MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, January 27, 1968
6:45 p.m.
Rec'd 7:20 p

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin, August, 1964

Attached are papers which address themselves to allegations that the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin in August, 1964, did not take place but if they did, occurred in territorial waters.

1. Ambassador Stevenson, in presenting our complaint to the United Nations Security Council on August 5, said that the first Tonkin incident involving the SS Maddox occurred 30 miles at sea from the mainland of North Vietnam. The second incident involving the SS Maddox and the SS C. Turner Joy occurred 65 miles offshore. (Tab A)

   The Vietnamese have, at various times, advanced the claim that the entire Gulf of Tonkin was a closed area, i.e., territorial waters. No major maritime state has acknowledged this claim. The map showing the precise track of the first incident is attached. (Tab B)

2. As regards allegations that neither of these attacks took place, there is attached a statement by the Defense Department giving conclusive proof that the U. S. destroyers were attacked twice while they were on patrol in international waters. (Tab C)

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Bromley Smith

STATEMENT BY DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN

Gulf of Tonkin

Any suggestion that the August 1964 attacks on U.S. destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf did not occur is contrary to the known facts.

The two attacks were made on August 2 and 4 when U.S. destroyers were on patrol in international waters. The attacks were seen, heard, and detected electronically by the crews of the ships.

During the first, daylight, attack, photos were taken of the attacking torpedo boats, and damage was done to the destroyer by machine gun bullets.

The evidence that the destroyers were attacked is conclusive. It includes:

AUGUST 2 ATTACK

1) Visual sighting of three torpedoe boats making daylight runs on the Destoryer MADDOX and firing at least four torpedoes.

2) Photographs of the attackers taken from ships and aircraft.

3) Damage to the MADDOX from North Vietnamese fire.

AUGUST 4 ATTACK

1) Radar tracks of fast, small craft parrelling and then closing in on the Destroyers MADDOX and TURNER JOY.

2) Numerous sonar detections of torpedoes fired at the destroyers, reported by the sonar man who manned the MADDOX'S equipment throughtout the attack.

3) Visual sighting by an officer and several crewmen of the WAKE of a torpedo passing near the TURNER JOY.

4) Visual sighting of the attacking craft lit by aircraft flares and by shells fired during the engagement.

5) Visual sighting of a search light beam from one of the attacking craft.

6) Visual sighting of anti aircraft fire directed at American planes overhead.

7) Visual sighting from aircraft of the WAKE of a small, fast craft near the destroyers.

Persons who have examined all of theevidence can have no doubt that the MADDOX twice and the TURNER JOY once were attacked by North Vietnamese small naval craft well in international waters and without provocation.

Dictated by phone by Miss Valenti (11-70713) 12/22/67
taken by C. L. Horn