” he told the gathering.

Admiral Thomas Moorer, then Chief of Naval Operations, later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and later US ambassador to the UK, personally concluded the Navy was ordered to accept the Israeli excuse.

The USS Liberty is an early and stark example that to Israel American lives are utterly expendable.

As an aside, in 1999 this writer was in a glider plane over the Israeli desert, piloted by a former Israeli jet pilot in the 1967 war. He said it wasn't Egypt that first attacked, but it was Israel that initiated hostilities to provoke an Arab attack.

Disillusioned, he left the military and joined a kibbutz. According to Ray McGovern, in 1982, before the National Defense Institute in Washington, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin confirmed it was Israel that attacked first.

The presentation at the Press Club was peppered with insights that ought to tempt journalists to investigate further. One involved the late Congressman

Pete McCloskey, (R-California).

Informed that Canadian Parliamentarians had learned of a Mossad plot to assassinate President George H.W. Bush at the 1991 Madrid Conference, McCloskey flew to Canada and interviewed the source, former Mossad agent Victor Ostrovsky.

He said the plot was motivated by Bush being seen as hostile because he opposed settlement expansion. The plot included a false flag operation blaming Palestinians in Beirut, as well as a PR campaign in Israel and the US to prepare for Dan Quayle, who was viewed as friendlier.

McCloskey documented the interview and informed the U.S. Secret Service, thwarting the plot. How many Americans have a glimmer of this?

Perhaps the most ruinous betrayal was the invasion of Iraq. Several panelists offered personal experiences on its greasing by pro-Israel neocons highly placed in George W. Bush's administration.

One speaker, Dennis Fritz, had the opportunity to work for Douglas Feith, one of the invasion's key architects. Tasked with reviewing pre-war planning documents for declassification, Fritz realized he had the Iraq War's equivalent of the Pentagon Papers.

His book, Deadly Betrayal: The Truth About Why the United States Invaded Iraq, puts the lie to the government's official reasons, and reveals Israel's substantial role. Recall Bibi testifying to Congress that if the US didn't invade, Saddam would arm terrorists around the world with nukes. Any echoes?

As attacks on Iran resumed on February 28 while the US was negotiating, the world was shocked by the deadly triple-tap strike on a girls' primary school in Minab, Iran, attended by daughters of many top officials. This writer asked if the motive was to demoralize Iranians. The panelists' answers were uniform, adamant and affirmative.

It was a page straight out of the playbook of demoralizing Palestinians. Panelists provided convincing technical and protocol expertise that there is no possible way the target wasn't known to be a school long beforehand, or that the missiles, equipped with cameras, couldn't have been nullified or rerouted at the last moment. In a just world it would be evidence in war crimes trials. As would the bombing of hundreds of Iranian hospitals.

Our war criminals, top drawer.

Another constant theme is that of moral injury – lasting harm from events and falsehoods clashing with deeply felt moral beliefs. Such injuries were evident in all the speakers.

We are fortunate they eloquently set examples of refusing to allow their internal pain to silence them.

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