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Mr. George Bundy

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~~SECRET~~

August 5, 1964

TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM: S/P - W. W. Rostow
SUBJECT: Speculation on the Background and Possible Implications of the Tonkin Gulf Incidents.

1. The Setting. The North Viet Nam PT-boat attacks occurred against a background marked, in recent weeks, by divergent tendencies as seen from Hanoi:

a. Their military and political prospects in South Viet Nam have substantially improved, and this fact was appreciated and reflected, for example, in General Giap's speech of July 20.

b. On the other hand, the U.S. commitment to the defense of Southeast Asia and support of peripheral offensive actions increased both in Laos and in Viet Nam. The covert moves against North Viet Nam and the discussion of the possibility of more direct action against North Viet Nam have been, evidently, taken seriously despite the evident desire of President Johnson to limit the terrain of conflict. They may have reckoned that this danger would rise in the months ahead, notably after our election.

It is out of this mixed setting of simultaneously enlarged hopes and fears, with perhaps a sense that time might not be their friend, that they took a course extremely difficult to explain by attacking directly units of the Seventh Fleet.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 92-314
By ljg NARA. Date 7-31-92

2. Alternative Theories. The following four major hypotheses might explain the action.

a. The least likely, that the attacks on the Seventh Fleet were an effort to seek a response which could be used as a provocation for a previously planned massive military assault on Laos and South Viet Nam either by the overt use of ground forces across frontiers or by forces previously secreted in those areas.

b. More likely, Hanoi may have concluded, on the basis of its assessment of SVN politics, that a U.S. failure to react sharply to these attacks might have persuaded the Khanh government that further reliance on the U.S. was unprofitable and that Saigon should seek the best terms it could find with Hanoi. The incident may have been linked in its timing to such a planned or hoped for cave-in by the GVN.

c. The attacks could be a device for so raising the international noise level and anxiety about war in South-east Asia as to force the U.S. into a conference in which the issue of the violation of the 1954 and 1952 Accords would be obscured; that is, they could have regarded the move as a device to place us in a position of negotiating under conditions where it would be extremely difficult for us to continue to increase direct pressure on the North, while they continued their military and political campaign in the South, hoping, as in 1954, for a Dienbienphu during the conference. U.S. acceptance of a conference on such terms would be assessed in Hanoi as a damaging, if not mortal, blow to GVN morale.

d. The attacks may have been intended as a limited reaction to covert intrusions into the North, and the raised level of our support in SVN and Laos, probably designed to make us back off or to deter us from conducting further operations of this type or from continuing to expand our commitment in the area.

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3. Comment on the Hypotheses. We know of no evidence to justify the view that a massive ground force attack by the Communists in Southeast Asia is planned. However, a heightening of all forms of intelligence collection on Communist troop dispositions and movements in Southeast Asia does appear justified. The hope that the U.S. might respond so passively as to trigger a cave-in or coup inside Saigon is a more tenable hypothesis; although the political evidence available from South Viet Nam does not make a connection clear. What is clear, however, is that a failure to react vigorously by the U.S. might, in fact, have had the result of inducing Khanh to throw in his hand. One likely strand in their action was a felt need to make a show of force in the face of our increasing involvement in the area. So far as a conference is concerned, what is clear is that a direct U.S.-Hanoi confrontation may prove a more effective way of forcing us to the conference table, in their view, than a focusing of attention on the state of the 1954 and 1962 Accords, taken by themselves.

In short, we cannot give a straight, confident answer to the question: Why did they do it? The most likely elements appear a desire to make a show of force against us; a desire to force us to the conference table on unfavorable terms; and the hope that we would so behave as to weaken the political base in Saigon.

4. The Next Stage. On the whole, it is likely that they did not count on a response as substantial as that now under way. From their point of view, the U.S. strike will appear a rather massive countermove, however limited it may be judged by us. It will create a new situation. Specifically, we would agree in general with the memorandum of August 4 to you from Tom Hughes, suggesting that they would feel impelled to increase their actions in South Viet Nam and, perhaps, in Laos; that they would seek to bring us to the conference table on unfavorable terms; and that the Chinese Communists might make some move of limited support in air defense, at least.

As a contingency matter, however, we should be prepared for the possibility that Hanoi will feel itself so cornered or humiliated as to feel impelled to engage their

ground forces, which constitute their major unused asset, more overtly and substantially in Laos or, even, in South Viet Nam than the Hughes' memorandum suggests. This might be more likely if Hanoi interpreted the military deployments we will now be making in the Pacific for deterrent purposes as the prelude to massive attack. Lacking lucid communication from us, they may undertake what they would regard as pre-emptive action on the ground.

5. Policy Consequences. The Tonkin Gulf incidents, taken as a whole, are likely to have a momentum of their own which we should seek to direct for our own purposes. Specifically, they will tend to shift the vision of the problem out of the context of a struggle for control over Southeast Asia by local Communists, with the U.S. as marginal defenders of the area, to one of direct U.S. confrontation with the Asian Communists. As we suggested to George Ball and Harlan Cleveland last night, this requires of us, in our Security Council presentation, to ensure that the Tonkin Gulf incidents do not become the exclusive focus for discussion but are kept in the larger perspective of purposeful Communist violation of the 1954 and 1962 Accords. It also would make advisable that we strictly discipline our public reporting on the air strike against North Viet Nam to portray the action as an essentially limited retaliatory move, minimizing the details of military reporting, ancillary damage, etc.

The fundamental issue raised by these incidents, however, is the following: (a) if a limited Communist response permits, should we seek to treat these incidents as closed by our action, while we carry forward substantially our present policy on Southeast Asia; or (b) should we take the occasion of these incidents and the perhaps transient unity they bring about in U.S. public opinion and the Congress, to move on to force Hanoi to cease its aggression and to return, essentially, to compliance with the 1954 and 1962 Accords.

I believe it is to this fundamental choice that you and the President may wish to address yourselves as the hour-by-hour events of the occasion unfold. Public opinion at home

Mr. George...

and abroad will require prompt decision and continuing leadership if the Tonkin Gulf incidents are not to result in confusing debate which could gravely weaken our position in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Although the Communist response to our retaliatory strike may determine the choice for us, we should seek to guide the forces set in motion by the Communist attacks on our fleet, to the maximum extent possible.

In any case, as we go forward from these incidents and try, by whatever route the President chooses, to move towards a settlement which would restore the 1954 and 1962 Accords, we shall have to shift focus quite rapidly from the Tonkin Gulf incidents themselves to the basic problem of indirect Communist aggression in Laos and South Viet Nam.

Their consistent and political aggression in South Viet Nam is a major concern of the United States. We must be prepared and ready to meet this aggression in the event it directed to other areas.

a. Their consistent and political aggression in South Viet Nam is a major concern of the United States. We must be prepared and ready to meet this aggression in the event it directed to other areas.

b. In the event that the area of concern is the defense of South Viet Nam and the security of the region, we must be prepared to meet this aggression in the event it directed to other areas.

In the event of this kind of aggression, we must be prepared to meet this aggression in the event it directed to other areas.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Research Memorandum
RFE-56, August 6, 1964

DECLASSIFIED

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *Thomas L. Hughes* Authority State Dir. 6/1/78
By ehw, NARS, Date 8/8/78
Subject: Peiping and Hanoi: Motivations and Probable Reactions to Gulf of Tonkin Crisis

We have attempted a speculative reconstruction of the motivations and responsibilities of Hanoi and Peiping in triggering the Gulf of Tonkin crisis and we project the probable reactions of both Asian Communist regimes to the present United States responses, military and political. We recognize the paucity of evidence to support the following analysis but offer it as a tentative selection of the more plausible hypotheses among those offered in the initial phases of Communist military action.

General Strategic Co-ordination Between Hanoi and Peiping

Prior to the North Vietnamese attacks on the Maddox, Peiping and Hanoi manifested a close coordination in their public posture and their covert activity with regard to existing and -- to them, prospective -- United States escalation of hostilities in Indochina. This coordination, evident since early July, followed apparent high-level conferences in late June between the leaderships of North Vietnam and Communist China. In contrast to significantly differing statements from the two regimes last spring concerning the risk of U.S. escalation and probable Communist responses, Peiping and Hanoi issued statements in July which suggested an identity of view with respect to the seriousness of the U.S. threat, Chinese Communist willingness to deter it through implied commitments to defend North Vietnam, and the pursuit of an unaltered course in South Vietnam. The July statement specifically hinted at the eventual introduction of Chinese ground forces into the Indochinese peninsula.

These public statements were accompanied by indicators of increased military cooperation, at least in the area of contingency planning, centering in particular around improvements in North Vietnamese air defense capability, strengthening of jet airfields and petroleum shipments. At the same time, Hanoi prepared its people for the possibility of air attacks.

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These developments occurred against a background of growing estrangement between Hanoi and Moscow, on the one hand, paralleled by increased rapprochement between Hanoi and Peiping, on the other hand. Following the test-ban treaty in July 1963, but most evident after the Lao Dong Central Committee meeting in Hanoi last December, Hanoi's shift from a middle ground in the Sino-Soviet relationship turned, among other factors, around its assessment of the prospects for victory through continued military action in South Vietnam weighed against the risk of United States air attacks on North Vietnam. This, in turn, led to the ascendancy of the view in Hanoi that Peiping's strategy offered better assurance of victory and protection against damage than did that of Moscow.

Critical in this assessment was the apprehension that the possibility of steady U.S. escalation of hostilities against North Vietnam was sufficiently serious to demand anticipatory action at the level of public preparation for air attacks. However, sufficient uncertainty as to the imminence of the threatened action, particularly during the American election campaign, appeared to permit various political actions to deter escalation.

The Maddox Attacks: Co-ordinated Miscalculation?

In July Peiping and Hanoi signalled their apparent joint willingness to counter U.S. attacks on North Vietnam rather than damp down Communist aggression in South Vietnam. While this seemed to temper American public speculation concerning the likelihood of escalation, other U.S. associated initiatives, as seen by the Communists, continued. In Laos American reconnaissance missions and Laotian T-28 strikes continued with almost total impunity against Pathet Lao targets, including logistic points adjacent to North Vietnam. Nor did Chinese Communist, North Vietnamese, and Pathet Lao warnings against "serious consequences" deter Operation Triangle, at least for the time being, from extending anti-communist control over strategic ground in western Laos. Finally in South Vietnam, a crescendo of calls for "march North" accompanied public boasts from Saigon authorities that escalation against North Vietnam had indeed already begun in the form of clandestine attacks by air, ground, and sea. Although Hanoi disparaged the effectiveness of so-called "commando raids" evidence exists of its concern, particularly regarding those directed against its long coastline.

Hanoi's problem, and ultimately that of Peiping, was to avoid passivity of a type that would invite further punishment without, at the same time, providing a provocation that would trigger further escalation. The unescorted mission of the Maddox, close to North Vietnamese territory and coinciding with clandestine South Vietnamese activities along the coast provided an opportunity both to demonstrate Hanoi's determination to respond as well as to implicate the US publicly and directly in the "South Vietnamese" raids.

We are unlikely ever to know what coordination, if any, occurred between Peiping and Hanoi prior to the initial attack on the Maddox. Against the hypothesis of such consultation is Peiping's known aversion to engagements which directly involved United States forces, dramatically demonstrated in the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis where Chinese Communist shore batteries ceased bombardment of Quemoy when our ships first escorted Chinese Nationalist convoys to the island. At the time, satisfied that we would remain outside the three-mile limit, the Chinese Communists resumed their shelling within that confined area, hitting Chinese Nationalist vessels without endangering the American escort ships.

In 1958, however, the threat of a United States response was immediate. Peiping could well have felt this less likely in the event of a successful surprise attack on the unescorted Maddox. While U.S. aircraft patrolling Soviet borders have been shot down, there has been no U.S. retaliation. The ship's proximity to North Vietnam, especially in the area and context of clandestine South Vietnamese commando raids, could have been seen as complicating American public justification of any retaliation. Intensified diplomatic pressures for de Gaulle-type conference on Indochina might intervene before a startled Washington could map out its response. Success could be swift and disengagement costless, as in the attack on India. Failure might go unpublicized or be camouflaged with subsequent political moves, as in the 1958 bombardment of the offshore islands.

Most important for Peiping, however, was the fact that Hanoi would be carrying the primary risk. The temptation for Hanoi was considerable, ranging from the minimum boost to morale of weighing in successfully against the vaunted American navy to the maximum gain of stopping further clandestine activity and denying the Gulf of Tonkin to the enemy. Whether Hanoi pushed the concept or Peiping urged it, there would not seem to be any obvious disparity of interest in seeing the action attempted. Moreover, given the obvious import of attacking an American vessel, it seems highly unlikely Hanoi would have undertaken this venture without consulting Peiping, for which it had ample opportunity between the time when the Maddox was detected and the time when it was attacked.

At this point, a double miscalculation appears to have occurred. Peiping and Hanoi apparently underestimated the severity and swiftness of our response to the attack on the Maddox. In addition, they overestimated Hanoi's ability to knock out the destroyer with torpedo boats.

However, much of this may explain the initial attack of August 2, it obviously does not illuminate the motivation behind the second attack of August 4. Hanoi may have felt that night cover would impair our air cover and a second effort could sink the Maddox; against this, it had to reckon with the

loss of surprise. Even more important, the intervening public commitment of President Johnson to meet fire with counterfire sharply reduced, if it did not eliminate, the likelihood of a second attack going unpunished.

Basic Strategy Reaffirmed: The Compulsions of Confrontation

At a minimum, Hanoi knew its attack would meet a counterattack on the torpedo boats involved. At a maximum, it should have contemplated hot pursuit which could result in air strikes against torpedo boat bases. Acceptance of this greater risk may not have been carefully weighed in prolonged consultation with Peiping, but its acceptance would be consistent with the basic posture struck by Hanoi -- and supported by Peiping -- during the previous six months, i.e., the willingness to suffer United States air strikes in order to pursue the war in South Vietnam. If Hanoi could be deterred from its course of action in the Gulf of Tonkin by relatively low-cost aerial retaliation, how could it persuade its enemy it would stick to the present course in South Vietnam when greater costs were involved?

In short, having assured its people and the world that it would not compromise in the face of threatened escalation, Hanoi may have felt compelled to prove this point with the Maddox. Once the initial attack aborted, the consequences of passivity became more serious, as did the consequences of further action. Public silence was prudent, even though the element of surprise was gone, since the attack might fail. Denial that it ever occurred followed from that failure, whereas admitting the initial assault supported the allegation that Maddox missions were not peaceful but screened covert South Vietnamese attacks against North Vietnamese territory.

Peiping's prompt and public official support for Hanoi following our air strikes, asserting that aggression against North Vietnam was aggression against Communist China, suggests that Peiping certainly accepted the consequences of Hanoi's second attack even if it did not expressly acquiesce beforehand. Peiping had not uttered this precise formulation previously nor was it compelled to do so at this time, in the absence of any continued attacks on North Vietnam. Indeed, what evidence is at hand makes it difficult to believe Peiping attempted any restraint between the two attacks and more likely that it supported Hanoi's willingness to persist.

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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AP ITEMS ARE BASED ON LETTER DATED JULY 28 FROM VN ICC LIAISON MISSION TO ICC PROTESTING CAI BE ATTACK (EMBTTEL 259). LETTER, COPIES OF WHICH HAVE BEEN POUCHED DEPT, STATES: "ACCORDING TO WITNESSES FORCES MAKING ATTACK ON SUNG HIEU (CAI BE) WERE 261 AND 514 BATTALIONS OF REGULAR ARMY OF NORTH VN, AND DECAPITATE BODIES (LETTER STATES 42 VC BODIES, 8 DECAPITATED, DISCOVERED IN CFN 279 128 2 4PM 323 28 259 261 514 42 8

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 05A ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

TRENCH 200 METERS FROM CAI BE) WERE THOSE OF OFFICERS WHO COMMANDE THESE BATTALIONS AND OF CERTAIN CHICOM ADVISORS KILLED DURING ATTACK. PRESENCE OF LATTER WITH VC RANKS REVEALED BY ORDERS IN CHINESE HEARD DURING ASSAULT. VC COMMANDER APPARENTLY DECAPITATED BODIES TO PREVENT THEIR IDENTIFICATION."

COL. AN, HEAD VN MISSION, INFORMED EMBOFFICER LETTER BASED ON INFO FROM WITNESSES WHO INTERROGATED BY ICC FIXED TEAM, PARTICULARLY 2 VC-PRISONERS AND DISTRICT CHIEF. AN SAID VC PRISONERS STATED "AUTUMN CADRES" (APPARENTLY SENT FOR VC AUTUMN CAMPAIGN) FROM DRV HAD "TRAINED AND DIRECTED" 261 BN. NOT CLEAR WHETHER PRISONERS MADE SAME STATEMENT WITH RESPECT TO 514TH. AN SAID HE HAD INTENDED HIS LETTER TO INDICATE THAT THESE WERE REGULAR DRV TROOPS ATTACKING UNDER COVER THAT THEY LOCAL "LIBERATION" FORCES. HE SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT THESE WERE REGULAR PAVN BATTALIONS WHICH HAD ENTERED SVN AS UNITS. AN EXPLAINED HE WAS OBLIGED TO PHRASE HIS LETTER TO SHOW STRONG LINK BETWEEN DRV AND ATTACK SINCE OTHERWISE POLES WOULD HOLD THAT THESE WERE INTERNAL VN FORCES WHOSE ACTIONS DID NOT FALL UNDER GENEVA ACCORDS. AN SAID HE MUST MAKE STRONG ACCUSATION IN ORDER OBTAIN ICC ACTION, AND HE WISHED FOLLOW UP ON FIXED TEAM INVESTIGATION.
CFN 2 261 514TH

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-2- 279, AUGUST 2, 4 PM, FROM SAIGON

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 05A ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ON PRESENCE OF CHICOM ADVISORS, AN QUOTED DISTRICT CHIEF WHO PARTICIPATED IN DEFENSE CAI BE AS SAYING THAT HE SAW CHINESE WHO DISTINGUISHABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE TALLER THAN VIETNAMESE AND SHOUTED ORDERS IN CHINESE. AN SAID SOME OF DECAPITATED CORPSES WERE TALL MEN, AND THAT REPORTS OF CHICOM ADVISORS PARTICIPATING IN RECENT BEN CAT BATTLE HAS ALSO BEEN RECEIVED. AN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NATURE OF EVIDENCE HE CITED IF TRUE INDICATED ONLY PRESENCE CHINESE AND THAT SOME CHINESE FROM SVN WERE KNOWN TO BE IN VC UNITS. STATED HOWEVER THAT FACT THEY GIVING ORDERS LED TO PRESUMPTION THEY CHICOM AND SPECULATION THAT EITHER DRV HAS ASKED FOR CHINESE ADVISORS BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE LEADERS, OR CHINESE HAD SENT SUCH ADVISORS TO DIRECT RECENTLY STEPPED UP ATTACKS.

MACV HAS ACCEPTED EXISTENCE SINCE 1962 OF 261 AS MAIN VC BATTALION AND 514 AS PROVINCIAL VC BN BOTH OF WHICH FREQUENTLY OPERATE IN AREA NEAR CAI BE. ALSO ACCEPTS PRESENCE CADRE FROM NORTH IN 261ST. NEITHER MACV NOR GVN HIGH COMMAND HOWEVER ACCEPT PARTICIPATION ANY PAVN UNITS AS SUCH IN ATTACK ON CAI BE. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN NUMBER UNCONFIRMED REPORTS ALLEGED PARTICIPATION CHICOM ADVISORS WITH VC UNITS, ACCORDING MACV THERE NO FIRM EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT SUCH REPORTS, INCLUDING ALLEGED CFN 1961 261 514 261ST

PAGE 4 RUMJIR 05A ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CHICOM PARTICIPATION ATTACK ON CAI BE. MACV HAS ARRANGED FOR DIRECT ACCESS TO CAI BE POW'S IN ORDER OBTAIN ALL POSSIBLE INFO ON UNITS PARTICIPATING IN CAI BE ATTACK. WILL REPORT FINDINGS AS SOON AS AVAILABLE.

BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONFINE OUR COMMENTS ON THESE GVN ALLEGATIONS TO FACT WE HAVE NOT SEEN EVIDENCE REFERRED TO WHICH WE UNDERSTAND BEING INVESTIGATED BY ICC AND REFERRING QUESTIONS TO GVN. WE WILL ALSO SUGGEST COL. AND HE SEEK IN FUTURE AVOID MORE SENSATIONAL CHARGES UNLESS SUBSTANTIATED IN ORDER AVOID EMBARRASSMENT POSSIBLE SUBSEQUENT DENIAL BY U.S. AND QUESTIONING OF GVN CREDIBILITY.
TAYLOR

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY DELIVERED TO S/S-O AT 8:10 AM AUGUST 2ND
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CONTROL 726
RECD AUGUST 3, 6:11 AM 1964
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ACTION SECSTATE 285 PRIORITY
INFO CINCPAC 132
WHITE HOUSE 17
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DEFENSE 19
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Authority Stat 3-31-78 + OSD 6-13-78

By AD Name, Date 7-30-79

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E X D I S

FOR SOME TIME WE HAVE BEEN GIVING CONSIDERATION HERE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE INTRODUCTION INTO NVN OF JET AIRCRAFT, EITHER INTERCEPTORS OF MIG-17 TYPE, LIGHT BOMBERS OF IL-28 TYPE OR BOTH. SEVERAL COMBINATIONS ARE POSSIBLE, THE INTERCEPTORS APPEARING WITH THE BOMBERS, WITHOUT THE BOMBERS (WHICH ARE NOW IN BETTER POSITION ON HAINAN ISLAND THAN THEY WOULD BE ON NVN FIELDS), OR WITH THE BOMBERS STAGING IN AND OUT. WHILE THE PLANES WOULD PROBABLY BEAR DRV MARKINGS, PILOTS MIGHT INCLUDE CHICOMS.

SUCH A CIRCUMSTANCE WOULD CREATE PROBLEMS FOR US IN SVN. THERE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE ALARM BOTH REAL AND SIMULATED IN GVN OVER THE AIR DEFENSE OF URBAN TARGETS IN SVN WHICH COULD LEAD TO URGENT REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL US HELP IN FORM OF JET INTERCEPTOR CIVIL DEFENSE AND JET BOMBERS FOR VNAF. THERE COULD BE AN UPSURGE IN THE PROPAGANDA TO "MARCH NORTH" IN ORDER TO WIPE OUT THE NEW THREAT.

AS TO THE ACTUAL MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE, THERE WOULD BE LITTLE EFFECT ON NIGHT AIR OPERATIONS AGAINST NVN SUCH AS THOSE CONDUCTED UNDER PLAN 34A. IN THE CASE OF DAYLIGHT OPERATIONS, WE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE INCREASED CAP FOR US RECCE MISSIONS OVER LAOS. BUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EFFECT WOULD BE TO VOID THE USE OF VNAF A-1H'S IN DAYLIGHT OPERATIONS OVER NVN WITHOUT PRIOR ELIMINATION OF THE MIG THREAT OR WITHOUT A CAP OF US FIGHTERS. IN OTHER WORDS, ASSUMING AS WE MUST THAT VNAF NIGHT BOMBING WOULD BE VERY

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-2- 285, AUGUST 3, 5 PM, FROM SAIGON

INACCURATE, NO EFFECTIVE AIR ATTACK AGAINST NVN TARGETS COULD NOT BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT INVOLVING US COMBAT AIRCRAFT FROM OUTSET. THE VNAF-FARMGATE OPTION FOR BOMBING NVN TARGETS WITHOUT OVERT US PRESENCE WOULD BE LOST.

IT SEEMS IMPORTANT HERE TO THINK THROUGH THIS SCENARIO OF POSSIBLE EVENTS AND REACH SOME GENERAL AGREEMENT AS TO THE RESPONSE USG SHOULD MAKE IF THIS CONTINGENCY ARISES. FROM VIEWPOINT SAIGON, IT APPEARS THAT WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DO FOLLOWING:

- A. INTRODUCE US INTERCEPTORS AND POSSIBLY HAWK MISSILES INTO SVN.
- B. INITIATE HEAVILY ESCORTED US RECCE OVERFLIGHTS OF NVN. MIG'S WOULD HAVE TO STAY DOWN IN HUMILITATION OR RISE TO BE DESTROYED.
- C. ATTACK DRV AIRCRAFT ON THE GROUND OR IN AIR AS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT APPROVED AIR MISSIONS.

