3/O/VHN/RØ1-64 ST 22Ø
SPOT REPORT
4 AUGUST 1964
DIST: OSCAR/VICTOR ALFA

SUMMARY OF SIGINT REFLECTIONS OF DRV ATTACK
IN GULF OF TONKIN 2-4 AUGUST 1964

DRV NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS FOLLOWING THEIR UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON THE USS MADDOX IN THE GULF OF TONKIN ON 2 AUGUST WERE LARGELY CONCERNED WITH (1) THE RECOVERY AND DISPOSITION OF TWO PT BOATS DAMAGED BY THE MADDOX AND AIRCRAFT LAUNCHED BY THE USS TICONDEROGA, AND (2) TRACKING AND SHADOWING OF THE MADDOX AND THE USS TURNER JOY WHICH BY NOW HAD JOINED THE MADDOX.

IT IS NOW APPARENT THAT THE ATTACK WAS CARRIED OUT BY TOPEDO FLOTILLA 135 COMPRISED OF AT LEAST THREE PT BOATS -- THE T333, T336 AND T339. THE LATTER WAS SUNK WHILE THE T336 SUSTAINED HEAVY DAMAGES; THE T333 APPARENTLY ESCAPED WITH ONLY MINOR DAMAGES. FOLLOWING THE ACTION ANOTHER PT BOAT, THE T146 CONDUCTED AN EXTENSIVE SEARCH FOR THE FLOTILLA, FINALLY LOCATING THE T333 AND T336 ABOUT 19ØØ HOURS LOCAL TIME ON 3 AUGUST. A TUGBOAT DEPARTED HAIPHONG ON THE 4TH TO TOW THE TWO DAMAGED CRAFT BACK TO HAIPHONE. THUS DRV NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS CONFIRMED THE INFORMATION PROVIDED EARLIER BY THE PILOTS OF THE TICONDEROGA WHO, WHEN DEBRIEFED, REPORTED THAT ONE PT BOAT WAS HIT AND DEAD IN WATER WHILE TWO OTHERS, ALTHOUGH HIT, HAD HEADED FOR THE BEACH. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE TWO PT BOATS WITHDREW TO LACH CHAO ESTUARY (19-46N 1Ø5-52E) AT THE MOUTH OF THE SONG MA RIVER JUST EAST OF THANH HOA. A 1 AUGUST MESSAGE REQUESTED THAT THE ESTUARY BE

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INVESTIGATED AS A POSSIBLE REFUGE AFTER THE ATTACK ON THE FOLLOWING DAY.

AFTER THE 2 AUGUST ATTACK, THE MADDOX WAS ORDERED TO RESUME PATROL NORTH AND SOUTH OF HON ME ISLAND (19-21N105-56E) JOINED BY THE USS TURNER JOY WITH AIR COVER FROM THE TICONDEROGA SEAWARD OF THE TWO DESTROYERS TO PRECLUDE ANY OVERFLIGHTS OF THE MAINLAND. DURING 3 AUGUST DRV NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS REFLECTED THE TRACKING AND SHADOWING OF THE TWO DESTROYERS THROUGHOUT THE DAY; THIS ACTIVITY WAS REPORTED BY BOTH DESTROYERS. THEY WERE ALSO APPARENTLY SHADOWED BY TWO PRESUMABLY DRV AIRCRAFT. A DRV MERCHANT SHIP ADVISED ITS SHIPPING OFFICE IN HAIPHONG THAT "TWO BOMBERS" WOUDL "FLY IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SHIP AND INVESTIGATE". NO FURTHER IDENTIFICATION OF THE AIRCRAFT WAS PROVIDED.

ON 4 AUGUST, DRV NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS AGAIN INDICATED PREPARATIONS FOR ANOTHER ATTACK THAT NIGHT. THE T142 AND T146 WERE ORDERED TO PREPARE FOR "MILITARY OPERATIONS". THE T333, WHICH APPARENTLY ESCAPED UNSCATHED AFTER THE FIRST ATTACK, WAS ORDERED TO OBTAIN OIL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SECOND ATTACK. THAT NIGHT THE MADDOX REPORTED BOTH SURFACE CRAFT AND AIRCRAFT APPEARING ON ITS RADAR SCREEN. THEY WERE LATER IDENTIFIED AS HOSTILE AND REPORTED CLOSING IN. THE MADDOX REPORTED AT 1440Z THAT IT WAS COMMENCING FIRE ON THE CLOSING PT BOAT. SUBSEQUENT REPORTS FROM THE DESTROYER INDICATED THAT TWO PT BOATS HAD BEEN SUNK. THIS WAS LATER CONFIRMED BY A DRV MESSAGE

WHICH STATED "WE SACRIFICED TWO SHIPS AND THE REST ARE OKAY." THE SAME MESSAGE ALSO REPORTED THAT TWO ENEMY PLANES HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN AND ONE DAMAGED AND THAT THIS HAD LIFTED THE MORALE OF THEIR MEN. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONFIRMATION OF THE SHOOTDOWN FROM SEVENTH FLEET ELEMENTS IN THE AREA AND CINCPAC HAS STATED THAT NO U.S. AIRCRAFT WERE LOST IN THE ENGAGEMENT. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT FLARES USED TO ILLUMINATE THE BATTLE AREA WERE MISTAKENLY REPORTED AS FALLING AIRCRAFT.

ALTHOUGH INITIAL MESSAGES INDICATED THAT THE T142, T146 AND T333 WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE ATTACK ON THE U.S. DESTROYERS ON THE NIGHT OF 4 AUGUST, SUBSEQUENT MESSAGES SUGGEST THAT NONE OF THESE WERE INVOLVED. REPORTS FROM THE MADDOX THAT IT WAS UNDER ATTACK SOME SEVENTY NAUTICAL MILES NORTHEAST OF THE NAVAL BASE AT QUANG KHE SUGGEST THAT NAVAL UNITS SUBORDINATE TO THE SOUTHERN FLEET COMMAND WITH ITS HEADQUARTERS AT BEN THUY (NEAR VINH) WERE INVOLVED IN THE SECOND ATTACK.