



# JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE OLDEST ACTIVE WAR VETERANS ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES • FOUNDED 1898

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STATEMENT BY JEROME D. COHEN, NATIONAL COMMANDER  
JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE U.S.A.  
FOR SUBCOMMITTEE #VII-TEMPORARY COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS  
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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans it is my high privilege to speak for an organization with 77 years of committed interest in the national security of the United States. To our views we bring the experience and perspective of our dual heritage, patriotic and religious.

The dramatic withdrawal of Soviet military personnel from Egypt is a fitting backdrop for our observations on the Sixth Fleet and its role in the Mediterranean. Having had the benefit of in-depth briefings and discussions not only with NATO and SHAPE commanders but as well with Israeli Prime Minister Meir and Foreign Minister Eban, I believe more than ever a modernized, efficient and vigilant fleet in the Mediterranean is the linchpin in the free world security system and that Israel is a reliable and invaluable ally worthy, by any standards, of continued American confidence and support.

Despite the recent exodus, the USSR continues to use four Egyptian ports, notably Alexandria, and Marsis El Matruh, as prime bases for naval operations that can control the Arab peninsula. Additional ports used by the Soviet flotilla are in Lebanon, one soon to open in Iraq and another in India bordering the Indian Ocean. By contrast the Sixth Fleet

does not avail itself of a single port in the Middle East. To remedy this ridiculous situation we recommend the use of liberty ports for our vessels and personnel in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Israel.

The embarrassing shore leave experience of American sailors in Greece and Turkey where they have been subjected to vilification and even physical harassment make imperative to the sustenance of necessary high morale a search for alternative liberty and drydock facilities. The exploration of such a possibility with each of the governments of Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Israel could provide a useful indication of where the American taxpayer's money as well as the welfare of the U.S. Navy would be best advanced. We should, at least, match the flexibility and capability of the Soviet Navy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Finally we are persuaded that the Sixth Fleet needs modernizing and refurbishing. In this connection, there seems to be a substantial and respectable body of belief among naval commanders of several nations that destroyers are outmoded and, indeed, may have outlived their usefulness. Missile boats of which we have less than a handful with surface to surface missiles have much greater mobility with as much firepower as a destroyer. They require a crew of less than 20 while destroyers require a compliment of 220 men. Despite the fact that we spend sixty three percent of our naval budget on personnel, the United States is still wasting money, men and material building new destroyers.

We believe that a liberty port in Haifa would be an asset to NATO, to the military security of our own country, as well as a boon for the morale of our sons who serve in the Sixth Fleet. It would make for a more effective and efficient deterrent to possible military adventures in the entire Mediterranean area and it would afford the Israelis an opportunity to provide a quid pro quo for American assistance and aid.