GP-1.

GN 285 132 17 12 19 MIG-17 IL-28 34A 1-H'S GP-1

TAYLOR

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VIENTIANE 14 MOSCOW 37 LONDON 81 CINCPAC POLAD, OTTAWA
WARSAW NEWDELHI UNN FROM PARIS AUG 6, 5 PM

BRETHES (ACTING DIRECTOR ASIAN AFFAIRS) SHOWED COUNSELOR
CABLE FROM NORTH VIETNAMESE FONMIN XUAN THUY TO COUVE
DATED AUGUST 5 AND TRANSMITTED COMMERCIALY WHICH PROTESTS
"AGGRESSIONS" AGAINST DRV TERRITORY CONDUCTED BY US AND
ITS SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND LAOTIAN "PUPPETS AND AGENTS"
TELEGRAM MENTIONS FIVE ATTACKS INCLUDING US NAVAL BOMBARDMENT
OF COASTAL CITIES PRIOR TO TWO MADDOX INCIDENTS. LATTER ARE
NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED DESPITE HANOI'S PUBLIC ADMISSION

PAGE 2 RUF6WP 220 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
FIRST ENGAGEMENT TOOK PLACE, AND TELEGRAM DWELLS RATHER
ON ATTACKS MENTIONED IN HANOI'S HIGH COMMAND DECLARATION
AUGUST 5 AS WELL AS USE OF LAO TERRITORY FOR AIR ATTACKS
ON NORTH VIETNAM. TELEGRAM STATES DRV APPEALING TO CO-
PRESIDENTS AND ICC GOVTS TO INTERVENE WITH USG AND GOVTS
SOUTH VIETNAM AND LAOS TO CEASE THESE ACTIVITIES, WHICH
ARE CONSIDERED DIVERSIONARY EXTENSIONS OF IMPERIALIST
WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, NO MENTION MADE
OF NEW GENEVA CONFERENCE AND TELEGRAM DOES NOT APPEAR
CONSTITUTE DIRECT APPEAL TO FRENCH GOVT FOR ANY SPECIFIC
DIPLOMATIC INTERCESSION.

BRETHES SAID THAT NOTHING HEARD FROM FRENCH DELEGATION IN
HANOI AS YET AND CHIEF OF MISSION ABSENT. CONVERSATION WITH
CHINESE REPORTED EMBTEL ANTEDATES SECOND MADDOX INCIDENT,
AND FIRST NOT BROACHED. THUS ONLY INDICES CHINESE AND
NORTH VIETNAMESE POSITIONS ARE IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS OR
PROPAGANDA-TYPE TELEGRAM MENTIONED ABOVE.

BRETHES SAID THAT FRENCH POSITION IN NEW YORK AND ELSEWHERE
BEING TELEGUIDED BY DE GAULLE FROM COLOMBEY, BUT INDICATED

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CONFIDENTIALLY THAT COUVE, WHO IS ALSO AWAY IN SOUTH,

PAGE 3 RUFOWP 220 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
AND QUAI SERVICES AGREE WITH POSITION TAKEN BY AMB STEVENSON,
I. E., THAT BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE SHOULD BE ALLOWED
TO APPEAR BEFORE SC. DE GAULLE DECISION ON THIS AND OTHER
ASPECTS NOT YET TAKEN.

BRETHES SAID HIS OWN FEELING WAS THAT ATTACKS ON US SHIPS
NOT CLEARED BY HANOI WITH PEIPING, WHICH PROBABLY TAKEN BY
SURPRISE IF ONE IS TO JUDGE BY TARDY PROPAGANDA REACTION AND
NON-COMMITAL NATURE OF CHINESE DECLARATIONS THUS FAR.
WHILE IT TOO EARLY TO PREJUDGE CHINESE DECISION, BRETHES
WAS DOUBTFUL THAT THEY WOULD UNDERTAKE ANY MASSIVE RETALIATION,
PARTICULARLY IF MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON MAINTAIN PRESENT
DISPOSITIONS TO LIMIT DAMAGE. BRETHES THOUGHT PEIPING
PROBABLY FULLY AWARE IT UNABLE TAKE ON SEVENTH FLEET AND
HE WAS DOUBTFUL HANOI WOULD WELCOME DISPATCH OF CHINESE
TROOPS TO NORTH VIETNAM, GIVEN PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH
CHINESE. HE THOUGHT HANOI JUDGED ITSELF CAPABLE OF DEFENDING
TERRITORY WITH OWN TROOPS. ATTACKS ON US SHIPS WERE PERHAPS
TO BE VIEWED AS HANOI ATTEMPT ELICIT COMMUNIST SOLIDARITY,
INCLUDING THAT OF MOSCOW, WHILE DEMONSTRATING NORTH VIETNAMESE
CAPACITY FOR DEFENDING ITSELF. BRETHES THOUGHT HANOI
MIGHT ALSO HAVE MISJUDGED NATURE OF US RESPONSE, PARTICULARLY/

PAGE 4 RUFOWP 220 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
USE OF AIRPOWER.

COMMENT: FOR MOMENT FRENCH TACTICS DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE
BEEN WORKED OUT, BUT WE DOUBT THEY WILL CHANGE THEIR
FUNDAMENTAL POSITION AGAINST MILITARY ACTION AND IN
FAVOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. GP-3. LYON
BT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Classification

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148

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-AUG 7 9 28 PM '64

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ACTION: Amembassy VIENTIANE IMMEDIATE 135
INFO: CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EXDIS

Handwritten initials

You should know that photography August 6 shows six
MIG 15/17 on Phuc Yen airfield near Hanoi. Suggest for
time being you avoid T-28 missions near DRV border.

GP-1

END

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State Ltr 3/31/78
By JK (ekw), NARS, Date 5/2/78

RUSK

OK/2

Drafted by: WCT FE:SEA:WCTrueheart:mm 8/7/64
Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: SEA - William C. Trueheart *WCT*

Clearances:
FE - Mr. Bundy (substance) *W*
DOD - Mr. McNaughton (substance) *W*

S/S - Mr. Moose *W*

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~~TOP SECRET~~

Classification

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

POL 27 VIET 5
POL 33-6 US-VIET N

42

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Action FM AMEMBASSY PARIS 6291
TO RUEMCR/SECSTATE WASHDC
SVN INFO RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON 1964 AUGUST 7 PM 6:32
RUEHDT/USUN NEW YORK
Info RUMJDH/AMCONSUL HONGKONG
BT
CONFIDENTIAL ACTION DEPT 742 INFO SAIGON 32
USUN 31 HONGKONG 11 MOSCOW LONDON UNN FROM PARIS AUG 7
6 PM

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8/7/64
POL 33-6 US-VIET N

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QUAI VIET NAM DESK (RICHER) TELLS US THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY THEORIZES THAT DRV ADVENTURE IN TONKIN GULF TOOK PLACE WITHOUT CHICOM FOREKNOWLEDGE. ACTION PROBABLY OCCURRED AS EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE TO POPULATION AND OUTSIDE WORLD THAT DRV IN BIG-LEAGUE BY 'SINKING US DESTROYER' AND AS RIPOSTE FOR RECENT SVN GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES IN NVN. IN SUPPORT THIS ANALYSIS RICHER ADDUCED SLOW CHINESE

PAGE TWO RUGWP 310 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
REACTION, OVERHEENING SELF-CONFIDENCE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE WHOSE TEMPERAMENT DIFFERS FROM MORE CALCULATING CHINESE, AND CONVICTION THAT DRV WOULD HAVE BRIDLED AT TAKING ALL RISKS OF OPERATION MASTERMINDED BY PEIPING. RICHER ADDED THAT QUAI DOUBTED MORE COMPLEX THEORIZING GOING ON IN PRESS THAT CHINESE OR DRV WISHED TO FORCE SOVIET HAND.

RICHER THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY DE GAULLE WOULD WISH AT THIS POINT TO ENTER VERBALLY INTO TENSE SITUATION AS GENERAL APPEARS TO PREFER TIMING HIS EFFORTS TO HAVE CALCULATED EFFECT AND AVOID DANGERS OF INVOLVEMENT HE CANNOT FORESEE. RICHER CITED EXAMPLE OF CYPRUS. EMBOFF EXPRESSED PERSONAL CONCERN THAT PRO-GAULLIST PRESS HAS DISPLAYED LARGELY UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARD US OVER AFFAIR.

ACCORDING TO RICHER SEYDOUX'S INSTRUCTIONS PERMIT HIS AGREEING TO SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION BY SVN AS WELL AS NVN TO SC. CHICOM AND DRV REPS HERE HAVE NOT BEEN IN TO SEE QUAI (TWO TOP DRV MEN ARE IN HANOI). ONLY INFORMATION FROM PEIPING EMBASSY IS BRIEF PRESS WRAPUP AND FROM HANOI THREE BRIEF PRESS REVIEWS.

2

GP-3. LYON
BT

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 12:17 AM AUGUST 8TH.
PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA AT 1:20 AM AUGUST 8TH.

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Authority RAC 32685
By NO NARA Date 5-18-98

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Jul 27 VIETS

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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CONTROL: 6125

Authority E.O. 11652 SEC. 5(A) and (D)
By JAR, NARS, Date 4-22-76

RECD: AUGUST 27, 1964, 8:01 P. M.

FROM: OTTAWA
ACTION: SECSTATE 176
DATE: AUGUST 27, 7 P. M.

GP
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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

IN A CALL ON CADIEUX (UNDER SECRETARY EXSTAFF) ON ANOTHER MATTER REPORTED SEPARATELY, CADIEUX VOLUNTEERED SOME SPECULATION ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES AS TO WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE MOTIVATION FOR THE NVN ATTACKS ON AUGUST 2 AND AUGUST 4. HE SAID THAT HIS EXPERIENCE IN HANOI HAD

TAUGHT HIM THAT THAT REGIME HAD BECOME SO USED TO FORCE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ITS POLICY THAT IT RARELY EMPLOYED ANY OTHER INSTRUMENT. THEY MAY HAVE REASONED THAT THEY COULD HAVE ATTACKED THE MADDOX AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE TURNER JOY SUCCESSFULLY AND WITH IMPUNITY. HE FOLLOWED THIS BY SAYING THAT HE THOUGHT THE U.S. RETALIATION, PARTICULARLY AGAINST THE NVN SUPPORTING FACILITIES, CAUGHT THEM BY SURPRISE, THAT IT WAS A CONTINGENCY FOR WHICH THEY PROBABLY HAD NOT PLANNED. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT "HIS NAVY PEOPLE" HAD TOLD HIM THAT A PROPERLY EXECUTED ATTACK BY PT BOATS AGAINST A DESTROYER WOULD NORMALLY BE SUCCESSFUL AND THE HANOI REGIME IN ALL PROBABILITY ASSUMED THAT THEIR FIRST MISSION WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. HAVING FAILED, THEY TRIED IT AGAIN.

GP4.

CFN 2 4 4

BUTTERWORTH

Microfilmed by RMR

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

0027 VIETS

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Action

SVN RR RUEHCR RUFGW
DE RUMJIR 11A 03/0935Z
Info R 030920Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
SS TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC
G INFO RUMJDH/AMCONGEN HONG KONG
SP RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
EUR RUMJNO/AMEMBASSY PHNOMPENH
FE RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUFGW/AMEMBASSY PARIS
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1964 AUG 8 AM 8 13

NVN

Aug 8 8 52
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USIA

NSC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ACTION DEPT (352) INFO HONGKONG 49 VIENTIANE
EUR 24 PPENH 54 BANGKOK 27 PARIS 34 CINCPAC 169 MOSCOW 9 FROM SAIGON
CIA AUG 8, 5:40 PM

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION CALLED TO AUGUST 6 LIBERATION BROADCAST-
ING STATION BROADCAST CARRYING MESSAGE FROM "HIGH COMMAND OF
ARMED FORCES FOR LIBERATION OF SVN TO HIGH COMMAND DRV ARMED
FORCES."

MESSAGE PRAISES DRV ARMED FORCES FOR HAVING "DEALT HEAVY BLOW
TO ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES OF US IMPERIALISTS," WHICH IS SAID
TO REVEAL VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S ARMY DETERMINATION TO SAFEGUARD
SOVEREIGNTY DRV PEOPLE. GOES ON TO PLEDGE: "ARMED FORCES FOR
LIBERATION OF SVN CONSIDER THEMSELVES RESPONSIBLE FOR STEPPING
UP ATTACK AGAINST AND ANNIHILATION AND DESTRUCTION OF ENEMY
ON ALL BATTLEFIELDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO PROTECTION OF NORTHERN
PART OF FATHERLAND. THIS IS SACRED MISSION OF ALL PEOPLE IN
WHOLE COUNTRY." US WARNED THAT IF IT CARRIED OUT FURTHER ACTS
OF "AGGRESSION AGAINST DRV, THEY WOULD HAVE TO FACE ARMED
FORCES AND PEOPLE OF WHOLE COUNTRY."

COMMENT: WHILE VC PROPAGANDA PAST FEW MONTHS HAS BEGUN TO
RELATE WAR IN SVN WITH DEFENSE OF NVN, THIS STATEMENT IS BY
FAR STRONGEST EXPRESSION YET OF THIS THEME. TAYLOR
ST

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Action

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Control: 6570
Rec'd: AUGUST 8, 1964
10:35 PM

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FROM: MOSCOW

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ACTION: SECSTATE 412 PRIORITY

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INFO: LONDON 62
PARIS 52
SAIGON 8

DATE: AUGUST 8, MIDNIGHT

REF EMBTEL 1085

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UNDER COVER NOTE 46/USA AUGUST 7 MFA TRANSMITTED TO EMBASSY VIA MESSENGER COPY OF DRV FORMIN LETTER OF JULY 15 CONCERNING ALLEGED US MISCONDUCT SOUTH VIETNAM AND "PLOT TO EXPAND IT (WAR) TO WHOLE OF INDO-CHINA," AS WELL AS "DECLARATION OF DRV ON OCCASION 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF STRUGGLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF GENEVA AGREEMENTS FOR PEACEFUL UNIFICATION OF VIETNAM," ALSO DATED JULY 15. FRENCH AND PRESUMABLY OTHER GENEVA POWERS ALSO RECIPIENTS.

MFA DID NOT TRANSMIT DRV DOCUMENTS "ON BEHALF OF SOV CO-CHAIRMAN OF GENEVA 1954 CONFERENCE" (REFTEL) BUT ONLY STATED THEY TRANSMITTING MESSAGE "ADDRESSED TO CO-CHAIRMEN."

EMBASSY HAS NOW LEARNED FROM BRITISH THAT THEY RECEIVED JULY 15 LETTER AND DECLARATION FROM SOVS AND WERE SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED IN JULY 31 BY LAPIN WHO EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR DRV POSITION AND PROPOSED CO-CHAIRMEN CIRCULATE DOCUMENTS. BRITISH HERE HAVE NOT SINCE REPLIED PROPOSAL.

STOESSEL

LM

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AUG 4 6 28 PM '64

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DATE: COLLECT
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Classification

Origin

~~ACTONX~~
INFO: USUN NEW YORK

~~XXX~~ PRIORITY

274
Pol 27 Viet 2

Info:

Please repeat Deptel 335 to Saigon, Aug. 3, Cn. 735, to USUN New York.

UNITED STATES MISSION

RUSK

Subj: USS Maddox

microfilmed by RMI

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Drafted by:

IO:DPSullivan:dps

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by:

IO - Daniel P. Sullivan

Clearances:

Requested by: UNP - Mr. Buffum

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FORM 8-63 DS-322

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COMMUNIST CHINA

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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RR RUMJDM RUEHC
DS RUPKVC 604 03/1545Z
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R 031547Z ZNH
FM AMEMBASSY (VIENNA)
TO RUMJDM/AMCONGEN HONGKONG
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON

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1964 AUG 3 PM 1 35

UNCLAS ACTION HONGKONG ONE INFO DEPT 276 FROM VIENNA THIRD.

JOINT EMBASSY/USIS

HONGKONG 2

DEPT PASS USIA

MORIER AUGUST 1 PUBLISHED TWO PORTISCH INTERVIEWS: FIRST WITH FONGMIN CHEN YI SIMULTANECUSLY RELEASED PEKING, SECOND WITH UNIDENTIFIED "HIGHEST LEVEL" MEMBER GOVERNMENT OF RANK "NOT INFERIOR" TO CHEN YI WHICH ALSO SEEN BY PEKING AUTHORITIES. CPN 276 2 1

PAGE 2 RUPKVC 604 UNCLAS
FOLLOWING SUMMARY CHEN YI INTERVIEWED: (1) US IS WARNED AGAINST EXPANDING VIETNAM WAR: VIETNAM AND OTHER INDOCHINA PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED ONLY THROUGH PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS: (2) THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN BANDUNG PRINCIPLES PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND CHINESE SUPPORT WORLD REVOLUTION: MARXISM-LENINISM DICTATES SUPPORT REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLES WHICH ACTUALLY SERVE PEACE BY WEAKENING IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM (3) PEKING SOLIDARITY WITH AFRO-ASIAN NATIONS NOT INTENDED CREATE "JOINT FRONT OF NON-EUROPEAN NATIONS AGAINST ALL NATIONS IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA "BUT TO SUPPORT STRUGGLE AGAINST "IMPERIALISM AND OLD AND NEW COLONIALISM" WITHOUT GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATIONS: (4) PEKING WILLING NEGOTIATE WITH US: RELATIONS "WOULD CHANGE IMMEDIATELY IF US WITHDREW ITS ARMED FORCES FROM TAIWAN AND STRAITS OF TAIWAN AND ABANDONED HOSTILE POLICY TOWARD CHINA: " (5) PEKING WILLING EXPAND TRADE WITH ALL COUNTRIES AND ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EVERY COUNTRY "OBSERVING PRINCIPLES EQUALITY, MUTUAL INTEREST AND MUTUAL RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORTIAL INTEGRITY OTHER SEE

RMR

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-2- 276, AUGUST 3, FROM VIENNA

FOLLOWING SUMMARY INTERVIEW UNIDENTIFIED OFFICIAL: MOSCOW DISTORTS TRUTH ABOUT CHINA MORE THAN WASHINGTON: PEKING DOES NOT WANT

PAGE 3 RUFKVC 804 UNCLAS

WAR AND CANNOT START IT SINCE IT LACKS LONG-RANGE PLANES AND ADEQUATE NAVY: TIME WILL SETTLE PROBLEMS HONG KONG, FORMOSA, MACAO WHICH MAY NOT BE "LIBERATED" FOR 20 YEARS OR MORE-- "THEREFORE WE NEED NOT WAGE WAR...WE OPPOSE ANY KIND OF AGGRESSION.. WE CANNOT WIN OUR NATION'S SUPPORT FOR AN AGGRESSION: "VOLUNTARY" WITHDRAWAL FROM INDIAN TERRITORY PROVES PEACEFUL INTENTIONS.

CHINA DOES NOT NEED TERRITORY BEYOND ITS BORDERS: COUNTRY CAN FEED ANOTHER 200 MILLION OR EVEN MORE: SINKIANG ALONE (WITH SIX MILLION INHABITANTS NOW) COULD FEED ANOTHER 50 MILLION: CHINESE POPULATION EXPLOSION WILL NOT CONTINUE, BIRTH CONTROL CAMPAIGN IS TAKING EFFECT; "NUMBER OF BIRTHS HAS DECREASED SIZEABLY...THE STANDARD OF LIVING MUST RISE...WHEN THE STANDARD OF LIVING IS HIGHER, PEOPLE GIVE BIRTH TO FEWER CHILDREN." CHINA DOES NOT SEEK TERRITRIOTIAL EXPANSION SOUTHEAST ASIA OR INDIA. "WHAT CAN WE HOPE TO FIND THERE? AGAIN LOTS OF PEOPLE, JUNGLES, SWAMPS, MOSQUITOES AND SNAKES...THINGS WHICH WE CHINESE CANNOT STAND. IS THERE A CHINESE WHO WOULD WANT TO GO THERE?"

PEKING WANTS CONVOCATION 14 GENEVA SIGNATORY NATIONS TO DECIDE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN TROOPS INDOCHINA AND PAVE WAY VIETNAMESE, LAOTIAN TREATIES ON BASIC PEACE, NEUTRALITY: PEKING WOULD TAKE MILITARY ACTION ONLY IF US ATTACKS NORTH

PAGE 4 RUFKVC 804 UNCLAS

VIETNAM, E.G. CARRIES "SPECIAL WARFARE" TO NORTH: THREE-MILLION ARMY IS BURDEN ON CHINESE RESOURCES WHICH COULD BE BETTER USED FOR SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION, " BUT AGGRESSIVE ENCIRCLEMENT MAKES IT NECESSARY. "WHAT DO THEY (AMERICANS) HOPE TO ACHIEVE WITH ATOM BOMBS AGAINST CHINA?... CITIES SUCH AS SHANGHAI OR PEKING CAN BE DESTROYED WITH ATOM BOMBS. BUT CHINA? DO AMERICANS BELIEVE THEY CAN OCCUPY CHINA?"

EVEN GOLDWATER, IF ELECTED, WOULD NOT RISK WAR AGAINST CHINA--"I WOULD VOTE FOR GOLDWATER IF I WERE IN AMERICA....GOLDWATER WOULD BE GOOD FOR THE US AND THE WORLD"IN PUSHING THINGS TO EXTREMES AND SPEEDING DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL CONDITIONS.

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-3- 276, AUGUST 3, FROM VIENNA

CONDITIONS CHINESE AGRICULTURE, TEXTILE INDUSTRY AND HOUSING CONSTRUCTION "NOT YET SATISFACTORY," BUT ALREADY QUITE GOOD IN AGRICULTURE; ANNUAL IMPORT TWO OR THREE MILLION TONS WHEAT COMPARES ANNUAL HARVEST 130 MILLION TON WHEAT AND RICE: AND SOME OF IMPORTS ARE SENT TO ALGERIA, ALBANIA AND CUBA. "THIS COUNTRY STILL NEEDS MUCH, SO MUCH THAT WE SHALL BE BUSY FOR AT LEAST 50 YEARS TO SETTLE THESE PROBLEMS TOLERABLY WELL. AND THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SAY THAT WE WANT WAR. THAT IS SIMPLY RIDICULOUS. ONLY HE WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST US WILL GET IT." (END SUMMARY)

PAGE 5 RUFKVC 804 UNCLAS
IN ACCOMPANYING EDITORIAL PORTISCH UNDERLINES THAT HE IS DRAWING NO CONCLUSIONS, ONLY REPORTING INTERVIEWS. HIS SERIES OF ARTICLES ON CHINA WILL COMMENCE "IN A FEW WEEKS."

TWO COPIES GERMAN ORIGINAL AND MORE EXTENSIVE ENGLISH SUMMARY BEING AIR POUCHED. IF STILL REQUIRE FULL TRANSLATION PLEASE ADVISE. RIDDLEBERGER
BT

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ROUTING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Action ZCZCMJAS65JDA332
PP RUEHCR
FE DE RUMJDH 09 05/0700Z
P R 060344Z ZEA
Info FM AMCONSUL HONGKONG
SS TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC
SVN INFO RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON
G RUASTP/AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
SP RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
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Authority State ltr 4/7/78
By llaw, NARS, Date 8/8/78

USIA ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

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INR ACTION PRIORITY DEPT (140) INFO SAIGON 44 TAIPEI 21 VIENTIANE 15
CIA CINCPAC UNN FROM HKONG AUGUST 5, 4 PM

NSA CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

OSD
ARMY IN CONTRAST PEIPING'S FAILURE THUS FAR DIRECTLY TO REPORT AUG 2
NAVY USS MADDOX ENGAGEMENT IN TONKIN GULF, HONG KONG COMMUNIST WEN WEI
IR PAO AND TA KUNG PAO CARRIED SERIES OF COMMENTARIES AUG 3, 4 AND
..IC 5 RELATING INCIDENT TO BROADER PATTERN OF ALLEGED US ADVENTURISM
AND AGGRESSION. (NEWS OF SECOND ATTACK ON USS MADDOX AND JOY AUG 4
REACHED HONG KONG TOO LATE TO BE REPORTED IN AUG 5 MORNING PRESS.)
RMR SCHEMATICALLY INCONSISTENTLY, COMMENTARIES AUG 3 AND 4 ALSO CAST DOUBT
UPON ACCURACY OF REPORTS ON GROUNDS ONLY INFORMATION AVAILABLE
FROM US SOURCES. WEN WEI PAO COMMENTARY AUG 4 LINKS MADDOX
INCIDENT WITH STEPPED UP "US AND RIGHTWING" ATTACKS ON "LIBERATED
AREAS" IN LAOS, KHANH'S "CLANGORING" ABOUT ADVANCING NORTHWARD,
AND ALLEGED SHELLING TWO NORTH VIETNAMESE ISLANDS BY
"US - KHANH" WARSHIPS. COMMENTARY STATES, "THESE MOVES FURTHER
INDICATE THAT THE US IS CARRYING OUT SYSTEMATIC PROVOCATIONS
TO TEST THE LIMIT OF THE PATIENCE OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND
CHINESE PEOPLES." TA KUNG PAC AUG 4, REFERRING TO DECISION SEND
SECOND DESTROYER FOR PATROL DUTY AND PRESIDENT'S ORDER THAT IN
FUTURE ANY ATTACKERS BE DESTROYED, DECLARES, "THIS IS OBVIOUSLY
EXCUSE TO START NEW WAR."

COMMENT: LOCAL COMMUNIST COMMENTARIES APPEAR TENTATIVE AND
PRELIMINARY, AS IF LACKING POLICY GUIDANCE, AND ARE CAREFUL NOT
TO GO BEYOND EARLIER CHICOM WARNINGS, INCLUDING LO JUI-CHINGS
AUG 1 REMARK ABOUT US "CLAWS" IN SEA GETTING CHOPPED OFF. THIS
TREATMENT, PLUS PEIPING SILENCE, INDICATES CHICOMS HAVE NOT YET
DECIDED ON RESPONSE TO FIRST MADDOX ENGAGEMENT QUITE APART FROM
EVEN GRAVER IMPLICATIONS OF SECOND ATTACK.

GP-3.

RICE

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HONG KONG 140 8-5-64

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Action

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1964 AUG 6 AM 1 48

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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ACTION PRIORITY DEPT 144 INFO BANGKOK 21 VIENTIANE 16
SAIGON 45 FROM HONG KONG SIXTH

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USIA

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FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY STATEMENT BY:

INR

(RADIO PEKING OVERSEAS SERVICE IN CANTONESE 1000 HRS HK TIME)

NSA

CPR

THE US SUDDENLY ATTACKED THE DRV ON 5 AUGUST. BY DOING SO US
IMPERIALISM HAS GONE BEYOND THE VERGE OF WAR AND EMBARKED ON
THE FIRST STEP IN EXPANDING THE WAR IN INDO-CHINA, AND THE
SITUATION IS EXTREMELY GRAVE. THE CPR GOVT "COMPLETELY
CFN 144 21 16 45 1000 HRS HK US DRV 5 US CPR

PAGE TWO RUMJDH 02 UNCLAS

SUPPORT" THE DRV'S STERN PROTEST AGAINST THE US.

THIS SECOND INCIDENT IN THE GULF OF TONKIN IS COMPLETELY
PREMEDITATED AND FABRICATED IN ORDER TO EXPAND THE WAR IN
INDO-CHINA AND TO SEND ARMED FORCES TO AREAS NEAR THE DRV
FROM TAIWAN AND HK.

SINCE 3 AUGUST THE US HAD COMMITTED A SERIES OF AGGRESSION
AGAINST THE DRV. "THE CPR GOVT SOLEMNLY STATE THAT THE AGGRESSION
AGAINST THE DRV IS STARTED BY THE US. SINCE THE US DOES THIS,
THE DRV HAS GAINED THE RIGHT TO RESIST AGGRESSION, AND ALL
COUNTRIES SUPPORTING THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS HAVE ALSO OBTAINED
THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT THE DRV'S ACTION AGAINST AGGRESSION....
THE DRV IS A CLOSE NEIGHBOR OF CHINA'S AND THE VIETNAMESE
PEOPLE ARE BROTHERS OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE. ANY US AGGRESSION
AGAINST THE DRV IS AN AGGRESSION AGAINST THE CPR. THE CHINESE

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-2- 144, AUGUST 6, FROM HONG KONG

PEOPLE WILL NEVER SIT IDLY BY WITHOUT ASSISTANCE. THE US'S BLOOD DEBT TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE MUST BE REPAID. THE US GOVT MUST IMMEDIATELY STOP ITS ARMED AGGRESSION AND PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE SACRED TERRITORIAL LAND, SEA, AND AIR OF THE DRV, OR THE US GOVT MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL GRAVE CONSEQUENCES CAUSED BY THIS /AGGRESSION AND PROVOCATIONS/".

RICE

BT

CFN DRV'S US TONKIN DRV TAIWAN PK 3 US DRV CPR DRV US US DRV
DRV'S DRV US DRV CPR US'S US DRV US

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 2:30 A.M. AUGUST 6, 1964

PASSED WHITE HOUSE, CIA, DOD 8-6-64 - 3:00 A.M.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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RUDTLN/AMEMBASSY LONDON
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Comm China

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1964 AUG 6 PM 5 57

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ACTION DEPT (702) INFO SAIGON 29
VIENTIANE 14 MOSCOW 37 LONDON 81 CINCPAC POLAD, OTTAWA
WARSAW NEWDELHI UNN FROM PARIS AUG 6, 5 PM

BRETHES (ACTING DIRECTOR ASIAN AFFAIRS) SHOWED COUNSELOR
CABLE FROM NORTH VIETNAMESE FONMIN XUAN THUY TO COUVE
DATED AUGUST 5 AND TRANSMITTED COMMERCIALY WHICH PROTESTS
"AGGRESSIONS" AGAINST DRV TERRITORY CONDUCTED BY US AND
ITS SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND LAOTIAN "PUPPETS AND AGENTS".
TELEGRAM MENTIONS FIVE ATTACKS INCLUDING US NAVAL BOMBARDMENT
OF COASTAL CITIES PRIOR TO TWO MADDOX INCIDENTS. LATTER ARE
NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED DESPITE HANOI'S PUBLIC ADMISSION

PAGE 2 RUGWP 220 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
FIRST ENGAGEMENT TOOK PLACE, AND TELEGRAM DWELLS RATHER
ON ATTACKS MENTIONED IN HANOI'S HIGH COMMAND DECLARATION
AUGUST 5 AS WELL AS USE OF LAO TERRITORY FOR AIR ATTACKS
ON NORTH VIETNAM. TELEGRAM STATES DRV APPEALING TO CO-
PRESIDENTS AND ICC GOVTS TO INTERVENE WITH USG AND GOVTS
SOUTH VIETNAM AND LAOS TO CEASE THESE ACTIVITIES, WHICH
ARE CONSIDERED DIVERSIONARY EXTENSIONS OF IMPERIALIST
WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, NO MENTION MADE
OF NEW GENEVA CONFERENCE AND TELEGRAM DOES NOT APPEAR
CONSTITUTE DIRECT APPEAL TO FRENCH GOVT FOR ANY SPECIFIC
DIPLOMATIC INTERCESSION.

BRETHES SAID THAT NOTHING HEARD FROM FRENCH DELEGATION IN
HANOI AS YET AND CHIEF OF MISSION ABSENT. CONVERSATION WITH
CHINESE REPORTED EMBTEL ANTEDATES SECOND MADDOX INCIDENT,
AND FIRST NOT BROACHED. THUS ONLY INDICES CHINESE AND
NORTH VIETNAMESE POSITIONS ARE IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS OR
PROPAGANDA-TYPE TELEGRAM MENTIONED ABOVE.

BRETHES SAID THAT FRENCH POSITION IN NEW YORK AND ELSEWHERE
BEING TELEGUIDED BY DE GAULLE FROM COLOMBEY, BUT INDICATED

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.4
By *M* NAPA, Date: *4-3-14*

XEROX FROM QUICK COPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2- 702, AUGUST 6, 5 PM, FROM: PARIS

CONFIDENTIALLY THAT COUVE, WHO IS ALSO AWAY IN SOUTH,

PAGE 3 RUFGWP 220 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
AND QUAI SERVICES AGREE WITH POSITION TAKEN BY AMB STEVENSON,
I. E., THAT BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE SHOULD BE ALLOWED
TO APPEAR BEFORE SC. DE GAULLE DECISION ON THIS AND OTHER
ASPECTS NOT YET TAKEN.

BRETHES SAID HIS OWN FEELING WAS THAT ATTACKS ON US SHIPS
NOT CLEARED BY HANOI WITH PEIPING, WHICH PROBABLY TAKEN BY
SURPRISE IF ONE IS TO JUDGE BY TARDY PROPAGANDA REACTION AND
NON-COMMITAL NATURE OF CHINESE DECLARATIONS THUS FAR.
WHILE IT TOO EARLY TO PREJUDGE CHINESE DECISION, BRETHES
WAS DOUBTFUL THAT THEY WOULD UNDERTAKE ANY MASSIVE RETALIATION,
PARTICULARLY IF MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON MAINTAIN PRESENT
DISPOSITIONS TO LIMIT DAMAGE. BRETHES THOUGHT PEIPING
PROBABLY FULLY AWARE IT UNABLE TAKE ON SEVENTH FLEET AND
HE WAS DOUBTFUL HANOI WOULD WELCOME DISPATCH OF CHINESE
TROOPS TO NORTH VIETNAM, GIVEN PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH
CHINESE. HE THOUGHT HANOI JUDGED ITSELF CAPABLE OF DEFENDING
TERRITORY WITH OWN TROOPS. ATTACKS ON US SHIPS WERE PERHAPS
TO BE VIEWED AS HANOI ATTEMPT ELICIT COMMUNIST SOLIDARITY,
INCLUDING THAT OF MOSCOW, WHILE DEMONSTRATING NORTH VIETNAMESE
CAPACITY FOR DEFENDING ITSELF. BRETHES THOUGHT HANOI
MIGHT ALSO HAVE MISJUDGED NATURE OF US RESPONSE, PARTICULARLY

PAGE 4 RUFGWP 220 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
USE OF AIRPOWER.

COMMENT: FOR MOMENT FRENCH TACTICS DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE
BEEN WORKED OUT, BUT WE DOUBT THEY WILL CHANGE THEIR
FUNDAMENTAL POSITION AGAINST MILITARY ACTION AND IN
FAVOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. GP-3. LYON
BT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

46

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Action

ZCZCJJA345

FE

RR RUEHCR
DE RUMJDH 03 08/0535Z
R 080531Z ZEA

Comm China

Info

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG /

0 0 6 3 3 9

SS

TO SECSATE WASHDC

1964 AUG 8 AM 4 05

SVN

STATE GRNC

G

BT

DECLASSIFIED

SP

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Authority *State Otr. 6/1/78*

L

155 AUG 08, 2 PM -

By *Shur*, NARS, Date *8/8/78*

P

US IA

NSC

INR

CIA

NSA

OSD

ARMY

NAVY

AIR

1. IN OUR CONTACTS OF PAST TWO DAYS WITH US AND OTHER WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS WELL AS FRIENDLY CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES IN HONG KONG WE HAVE FOUND THAT SEVERAL NORMALLY BALANCED OBSERVERS OF VIETNAMESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE GIVEN UNFORTUNATE DEGREE OF CREDENCE TO DRV-CHICOM CHARGES THAT SECOND PT ATTACK ON US DESTROYERS IN TONKI GULF DID NOT RPT NOT OCCUR, OR ALTERNATIVELY THEY HAVE SPECULATED THAT US DELIBERATELY PROVOKED AUG 4 ATTACK (PERHAPS BY VENTURING WITHIN 12 MILE LIMIT). THESE
CFN 155 1. 4 12

RMR

PAGE TWO RUMJDH 03 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
INDIVIDUALS SAY THEY CAN CONCEIVE MOTIVATION FOR DRV'S FIRST ATTACK BUT IN LIGHT FAILURE ON AUG 2 CANNOT LOGICALLY EXPLAIN ADVENTURESOME QUALITY OF AUG 4 ATTACK 65 MILES OFF SHORE AGAINST OVERWHELMING US NAVAL SUPERIORITY.

2. NON-COMMUNIST CHINESE REPORTER IN HONG KONG TOLD US HE WAS ASKED AUG 6 BY AN EDITOR OF COMMUNIST WEN WEI PAO WHETHER HIS AMERICAN FRIENDS FELT "RELIEVED" AFTER READING CPR GOVT. STATEMENT OF AUG 6. ALTHOUGH QUESTION IMPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGED CPR'S OWN CAUTION, CONTEXT SUGGESTED EDITOR WAS PROBING FOR EXPLOITABLE SIGNS OF US ANXIETY. HE ALLEGEDLY SAID FOR EXAMPLE THAT US ACTION AGAINST PT BASES WAS MOUNTED FROM CARRIERS FOR FEAR LAND-BASED STRIKES WOULD INVITE COMMUNIST RETALIATION AGAINST AIR BASES.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2- 155, AUGUST 8, 2 P.M. FROM HONG KONG

3. COMMENT-WE PRESUME LOCAL PUZZLEMENT
OVER DRV'S AUG 4 ATTACK MAY NOT RPT NOT BE LIMITED TO OBSERVERS
IN HONG KONG. IN PREPARING ADDITIONAL PUBLIC GUIDANCE
BEYOND MCNAMARA AND STEVENSON STATEMENTS, DEPARTMENT
MAY WISH CONSIDER FURTHER STEPS TO COUNTER UNFORTUNATE
CFN 2. 4 65 2. 6 6 3. 4

PAGE THREE RUMJDH 03 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
SPECULATION ALONG LINES PARA 1, PROVIDED WE CAN DO SO
WITHOUT STRENGTHENING THESE SUSPICIONS BY OUR OWN
PROTESTATIONS.

GP-3

RICE

BT

CFN 1 GP-3

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CONFIDENTIAL

of Thompson

160

Comm China

PT PLS PASS MOSCOW.

ACTION IMMEDIATE DEPT 143 INFO BANGKOK 22 MOSCOW 1 SAIGON 46
TAIPEI 24 TOKYO 35 VIENTIANE 17 CINCPAC UNN PARIS 13
LONDON 22 FROM HKONG AUGUST 6, 8:32 P.M.

✓ *Bundy*

CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

FOLLOWING ARE CONGEN COMMENTS ON CHICOM STATEMENT OF AUGUST 6:

1. IF STATEMENT IS ANY GUIDE TO CHICOM INTENTIONS -- AND THIS,
OF COURSE, MUST REMAIN A MOOT POINT PENDING FURTHER EVIDENCE--
CFN 143 22 11 46 24 35 17 13 22 5 8:32 5 1

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State etc. 6/1/78
By chm, NARS, Date 8/8/78

PAGE TWO RUMJDN 13 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PEIPING DOES NOT NOW INTEND IMMEDIATE, UNMEASURED, OR SWEEPING
ACTION IN RETALIATION FOR US ATTACKS ON DRV FT BASES AND NAVAL
FORCES. ALTHOUGH STATEMENT SOMBRELY CHARGES THAT AS RESULT OF
SURPRISE BOMBING ATTACKS BY US NAVAL AIRCRAFT ON AREAS OF NGHE
AN, HON GAY, AND THAN HOA (THE PHRASE "COASTAL TOWNS" IS ALSO
USED) US "WENT OVER BRINK OF WAR" AND "MADE FIRST STEP IN
EXTENDING WAR IN INDOCHINA," AND ALTHOUGH FOR FIRST TIME IT
ASSERTS THAT "AGGRESSION BY US AGAINST DRV MEANS AGGRESSION
AGAINST CHINA," STATEMENT STILL RETAINS UNSPECIFIC NATURE OF
EARLIER CHICOM WARNINGS AS TO PRECISELY WHAT MEASURES CPR MAY
TAKE TO SUPPORT DRV IN ITS "FIGHT AGAINST AGRESSION."

2. ESSENTIALLY, STATEMENT SEEMS ADDRESSED NOT SO MUCH TO JUSTIFY ANY MEASURES THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN BY CPR SINGLY OR JOINTLY IN RESPONSE TO DAMAGE INFLICTED ON DRV NAVAL FORCES AND INSTALLATIONS--THOUGH IT COULD ALSO SERVE THAT PURPOSE-- AS TO A) WARN STRONGLY AGAINST ANY FUTURE ATTACKS OR PROVOCATIONS DIRECTED W DRV, AND B) PUBLICLY ESTABLISH STRONGEST POSSIBLE MORAL CASE AGAINST US. STATEMENT CONCLUDES THAT "US GOVERNMENT MUST IMMEDIATELY STOP ITS ARMED PROVOCATIONS AGAINST DRV AND ITS ARMED ENCROACHMENTS ON LATTER'S SACRED TERRITORY, AIR CTR NOT NOW US DRV PT US NGHE AN HON GAY THAN HOA US US DRV CPR DRV NOT CPR DRV A) DRV B) US US DRV

PAGE THREE RUMJDH 18 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SPACE, AND TERRITORIAL WATERS. (BEGIN UNDERLINE) OTHERWISE, (END UNDERLINE) US GOVERNMENT MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES ARISING THEREFROM." (OUR UNDERLINING)

3. AUGUST 6 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL, WHICH REITERATES PLEDGE THAT "CHINESE PEOPLE WILL NOT SIT IDLY BY WITHOUT LANDING A HELPING HAND," FURNISHES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CHICOM'S DESIRE AT THIS POINT TO RETAIN FREEDOM OF MANEUVER IN DEALING WITH CRISIS. IN THREE SUCCESSIVE SENTENCES IT STRESSES RIGHT OF (BEGIN UNDERLINE) DRV AND NORTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE (END UNDERLINE) "TO HIT BACK IN SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST ARMED ATTACKS OF US" AND "TO REPULSE ENEMY, WHEREVER HE COMES FROM." EDITORIAL ADDS THAT IF US (BEGIN UNDERLINE) "KEEPS ON (END UNDERLINE) EXTENDING ARMED AGGRESSION" AGAINST DRV, (BEGIN UNDERLINE) "HEROIC VIETNAMESE PEOPLE (END UNDERLINE) WPPUNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO PUNISH US" (OUR UNDERLINING).

4. STATEMENT ASSERTS OR SEEKS TO PROVE THAT A) AGGRESSION WAS PREMEDITATED AND PART OF LARGER PLAN WHICH INVOLVED JULY 30 SHELLING OF 2 DRV ISLANDS AND AUGUST 1-2 BOMBING OF DRV BORDER POST AND VILLAGE BY PLANES FROM LAOS, AND B) SECOND TONKIN GULF INCIDENT "NEVER OCCURRED" AND WAS FABRICATED IN ORDER EXTEND WAR IN INDO CHINA. THIS THEME AMPLIFIED IN AUGUST 5 CFN US 3 6 NOT DRV US US DRV US 4 A) 30 2 DEV 1-2 DRV LAOS B) TONKIN 5

PAGE FOUR RUMJDH 13 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

ARTICLE BY "HSINHUA CORRESPONDENT" WHICH POINTS OUT ALLEGED INCONSISTENCIES IN US ACCOUNTS OF AUGUST 4 INCIDENT. IN ITS EFFORT TO MAKE THIS CASE, HOWEVER CHICOM STATEMENT SHOWS AWKWARDNESS IN ARRANGING "FACTS." STATEMENT IN AT LEAST ONE RESPECT DIFFERS NOTABLE IN NUANCE FROM DRV STATEMENT, NAMELY IN STATING THAT IN AUGUST 2 INCIDENT "US SIDE HAD SUFFERED NO LOSSES." THIS TACIT ADMISSION THAT US-DRV NAVAL ENGAGEMENT OCCURRED IS AT VARIANCE WITH DRV CLAIM THAT THEIR PATROL SHIPS "CHASED ENEMY SHIPS OUT OF TERRITORIAL WATERS" AND RETURNED TO BASE.

5. FURTHER ELEMENT IN STATEMENT, AS WE SEE IT, IS DIRECTED IN LARGE PART AT SOVIETS. ASSERTION THAT "NO SOCIALIST COUNTRY CAN SIT IDLY BY ~~WHILE~~ (DRV) IS BEING SUBJECTED TO AGGRESSION" AND OF EQUATING AGGRESSION AGAINST DRV WITH THAT AGAINST CHINA SERVES AT ONCE TO JUSTIFY CHINESE POSITION, PUT SOVIETS ON SPOT VERSUS REST OF COMMUNIST WORLD AND PERHAPS TO ELICIT SOVIET SUPPORT.

STATEMENT DOES NOT REFER TO NECESSITY FOR 14-NATION GENEVA
CONFERENCE, BUT WE FEEL THAT THIS IN NO WAY PRECLUDES INTENSIFIED
CHICOM PRESSURE FOR EARLY NEGOTIATIONS. LOCAL COMMUNIST WEN WEI PAO
COMMENTARY AUGUST 6 CONCLUDES WITH CALL FOR US ACCEPTANCE OF
...-POWER CONFERENCE AND PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS.

CFN HSINHUA US 4 DRV 2 US NO US-DRV DRV 5 NO DRV DRV 6 NOT
14 NO WEN WEI PAO 6 US 14

PAGE FIVE RUYJDH IS ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

7. ALTHOUGH CHICOMS HAVE THUS SOUGHT TO RETAIN THEIR FREEDOM
OF MANEUVER WHILE PUTTING BEST PUBLIC FACE ON EPISODE, WE EXPECT
CHICOMS TO TAKE STEPS OF TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR DRV, PROBABLY IN
SPHERE OF AIR DEFENSE AND POSSIBLY IN SUPPORT OF DRV MOVES
IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND LAOS.

8. ONE POINT OF PARTICULAR CONCERN LOCALLY IS UNPRECEDENTED
LINKING OF SEVENTH FLEET MOVEMENTS FROM TAIWAN STRAITS AND
HONG KONG WITH OPERATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST DRV. WE DO NOT AT
THIS TIME INTERPRET THIS AS SIGN OF IMPEFING STRONG PRESSURE
AGAINST COLONY, BUT WE DO BELIEVE CHINESE MAY EXPLOIT ANY
CONSPICUOUS 7TH FLEET ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HONG KONG IN NEAR
FUTURE.. IN FACT, BRITISH COMMODORE HAS ALREADY DRAWN THIS
CONCLUSION, AND WE MAY EXPECT SPECIAL SENSITIVITY, FOR A WHILE
AT LEAST, ON THIS SCORE.

GP-3.

CE

BT

CFN 7 DRV DRV LAOS 3 DRV NOT 7TH GP-3

Confidential

Department of State

161

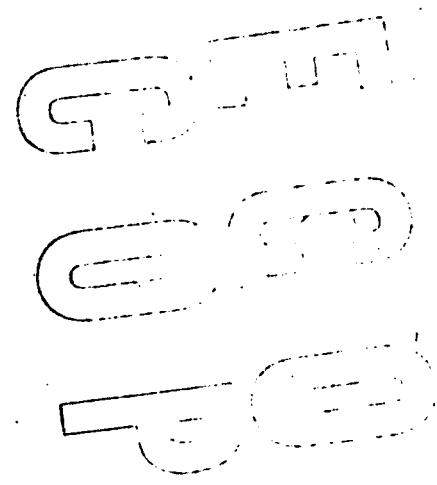
30
Action

Comm China

ZCZCJJA973

1984 AUG 6 PM 2 26

SVN 03 RUDDEN RUENOR RUGWP
 DE RUMJDN 18 00/1120Z
 Info CLR 1511Z ZFA
 SS FM INCONSUL HONGKONG
 G TO RUEHCE/SECSTATE WASHDC
 SP INFO RUMJDN/AMBASSY BANGKOK
 FE RUMJIR/AMBASSY SAIGON
 IO RUASTP/AMBASSY TAIPEI
 NSC RUALOT/AMBASSY TOKYO
 INR RUMJFS/AMBASSY VIENTIANE
 RUMHLC/CINCPAC CAMP SMITH HAWAII
 RUGGUP/AMBASSY PARIS
 RMR RUDYLN/AMBASSY LONDON
 STATE GRNC
 BT



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ACTION IMMEDIATE DEPT [148] INFO BANGKOK 22 MOSCOW 1 SAIGON 46
 TAIPEI 24 TOKYO 35 VIENTIANE 17 CINCPAC UNN PARIS 13
 LONDON 22 FROM HKONG AUGUST 6, 8:30 P.M.

CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

FOLLOWING ARE CONGEN COMMENTS ON CHICOM STATEMENT OF AUGUST 6:

1. IF STATEMENT IS ANY GUIDE TO CHICOM INTENTIONS -- AND THIS, OF COURSE, MUST REMAIN A HOOT POINT PENDING FURTHER EVIDENCE-- PEOPING DOES NOT NOW INTEND IMMEDIATE, UNMEASURED, OR SWEEPING ACTION IN RETALIATION FOR US ATTACKS ON DRV PT BASES AND NAVAL FORCES. ALTHOUGH STATEMENT SOMBRELY CHARGES THAT AS RESULT OF SURPRISE BOMBING ATTACKS BY US NAVAL AIRCRAFT ON AREAS OF NGHE AN, HON GAY, AND THAN HOA (THE PHRASE "COASTAL TOWNS" IS ALSO USED) US "WENT OVER BRINK OF WAR" AND "MADE FIRST STEP IN EXTENDING WAR IN INDOCHINA," AND ALTHOUGH FOR FIRST TIME IT ASSERTS THAT "AGGRESSION BY US AGAINST DRV MEANS AGGRESSION AGAINST CHINA," STATEMENT STILL RETAINS UNSPECIFIC NATURE OF EARLIER CHICOM WARNINGS AS TO PRECISELY WHAT MEASURES CPR MAY TAKE TO SUPPORT DRV IN ITS "FIGHT AGAINST AGRESSION."
2. ESSENTIALLY, STATEMENT SEEMS ADDRESSED NOT SO MUCH TO JUSTIFY ANY MEASURES THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN BY CPR SINGLY OR JOINTLY IN RESPONSE TO DAMAGE INFLICTED ON DRV NAVAL FORCES AND INSTALLATIONS--THOUGH IT COULD ALSO SERVE THAT PURPOSE--

EXCLUDED BY ENR

2

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 E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.4
 By g NARA, Date 4-3-74

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2- 148, AUGUST 6, 8:30PM FROM: HONG KONG.

AS TO ADVISE STRONGLY AGAINST ANY FUTURE ATTACKS OR PROVOCATIONS DIRECTED AT DRV, AND B) PUBLICLY ESTABLISH STRONGEST POSSIBLE MORAL CASE AGAINST US. STATEMENT CONCLUDES THAT "US GOVERNMENT MUST IMMEDIATELY STOP ITS ARMED PROVOCATIONS AGAINST DRV AND ITS ARMED ENCROACHMENTS ON LATTER'S SACRED TERRITORY, AIR SPACE, AND TERRITORIAL WATERS. (BEGIN UNDERLINE) OTHERWISE, (END UNDERLINE) US GOVERNMENT MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES ARISING THEREFROM." (OUR UNDERLINING)

3. AUGUST 6 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL, WHICH REITERATES PLEDGE THAT "CHINESE PEOPLE WILL NOT SIT IDLY BY WITHOUT LENDING A HELPING HAND," FURNISHES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CHICOM'S DESIRE AT THIS POINT TO RETAIN FREEDOM OF MANEUVER IN DEALING WITH CRISIS. IN THREE SUCCESSIVE SENTENCES IT STRESSES RIGHT OF (BEGIN UNDERLINE) DRV AND NORTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE (END UNDERLINE) "TO HIT BACK IN SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST ARMED ATTACKS OF US" AND "TO REPULSE ENEMY, WHEREVER HE COMES FROM." EDITORIAL ADDS THAT IF US (BEGIN UNDERLINE) "KEEPS ON (END UNDERLINE) EXTENDING ARMED AGGRESSION" AGAINST DRV, (BEGIN UNDERLINE) "HEROIC VIETNAMESE PEOPLE (END UNDERLINE) WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO PUNISH US" (OUR UNDERLINING).

4. STATEMENT ASSERTS OR SEEKS TO PROVE THAT A) AGGRESSION WAS PREMEDITATED AND PART OF LARGER PLAN WHICH INVOLVED JULY 30 SHELLING OF 2 DRV ISLANDS AND AUGUST 1-2 BOMBING OF DRV BORDER POST AND VILLAGE BY PLANES FROM LAOS, AND B) SECOND TONKIN GULF INCIDENT "NEVER OCCURRED" AND WAS FABRICATED IN ORDER EXTEND WAR IN INDO CHINA. THIS THEME AMPLIFIED IN AUGUST 5 ARTICLE BY "HSINHUA CORRESPONDENT" WHICH POINTS OUT ALLEGED INCONSISTENCIES IN US ACCOUNTS OF AUGUST 4 INCIDENT. IN ITS EFFORT TO MAKE THIS CASE, HOWEVER CHICOM STATEMENT SHOWS AWKWARDNESS IN ARRANGING "FACTS." STATEMENT IN AT LEAST ONE RESPECT DIFFERS NOTABLE IN NUANCE FROM DRV STATEMENT, NAMELY IN STATING THAT IN AUGUST 2 INCIDENT "US SIDE HAD SUFFERED NO LOSSES." THIS TACIT ADMISSION THAT US-DRV NAVAL ENGAGEMENT OCCURRED IS AT VARIANCE WITH DRV CLAIM THAT THEIR PATROL SHIPS "CHASED ENEMY SHIPS OUT OF TERRITORIAL WATERS" AND RETURNED TO BASE.

5. FURTHER ELEMENT IN STATEMENT, AS WE SEE IT, IS DIRECTED IN LARGE PART AT SOVIETS. ASSERTION THAT "NO SOCIALIST COUNTRY CAN SIT IDLY BY WHILE (DRV) IS BEING SUBJECTED TO AGGRESSION" AND OF EQUATING AGGRESSION AGAINST DRV WITH THAT AGAINST CHINA SERVES AT ONCE TO JUSTIFY CHINESE POSITION, PUT SOVIETS ON SPOT VERSUS REST OF COMMUNIST WORLD AND PERHAPS TO ELICIT SOVIET SUPPORT.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3- 148, AUGUST 6, 8:30PM FROM: HONG KONG.

6. STATEMENT DOES NOT REFER TO NECESSITY FOR 14-NATION GENEVA CONFERENCE, BUT WE FEEL THAT THIS IN NO WAY PRECLUDES INTENSIFIED CHICOM PRESSURE FOR EARLY NEGOTIATIONS. LOCAL COMMUNIST WEN WEI PAI COMMENTARY AUGUST 6 CONCLUDES WITH CALL FOR US ACCEPTANCE OF 14-POWER CONFERENCE AND PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS.

7. ALTHOUGH CHICOMS HAVE THUS SOUGHT TO RETAIN THEIR FREEDOM OF MANEUVER WHILE PUTTING BEST PUBLIC FACE ON EPISODE, WE EXPECT CHICOMS TO TAKE STEPS OF TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR DRV, PROBABLY IN SPHERE OF AIR DEFENSE AND POSSIBLY IN SUPPORT OF DRV MOVES IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND LAOS.

8. ONE POINT OF PARTICULAR CONCERN LOCALLY IS UNPRECEDENTED LINKING OF SEVENTH FLEET MOVEMENTS FROM TAIWAN STRAITS AND HONG KONG WITH OPERATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST DRV. WE DO NOT AT THIS TIME INTERPRET THIS AS SIGN OF IMPEFING STRONG PRESSURE AGAINST COLONY, BUT WE DO BELIEVE CHINESE MAY EXPLOIT ANY CONSPICUCUS 7TH FLEET ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HONG KONG IN NEAR FUTURE. IN FACT, BRITISH COMMODORE HAS ALREADY DRAWN THIS CONCLUSION, AND WE MAY EXPECT SPECIAL SENSITIVITY, FOR A WHILE AT LEAST, ON THIS SCORE.

GP-3.

RICE

ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O 8/6/64-3:05PM

Note: Passed White House, DOD, CIA, USUN 8/6/64-3:18PM

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

162

42

UNCLASSIFIED

Comm China

Action

FE PP RUEHC
DE RUMJDH 02 1/0245Z

Info ZNR 0 0 3 9 0 0

SS P R 060236Z 1964 AUG 6 AM 1 48

SVN FM AMCONSUL HONGKONG P R I O R I T Y
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC

G INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

SP RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

L RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON

H STATE GRNC

EUR BT
UNCLAS

IO ACTION PRIORITY DEPT 144 INFO BANGKOK 21 VIENTIANE 16

P SAIGON 45 FROM HONG KONG SIXTH

USIA FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY STATEMENT BY:

NSC (RADIO PEKING OVERSEAS SERVICE IN CANTONESE 1000 HRS HK TIME)

INR THE US SUDDENLY ATTACKED THE DRV ON 5 AUGUST. BY DOING SO US
NSA IMPERIALISM HAS GONE BEYOND THE VERGE OF WAR AND EMBARKED ON
NIC THE FIRST STEP IN EXPANDING THE WAR IN INDO-CHINA, AND THE
RMR SITUATION IS EXTREMELY GRAVE. THE CPR GOVT "COMPLETELY
CFN 144 21 16 45 1000 HRS HK US DRV 5 US CPR

PAGE TWO RUMJDH 02 UNCLAS
SUPPORT" THE DRV'S STERN PROTEST AGAINST THE US.

THIS SECOND INCIDENT IN THE GULF OF TONKIN IS COMPLETELY
PREMEDITATED AND FABRICATED IN ORDER TO EXPAND THE WAR IN
INDO-CHINA AND TO SEND ARMED FORCES TO AREAS NEAR THE DRV
FROM TAIWAN AND HK.

SINCE 3 AUGUST THE US HAD COMMITTED A SERIES OF AGGRESSION
AGAINST THE DRV. "THE CPR GOVT SOLEMNLY STATE THAT THE AGGRESSION
AGAINST THE DRV IS STARTED BY THE US. SINCE THE US DOES THIS,
THE DRV HAS GAINED THE RIGHT TO RESIST AGGRESSION, AND ALL
COUNTRIES SUPPORTING THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS HAVE ALSO OBTAINED
THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT THE DRV'S ACTION AGAINST AGGRESSION....
THE DRV IS A CLOSE NEIGHBOR OF CHINA'S AND THE VIETNAMESE
PEOPLE ARE BROTHERS OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE. ANY US AGGRESSION
AGAINST THE DRV IS AN AGGRESSION AGAINST THE CPR. THE CHINESE

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UNCLASSIFIED

-2- 144, AUGUST 6, FROM HONG KONG

PEOPLE WILL NEVER SIT IDLY BY WITHOUT ASSISTANCE. THE US'S BLOOD DEBT TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE MUST BE REPAID. THE US GOVT MUST IMMEDIATELY STOP ITS ARMED AGGRESSION AND PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE SACRED TERRITORIAL LAND, SEA, AND AIR OF THE DRV, OR THE US GOVT MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL GRAVE CONSEQUENCES CAUSED BY THIS /AGGRESSION AND PROVOCATIONS/".

RICE

BT

CFN DRV'S US TONKIN DRV TAIWAN HK 3 US DRV CPR DRV US US DRV
DRV'S DRV US DRV CPR US'S US DRV US

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 2:30 A.M. AUGUST 6, 1964

PASSED WHITE HOUSE, CIA, DOD 8-6-64 - 3:00 A.M.

UNCLASSIFIED

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

164

38

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Action

PE ZCZCHJAS71J549
 PP RUEHCR RUEMDT RUFQWP
 Info DE RUMJDH 20 10/1113Z
 P R 101104Z ZEA
 SS FM AMCONSUL HONGKONG
 SYN TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC
 G INFO RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEWDELHI
 SP RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON
 EJR RUFHDM/AMEMBASSY LONDON
 NEA RUFQWP/AMEMBASSY PARIS
 IO RUEMDT/USUN NEWYORK
 NSC STATE GRNC
 INR BT

1964 AUG 10 AM 10 35

007463

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ACTION PRIORITY DEPT 166 INFO NEW DELHI 8 SAIGON 50 LONDON 24
PARIS 15 USUN 2 FROM HKONG AUGUST 10, 8 PM

DEPTEL 165, REPEATED NEW DELHI 299.

ON BASIS INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE, CONGEN DOUBTS CHICOMS
 WERE PRIME MOVERS BEHIND DRV ATTACKS ON OUR DESTROYERS IN
 TONKIN GULF. CPR GOVT STATEMENT AUG 6 AND SUBSEQUENT PRONOUNCE-
 MENTS HAVE CONVEYED SENSE OF CAUTION IN FORMULATING RESPONSE TO
 OUR RETALIATION AND CHICOM MOVES SO FAR SUGGEST CAREFUL
 CALCULATION WHICH WOULD SEEM INCONSISTENT WITH ADVENTURESOME
 CFN 166 8 50 24 15 2 10 8 165 299 DRV TONKIN CPR 6

PAGE TWO RUMJDH 20 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
QUALITY OF DRV ACTION.

EVEN ASSUMING CHICOMS HAD UNDERESTIMATED
 US WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND FORCEFULLY, THEIR SENSITIVITY TO TALK
 OF OPERATIONS AGAINST DRV WAS REPEATEDLY EVIDENCED BEFORE AUG 2
 AND SHOULD HAVE LOGICALLY RESTRAINED THEM FROM SPONSORING RISKY
 PROVOCATION. IN TACTICAL SENSE, CHICOMS MIGHT HAVE BEEN AWARE
 IN ADVANCE OF MORE AGGRESSIVE DRV NAVAL INSTRUCTIONS WHICH
 CONTRIBUTED TO AUG 2 ATTACK, BUT CHINESE ENCOURAGEMENT OF SECOND
 ATTACK AUG 4 IN FACE OVERWHELMING US SUPERIORITY WOULD VIOLATE
 FUNDAMENTAL CHICOM MILITARY TENET OF RESPECTING ENEMY TACTICALLY
 AND MOBILIZING SUPERIOR FORCE BEFORE STRIKING. FINALLY, WE
 SUSPECT PATTERN OF PUBLICITY FROM HANOI AND PEIPING WOULD HAVE
 BEEN LESS DELAYED, CONFUSED, AND INCONSISTENT IF CHICOMS HAD
 PLANNED AFFAIR FROM START.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5.

State Dept. Guidelines

By jc, NARA, Date 3-21-01

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-2- 166, August 10, 8 P.M., From Hong Kong

BANNERJEE'S SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS WOULD NOT SEEM PERSUASIVE FROM CHICOM VIEWPOINT. CHICOMS HAVE BEEN PUT "ON SPOT" IN FAR MORE IMMEDIATE SENSE THAN SOVIETS AND CHICOMS ARGUMENTS IN AFRO-ASIAN COUNTRIES AT LEAST PARTLY UNDERCUT BY TECHNIQUE X DRV ACTIONS. IN SUM, WE THINK FRENCH FONOFF VIETNAM DESK OFFICER (PARIS' 742 TO DEPT) IS CLOSER TO AT LEAST PARTIAL EXPLANATION DRV MOTIVATION.

GP-3.

RICE

BT

- CFN DRV US DRV 2' DRV 2 4 US HANOI PEIPING BANNERJEE'S
NOT DRV 742 DRV GP-3

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-0 11:50 A.M., 8-10-64.
PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA 1:10 P.M., 8-10-64.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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INFO RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON
RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
RUASTP/AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
RUALOT/AMEMBASSY TOKYO
RUHLHQ/CINCPAC CAMP SMITH HAWAII
RUEHDT/USUN NEW YORK
STATE GRNC

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1964 AUG 10 AM 10 55

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: State Dept 6/1/78
By: [Signature], NARS, Date 8/2/78

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ACTION PRIORITY DEPT 167 INFO SAIGON 51 VIENTIANE 19
TAIPEI 29 TOKYO 36 CINCPAC UNN USUN 3 FROM HKONG AUG 10, 9:30 M
CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

PEIPING OVER WEEKEND BROADENED SCALE OF MASS RALLIES DEMONSTRATING
SUPPORT FOR DRV AND STRENGTHENED AUG 6 PLEDGE OF SUPPORT FOR IT
BY IMPLYING SPECIFIC MEASURES OF ASSISTANCE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING.

1. FOLLOWING FRIDAY'S DEMONSTRATIONS IN PEIPING INVOLVING HALF
MILLION PEOPLE (CONGENEL 156), DEMONSTRATIONS REPORTEDLY
CFN 167 51 19 29 36 3 10 9:30 DRV 6 1 156.

PAGE TWO RUMJDH 22 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CONTINUED ON WIDENING SCALE WITH ONE MILLION ON SATURDAY AND TWO
MILLION ON SUNDAY PARTICIPATING IN PARADES, RALLIES AND MEETINGS.
IN ADDITION PEIPING DEMONSTRATIONS, SIMILAR ACTIVITIES HAVE
SPREAD THROUGHOUT CHINA WITH DEMONSTRATIONS INVOLVING HALF
MILLION REPORTED IN SHANGHAI, THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND IN CANTON
AND TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND IN CHUNGKING. NEARLY ALL MAJOR
CITIES REPORTED AS HAVING HAD DEMONSTRATIONS.

2. OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE WAS LIAO CHENG-CHIH'S SPEECH AT
AUG 9 RALLY OF ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND IN OPEN-AIR WORKERS'
STADIUM AT WHICH CHOU EN-LAI, LU TING-YI, LO JUI-CHING AND
OTHER LEADERS WERE REPORTED AS IN ATTENDANCE. THREE MAJOR
ASPECTS CHARACTERIZED LIAO'S SPEECH:

A. FORTHCOMING TANGIBLE MEASURES OF SUPPORT FOR DRV MORE STRONGLY
IMPLIED. NCNA REPORTS LIAO AS HAVING STATED THAT "THE CHINESE

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-2- 167, AUGUST 10, 9:30 P.M., FROM HONGKONG.

PEOPLE WERE DETERMINED BY PRACTICAL DEEDS TO VOLUNTEER AID TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE IN THEIR JUST STRUGGLE AGAINST US AGGRESSION AND IN DEFENCE OF THEIR MOTHERLAND." IN ADDITION, LIAO REPEATS CPR GOVERNMENT STATEMENT OF AUG 6 THAT, AS RESULT US ACTION, "ALL COUNTRIES UPHOLDING GENEVA AGREEMENTS HAVE GAINED RIGHT TO ASSIST DRV IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST AGGRESSION," AND IN CONCLUSION HE ASSERTS THAT "CHINESE PEOPLE ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT SUPINELY TOLERATE RUTHLESS US IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION AGAINST THEIR CFN SHANGHAI CANTON CHUNGKING 2 LIAO CHENG-CHIH'S 9 CHOU EN-LAI LU TING-YI-LO JUI-CHING LIAO'S A DRV NCNA LIAO US LIAO CPR 6 US DRV NOT US OPERATORS NOTE: UNDERLINE IN PARA 2A IMI 2A FIRST SENTENCE, AND WORDS (PRACTICAL DEEDS) (VOLUNTEER AID) SECOND SENTENCE (CONGEN UNDERLINING)

PAGE THREE *RumJm* 22 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
BROTHERS, THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE."

B) US WILL BE PUNISHED. LIAO STATED, "SINCE YOU HAVE COMMITTED CAPITAL CRIME OF AGGRESSION, YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE DUE PUNISHMENT. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO ESCAPE IT."

C) "MYTH" OF SECOND TONKIN GULF INCIDENT. LIAO DEVOTES CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO FURTHERING CHICOM-DRV CLAIM THAT SECOND TORPEDO BOAT ATTACK ON AUG 4 IS "FABRICATION" AND PRETEXT FOR ATTACKING DRV. HE CLAIMS US LEADERS' "INCONSISTENT MUMBLING" AS TO NUMBER OF PT BOATS INVOLVED AND HOUR WHEN ATTACK MADE HAS EXPOSED THEIR "LIE" AS DESIGNED TO EXECUTE "PRE-MEDITATED PLAN" FOR EXTENSION OF "WAR OF AGGRESSION."

3. PEOPLE DAILY EDITORIAL OF AUG 9, LATEST AND MOST SIGNIFICANT OF FOUR CONSECUTIVE EDITORIALS ON VIETNAMESE SITUATION TAKES SAME LINE AS LIAO CHENG-CHIH'S SPEECH, STRESSING IN EVEN MORE CONCRETE TERMS THEME THAT THE MATTER IS NOT YET SETTLED AND RETRIBUTION WILL BE FORTHCOMING. AMPLIFYING AUG 6 STATEMENT, EDITORIAL STATES, "BY ITS ACTS OF AGGRESSION, US IMPERIALISM HAS GIVEN COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES THAT UPHOLD GENEVA AGREEMENTS AND ALL PEACE-LOVING COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES THE RIGHT TO (BEGIN UNDERLINE) TAKE ACTION (END UNDERLINE) IN RENDERING SUPPORT IN (BEGIN UNDERLINE) EVERY POSSIBLE FORM (END UNDERLINE) FOR THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE TO RESIST THE US AGGRESSORS." (OUR CFN B US LIAO C TONKIN LIAO DRV 4 DRV US PT 3 9 LIAO CHENG-CHIH'S NOT 6 US US

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3- 167, AUGUST 10, 9:30 P.M., FROM HONGKONG.

PAGE FOUR RUMJDH 22 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
UNDERLINING) ALSO PARALLELING LIAO, EDITORIAL MAKES IMPLIED
THREAT OF FUTURE RETALIATION FOR US ACTION AGAINST DRV, WARNING,
"US AGGRESSORS, DON'T YOU REJOICE TOO SOON. DON'T THINK YOU CAN
GET AWAY WITH YOUR SURPRISE ATTACK ON THE DRV." (LITERAL
TRANSLATION OF CHINESE SUMMARY IN HONG KONG COMMUNIST WEN WEI
PAO READS, "US AGGRESSORS, DON'T THINK YOU CAN CARRY OUT A SUDD
ATTACK ON THE DRV AND THE MATTER WILL BE CONCLUDED.") EDITORIAL
CONCLUDES, "FROM NOW ON THE INITIATIVE WILL BE IN THE HANDS OF
VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLES OF THE WHOLE WORLD WHO SUPPORT
THEM. IT IS YOU AND NOT US WHO WILL BE DEFEATED."

4. PEIPING TA KUNG PAO AUGUST 10 EDITORIAL REITERATES PEOPLE'S
DAILY STATEMENTS IN MORE CONCISE TERMS STATING, "WE ARE
DETERMINED TO SUPPORT WITH CONCRETE ACTION THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE
JUST STRUGGLE TO RESIST US AGGRESSION AND DEFEND THEIR MOTHER-
LAND." EDITORIAL ALSO STRESSES ALERTNESS TO EVENTS SAYING, "WE
MUST MOBILIZE OUR PEOPLE STILL FURTHER, HEIGHTEN OUR VIGILANCE
AND BE READY FOR WHATEVER EVENTUALITIES AND GIVE ALL-OUT
SUPPORT FOR JUST STRUGGLE OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AGAINST US
AGGRESSION."

5. PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL AUGUST 8 IS DEVOTED TO ATTACK ON US
EFFORTS TO BRING AUGUST 4 TONKIN GULF INCIDENT BEFORE UNSC,
DENOUNCING IT AS DEVICE "PROVIDE LEGAL CAMOUFLAGE FOR ACTS OF
CFN LIAO US DRV US DRV WEN WEI PAO US DRV NOW NOT 4 TA KUNG PAO
10 US US 5 8 US 4 TONKIN UNSC

PAGE FIVE RUMJDH 22 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
AGGRESSION." EDITORIAL STRESSES THAT "UNITED NATIONS HAS NO
RIGHT WHATSOEVER TO INTERFERE IN INDO-CHINA. A PEACEFUL SETTLE-
MENT FOR INDO-CHINA CAN ONLY BE SOUGHT THROUGH THE CHANNEL OF THE
GENEVA ACCORD." IN CLEARLY ANTI-SOVIET SENSE, NCNA REPORTED
SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO'S AUGUST 7 MESSAGE TO DRV
FOREIGN MINISTER PROPOSING SUBMISSION OF QUESTION TO UNSC FOR
CONSIDERATION; NCNA IN ANOTHER DISPATCH HAS STRESSED CONGRUENCE
OF US AND SOVIET EFFORTS TO BRING MATTER BEFORE UNSC.

6. HONG KONG COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS WEN WEI PAO AND TA KUNG PAO
IN COMMENTARIES TODAY BOTH DISPARAGE US ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PATROL
WILL BE SUSPENDED IN TONKIN GULF, WITH WEN WEI PAO TAKING
POSITION THAT THIS MOVE PROMPTED BY US DESIRE "RELAX OPPOSITION
OF PEOPLE OF WORLD" RATHER THAN DESIRE TO RELAX TENSIONS.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-4- 167, AUGUST 10, 9:30 P.M., FROM HONGKONG.

COMMENT: LIAO CHENG-CHINS STATEMENTS RE US PEOPLE'S DAILY AUG 9 EDITORIAL GO FURTHER THAN ANYTHING THUS FAR IN COMMITTING PEIPING TO EXPRESS SUPPORT OF DRV IN SOME CONCRETE WAY. THEY SEEM DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO REMEDY FAILURE OF AUG 6 STATEMENT TO ANNOUNCE ANY PROMPT OR SPECIFIC MEASURES OF ASSISTANCE, TO PREVENT US FROM ASSUMING IT CAN MAKE FURTHER MOVES AGAINST DRV WITH IMPUNITY, AND POSSIBLE TO PREPARE POPULATION FOR MORE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN DRV SECURITY IN FUTURE.

GP-3.

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NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-0, 11:57 A.M., 8/10/64.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

166

SOVIET UNION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Intelligence
Note 167

AUG 7 1964

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *TH*

Subject: Soviet Reaction to Tonkin Gulf Crisis: Greater Verbal
Stridency Commitments

The trend, noted yesterday, toward greater stridency in Soviet propaganda attacks on our actions in the Tonkin Gulf has gathered some momentum. Equally notable, however, is Moscow's continued failure to commit itself to assist the North Vietnamese. At the UN, the Soviets today left the burden of the attack on the US to the Czechs.

Charge of US Fabrication Repeated. An article in today's Pravda accusing the US of seeking a casus belli in the Tonkin Gulf carries the North Vietnamese charge -- but without comment -- that the second incident was a "complete fabrication" on Washington's part. The article also links US action with the elections, asserting that Washington is acting under pressure of the military and Goldwater. Pravda also printed selected hostile foreign reactions. The Soviet peace and Afro-Asian Solidarity organizations, meanwhile, went into the ritual of protesting and demanding a halt to US aggression. Instead of the usual expressions of support for

GROUP 4
Downgraded at 5 year
interval; declassified
after 15 years

a "victim", however, the Soviet groups urged "world opinion" to raise its voice.

Wait-and-See Attitude Maintained. Other Soviet comment, too, remains devoid of the expressions of "support and sympathy" for the North Vietnamese which have been standard themes in previous East-West crises. On this score, Pravda adheres strictly to the line of the moderate August 5 TASS statement and Soviet representative Morozov's August 6 Security Council presentation in warning that US aggressive activities against the DRV can cause a wide military conflict involving the most serious consequences. Khrushchev, continuing his tour of the USSR, has still not been heard from on foreign affairs.

Sino-Soviet Divergencies. The underlying differences between Moscow and Peiping -- already evident in Moscow's failure to express support for the Asian Communists while Peiping insists that all communist countries must back the DRV -- was made more explicit in a Chinese Communist comment today on the Security Council (SC) deliberations. Peiping noted Morozov did not object to SC consideration of the US complaint against the DRV, and charged that he "refrained from refuting the lie fabricated by the US Government about US warships having been attacked by the DRV." Morozov's rather perfunctory last-minute speech at the SC today, in which he joined the Czech delegate in attacking US actions but still called for more information, may well draw further Chinese fire.

First Soviet Reference to 14-Nation Geneva Conference. TASS has noted U Thant's statement, here in Washington, doubting that the Security Council was the proper forum for a settlement of the Indochina crisis and that a 14-nation Geneva conference must be convened. This is the first reference since the crisis began that Moscow has made to a conference although the Czech alluded to it in the SC to-day.

Dear Mr. President,

I deem it necessary to personally inform you about the concern that we feel in connection with the events unfolding in the Gulf of Tonkin.

From the very outset I want to mention that we know about these events solely from those statements which have been made these days in Washington, from the published orders to the American armed forces, from the reports of the news agencies and also from the statement, just published, by the spokesman of the High Command of the Vietnamese People's Army concerning the incident on August 2 in the Gulf of Tonkin. We do not have other information as yet. One thing is undisputable, however, - the situation there has sharply deteriorated and military conflicts are taking place near the coast of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Chinese People's Republic, in which warships of the U.S. Navy are participating as well as military planes based on American aircraft - carriers. Also obvious is the seriousness of these developments - indeed, it is impossible to rule out that they may mushroom into such proportions and turn in such a way that it will be difficult to say where they will stop.

We do not know exactly now just what has happened there. But even irrespective of this the fact remains that the warships of the U.S. Navy have entered the Gulf which cuts deeply into the territories of the DRV and the CPR, and that it is from these ships that fire was opened and aircraft are being launched which according to the latest reports, are making strikes against objectives on the territory of the DRV. Suffice it to look at the map to convince oneself that except the DRV and the CPR there are no other states the territories of which adjoin the Gulf of Tonkin and that, consequently, the very fact of introduction of American warships in that Gulf under any circumstances cannot be viewed in any other way but as a military demonstration, as a challenge to the states whose shores are washed by that Gulf.

With all frankness I must say that if these actions of American warships and air forces pursue the aim of strengthening somehow the position of the corrupt and rotten South Vietnamese regime which exists - and this is no secret to anyone - only because of the foreign support, then such actions will not achieve the given aim. But to increase the danger of a serious military conflict - they can.

A question arises before me: have not clouds been deliberately darkened around the developments in the Gulf of Tonkin? Is not the influence felt here by those quarters and persons who do not

conceal their desire to inflame the passions, to pour oil on the flame and to whose militant frame of mind one should regard with great caution and restraint? But if this influence is indeed real and if it has an ear, then another, more serious question arises - where the present developments can lead to?

It would be unnecessary to speak in detail now about the enormous responsibility which our two powers bear, you personally as President of the United States and I as Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, in keeping the peace, in ensuring that dangerous events whichever area of the globe they begin with, would not become first elements in the chain of ever more critical and maybe irreversible events. I believe that you should agree with this. And if this is so, then at this moment it is most important to draw from this necessary practical conclusions and proceeding from this lofty responsibility to look at the circumstances around the developments in the Gulf of Tonkin with maximum objectivity and to again and again weigh possible consequences.

I would not like here to give play to feelings although this, in all appearance, is justified by the situation. Because of lack of reliable information I confine myself to expressing those thoughts which follow from the main and undeniable fact, namely, that the warships and air forces of the United States have taken military actions in the Gulf of Tonkin area.

I want to emphasize that no one has asked the Soviet Government to address you in connection with the developments near the coast of the DRV and the CPR. If there appears a threat to peace, I am deeply convinced that we should not wait for requests or appeals from anybody but must act so as to remove that threat without delay.

I would like to hope that on your part there will be shown necessary composure and restraint in order to remove the military tension and stop defiant actions of the American armed forces in the Gulf of Tonkin area which may lead to an appropriate response from the other side.

Sincerely,

N. KHURUSHCHEV

August 5, 1964.

~~TOP SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

169 17161

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I share the concern expressed in your message of August fifth concerning the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin.

I also fully share your view of the heavy responsibility which we both bear for keeping the peace and for preventing incidents anywhere in the world from starting a chain of dangerous and irreversible developments. It was for this reason that we took only the minimum defensive action in response to the first attack upon the American destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin. I think you can understand that the second deliberate attack -- on which there is complete and incontrovertible evidence -- could not be allowed to pass without reply. Our action was carefully measured to fit the circumstances, and we have no wish at all to see this matter go further. We have, of course, made appropriate deployments in the area as we are uncertain of the purpose of these flagrant attacks on our ships on the high seas. We do not know, for example, whether they were instigated by Peiping or made by the North Vietnamese in an effort to draw Peiping into the area. I have made it clear, publicly, that we ourselves do not wish an escalation of this situation.

Our position with respect to South Vietnam has been made clear on many occasions. I repeat that we seek no military base or special

~~TOP SECRET~~ - SENSITIVE

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By MBA, NARS, Date 5/20/77

position in this area and that our sole purpose is to enable the nations there to maintain their independence without outside intervention.

Our complete withdrawal from Laos following the agreement of 1962, about which I have already communicated with you, is convincing evidence of the sincerity of our purpose. Anything you can do to restrain either the North Vietnamese or Peiping from further reckless action in this area will be most helpful to peace.

Sincerely,

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ACTION PRIORITY DEPT (512) INFO MOSCOW
69 BERLIN 145 AUG 7, 8PM

DAN SHOOR OF CBS TOLD US LAST NIGHT THAT SOV TASS
CORRESPONDENTS IN BONN HAD YESTERDAY SEPARATELY
INVITED SEVERAL US JOURNALISTS HERE TO JOIN THEM
AT COFFEE. SOVS HAD TAKEN RATHER AMBIGUOUS LINE,
WHICH ALTERNATELY STRESSED TWO POINTS. A) IT WAS
DECEISIVE IMPORTANCE TO ASCERTAIN FACTS OF FIRST
ATTACKS, IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH WHO WAS GUILTY
PARTY; AND B) SOV UNION HAD NO INTEREST IN GETTING

PAGE 2 RUFHOL 958 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
INVOLVED IN MATTER. THEY ALLUDED VAGUELY TO SOV
RECORD AT TIME OF RED CHINESE ATTACK ON INDIA. IM-
PLICATION WAS THAT IF NORTH VIET NAM ATTACKS WERE
BONA FIDE, USSR WOULD AVOID HEAVY INVOLVEMENT.

THEREAFTER, SOVS INQUIRED CLOSELY AS TO WHAT US
CORRESPONDENTS WERE PLANNING TO FILE ON SITUATION.

SCHOOR SAID HE WAS NOT REPORTING STORY IN NEWS, ALTHOUGH
HE HAD ALERTED HIS EDITORS. HE WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER
LINES WAS DICTATED FROM MOSCOW WITH AIM OF SPREADING
IT, OR WHETHER IT WAS AD HOC GAMBIT TO ELICIT COMMENT
FROM US NEWSMEN. HE INCLINES TO FIRST INTERPRETATION.

EMBOFF ALSO TALKED YESTERDAY TO MEYER LANDRUT (SOV
DEST) OF FONOFF, WHO STATED THAT HE NOT YET HEARD OF
ANY LOCAL REACTION FROM SOVIET EMBASSY, BONN.

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171

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Control: 6523
Rec'd: AUG 13 8, 1964
9:19 A.M.

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FROM: VIENTIANE

Info

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ACTION: SECSTATE 271

SVN

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INFO: LONDON 132

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MOSCOW 56

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DATE: AUGUST 8, 6 P.M.

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USIA

EMBOFF HAS HAD FRIENDLY CONTACTS OVER PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS WITH SOVIET SECOND SECRETARY, KOLOS TRIGUBENKO.

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RMR

AFTER LEARNING FROM EMBASSY OFFICER AUG 5 OF BOMBING DRV INSTALLATIONS BY US PLANES, TRIGUBENKO TOLD HIM THAT IF DRV BECAME INVOLVED IN WAR WITH US, USSR WOULD HAVE TO AID DRV. OTHERWISE, IT WOULD FIND ITSELF IN UNTENABLE POSITION WITH ITS ALLIES, SUCH AS CZECHOSLOVAKIA. HE ADDED THAT IF US HAD INDEED BOMBED DRV, IT HAD PLACED USSR IN VERY DIFFICULT POSITION.

HE LATER SAID USSR DEFINITELY WANTED LEAVE ITS POSITION AS CO-CHAIRMAN ICC, AND WANTED MAKE IT CLEAR AS POSSIBLE THAT IT WISHED SHARE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT MIGHT OCCUR IN LAOS IN FUTURE. USSR HAD APPROACHED ITS DUTIES AS CO-CHAIRMAN WITH INTENTION FINDING SOLUTION TO LAO PROBLEM. HOWEVER, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT "US AND THEN COMMUNIST CHINA" WERE NOT WILLING PERMIT LAOS BE TRULY NEUTRAL. LAO SITUATION UNFORTUNATE SINCE COUNTRY WAS "ONE PLACE IN WORLD WHERE USSR HAD PLAYED IT STRAIGHT WITH US".

GP-3.

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NARA, Date 7-2-74

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Action

CONTROL: 6735
RECD: AUG 8, 1964 3:30PM

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FROM: MOSCOW

SS

ACTION: SECSTATE 422 IMMEDIATE

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INFO: LONDON 65

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DATE: AUG 8, 8PM

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EMB THIS AFTERNOON RECEIVED BY MESSENGER MFA NOTE 47/USA AUG 8 TRANSMITTING TEXT TELEGRAM AUG 5 FROM DRV FONMIN TO GROMYKO AND AUG 7 REPLY. NOTE MAKES NO REFERENCE TO ICC OR CO-CHAIRMANSHIP. REQUESTS EMB FORWARD TELS TO US GOVT.

HANOI TEL, WHICH NOT PUBLISHED HERE, RECITES ALLEGED US ATTACKS JULY 30 - AUG 2 ON DRV ISLANDS AND INLAND, ALONG LINES DRV PUBLIC STATEMENTS, AND CALLS FOR CO-CHAIRMEN TO REQUIRE OBSERVANCE GENEVA AGREEMENTS BY US AND RLG, WHICH CHARGED WITH PERMITTING USE ITS TERRITORY FOR ATTACKS. GROMYKO REPLY PUBLISHED TODAY'S PRAVDA AND CARRIED TASS THIS MORNING.

UNLESS DEPT INSTRUCTS OTHERWISE EMBASSY WILL, ACCORDING USUAL PRACTICE, NOT ACKNOWLEDGE AND WILL POUCH TO DEPT.

CFN 47/USA 8 7 30 2

RMR

STOESSEL

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NOTE: RELAYED TO WHITE HOUSE 8/8/64, 4:15 P.M.

Microfilm by RMR

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Action

Control:
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7873
AUGUST 10, 1964
5:21 P.M.

SVN

FROM: MOSCOW

Info

ACTION: SECSTATE 434

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INFO: LONDON 70
PARIS 57
SAIGON 10

DATE: AUGUST 10, 7 P.M.

EMBASSY TELEGRAM 387

SOVIET PUBLIC PLAY OF TONKIN GULF CRISIS, BY NOW DOWN TO TRICKLE, HAS REFLECTED APPARENT DETERMINATION TO AVOID OVERCOMMITMENT AS WELL AS NEED TO ESTABLISH RECORD PRIMARILY FOR USE IN COMMUNIST WORLD.

ALTHOUGH TONE OF PRESS REPORTING GREW MORE STRIDENT FOLLOWING EARLY TASS STATEMENT (REFTEL), SOVIETS REFRAINED FROM FURTHER EXPRESSION OFFICIAL VIEW UNTIL BELATED KHRUSHCHEV REMARKS IN WEEK-END ORZHONINIZDE SPEECH. ALTHOUGH STRONGER THAN TASS STATEMENT, KHRUSHCHEV LIMITED SELF TO ASSERTION THAT SOVIETS WILL DEFEND SOCIALIST STATES IF THEY FORCED INTO WAR BY IMPERIALISTS.

FACT THAT THIS CAME ONLY AFTER HEAT OF CRISIS EVIDENTLY PAST STRONGLY SUGGESTS HE SPOKE FOR FUTURE RECORD AND IN CONFIDENCE THAT WORDS WOULD NOT BE TESTED.

SOVIETS ARE LIKELY RELIEVED AND HOPEFUL THAT CRISIS HAS PASSED, PROBABLY NOT WITHOUT MIXED FEELINGS AS TO ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR HANOI AND PEKING.

RMR

Interfiled by R3/A

STOESSEL

DLW

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Moscow 101

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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174

INDICATE: COLLECT
 CE TO

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Classification

Origin
Info

ACTION: CIRCULAR 281

Aug 13 4 23 PM '64

EXDIS

Following is summary (based on Soviet Embassy translation) of Khrushchev's August 7 reply to President's August 1 letter transmitted Deptel 316 to Moscow (also rptd other addressees):

Khrushchev expresses appreciation for frankness President's views and says he would also be frank. Situation in Laos cause for concern and for this reason Soviets proposed conference be held August. Khrushchev reaffirms Soviet support and observance agreement reached with President Kennedy at Vienna and Geneva Agreements which based on it.

In Reply to /idea Soviet Union should bear special responsibility Laos and to call not to withdraw from Co-Chairmanship, what more can be added to Soviet statement July 26? Efforts as Co-Chairman constantly blocked by actions of others in violation Agreements. Must admit efforts Co-Chairmen remain fruitless.

Recall that following Vientiane coup in April situation deteriorated further. Co-Chairmen made recommendations to restore situation, to renew cooperation three political forces. Nothing done to change situation. Hard to believe USG could not have exerted influence on Souvanna and Nosavan in order restore situation accordance Geneva Agreements. Increasingly

Drafted by: *Just*
FE:SEA:GMB:mas:8/12/64

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: FE - Marshall Green *mg*

Clearances:
S/S - Mr. Davies *md*
SEA - Mr. Trueheart *md*

WH - Mr. Klein *md*
SOV - Mr. Tomanoff *md*

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Classification

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FORM DS-322 8-63

DECLASSIFIED Authority *FEUS, Vol. XIV, # 121*
By *h*, NARA, Date *4-2-74*

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Classification

Increasingly obvious two not three political forces acting in Laos." "Souvanna Phouma has lost his identity, he has in fact ceased to be the representative of the neutralist forces."

Although you wrote in principle you do not object to new Geneva Conference US puts forth preconditions for such a conference and UK and others follow suit. This approach unrealistic. If one side insists on preconditions other can do same. For example one might demand Nosavan pull back his troops to previous positions. Or that situation be restored to that existing before coup. Such a view not unfounded. Such approach would clearly make impossible convening conference. Who is to say whose troops/^{occupied} ~~xxxxxx~~ what and when? Impracticable to advance preconditions you recommend.

You write this is what Souvanna demands. Do not dispute but would say "from our standpoint such a demand merely confirms that Souvanna Phouma has recently drifted further away from the position of cooperation of the three political forces and has already ceased to express interests of the neutralist group which he represented earlier."

You also express doubt Hanoi and Peking will agree participate in 14-nation conference. They have said ready attend and even insist conference be convened urgently. Hope US will drop any preconditions and remove obstacles to convening conference on Laos. Otherwise Soviet Union will have to consider question relinquishing Co-Chairman's functions since they have become anachronism, turned into fiction.

Difficult view Lao question isolated from other regions of Southeast Asia.
US measures

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Classification

US measures escalating military operations in SVN as well as dangerous naval and air operations Gulf of Tonkin do not facilitate peaceful settlement Laos.

CP-3

END

SENT TO: MOSCOW
LONDON
PARIS
VIENTIANE
BANGKOK
SAIGON
PHNOM PENH
RANGOON
NEW DELHI
OTTAWA
WARSAW
HONG KONG
USUN
CINCPAC

RUSK

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Classification

(21)

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

IN TELETYPE COLLECT
AGE TO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification

POL 2 / VIET
XR POL 330 2-9-62
XR US 6-2-45

- AUG 6 3 50 PM '64

Origin

ACTION: Amembassy MOSCOW ~~DECLASSIFIED~~ 175

Info

Authority E.O. 11652 SEC. 5(A) and (D)

By JRS, NARS, Date 4-22-76

Following INR Intelligence Note sent Secretary today on Soviet reaction to Tonkin Gulf developments;

Moscow's wary attitude illustrated by its coverage today's ChiCom government statement which omitted latter's threatening language, including assertion no communist country could sit idly by if DRV subjected to aggression. None of Soviet comment so far has promised any degree of Soviet support to Asian communists. Moscow instead has adhered to formula warning of possible dangerous consequences and US responsibility for them. Khrushchev remains on tour Soviet rural areas with no reference yet to foreign affairs in his public remarks.

While noncommittal on future Soviet courses action, Moscow nevertheless beginning step up propaganda attacks on US. One commentator implied President Johnson acted to placate Senator Goldwater; at Geneva disarmament talks Tsarapkin echoed yesterday's official statements and accused US of choosing path of aggression; another commentary contrasted US President's approval test ban anniversary statement calling for negotiated

Excluded by RAB

Drafted by: BZ
INR/RSB: BZook: lfb: 8/5/64

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: JRS - Helmut Sonnenfeldt

Clearances: SOV - Mr. Polansky (in substance)

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Classification

settlements with his ordering US forces into action that might trigger major conflict.

Seems probable Moscow will step up propaganda and diplomatic campaign against US for its actions. At same time Soviets may hope UN Security Council discussion, which they probably urging North Vietnamese attend, will serve as restraining influence on all sides involved and thus avert increasingly uncomfortable situation for USSR. GP-4

END

RUSK

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification

32

POL 27 VIET 5

176

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Action

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DE RUEHDT 452 07/0110Z
P 020100Z ZEA

Authority E.O. 11652 SEC. 5(A) and (D) R I T Y

Info

FM USUN NEWYORK

By TR, NARS, Date 4-22-76

SS

TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUMJIR/ANEMBASSY SAIGON
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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ACTION PRIORITY DEPT [322] INFO SAIGON 42
FROM USUN AUG 6, 9 PM

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RE: VIETNAM - USUN'S 318

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RMR

SUBSEQUENT TO DRAFTING REPTEL NIELSEN (NORWAY) CALLED TO SAY HE HAD ANOTHER LONG CONVERSATION WITH MOROZOV (USSR). MOROZOV REITERATED AT FOUR POINTS USSR WISHED TO REACH AGREEMENT. NIELSEN EXPLAINED POSITION ELECTED SC MEMBERS TO HIM AND SAID US HAD NOT ACCEPTED DRV PHRASEOLOGY AND FELT LAST SENTENCE WAS TOO WEAK. TOLD MOROZOV THAT IF HE COULD ACCEPT TEXT IT WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS HAND WITH US. AS RESULT CONVERSATION NIELSEN BELIEVES CFN 322 42 6 9 318

PAGE TWO RUEHDT 452 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
MOROZOV REALLY NOW COMMITTED TO TEXT ALTHOUGH DID NOT USE THOSE PRECISE WORDS. TOLD NIELSEN WE CONFIDENT WE COULD GIVE HIM FIRM AGREEMENT IN MORNING ON CONDITION USSR ACCEPTED THIS TEXT WITHOUT CHANGE.

NIELSEN SAID HE HAD TOLD CZECHS WHEN THEY HAD INDICATED DESIRE TO SPEAK ON SUBSTANCE OF ISSUE TOMORROW AFTERNOON THAT THIS ALL RIGHT BUT PRES'S STATEMENT WOULD HAVE TO STAND WITHOUT COMMENTS BY ANYONE.

CP-4
PEDERSEN
BT
CFN 6P-4

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-0 AT 10:56 PM AUGUST 6th.
PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA AT 11:30 PM AUGUST 6TH.

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8-6-69
POLYGRAPH SECTION

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

POL 21 VIETS

XR POL 33-625-VTE

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CONTROL: 4551
RECD: AUGUST 6, 1964
1:27PM
FROM: MOSCOW
ACTION: SECSTATE 387 PRIORITY
INFO: PARIS 51
LONDON 61
SAIGON 7
VIENTIANE 10
HONG KONG 3

33
GFM
EAR

DATE: AUGUST 6, 5 PM

REACTION MOSCOW PRESS AND RADIO TV TO EVENTS IN GULF TONKIN CAUTIOUS THUS FAR. PRAVDA AUG 6 CARRIED TEXT MILD TASS AUGUST 5 STATEMENT, DRV MINISTRY DEFENSE AUG 5 STATEMENT AS WELL AS NUMBER SHORT, FACTUAL NEWS ITEMS. PRELIMINARY SAMPLING SOVIET BROADCASTS BY EMBASSY INDICATES, HOWEVER, THAT MEDIA TREATMENT FOR FOREIGN AUDIENCE CONSIDERABLY SHARPER THAN DOMESTIC TREATMENT.

IZVESTIYA AUG 5, IN ADDITION DRV MD AUG 5 STATEMENT, CARRIED ARTICLE BY IZVESTIYA WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT WHICH STRESSED "UNKNOWN" IDENTITY ATTACKING PT BOATS AND QUOTED ALLEGED SPECULATION OF CERTAIN WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS THAT WHOLE AFFAIR MAY BE SAIGON ATTEMPT TO "PULL US DEEPER INTO MILITARY ADVENTURE".

EARLIER EDITIONS PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA AND OTHER CENTRAL PAPERS ONLY CARRIED FEW, SHORT, FACTUAL NEWS ITEMS AS SITUATION DEVELOPED.

COMMENT: SOVIETS OBVIOUSLY STILL RESPONDING TENTATIVELY TO DEVELOPMENT (KHRUSHCHEV'S ABSENCE VOLGA REGIONS MAY BE CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR). THIS CLEARLY INDICATED BY TASS AUG 5 STATEMENT WHICH, IN CIRCUMSTANCES, WE CONSIDER EXTREMELY MILD. STATEMENT A) BEGINS IMMEDIATELY WITH SUBSTANCE WITHOUT SAY IT "AUTHORIZED"; B) STATES MERELY THAT US AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS ARE BEING CONDEMNED IN "AUTHORITATIVE SOVIET CIRCLES"; AND C) MAKES NO MENTION OF POSSIBLE SOVIET RESPONSE. OUR IMPRESSION FURTHER CONFIRMED BY WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE ADOPTED BY SOVIET UN REP WHO FAILED DENOUNCE US CASE OUT OF HAND. FURTHER STRIKING CONFIRMATION PROVIDED LAST NIGHT'S MOSCOW TV NEWS PROGRAMS. EVENING NEWS HAD ONE ANNOUNCER READ US

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-2- 387, AUGUST 6, 5 PM FROM MOSCOW

RELEASES IN UNUSUALLY BALANCED TONES, THE OTHER READ HANOI. RELEASES -THUS GIVING BOTH SIDES WHAT COULD BE CONSIDERED FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT. MOSCOW "NEWS OF WORLD" TV PROGRAM WAS DEVOTED IN LARGE PART TO SOVIET DESALINIZATION EXPERTS EXTOLLING VIRTUES OF SOVIET-US FRIENDSHIP AND OF RECENT DESALINIZATION AGREEMENT. PROGRAM ENDED WITH SHORT, ALMOST EMBARRASSED, NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT OF SITUATION IN GULF OF TONKIN.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Action

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TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC

1964 AUG 6 AM 7 26

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INFO RUGWP/AMEMBASSY PARIS

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ZEN/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ACTION DEPT 144 INFO PARIS 10 MOSCOW THREE
AUGUST 6 12 NOON

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VIET NAM.

NSC

FRENCH AMBASSADOR PIERRE FALAIZE TRANSFERRED HERE
RECENTLY AFTER SEVERAL YEARS AS AMBASSADOR LAOS. FOR WHAT
IT MAY BE WORTH, HE TELLS ME THAT ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO
SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN LAOS TOLD HIM THAT IF HOSTILITIES
BROKE OUT IN INDO CHINESE STATES SOVIETS WOULD
LEAVE FIGHTING TO CHICOMS IF RPT IF MILITARY ACTION LIMITED
TO CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY. HOWEVER, IF NUCLEAR WEAPONRY
EMPLOYED SOVIETS WOULD BE COMPELLED TO BECOME INVOLVED.
CFN 144 10

INR

CIA

OSD

RMR

PAGE TWO RUQMBE 287 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
FALAIZE SAYS FRENCH AT THAT TIME RECEIVED IDENTICAL
REPORT RE SOVIET POSITION FROM SOVIET SOURCE IN
AUSTRALIA. MEYER
BT

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E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.4

By 12 NARA, Date 4-3-14

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XR POL 33-6 US-
179
VIET

AUG 5 7 13 PM '50

Origin

ACTION: Amembassy MOSCOW 359

Date

FYI: summary of portion of INR memorandum on reactions to US strikes dealing with USSR:

After confining itself for some eighteen hours to reporting events on basis US and DRV news stories, Moscow issued TASS statement in on August 5, condemning US actions in rather routine fashion but evading issue of which side took initiative in Tonkin Gulf incidents. TASS warned of dangerous consequences for which US would be responsible, but refrained from any direct expression of support for DRV.

Same general caution and restraint characterized speech by Morozov (who had first sought day's ~~postponement~~ postponement of Security Council session). While condemning US actions and portraying them as aggression, he stressed need for further information and for hearing DRV side. Speech was rather striking reflection of deterioration Soviet relations with Asian communist regimes in that it failed to denounce US case as pack of lies, something which would have been reflex action in earlier days. Instead of demanding formal condemnation of US, Morozov confined self to proposal to solicit ~~extra~~ information from H noi and invite its reps under article 24 32. He appeared to envisage prolonged UN discussion, stressing several times ~~that~~ Security Council only beginning its consideration US complaint. Moscow presumably hopes US will be restrained from further military action during course of UN discussion. END GR-2

2

Drafted by:

INR/RSB HSonnenfeldt/RBaraz

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by: INR/RSB Helmut Sonnenfeldt

Clearances:

SOV to Mr. Henry

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

S/S-11448

August 7, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Law of the Sea

Attached is a memorandum on the law of the sea as it applies in the Gulf of Tonkin, which has been prepared at the request of Mr. Bromley Smith.

Benjamin H. Read
Benjamin H. Read
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Memorandum dated
August 7, 1964.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 6-12-79 letter
By if, NARS, Date 1-18-80

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

181a

Authority RAC 17031
By is NARA, Date 5-18-98

August 7, 1964

LAW OF THE SEA -- GULF OF TONKIN

Geography

The Gulf of Tonkin is an arm of the South China Sea bounded on the north, east and west by Communist China, including Hainan Island, and North Viet-Nam. Between the Chinese mainland (Luichow Peninsula) and Hainan Island is Hainan (Kiungchow) Strait, about which more later. The Gulf is roughly 135 miles wide by 190 miles long. At its south entrance it is approximately 126 miles wide, between Hainan Island and the North Viet-Nam coast. (All references to miles in this memorandum are to nautical miles.)

Territorial Sea

Communist China claims a 12-mile territorial sea. North Viet-Nam has given no official indication as to its claims with respect to the breadth of the territorial sea. It has, however, claimed that our vessels, which were beyond the 3-mile limit, had entered its territorial waters. In view of this assertion and the fact Communist countries regularly claim a 12-mile territorial sea, we cannot proceed upon the assumption that it maintains the 3-mile territorial sea, which it had when it was French territory.

The United States considers that there is no obligation on it under international law to recognize territorial sea claims in excess of the traditional 3-mile limit and it is its policy to protest unilateral claims to a territorial sea in excess of that limit. However, the legal situation with respect to the breadth of the territorial sea can only be described as chaotic. Three times in this century world conferences have failed to reach agreement on the subject. The Second Law of the Sea Conference held at Geneva in 1960 under United Nations auspices came closest to agreement failing by one vote of the necessary two-thirds majority to approve a proposal by the United States and Canada for a 6-mile territorial sea plus a 6-mile exclusive fishery zone. In the existing legal situation two things are certain: all States are entitled under international law to at least a 3-mile territorial sea; claims to a territorial sea in excess of twelve miles are without foundation in international law. The legal status of claims in excess of 3 miles and not in excess of 12 miles is highly controversial. (Different States claim 4, 6, 9, and 12 miles respectively.) The two sizable groups are the 3-mile

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and 12-mile groups. The latter group is growing due to the adherence of newly formed States in Africa. If the question of the width of the territorial sea were to be presented to the International Court of Justice, we could not count on the Court upholding the 3-mile limit.

High Seas

The waters of the Gulf of Tonkin outside of the territorial belts of Communist China and North Viet-Nam must be regarded as high seas since they do not qualify as internal waters under any rules of customary international law as now codified in the Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone adopted at Geneva in 1958. Under the principle of freedom of the high seas, the vessels of all nations enjoy freedom of navigation in such waters. Warships on the high seas are not subject to the jurisdiction of any State other than the flag State. There is also freedom of flight over the high seas for the aircraft, military or civil, of all States.

Historic Waters

We are not aware of any claim to the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin as historic waters. There has not been time for thorough research of this question but it is being looked into and we will have a report shortly. On the other hand, there is no reason for believing that the factors on which a claim to waters as historic waters must be based exist in the case of the Gulf of Tonkin.

Hainan Strait

This body of water which separates the mainland of Communist China from Hainan Island, connects the South China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin and thus forms the eastern entrance to the Gulf. It varies between 10 and 11 miles in width and is some 40 miles long. Communist China claims the waters of the Strait as "China's inner sea" (State Council Order of June 28, 1964). Under Communist Chinese regulations foreign military vessels are not allowed to transit the Strait and foreign non-military vessels must request permission to pass through it and must comply with the regulations for passage if such is granted. Further research is now under way to determine whether there is any foundation for the Chinese claim

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-3-

that the Strait consists of inland waters. If it does not, this body of water constitutes an international strait through which all vessels, military and non-military, have a right of innocent passage.

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S/S 11999

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

182

File

August 21, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY *S*
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Law of the Sea

Attached is a supplemental memorandum on the law of the sea as it applies in the Gulf of Tonkin. Our original memorandum on this subject was dated August 7, 1964.

Grant G. Hilliker
Grant G. Hilliker
Acting Executive Secretary

Enclosure:

Memorandum dated
August 18, 1964.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 6-12-79 letter
By if, NARS, Date 1-18-80

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Supplements memo
of August 7, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

August 18, 1964

LAW OF THE SEA -- GULF OF TONKIN

182a

Historic Waters

A search of the Department's records and those of the National Archives has disclosed no information of any Chinese claims to the Gulf of Tonkin as "historic waters" of China.

Hainan Strait

On September 4, 1958 the Government of the People's Republic of China issued a statement on territorial seas in which it claimed a territorial sea 12 miles in width measured from straight base lines between various points on the coast (not specified) and the "peripheral islands". The statement specifically claimed certain islands within these base lines as islands of China's inner seas. It also specifically claimed Hainan Strait as an inner sea of China. On the same date, in answer to press queries on the announcement, a Department of State spokesman indicated that these claims to offshore islands were an obvious attempt to cloak the aggressive purposes of the Chinese Communists. He also indicated that the United States Government has never recognized any 12-mile territorial sea claims.

At a news conference on September 9, 1958, Secretary Dulles, in reply to a question concerning the Chinese Communist claims, said that the United States Government did not accept the extension of territorial waters to 12 miles for the Chinese Communists or anybody else. He described this as "a grab".

At the eighty-second ambassadorial level meeting with the Chinese Communists, which took place at Warsaw on October 25, 1958, Ambassador Beam told the Chinese Communists' representative that the United States could not accept the unilateral declaration of September 4, which he asserted was a clear violation of widely accepted principles of international law.

The Chinese Communist claims have been rejected by the United Kingdom, Japan and probably other countries.

In view of the above official actions, it is believed unnecessary that any further action concerning the Chinese Communist regulations of June 29, 1964 regarding Hainan Strait is required from a legal standpoint, even though the above official declarations did not deal specifically with that Strait. It is considered that such declarations constituted a repudiation of the whole Chinese Communist claim, set forth in the statement of September 4, 1958.

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Authority RAC 17028

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

By us NARA, Date 5-18-98

183

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

184 #20
Gen. Taylor

48
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Brady

OO RUEHCR
DE RUMJIR 02A 03/0300Z
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AUGUST 03 1964
12:15 A.M.

I M M E D I A T E

ACTION IMMEDIATE DEPT 282 WHITHOUSE 16 CIA 17 DOD 18 FROM
SAIGON AUGUST 3 11AM

LINDIS

attached

DEPTEL 328 AND EMBTEL 281.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority *State Ltr. 6/1/78*
By *shw*, NARS; Date *8/8/78*

DEPTEL DOES NOT REPEAT NOT ADDRESS ITSELF TO PRIMARY QUESTION
RAISED EMBTEL NAMELY WHAT WILL BE U.S. GOVT REACTION TO THIS
ATTACK? DEPT WILL APPRECIATE THAT INFO. UNPROVOKED ATTACK
AGAINST U.S. DESTROYER IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS BY THREE ILLEGAL
NORTH VIETNAMESE TORPEDO BOATS WILL BE RECEIVED DRAMATICALLY
IN CURRENT ATMOSPHERE SAIGON. IT IS NOT REPEAT NOT ADEQUATE
TO LOCAL MINDS (NOR RPT NOR INDEED TO OURS) TO STATE THAT
ATTACK WAS REPELLED AND THAT PATROL WILL CONTINUE.

THIS REACTION, IF IT CONSTITUTES TOTALITY OF U.S. GOVT
INTENTIONS, WILL MAKE IT APPEAR THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT
REGULAR SWATOW RPT SWATOW HARASSMENT IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS
AS NORMAL CONCOMITANT OUR NORMAL NAVAL PATROLLING ACTIVITIES.
SUCH AN ATTITUDE WOULD IMMEDIATELY BE CONSTRUED IN SAIGON AS
INDICATION THAT U.S. FLINCHES FROM DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH
NORTH VIETNAMESE, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE APPARENTLY DID NOT RPT
NOT PRESS HOME TOTAL DESTRUCTION THOSE VESSELS WHICH ATTACKED
MADDOX RPT MADDOX.

TO MEET THIS SITUATION, RECOMMEND PROMPT CONSIDERATION OF
FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

- A. ANNOUNCE THAT SWATOWS RPT SWATOWS WILL HENCEFORTH BE
ATTACKED WHENEVER FOUND IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND
MAINTAIN AIR AND/OR NAVAL FORCES IN READINESS TO DO SO.

~~SECRET~~

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~~SECRET~~

-2- 282, AUGUST 3, 11 A.M., FROM SAIGON

B. DIRECT REGULAR AIR SURVEILLANCE OF SWATOWS OVERFLYING
DRV RPT DRV AIR SPACE AS REQUIRED.

C. MINE APPROACHES TO SWATOW HARBORS.

D. CREATE A TORPEDO CAPABILITY IN GVN RPT GVN NAVY FOR USE
AGAINST APPROPRIATE TARGETS, SUCH AS HAIPHONG RPT HAIPHONG
DREDGES.

THESE ARE QUICK THOUGHTS WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY FOR CONSULTATION
WITH EXPERTS. HOWEVER, WE ARE IMPRESSED WITH NEED FOR PROMPT R
REACTION AND TIMELY PRIVATE COMMUNICATION OF INTENTIONS TO GVN.

REQUEST URGENT CONSIDERATION THESE MATTERS AND ADVICE SOONEST
RE STATEMENTS WHICH WE MAY MAKE PRIVATELY TO GVN RPT GVN.
TAYLOR

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-0 AT 12:28 A.M. 8/03/64

~~SECRET~~

For General Taylor's Views also see:

TAB 7 - US/GVN cables of July & August 1964

TAB 40 - Laos

186

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

187

August 24, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR

MR. JENKINS

Your summary of the Leadership meeting of August 4 gives me everything I need, and it bears out the recollection of others present. I am sure that on this basis we can deal with Halleck sharply as and when we need to.

Many thanks.

McG. B.

187a

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 21, 1964

Mac:

If you want me to, I will dictate all of the notes. I only put excerpts of the people that you mentioned, but I cannot find anything that remotely bears out the charge that was made. This particular subject was gone in more fully at the Security Council than at the leadership meeting.



Walter

~~TOP SECRET~~

1876

SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP MEETING AUGUST 4, 1964

The meeting opened with the President complaining about reports on the tickers about the meeting being held and stating that "the facts we would like to present to you are to be held in the closest confidence and are to be kept in this room until announced." Halleck said: "I did not tell a damn person." The President said: "I know no one did, but it is on both tickers anyway. We have to be very careful. Please don't discuss what goes on in this room."

Then at the President's request, Secretary McNamara gave a briefing on what was planned. The President then asked Secretary Rusk to give a report on the political situation. The President then asked Mr. McCone to give his estimate of any enemy action that might be expected--what response there might be.

On being questioned by Senator Russell, General Wheeler discussed the type of anti-aircraft installations that were in the area. After some discussion with Fulbright, Aiken, and Hickenlooper Mansfield read a paper expressing general opposition. Then Hickenlooper and Rusk had a discussion comparing this situation with the Cuban situation. Following some conversation with Secretary Rusk by Mrs. Bolton and Senator Saltonstall, Senator Aiken asked for Mr. McCone to give information on the provocation, if any. McCone explained the activity in the area prior to the attack. The President then asked General Wheeler to report on the recommendations of General Taylor in Viet Nam. Senator Russell then asked if we were sure "that we had enough stuff to do this job" and commented he did not want to do it half way. McNamara reiterated the extent of the equipment in the area.

Senator Russell then asked how many sorties were planned and Secretary McNamara then said: "We have issued orders for only a single night's action. These orders are already in being. Russell asked if the attack would be in daylight over there and McNamara replied: "our attacks will be in daylight hours."

DECLASSIFIED

Authority Stat 7-7-78, NSC 3-1-79, OSD 2-3-77
By isg, NARS, Date 8-8-79

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Senator Russell expressed the hope that they would keep going until they get the last one of the bases. Saltonstall expressed agreement that we had no choice after we had been attacked twice. The President then said as follows:

"We thought there were two decisions to take. After we were attacked yesterday and today and nine torpedoes were shot at our destroyers forty miles on the high seas we had to answer that attack. There are four bases where they use these boats. There is a relatively small civilian population around them. We can tuck our tails and run, but if we do these countries will feel all they have to do to scare us is to shoot the American flag. The question is how do we retaliate. We have worked out this plan on these four bases. There have been many discussions and recommendations by people in the country that we go into this the northern area and not allow them to murder us from bases of safety. These boats came from these bases and have been shooting the American ships.

"I think I know what the reaction would be if we tucked our tails. I thought I should get the Security Council and get the leadership and after the orders are executed I would plan to make a statement something like this." The President then read the proposed statement. Senator Saltonstall pointed out that the word "limited" was used three times in the statement and suggested that the word "determined" be substituted for it and let the limitations speak for themselves. The President said: "We want them to know we are not going to take it lying down but we are not going to destroy their cities and we hope we can prepare them for the course we ~~went~~ ^{will} follow."

Saltonstall said: "I agree with what you are doing." Mrs. Bolton said: "I would do it. Keep them a little bit in the dark on what we will do." Secretary Rusk said: "I think there is some advantage in not leaving in doubt that we are not doing this as a pretext for a larger war. I think the time factors involved are important. We have not had a chance to discuss this with all the Governments that will have to be consulted."

Senator Hickenlooper said: "I agree that the word 'limited' should not be used three times." The President then suggested a change in the word saying "our responses for the moment will be limited." Senator Dirksen said: "If I had it to do I would put our references to the word 'limited' in deep freeze. It connotes we would be like sitting ducks. We should make it clear we would meet every enemy threat."

~~TOP SECRET~~

Senator Dirksen then pointed out that the newspaper people knew about the meeting just as soon or before he did. Secretary McNamara pointed out the importance of keeping security because the northern Viet Nameese could use the boats and their 'defenses' could be alerted."

Congressman Halleck then said: "If we are going to have it, it has to be overwhelming." He indicated a desire to hear from the Speaker and the Majority Leader. There was then a discussion of Korea where there was no resolution and Formosa and the Middle East where there were resolutions. Senator Hicken looper said "It seems to me there should be no doubt as to whether the President should have the right to order the armed forces into action. It is my own personal feeling that it is up to the President to prepare the kind and type of resolution he believes would be proper. It is up to Congress to see whether they will pass it or not. I have no doubt in my mind that concrete action would be taken."

The President said: "I had that feeling but felt I wanted the advice of each of you and wanted to consult with you. We felt we should move with the action recommended by the Joint Chiefs, but I wanted to get the Congressional concurrence. I think it would be very damaging to ask for it and not get it."

The President then said: "We will probably make some changes in it. I don't ask you to draft the message. We have taken the resolutions you have had in the past. I don't think any resolution is necessary, but I think it is a lot better to have it in the light of what we did in Korea.

The Speaker said: "I think Congress has a responsibility and should show a united front to the world." Halleck said: "The President knows there is no partisanship among us. Are we getting fouled up here on something we could put off? There was never any hesitation when we had the deal about Cuba. I was the first to speak up and say Mr. President count me in."

The President said: "We can pretty well work out a good resolution with a minimum of ⁰⁻¹⁷⁰⁻²¹²⁵ ~~doctrine~~ ^{doctoring}. I wanted to see if you felt it was ^{the} wise thing to do."

Hickenlooper said: "I think the resolution is appropriate and proper, but I doubt you should mention the resolution in your remarks this evening."

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~~TOP SECRET~~

The President said: "I did not plan to mention it." The President then said "I have told you what I want from you." He then went around the table to each person and made an expression of support one way or another.

Saltonstall and Russell expressed the hope that the President could make the United Nations more effective in fields like this. Halleck said: "I think it will be passed overwhelmingly. As far as I am concerned I have made my position clear here and in all other cases. Aiken said: "By the time you send it up there won't be anything for us to do but support you."

~~TOP SECRET~~

Source not
identified
to Jenkins?

NOTES TAKEN AT LEADERSHIP MEETING ON AUGUST 4, 1964
(McNamara's and Rusk's statements not included)

The meeting opened with the President stressing the secrecy of the meeting and pointing out that the tickers already had about the meeting. The President said: "The facts we would like to present to you are to be held in the closest confidence and are to be kept in this room until announced."

Halleck: "I did not tell a damn person."

President: "I know no one did, but it is on both tickers anyway. We have to be very careful. Please don't discuss what goes on in this room."

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Senator Russell: "Are we sure that we have enough stuff to do this job. We do not want to do it half way."

Secretary McNamara: "We have issued orders for only a single night's action. These orders are already in being."

Senator Russell: "I notice you do not mention the submarine. Does anybody know what kind of anti-sub warfare is in that area?"

The submarine can come nearer disguising itself."

Hickenlooper: "Do I understand the reasoning behind your analysis on one phase is that if we do not do something here then the Communist forces will be in a position to deal from strength in any proposed settlement. If we do react, it may put us in a position to deal from strength."

Russell: "That is part of the problem. I notice in the papers that they came to the wrong conclusion about what we are willing to do. Much more serious."

Fulbright: "Are they expected to enlarge these projections?"

Rusk: "Maybe you have seen some of the broadcasts. They are highly inaccurate. Have not talked about what did happen but about what did not happen."

Fulbright: "What bases do you propose to destroy? Haifong?"

McNamara: "No, we are not destroying anything in the Haifong area."

Aiken: "You spoke of airplanes. Do we conclude they are airplanes. Viet Nam has no combat aircraft. Communist China will move combat aircraft in."

Russell: "There are some Chinese Communists perhaps in a nearby area."

McNamara: "There are four bases in North Vietnam."

Russell: "How many sorties are planned. Will the attack be in daylight over there?"

McNamara: "Our attacks will be in daylight hours."

Senator Russell expressed the hope that they would keep going until they get the last one of the bases.

Saltonstall: "Just asked the Secretary to show me that paragraph again. Doesn't ask any other nations to join with us at all. We would have to go alone. Other nations could say - go to it."

Saltonstall expressed agreement that we had no choice after we had been attacked twice.

President: "We thought there were two decisions to take. After we were attacked yesterday and today and nine torpedoes were shot at our destroyers forty miles on the high seas we had to answer the attack. There are four bases where they use these boats. There is a relatively small civilian population around them. We can tuck our tails and run, but if we do these countries will feel all they have to do to scare us is to shoot the American flag. The question is how do we retaliate. We have worked out this plan on these four bases. There have been many discussions and recommendations by people in the country that we go into this the northern area and not allow them to murder us from bases of safety. These boats came from these bases and have been shooting the American ships.

"I think I know what the reaction would be if we tucked our tails. I thought I should get the Security Council and get the leadership and after the orders are executed I would plan to make a statement something like this." The President then read the proposed statement.

Saltonstall: "Three times in that little statement you used the word 'limited.' Why not use the word 'determined' and let the limitation speak for itself.

President: "We want them to know we are not going to take it lying down but we are not going to destroy their cities and we hope we can prepare them for the course we will follow."

Saltonstall: "I agree with what you are doing. If you put it in, someone will pick it up."

Mrs. Bolton: "I would do it. Keep them a little bit in the dark on what we will do."

Secretary Rusk: "I think there is some advantage in not leaving in doubt that we are not doing this as a pretext for a larger war. I think the time factors involved are important. We have not had a chance to discuss this with all the Governments that will have to be consulted."

Hickenlooper: "I agree that the word 'limited' should not be used three times."

The President then suggested a change in the word saying "our responses for the moment will be limited."

Fulbright: "How the Secretary has made the projection is important. Could go on for several days. Think you should leave it in for the moment."

Dirksen: "If I had it to do I would put our references to the word 'limited' in deep freeze. It connotes we would be like sitting ducks. We should make it clear we would meet every enemy threat."

Senator Dirksen then pointed out that the newspaper people knew about the meeting just as soon or before he did. Secretary McNamara pointed out the importance of keeping security because the northern Viet Nameese could use the boats and their 'defenses' could be alerted.

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President: "We can pretty well work out a good resolution with a minimum of doctoring. I wanted to see if you felt it was the wise thing to do."

Hickenlooper: "I think the resolution is appropriate and proper, but I doubt you should mention the resolution in your remarks this evening."

President: "I did not plan to mention it. I have told you what I want from you."

The President then went around the table to each person and made an expression of support one way or another.

Saltonstall: "I hope you can make the UN a little more effective."

Russell: "I share that hope."

Halleck: "I think it will be passed overwhelmingly. As far as I am concerned, I have made my position clear here and in all cases."

Fulbright: "I will support it."

Aiken: "By the time you send it up there won't be anything for us to do but support you."

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AGENDA

AGENDA FOR MEETING WITH THE
CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS

August 4, 1964

1. Report on Maddox action by the Secretary of Defense.
2. Political situation report by the Secretary of State, to include both meaning of the present situation and diplomatic steps being taken.
3. Immediate military plan of action - Secretary of Defense
4. Discussion led by the President aimed toward the question of Congressional resolution -- text to be presented and explained by the Secretary of State.
5. Discussion of what leadership will say about this meeting.

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Congressional delegation at August 4 Meeting with President

- 1 Speaker McCormack
- 1 Senator Mansfield
- 6 Senator Humphrey
- 4 Senator Fulbright
- 8 Senator Russell
- 2 Senator Dirksen
- 7 Senator Kuchel
- 5 Senator Hickenlooper
- 9 Senator Saltonstall
- 3 Senator Aiken
- 2 Congressman Albert
- 7 Congressman Vinson
- 6 Congressman Thomas Morgan
- 5 Congressman Halleck
- 3 Congressman Arends
- 4 Congressman Bolton

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NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

PLEASE NOTE DATE

FOR THE PRESS:

August 4, 1964

NO. 570-64
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The following statement was issued today by Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester:

"A second deliberate attack was made during darkness by an undetermined number of North Vietnamese PT boats on the USS MADDOX and USS C. TURNER JOY while the two destroyers were cruising in company on routine patrol in the Tonkin Gulf in international waters about 65 miles from the nearest land. The attack came at 10:30 P.M. local time (10:30 A.M., August 4, Washington time.)

"The PT boats were taken under fire by the destroyers and thereafter by attack aircraft from the TICONDEROGA and the CONSTELLATION.

"The attackers were driven off with no U.S. casualties, no hits and no damage to either destroyer.

"It is believed that at least two of the PT boats were sunk and two others damaged."

END

See Page

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NEWS CONFERENCE
OF
HONORABLE ROBERT S. McNAMARA
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

* * * * *

THE PENTAGON

* * * * *

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1964

12:02 A.M.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Earlier tonight the President told the nation the United States would take appropriate action to respond to the unprovoked attacks on U S naval vessels by torpedo boats of North Vietnam. I can tell you that some of that action has already taken place. U S naval aircraft from the carriers TICONDEROGA and CONSTELLATION, these carriers operating in the Gulf of Tonkin where our destroyers had undergone two deliberate attacks in international waters, have already conducted air strikes against the North Vietnamese bases from which these PT boats have operated. Our naval aircraft have also conducted strikes against certain other targets which have directly supported the operation of the PT boats. Furthermore, in view of the unprovoked attacks, the deliberate attacks in international waters on U S naval forces, the United States has taken the precaution of moving substantial military reinforcements to Southeast Asia from our Pacific bases.

In addition we are also sending reinforcements to the Western Pacific from bases in the United States. I think you can understand it is not wise at the present time for me to identify these forces or to list the detailed strength of these movements, but I can assure you that the movements are appropriate to the provocation.

Now I would like to review briefly in chronological order of the unprovoked attacks which took place today, August 4th, on our vessels operating in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.

You will recall that the destroyer MADDUX operating in those waters on Sunday, was attacked by three PT boats. The President instructed us to add the destroyer TURNER JOY to the patrol being carried out by the MADDUX, and since that time the two vessels have operated on patrol in those waters. You'll see their course on this map.

Here is the southern portion of China, the coast of North Vietnam, down to the 17th parallel, below which, of course, is South Vietnam. This is Hainan Island, possessed by Communist China. The course of our destroyers is here, operating 30, 40 to 60 miles off the coast of North Vietnam in international water, moving southward.

MORE

At 7:40 P.M., August 4th, 7:40 P.M. local time, Vietnamese time, August 4th, the MADDOX at about this position (indicating) reported radar contact with unidentified surface vessels who were paralleling its course paralleling the track of both the TURNER JOY and the MADDOX.

At 8:36 P.M., by which time it was about in this position (indicating) the MADDOX established two new radar contacts with two unidentified surface vessels and three unidentified aircraft. At this time U. S. fighter aircraft were launched from the carrier TICONDEROGA, which was also operating in the Gulf of Tonkin. These fighter aircraft were launched to rendezvous with the MADDOX and TURNER JOY, and provide air cover to them.

At 9:08, by which time the MADDOX and JOY had advanced south to approximately this point (indicating), the unidentified aircraft had disappeared from the destroyers' radar screens and the surface vessels were remaining at a distance. By that time, the aircraft from the USS TICONDEROGA had arrived over the destroyers and they commenced defensive patrol over them.

By 9:30, the destroyers were at this point (indicating) and at this time the initial attack occurred. Additional vessels had by now appeared on the MADDOX's radar screen, and these vessels were observed to close very rapidly on the destroyers at speeds in excess of 40 knots. The attacking surface vessels continued to close rapidly from both the west and the south.

By 9:52, the MADDOX and the TURNER JOY had continued south to approximately this point (indicating), and they reported they were under continuous torpedo attack and were engaged in defensive counterfire.

By 10:15 they had advanced approximately to here (indicating). They were reporting they were avoiding torpedoes and that they had sunk one of the attacking patrol craft.

At 10:42, the destroyers reported they had evaded additional torpedoes and had sunk a second of the attacking patrol craft. Other aircraft from the TICONDEROGA had arrived overhead and joined the defensive patrol.

At 10:52 the MADDOX reported the destroyers were again under attack. At midnight, by which time the vessels were in this position (indicating).

MORE

the destroyers reported they had suffered no hits, no casualties, and that the defense aircraft from the TICONDEROGA were illuminating the area and attacking the enemy surface craft.

At 12:32, at which time they were at this point (indicating) the patrol reported that an additional enemy craft was believed to have been sunk, and that low ceilings, poor weather, was beginning to hamper the aircraft operations.

At 12:54, the TURNER JOY, one of the two destroyers, reported that during the engagement, in addition to the torpedo attacks, the destroyer had been fired upon by automatic weapons while being illuminated by search lights.

At 1:30 a.m., by which time the destroyers were in this position (indicating) they reported the attacking craft had apparently broken off the engagement. The MADDOX and TURNER JOY were directed to resume their normal and routine patrol operations, and they are continuing them at the present time.

Now, I will endeavor to answer your questions.

QUESTION: Sir, was there anything else ever seen or heard from the unidentified aircraft?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No. The unidentified aircraft did not participate in the attack and at this moment, we have no further information regarding them.

QUESTION: In which direction did they disappear?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I can't tell you. There was no further information on them.

QUESTION: Can you name the bases in North Viet Nam that were attacked?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No. I cannot.

QUESTION: Will you name them before the Communists do?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: We will name them at a time appropriate to the safety of our forces. It would be inappropriate to name them at this time. The attack is continuing at present.

QUESTION: Can you tell us how many bases?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No. Until such time as the attack is completed, it would be unwise to comment further or to identify the areas being attacked.

QUESTION: Can you tell us if the attack is currently underway?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: It is currently underway.

QUESTION: You made a distinction between North Viet Nam and certain other support facilities?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I simply wanted to distinguish between patrol craft bases themselves and certain supporting installations which might be separated geographically from the mooring points of the craft but in North Viet Nam.

QUESTION: There is no question that we attacked any other place but North Viet Nam?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: None whatsoever.

QUESTION: Can you say if we are attacking Hanoi?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: We are not attacking Hanoi. We are attacking only the patrol craft bases and certain associated logistical facilities.

QUESTION: In that area?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Not in the area of Hanoi. But in North Viet Nam.

QUESTION: The same area as the patrol craft?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: In the same area as the patrol craft are moored but separated physically from the mooring point.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, can you tell us when the attack has been completed, what orders the entire group has in this area?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: We will only be able to tell you such information as will not reveal future plans or in any way jeopardize our future operations.

QUESTION: What I mean is, will they go back to the standing orders which they had?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: It will depend on circumstances at the time.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, has the alert status of the United States forces around the world been increased?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Only such units as are being alerted for reinforcing moves.

QUESTION: Has there been any long range alerts to any portion of defense industrial base at all?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No, none.

QUESTION: Sir, were all the attacks from the two carriers?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes. The only aircraft participating in the strikes are aircraft from the TICONDEROGA and the CONSTELLATION.

QUESTION: You, I think, said that the carriers were in the Gulf of Tonkin?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes.

QUESTION: They have moved up. They are shown as being outside.

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: The TICONDEROGA is essentially in the Gulf area and the CONSTELLATION has been moving in this direction.

QUESTION: Sir, will this be one strike or several strikes?

MORE

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: There are obviously more than one aircraft from each carrier participating in it, but it is basically one strike, unless there are further unprovoked attacks on our vessels.

QUESTION: This is just a retaliatory strike, then?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I simply want to leave it as I said it.

QUESTION: Can you describe the weapons or type of aircraft being used?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No, they are typical aircraft from attack carriers.

QUESTION: Do you know whether the strike has been successful at all?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I am sure it will be successful.

QUESTION: Can you tell us whether they have encountered any aircraft opposition or any interdiction by air?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: The strikes are continuing so I can't give you any progress report on it.

QUESTION: How many aircraft are involved on our part?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: The aircraft from two attack carriers.

QUESTION: No numbers?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I can't give you any more information.

QUESTION: The presumption is conventional weapons.

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes. Not only presumption, but that is the fact.

QUESTION: What did CIC radar show the course of the three unidentified aircraft to be from? Hainan?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: We don't have any report on the course of the aircraft.

QUESTION: How many casualty reports on the strikes?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: There have been none so far. There have been no casualties so far.

QUESTION: What time was the strike launched?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I prefer not to give you the exact time of launch.

QUESTION: Were the aircraft from the CONSTELLATION involved in the operation of the MADDOX and JOY?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes. This is a question I should clarify for you. I may not have made it clear. The question is were aircraft from the CONSTELLATION involved in the protective cover during the attacks on the two destroyers August 4th, and the answer is yes. The CONSTELLATION and the TICONDEROGA alternated in providing air cap for the destroyers on the 4th.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, I am sure there is no doubt in your mind that these PT boats came from, in fact, North Vietnam?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: There is none. The radar made it quite clear that they were coming from North Vietnamese bases.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, can you tell us the distance over which this engagement occurred? Is it about 60 or 65 miles?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: These are about 60 miles square (indicating) so you can see during this period of time from 7:40 when there was an indication that an attack was imminent, until some time around midnight, to 1:30, when it terminated, they covered a distance of something on the order of 80 miles.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, can you give us the basic reasons for the Gulf of Tonkin patrol?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: It is a routine patrol of the type we carry out in international waters all over the world.

QUESTION: Does it have anything to do with movements of junks or whatever it is back and forth?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No. It has no special relationship to any operations in that area. We are carrying routine patrols of this kind on all over the world all the time.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, do you have any idea why the North Vietnamese may have done this?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: None.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you mentioned that the destroyer

at one point was under attack by automatic weapons. Does that mean both destroyers, or just the MADDOX?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: The report was, I believe, that both destroyers had been attacked by automatic weapons.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, have we picked up any survivors?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No, we have picked up no survivors on either the second or the fourth.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, the reinforcements moving from the Western Pacific and the Coast, are they of all services?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, has SAC and Air Defense Command been placed on an increased alert?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No, it has not.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, can you tell us when this attack, this strike, may be over, or when we may expect further details?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I would think that you might expect some further details tomorrow morning.

QUESTION: Have there been any casualties, any damage, anything whatsoever with American Forces?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: There have been no casualties to American forces, either sea or air, and no damage to American forces to date, either sea or air.

QUESTION: That includes the current air strike?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes, but as I point out, the current air strikes are not completed yet.

QUESTION: Has there been opposition?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I cannot report on that until we get the full mission report which we don't have at the present time.

QUESTION: What is the closest, roughly, that the attacking craft have come to the MADDOX and JOY?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: We have had reports of torpedoes 100 and 200 yards off the beam of the ships. I can't tell you how close the attacking craft came to the vessels, although if they were

firing automatic weapons they must have been closer than 800 yards at a minimum.

QUESTION: Who opened fire first?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: It was quite clear that the PT boats initiated the attack.

QUESTION: When was the last time that there were destroyers up there in the Tonkin Gulf?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I prefer not to answer the question other than to say that we have been carrying on routine patrols in that area for months.

QUESTION: How far up do you go, Mr. Secretary, before they turn back?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I prefer not to answer that, either. We don't wish to identify the course of our operations in the area.

QUESTION: Can you tell us what order the strike aircraft have, if they encounter interceptor aircraft in North Vietnam?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: They are to destroy any aircraft that are in a position to attack them.

QUESTION: Do we have --

QUESTION: One the ground?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: In the air.

QUESTION: We have troops from the Far East Asia to -- well, does that mean ground forces are being put into South Vietnam?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No, it means we are reinforcing our forces with such additional forces we believe to be required and have placed on alert such forces as we believe to be necessary.

I don't wish to identify the types or numbers or names or locations of those forces.

QUESTION: Can you repeat that first part about no troops in Vietnam?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: The question was: Have additional troops been moved into North Vietnam, meaning have combat units been moved into North Vietnam -- I meant South Vietnam -- and the answer is no.

QUESTION: Are we hitting only shore installations, or do we move inland?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I referred to patrol craft bases and supporting logistical installations in close proximity to but geographically separate from.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, have there been any similar aggressive actions on the part of the North Vietnamese navy short of the torpedoing that we didn't bother to report before?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No.

QUESTION: This was the first time?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: That is right. I want to emphasize that these attacks both on Sunday and today, both on the second of August and the fourth of August, occurred in international waters. These destroyers were operating between 30 and 60 miles off the North Vietnamese coast.

QUESTION: Can you tell us what towns, cities, or whatever on the Vietnamese coast are roughly closest or parallel to the area of attack?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No.

QUESTION: Not our attack but theirs on us.

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No.

QUESTION: How far off was the 7:40 P.M.? Was that 60 miles?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: These squares are 60 miles, so this point is on the order of 65 miles, perhaps. As you can see down here, it is something a little less than that.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, some of our readers will find it difficult to understand how the two destroyers were chased, and apparently from this maneuver they made, they ran from these PT boats and yet they were sufficiently --

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No, this is their course of patrol (indicating).

QUESTION: While under attack?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes, they were proceeding south.

QUESTION: Once they were engaged they didn't turn?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No. This is the approximate direction they moved in (indicating). Of course, they were taking evasive action during that period of time to avoid the torpedoes which were launched against them.

QUESTION: But if they were sufficiently close to be illuminated by the PT boats, the question a reader will have is how come the destroyers weren't able to nullify the PT boats.

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: They did. They sunk at least two.

QUESTION: Two out of how many, sir?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: We can't be sure. It was a night attack. We can't be certain of the total number of boats that were engaged. I will give you an estimate, just for your own information, although I can't be absolutely certain of these numbers. I would say between three and six boats were engaged in the attack, of which at least two were sunk.

MORE

QUESTION: How did you know that?

QUESTION: And in which they were engaged for a period of, I believe, two hours?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes.

QUESTION: How did you know they were sunk, those two?

QUESTION: Were these sunk by destroyer fire or aircraft fire?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I can't identify the source of the sinking.

QUESTION: Did you use the five inch and three inch batteries? Is that all?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: The five inch batteries plus certain automatic weapons available on the destroyers were used.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, the earlier statement put out said they were believed to have been sunk. Is this later information they have been sunk?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: It has been reported to us that they were sunk. This, let me emphasize, was a night action. You must expect certain restrictions in the amount of information available under night conditions. But the report to us from sources that we believe are reliable indicates that at least two vessels were sunk.

QUESTION: Sir, are you confident that one PT boat was sunk on Sunday?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Yes, that is correct.

QUESTION: But is this later information that makes it more likely that they were sunk?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Just five minutes before I came down, I received a report that they were sunk.

QUESTION: In other words, the later information is flat?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I just want to repeat what I said, that the report was that two PT boats at least were sunk, and a possible third. That is right.

QUESTION: Can you tell us at all whether any of the damage was inflicted by five inch guns?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: No. This was night time. I can't identify the type of shell that caused the damage, or even the source of the damage as between destroyers on the one hand, and our aircraft on the other.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, could you give us a rundown on the remaining portion of the North Vietnamese Navy? Jane's Fighting Ships says they have a total of 16 PT boats, of which I figure you have sunk now one fifth.

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I don't wish to give you our estimate of the number of North Vietnamese boats by type, for obvious reasons, but I will tell you there are two different types. One type we identify as the PT-4's. This is a patrol craft with a speed of approximately 50 knots. The other type we identify as the Swatow type, a patrol craft with a lesser speed, approximating 40 knots. We believe that both types of patrol craft were engaged in today's operation.

QUESTION: How do you spell Swatow?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: S-w-a-t-o-w.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, approximately how many hostile torpedoes were fired at our ships?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: It is very difficult to estimate. I don't wish to make a guess at them.

QUESTION: How many do they carry, sir?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I don't wish to approximate that, either.

QUESTION: Has your government been in touch during today or since Sunday with the Government of the Soviet Union on those incidents?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I would rather not discuss that.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: One more question.

QUESTION: I have three sunk in my notes.

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: One sunk on Sunday, at least two sunk today, possibly a third sunk today, for a total of possibly four, as a possible.

QUESTION: And the last one is a possible.

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: The possible third one today which would make a four possible in total.

QUESTION: Did you say the nearest torpedoes were about 200 yards away?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: Torpedoes were reported as passing between 100 and 200 yards abeam of the ships. One more question.

QUESTION: Can you set something up for tomorrow?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I will see that you are provided with whatever news we can properly release. I will either do it myself or arrange for others to do it.

QUESTION: How about tonight?

SECRETARY MC NAMARA: I don't believe there will be anything tonight. I will be receiving reports. I am going to stay in the building tonight and receive reports every half hour from CINCPAC. But I doubt that there will be anything to release tonight.

THE PRESS: Thank you, sir.

End--12:30 A.m.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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PRESS BRIEFING

By

HONORABLE ROBERT S. McNAMARA
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

9:00 a.m.

Wednesday, 5 August 1964

SECRETARY McNAMARA: As you know, on August 2nd, and again on August 4th, North Vietnamese surface vessels attacked U. S. destroyers operating on routine patrol in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.

In retaliation for this unprovoked attack on the high seas, our forces have struck the bases used by the North Vietnamese patrol craft. During the night, 64 attack sorties were launched from the U. S. carriers TICONDEROGA and CONSTELLATION against the four North Vietnamese patrol bases and certain support facilities associated with those bases.

The points are located on this map showing the Gulf of Tonkin, South China, North Viet Nam. The first base is at Hon Gay in North Viet Nam; the second at Loc Chao; the third at Phucloi; the fourth at Quang Khe; and the fifth strike was against the Vinh oil storage depot, which is associated with the Swatow torpedo base.

The oil storage depot, which contains 14 tanks, approximately 10 percent of the total petroleum storage capacity of North Viet Nam, was 90 percent destroyed. Smoke was observed rising to 14,000 feet. In addition to the damage to the torpedo boat bases and their support facilities, approximately 25 of the boats were damaged or destroyed.

Two of our aircraft were lost, two of our aircraft were damaged, all others have been recovered safely on the carriers. The destroyers MADDOX and TURNER JOY, which have been operating on routine patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin, have resumed patrol operations in international waters.

Last night I announced that moves were underway to reinforce our forces in the Pacific area. These moves include the following actions: [First, an attack carrier group has been transferred from the First Fleet on the Pacific Coast to the Western Pacific. Secondly, interceptor and fighter bomber aircraft have been moved into South Viet Nam. Thirdly, fighter bomber aircraft have been moved into Thailand. Fourthly, interceptor and fighter bomber squadrons have been transferred from the United States into advance bases in the Pacific. Fifthly, antisubmarine task force group has been moved into the South China Sea. And finally, selected Army and Marine forces have been alerted and readied for movement.]

I want to emphasize that the damage report which I gave to you is based on preliminary reports received shortly after the completion of operations.

Now I will take your questions and endeavor to answer them.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, were the planes that we lost, the two planes, downed by ground fire, and also, was there any air action from North Viet Nam?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The two planes we lost were downed by anti-aircraft fire. There was no enemy air reaction.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, can you tell us the height of the attack? How low did they come?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Generally, the strikes were at low level.

QUESTION: And the local times, Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The local times ranged from on the order of Noon to 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

QUESTION: Can you tell us, sir, how long the attack --

SECRETARY McNAMARA: These are local Vietnamese times.

QUESTION: Can you tell us how long the entire strike lasted?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Roughly four to five hours.

QUESTION: How was the weather?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Bad.

QUESTION: Rainy?

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SECRETARY McNAMARA: Low ceiling.

QUESTION: What types of antiaircraft fire?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: There was heavy antiaircraft fire over several of the targets.

QUESTION: Missiles?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Guns rather than missiles.

QUESTION: Small caliber or big caliber?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I can't tell you the caliber other than it was heavy antiaircraft bases.

QUESTION: Can you tell us at which of these places the planes were downed?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I can't.

QUESTION: What was the question?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The question was at which point were the two aircraft lost. I can simply say that the heaviest antiaircraft fire was received at Hon Gay, the most northerly of the bases attacked.

QUESTION: Is that also the largest?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It is the largest; yes.

QUESTION: At the torpedo bases themselves, can you describe the damage itself as light or heavy?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It is too early to say. We will have to wait until the pilots' reports have been assessed.

QUESTION: And the number of American casualties?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Two. Two pilots were lost, one in each of the two downed aircraft.

QUESTION: Are you giving out their names?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Not until their nearest of kin have been notified.

QUESTION: That will be sometime today?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, it will.

QUESTION: Were they picked up?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We believe they were lost.

QUESTION: At sea or land?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: At sea.

QUESTION: Will we take reconnaissance missions over there?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We will take such action as is necessary to determine the results of our operations.

QUESTION: How much of the petroleum supply did you say?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Approximately 10 percent of the petroleum capacity of North Viet Nam is located at Vinh, the point that was struck. Approximately 90 percent of that 10 percent was destroyed.

QUESTION: Are these the only four torpedo boat bases?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: These four are the main bases. With a coastline such as this, of course, the boats occasionally use other areas for staging areas.

QUESTION: Can you tell us what percentage it is of their total fleet?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I can't, except that it is a very substantial percentage.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, how do you explain these attacks?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I can't explain them. They were unprovoked. As I told you last night, our vessels were clearly in international waters. Our vessels, when attacked, were operating in this area, roughly 60 miles off of the North Vietnamese coast.

QUESTION: There have been reports that South Vietnamese vessels were showing or taking some sort of action against North Viet Nam approximately at this time.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, to the best of my knowledge, there were no operations during the period I was describing last night.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, what orders now for either the Seventh Fleet or for these particular units of the Seventh Fleet?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Our orders to the commanders are to continue their patrols, to protect themselves against aggression on the high seas with whatever force is necessary.

QUESTION: Has there been any word --

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, would you say this will be all that will be necessary, that the attack has met its objectives?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Whether this is all that is necessary depends entirely on the North Vietnamese.

QUESTION: Do you think the air strike accomplished its objectives?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The air strike very clearly made clear to the North Vietnamese our intention to maintain our right to operate on the high seas. That was the objective. I think that has been accomplished.

QUESTION: Wasn't the objective to wipe out the PT boat fleet?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Our objective was to deter the PT boat fleet from further attacks on our vessels. I believe we have accomplished that.

QUESTION: Were any attempts made, Mr. Secretary, to go after the anti-aircraft batteries?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: There were no actions against the anti-aircraft batteries. The attack was against the patrol boat bases and the associated facilities.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, last night there were three bogies reported, three unidentified aircraft. Did we ever find out in which direction they came from?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We have no identification on those aircraft. They did not participate in the attacks on our vessels.

QUESTION: Sir, are there villages or towns adjacent to or linked up with these bases?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: There were no civilian centers close to the bases which were attacked last night.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, could you give us the estimate of how many percent of the North Vietnamese patrol boat fleet has been destroyed or damaged?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I can't estimate for you the exact percent destroyed or damaged, other than to say that it was a very substantial percentage of their fleet.

One more question.

QUESTION: From what you say, there are no further actions of this kind going on at the moment, or planned. Is that correct?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No operations are being carried on by our forces at the present time, other than the continuation of the routine patrol activities of the TURNER JOY and the MADDOX, the two destroyers which have been operating in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Thank you very much.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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HONORABLE ROBERT S. McNAMARA
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Interviewed

by

NEIL STRAWSER, CBS-TV

7:30 P. M., EDT

Wednesday, August 5, 1964

QUESTION: Secretary McNamara, have your continuing reconnaissance reports during the day changed in any way your earlier estimate of the damage inflicted on those North Vietnam bases?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, not at all. During the day we've carried out post strike reconnaissance using aircraft from the two carriers TICONDEROGA and CONSTELLATION and these reconnaissance aircraft and the photos that they have supplied to the carriers have supported the estimates we made earlier in the day. At that time you may recall that we reported we had attacked the four torpedo bases at Hon Gay, Loc Chao, Phuc Loi, Vinh, Quang Khe, and we stated we had destroyed the supporting facilities of the bases and had either damaged or destroyed about 25 of the patrol craft themselves.

And in addition, we attacked the Vinh oil storage area which is associated with the Phuc Loi base and supports the other bases as well. This base at Vinh contains about 10% of the total petroleum capacity of North Vietnam, we destroyed 90% of that 10%.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, did your reconnaissance flights meet with any anti-aircraft fire?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, None.

(MORE)

QUESTION: The earlier air strike did?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, they had.

QUESTION: Do you feel that this mission has been accomplished then?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Very successfully.

QUESTION: Why do you think that the North Vietnam carried out the PT boat attacks in the first place?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I can't say. It was deliberate, unprovoked aggression on the highseas. It would be sheer speculation on my part to attempt to explain the reason for that attack.

QUESTION: The North Vietnamese have made one reaction. They have claimed that they have shot down five of our aircraft. You said, I believe, we lost two.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We lost two aircraft and we had one damaged. Earlier today I believe I said two. But it turned out there was only one damaged, and that aircraft that was damaged landed at Da Nang in South Vietnam. It had very minor damage and will be shortly returned to the fleet.

QUESTION: The North Vietnamese also claim to have captured an American pilot. Does that seem borne out?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: That is possible. We, as I say, lost two aircraft -- one an A-1 aircraft and the other an A-4 aircraft -- each of these contained one pilot. We believe one of the pilots was lost, one of the pilots may have landed in North Vietnam.

QUESTION: Returning a moment to the strike of the torpedo boat bases, do you still hold to the figure of about 25 boats?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, I think that about 25 of the craft were either damaged or destroyed.

QUESTION: Is that just about the sum total of the North Vietnamese . . .

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I suspect they have perhaps a quarter to one-third of their patrol boat force operational. But the bulk of them have been eliminated from operational use.

(MORE)

QUESTION: Do you consider that still a threat?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I think that the strike was highly successful.

QUESTION: Do you see any sign of any other response from the North-Vietnamese at this point?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: None so far.

QUESTION: No other provocation?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: They may continue their aggression on the high seas. If they do we will certainly respond as we have both on Sunday and again yesterday and today.

QUESTION: Are there any other spots where they might commit provocation?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: They are carrying out unprovoked aggression in Laos, in South Vietnam and more recently on the high seas. I think this is the pattern of aggression that is typical of what we can expect from the Communist Chinese and their allies.

QUESTION: Well, you have taken several measures to move in reinforcements in Southeast Asia -- planes and ships and anti-submarine warfare unit. You have alerted some ground forces. Did you take these steps because you thought there might be some reaction?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: These are purely precautionary steps taken to deter further action. Whatever further action occurs will occur in response to aggressive initiatives of the North Vietnamese or their Communist Chinese backers.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the reinforcements being moved in could handle any eventualities?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes. As you implied, we have moved in very substantial reinforcements. We have moved in interceptor aircraft, for example, and fighter-bombers into South Vietnam, we've moved fighter bombers into Thailand we've moved an antisubmarine warfare force into the South China Sea to protect our attack carriers and their accompanying destroyers. We've moved very substantial interceptor and fighter bomber forces from the United States into advance bases in the Western Pacific.

(MORE)

We've moved an attack carrier task force from the First Fleet which operates off the Pacific coast into the Western Pacific. We've alerted and readied for movement selected Army and Marine units.

QUESTION: What might be the range of our response if there are further provocations?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Our response will be firm and, as President Johnson said, it will be limited and it will be relevant to the aggressive actions of the North Vietnamese.

QUESTION: Would that mean, for instance, that if they bomb South Vietnam, that we would bomb their bases in return?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I wouldn't wish to predict exactly how we would respond, but I would say we'd respond in a fashion similar to that of the last day, in which when they attacked us at sea using torpedo boats, we destroyed their torpedo boat capability.

QUESTION: It can be assumed that bombing of cities and civilian population would be about the last alternative?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes. I think it is important to recognize that today we were attacking isolated marine facilities, and these facilities were not associated with civilian population centers and therefore there were very few civilian casualties.

QUESTION: : This was kind of an old-fashioned warlike incident, too, with an airstrike and conventional bombs. Is there any point where tactical nuclear weapons . . .

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I see no reason to think that our conventional capabilities are not sufficient to respond to the type of aggression we can expect from North Vietnam.

QUESTION: So far we have been talking about North Vietnam. Elsewhere in the Communist world the Russians have been cautious so far. And the first reaction from the Communist Chinese is to accuse President Johnson of playing politics. Do you have any fear of military intercession by either of these powers?

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SECRETARY McNAMARA: I can't predict their actions. I can only say we are prepared for whatever action they undertake.

QUESTION: The reinforcements you sent in would take care of that?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, and we have further reinforcement capabilities we have not yet called upon.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you spent the night in the Pentagon here last night and you spent many nights here during the Cuban Crisis. How would you compare your feelings these past twenty-four hours with your feelings in the crisis then?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: There are many similarities I think between the action the last twenty-four hours and the Cuban Crisis and some very great differences, too. In the case of the Cuban Crisis nuclear weapons were armed, in operational condition, and poised to be launched against this country. In that sense it was a much more dangerous crisis. On the other hand our response in each instance was a controlled application of the tremendous power which we have. As President Johnson indicated, we seek no wider war, but we will respond with firmness and we will insure that any aggressive action against our forces is met with power and force and pressure against the aggressor. That was true in the Cuban Crisis and it's certainly been true in the last forty-eight hours.

QUESTION: Personally how do you react to these crises. With nervousness, tenseness . . . or what . . . ?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: With lack of sleep.

QUESTION: Incidentally, how did you sleep last night to receiving those reports during the night?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: With about 3-1/2 hours of sleep during the night. I'm looking forward to leaving here and going home immediately.

QUESTION: You are not going to spend the night here tonight?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I will not spend the night here tonight.

QUESTION: Thank you very much, Secretary of Defense McNamara. And now back to Harry Reasoner in New York.

- E N D -

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HONORABLE ROBERT S. McNAMARA
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Interviewed by

PETER HACKES, NBC-TV

9:15 P.M. EDT

Wednesday, August 5, 1964

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, it's been just about 12 hours now since you met with us here in this room. What can you tell us now to bring us up to date on the situation in the Tonkin Gulf?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We've carried out photographic reconnaissance missions during the past 12 hours over the target areas. The photographs from these missions have been analyzed and they confirm essentially the reports that I gave earlier today. We have damaged or destroyed about 25 of the North Vietnamese patrol craft, the torpedo boats which attacked our destroyers August 2 and August 4. In addition, we have damaged and destroyed the support facilities and base facilities for those craft--certainly the anti-aircraft emplacements protecting those bases and about 90% of the petroleum storage dump at Vinh. At Vinh is located about 10 percent of the total storage capacity of petroleum in North Vietnam.

QUESTION: Well, then, how successful would you characterize last night's strike?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Well, I think highly successful, both from a purely military point of view in terms of damage incurred, and also highly successful in the sense that we have made it unmistakably clear to the North Vietnamese we will not tolerate deliberate unprovoked attacks on our vessels operating in international waters on the high seas.

MORE

QUESTION: During these 64 sorties, Mr. Secretary, what weapons did the planes use?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The planes were loaded with bombs, rockets, and 20mm shells.

QUESTION: Was the damage mostly from the bombs?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I think that the majority of the damage resulted from the rockets.

QUESTION: In light of the two American casualties, Mr. Secretary, would you say it was actually worth it?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The loss of one American life is a tragedy, but I think all Americans would agree that it's absolutely essential that our ships have the right to operate on the high seas in international waters, and that in the event that they are attacked in international waters, we must respond by bringing our power against the aggressor, deterring him from future attacks.

QUESTION: Are things mostly peaceful at this hour?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: There are no military operations being carried on at the present time other than the routine patrol of the Maddox and the Turner Joy in the Gulf of Tonkin.

QUESTION: And under what orders are they continuing their patrol?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: They're under the same orders that they operated under earlier this week. They are to respond to any attack by, not only driving off the attacker, but by seeking to destroy him as well.

QUESTION: Is there any thought, Mr. Secretary, of increasing this patrol in that general area?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, there is no need to. The functions of the patrol can be carried out by the two vessels presently on patrol.

QUESTION: Among the theories advanced after the first attack on Sunday was that this may have been an accident on somebody's part. Could you come up with that conclusion now?

MORE

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I think it was reasonable to expect after the first attack that it might have been an accident, that it might have been a miscalculation, a mistake, but it's perfectly apparent after the second attack that occurred on August 4 that there was a pattern and a deliberate attempt to destroy our destroyers operating on the high seas. This could not be thought to be an accident or a mistake.

QUESTION: What about the theory that some people have that the Communists did not think we would strike back or at least not this hard?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: They should have learned by now that we will respond rapidly and firmly to any aggression against our forces.

QUESTION: I believe it was at the second of the two National Security Council meetings yesterday that it was decided to send the planes on the strikes at North Vietnam.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, that is correct.

QUESTION: Can you tell us anything about the mood of what went on at that meeting?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I think everyone present recognized we are facing a very perilous situation, a very serious situation. There was a soberness of mood and attitude in discussion, but a firmness of purpose and an unanimous recommendation to the President that we respond as we did.

QUESTION: Was there a delay--there was a delay, I should say--in announcing the strike thrust last night. Can you explain that--it was several hours?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, because, of course, with the decision taking place in the late afternoon it was necessary to inform the Commanders in the Pacific. They, in turn, to brief their pilots, load their airplanes, and launch those craft across approximately 200 miles of water to their targets. This took several hours and until such time as the planes were over the target it was unwise to inform either our nation or the world of the action we had underway.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you've had a hectic couple of days now--the most serious, the most delicate period since the Cuban Crisis. How does it feel sweating out a crisis that could conceivably draw us into a war?

MORE

SECRETARY McNAMARA: As I said, I think that all of us who have been associated with these crises--the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 and, more recently, the events of the past two days, face them recognizing they are serious, they are perilous situations. And this introduces a soberness into one's behavior and attitude, but also, I think, we face them with a firmness and the results indicate that firmness.

QUESTION: You slept here in this building last night, Mr. Secretary. Are you going to sleep again here tonight?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I slept all too limited last night. As a matter of fact, about 3-1/2 hours to be exact.

QUESTION: Will you be sleeping here again?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I expect to go home immediately after this program.

QUESTION: Well, is that our cue? Can we now say that the naval crisis in Vietnam is over?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: If your communications are as good as mine with the naval forces in the Pacific, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. This is Peter Hackes, NBC News in the Pentagon.

E N D



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

PLEASE NOTE DATE

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FOR THE PRESS:

August 5, 1964

NO. 576-64

OXford 5-3201 (Info.)

OXford 7-3189 (Copies)

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara today identified targets in North Vietnam under attack by U. S. carrier aircraft as follows:

Hon Gay - Patrol boats and associated facilities.

Loc Chao - Patrol boats and associated facilities.

Phuc Loi - Patrol boats and associated facilities.

Vinh - Oil storage.

Quang Khe - Patrol boats and associated facilities.

END



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

PLEASE NOTE DATE

FOR THE PRESS:

August 5, 1964

198
No. 575-64

OXford 53201 (Info)

OXford 73189 (Copies)

The following is the text of a statement made by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara at a news conference at 9:00 a. m., Wednesday, August 5, 1964:

"As you know on August 2 and again on August 4, North Vietnamese surface vessels attacked U. S. destroyers operating on routine patrol in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin. In retaliation for this unprovoked aggression on the high seas, our forces have struck the bases used by North Vietnamese naval craft.

"During the night, 64 attack sorties were launched from the aircraft carriers TICONDEROGA and CONSTELLATION against 4 North Vietnamese patrol boat bases and an oil storage depot supporting these bases.

"The oil storage depot containing 14 tanks and representing 10% of the petroleum storage capacity of the country was 90% destroyed. Smoke was observed rising to 14,000 feet.

"In addition to damage to the bases and to their support facilities, approximately 25 patrol boats were damaged or destroyed.

"Two of our aircraft were lost and two were damaged; all others have been recovered safely.

"The destroyers MADDUX and C. TURNER JOY are continuing their patrol in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.

"Last night I stated moves were underway to reinforce our forces in the Pacific area. These moves include:

a. Transfer of an attack carrier group from the First Fleet to the Western Pacific.

b. Movement of interceptor and fighter bomber aircraft into South Vietnam.

MORE

c. Movement of fighter bomber aircraft into Thailand.

d. Transfer of interceptor and fighter bomber squadrons from the U. S. to advance bases in the Pacific.

e. Movement of an anti-submarine task force into the South China Sea.

f. The alerting and readying for movement of selected Army and Marine forces."

END

MORE

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Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. McNAMARA
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS AND ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES

August 6, 1964

Chairman Fulbright, Chairman Russell, and members of the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees:

During the past few days, deliberate and unprovoked military attacks by the North Vietnamese have given rise to the need for us to appear here today. I should like to review the attacks with you briefly and to describe the responses we made to those attacks.

The first incident occurred on August 2. It concerned the USS MADDOX, one of our destroyers engaged in a routine patrol in International waters of the Gulf of Tonkin off the North Viet Nam coast. At about noon, when the MADDOX was about 30 miles from the coast, she reported that three torpedo boats were on a southerly course heading toward the ship at a range of over 10 miles.

Two hours later, at approximately 2:40 P.M., the MADDOX was approached by a high speed -- 45 to 50 knot -- craft. She reported that the apparent intention of this craft was to conduct a torpedo attack and that she intended to open fire in self-defense if necessary. She was attacked by the three PT craft at 3:08 P.M. She opened fire with her five-inch battery after three warning shots failed to slow down the attackers. The PTs continued their closing maneuvers, and two of the PTs closed to 5,000 yards, each firing one torpedo. The MADDOX changed course in an evasive move and the two torpedoes passed on the starboard side at a distance of 100 to 200 yards.

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PRESERVATION COPY

The USS TICONDEROGA, which was operating in waters to the southeast and which had been alerted to the impending attack, advised she was sending four already airborne F-8E (CRUSADER) fighters with rockets and 20 mm ammunition to provide air cover for the MADDOX. At about 3:21 P.M., the third hostile PT moved up to the beam of the MADDOX and received a direct hit by a five-inch round; at the same time it dropped a torpedo into the water which was not seen to run. Machine gun fire from the PTs was directed at the MADDOX. However, there was no injury to personnel and no damage. The MADDOX continued in a southerly direction to join with a sister destroyer, the C. TURNER JOY, as TICONDEROGA aircraft commenced attacking the PTs. ZUNI rocket runs and 20 mm strafing attacks were directed against two of the PTs, and they were damaged. The third PT remained dead in the water after the direct hit by the MADDOX. At 3:29 P.M., the engagement terminated and the aircraft escorted the MADDOX southward on its patrol course.

On Monday, August 3, the President made public instructions that he had issued the day before regarding future patrols and engagements with enemy craft. He instructed the Navy, first, to continue the patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin; second, to double the force by adding an additional destroyer to the one already on patrol; third, to provide a combat air patrol over the destroyers; and fourth, to issue instructions to the combat aircraft and to the destroyers (a) to attack any force which attacked them in international waters, and (b) to attack with the objective of not only driving off the force but of destroying it.

At the same time as these instructions were being broadcast throughout the world, the State Department, acting pursuant to the President's further instructions, took steps to deliver a note of protest to the North Vietnam regime. The note was also widely publicized. It concluded with the words, "The United

States Government expects that the authorities of the regime in North Viet-Nam will be under no misapprehension as to the grave consequences which would inevitably result from any further unprovoked offensive military action against United States forces."

Our hopes that the firm defensive action taken in response to the first attack and the protest to Hanoi would end the matter were short-lived.

After the first attack on Sunday, the MADDOX joined with its sister destroyer, the USS TURNER JOY, in the Gulf of Tonkin and resumed its patrol in international waters, as directed by the President.

Monday, August 3, was uneventful.

The patrol was also uneventful during most of the daylight hours of Tuesday, August 4. In the early evening of August 4, however, the MADDOX reported radar contact with unidentified surface vessels who were paralleling its track and the track of the TURNER JOY. It was 7:40 P.M. when the MADDOX reported that, from positions being taken by those unidentified vessels, an attack by them appeared imminent. At this time the MADDOX was heading southeast near the center of the Gulf of Tonkin in International waters approximately 65 miles from the nearest land.

The MADDOX at 8:36 P.M. established new radar contact with two unidentified surface vessels and three unidentified aircraft. At this time, U. S. fighter aircraft were launched from the TICONDEROGA to rendezvous with the MADDOX and the TURNER JOY to provide protection against possible attack from the unidentified vessels and aircraft, in accordance with the President's previously issued directives. Shortly thereafter, the MADDOX reported that the unidentified aircraft had disappeared from its radar screen and that the surface vessels were remaining at a distance. The aircraft from the TICONDEROGA arrived and commenced defensive patrol over the MADDOX and the TURNER JOY.

At 9:30 P.M., additional unidentified vessels were observed on the MADDOX radar, and these vessels began to close rapidly on the destroyer patrol at speeds in excess of 40 knots. The attacking craft continued to close rapidly from the west and south and the MADDOX reported that their intentions were evaluated as hostile. The destroyers reported at 9:52 P.M. that they were under continuous torpedo attack and were engaged in defensive counterfire.

Within the next hour, the destroyers relayed messages stating that they had avoided a number of torpedos, that they had been under repeated attack, and that they had sunk two of the attacking craft. By Midnight local time, the destroyers reported that, even though many torpedoes had been fired at them, they had suffered no hits nor casualties and that the defensive aircraft from the TICONDEROGA were illuminating the area and attacking the enemy surface craft. Shortly thereafter, they reported that at least two enemy craft had been sunk although low ceilings continued to hamper the aircraft operations. The TURNER JOY reported that during the engagement, in addition to the torpedo attack, she was fired upon by automatic weapons while being illuminated by searchlights.

Finally, after more than two hours under attack, the destroyers reported at 1:30 A.M. that the attacking craft had apparently broken off the engagement.

The deliberate and unprovoked nature of the attacks at locations that were indisputably in international waters compelled the President and his principal advisers to conclude that a prompt and firm military response was required. Accordingly, the President decided that air action, in reply to the unprovoked attacks, should be taken against gun boats and certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam which had been used in the hostile operations. On Tuesday evening, after consulting with Congressional leadership, he so informed the

American people.

The United States military response was carefully planned and effectively carried out. The U. S. air strikes began approximately at noon Wednesday local time against North Vietnamese PT and gun boats, their bases and support facilities. These reprisal attacks, carried out by naval aircraft of the United States Seventh Fleet from the carriers TICONDEROGA and CONSTELLATION, were limited in scale -- their primary targets being the weapons against which our patrolling destroyers had been forced to defend themselves twice in the prior 72 hours.

Specifically, our naval air forces launched 64 attack sorties against 4 North Vietnamese patrol boat bases and their boats and against a major supporting oil storage depot. Strike reports indicate that all targets were severely hit, in particular the petroleum installation where 10% of North Vietnam's petroleum storage capacity was 90% destroyed. Smoke was observed rising to 14,000 feet. Some 25 North Vietnamese patrol boats were destroyed or damaged.

Our losses were two aircraft destroyed and two damaged. One of the pilots is believed to have crashed with his plane between two PT craft he had under attack. An other pilot reported that he was ejecting from his downed aircraft. His whereabouts is at present listed as unknown.

In view of the unprovoked and deliberate attacks in international waters on our naval vessels and bearing in mind that the best way to deter escalation is to be prepared for it, the President and his principal advisers concluded that additional precautionary measures were required in Southeast Asia. Certain military deployments to the area are therefore now underway. These include:

a. Transfer of an attack carrier group from the Pacific Coast to the Western Pacific;

- b. Movement of interceptor and fighter bomber aircraft into South Vietnam;
- c. Movement of fighter bomber aircraft into Thailand;
- d. Transfer of interceptor and fighter bomber squadrons from the United States to advance bases in the Pacific;
- e. Movement of an antisubmarine force into the South China Sea;
- f. The alerting and readjusting for movement of selected Army and Marine forces.

In the meantime, U. S. destroyers with protective air cover as needed, continue their patrol in the international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin.

The moves we have taken to reinforce our forces in the Pacific are in my judgment sufficient for the time being. Other reinforcing steps can be taken very rapidly if the situation requires.

This concludes my descriptions of the two deliberate and unprovoked North Vietnamese attacks on U. S. naval vessels on the high seas; of the United States reprisal against the offending boats, their bases and related facilities and of the precautionary deployment and alerting steps we have taken to guard against any eventuality.

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NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

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FOR THE PRESS:

August 7, 1964

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Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester made the following statement today at 3:15 P.M. EDT:

Because there is apparently some confusion in news reports today about the timing of the announcement of the U. S. retaliatory action Tuesday, August 4, I have secured the following statement from the Secretary of Defense, a statement which is attributable to him:

"I recommended to President Johnson that he schedule his announcement of the retaliatory attack against the North Vietnamese torpedo boats and their supporting installations for 11:40 P.M., August 4, because:

"1. By that time U. S. Naval aircraft had been in the air on their way to their targets approximately one hour.

"2. Hanoi, through its radar, had then received indications of the attack.

"3. The time remaining before the aircraft arrived over their targets would not permit the North Vietnamese to move their boats to sea or to alert their forces.

"4. It was important that the people of our country learn of the manner in which their government was responding to the attacks on its vessels from their President rather than from Hanoi which was expected to announce the attack at any moment.

"5. It was desirable that the North Vietnamese government and others be told as soon as possible the character of the attack -- 'Our response for the present will be limited and fitting. We ... know ... the risks of spreading conflict. We will seek no wider war.'

"As you know, the North Vietnamese government did not have time to move their forces; our attacking aircraft found the torpedo boats at their docks; the attack was highly successful."

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