TRANSCRIPT OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS
4-5 AUGUST

Recorded conversation, General McCutcheon to General Burchinal at 1004 AM, EDT, 4 August.

General McCutcheon, sir.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Good morning, sir, this is McCutcheon in CINCPAC.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: In response to the previous request to General Wheeler, I'll give you an interim report as to what I've found out. Admiral Moorer is in his Command Post. Fleet and the Task Group are alerted and aware of these messages and the threat. As far as measures to be taken, they have the two DD's that are on station there, the TURNER JOY and MADDOX. The TICO with her three DD's is 15 minutes away by air. She is alerted. The CONNIE came out of Hong Kong yesterday and is headed south. I haven't got an ETA yet, but she's headed to rendezvous with the TICO.

GEN BURCHINAL: We just had a flash that that outfit is under attack now. Do you have anything on that?

GEN MCCUTCHEON: No, sir. I haven't seen that one yet.

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By: SOW NARA, Date 12/12/05

GEN BURCHINAL: For your information, the message is coming telling you take the CONNIE and put it off SVN, maybe in the vicinity of the TICON, but bring it on down into that area. We'll leave the deployment position up to you. Got that?

GEN MCCUTCHEON: That action has already been done. She's headed south.

GEN BURCHINAL: On Admiral Sharp's request for Rules of Engagement.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Right.

GEN BURCHINAL: We're sending a message which says stay at eleven. He asks for eight. It just says stay at eleven. It says aircraft only up to 3-mile limit.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Okay.

GEN BURCHINAL: Is authorized.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Right.

GEN BURCHINAL: You want to pass that by phone, fast.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Okay. Aircraft up to three but the boats stay at eleven.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Right.

GEN BURCHINAL: And we're taking a look at some possible retaliatory type points that we might want to take out. You might be thinking of it and come in if you've got any particular ideas on where we might go, inside the places, bases, etc., to womp them back if they do, in fact, make this attack.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Right.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay, if you get any word on the attack, results etc., keep them coming just as fast as you can get them.

GEN MCCUTCHEON: Yes, sir. Will do.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thank you.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS: General Burchinal.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS: Would you go to Mr. McNamara's office please, sir.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

EA: Thank you, sir.

A recording, Mr. McNamara to Admiral Sharp at 1019 AM, EDT, 4 August.

MR. MCNAMARA: Hello.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Hello Ollie, Bob. Sorry to awaken you tonight. Have you seen these messages regarding the MADDOX and a possible attack on her?

ADM SHARP: No, sir. I just got into Headquarters but they're all here and my Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations has read them.

MR. MCNAMARA: Okay, good.

ADM SHARP: I just got in.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, we have a slight change in Rules of Engagement going out to you. I understand it has been sent by telephone,; we're confirming it by cable. It accepts, partially, your recommendation to pursue to the 3-mile limit except it's for aircraft only. But that isn't really the reason for my call. The reason for my call is to suggest that you examine the kill capability of the MADDOX and its associated aircraft to be sure that we've done everything we possibly can to assure destruction of any attacking craft and use whatever carrier force, flareships, fighters, anything else you need in terms of numbers and weapons to obtain that objective.

ADM SHARP: All right, sir. Now when I talked to Keith McCutcheon about 15 minutes ago, he was talking about flareships and flareships are the one thing that I'm not sure about right now.

MR. MCNAMARA: You mean you don't know whether they have them or whether it would be wise to use them.

ADM SHARP: Well, no, we'll use them if we have them but the question is, are they ready and we have already told the fleet to get them ready.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes.

ADM SHARP: But there is a question in my mind right now whether they're there or not. And of course, these people --- these aircraft have a limited night attack capability anyway.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes.

ADM SHARP: But when we get the flareships there, we're all right. In the meantime, of course, I think the two destroyers can handle themselves pretty doggone well anyway.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, do you think the two destroyers could destroy the attacking craft -- the Swatows.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: At night?

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir. They should be able to.

MR. MCNAMARA: Make perfectly clear that's the objective.

ADM SHARP: Oh, yes sir, they know that.

MR. MCNAMARA: Just use whatever force you need to accomplish that, air and sea.

ADM SHARP: Right. Well, we've got two F-8's and two A-4D's right now up and 4 A-1H's will be up shortly. Now -

MR. MCNAMARA: Why not put 20 more in the hole. I'm just going to an extreme here. I just want to understand why it's only 4.

ADM SHARP: It's not 4, it's 8.

MR. MCNAMARA: All right, why 8, why not 20?

ADM SHARP: Well, I think that until an attack happens - -

MR. MCNAMARA: Oh, yes, surely, I understand that, but after the attack happens, you wouldn't feel limited to 8 or 10 or anything like that.

ADM SHARP: We'll put everything on deck up, sir. Ha! Ha!

MR. MCNAMARA: Alright Ollie. If any question arises, just pick up the phone and call me.

ADM SHARP: All right, sir, certainly will.

MR. MCNAMARA: "Buzz" Wheeler is on his way to New York. This is one of the reasons I'm calling you. Dave Burchinal is here in my office at the present time.

ADM SHARP: All right, sir. Well, we're organized now. I think we have everything we need here - - the TICO has 3 destroyers with her including 1 DDG and then the other 2, the MADDOX and JOY - now the TURNER JOY has got a good battery and should be able to handle these things pretty easily, I think.

MR. MCNAMARA: Is the TURNER JOY's battery better than the MADDOX's?

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir; yes, sir. She's an after World War II destroyer and has these very fast firing 5"/54's.

MR. MCNAMARA: I see. Thanks very much, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: You're welcome, sir. Nice talking to you.

MR. MCNAMARA: Righto. Bye.

A recording, Admiral Sharp to General Burchinal at 1059 AM, EDT, 4 August.

GEN BURCHINAL: Hello.

ADM SHARP: Dave, --- Ollie.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: We're just thinking about what we might hit in reprisal.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: HON ME Island. HON ME.

GEN BURCHINAL: Significant?

ADM SHARP: Huh. Significant that the PT's have been working out of there. Apparently they've been going in there to fuel.

GEN BURCHINAL: There is a base there, then, for them.

ADM SHARP: Yes. They've been working out of there, we've noticed.

GEN BURCHINAL: HON ME, huh.

ADM SHARP: Yes, and then there's another little island called HON NE which is up ---

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes, now we've been doing those you know.

ADM SHARP: Huh?

GEN BURCHINAL: We've been hitting those with other things, you know.

ADM SHARP: Yes -- yes. That's right, but a good air strike on them would do a hell of a lot more than those other things.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: And can be done rather easily and right now, the CONSTELLATION will be -- she's within 350 miles of the Task Group right now.

GEN BURCHINAL: Uh huh. So you give her what -- about 12 hours; how much --

ADM SHARP: Oh well, she could make -- she could go in there right now and support them. No strain.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: That's stretching a little now but, she's going that way all the time and it's real easy.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: And we've speeded her up to get her down there as fast as possible.

GEN BURCHINAL: Good.

ADM SHARP: But she -- in other words, we've got two CVA's now that are ready to go. Now there are two other Swatow bases are QUANG KHE.

GEN BURCHINAL: Got that.

ADM SHARP: And BEN THUY.

GEN BURCHINAL: BEN THUY --- our info is that it has been replaced by PHUC LOI.

ADM SHARP: By what?

GEN BURCHINAL: PHUC LOI.

ADM SHARP: How do you spell it.

GEN BURCHINAL: PHUC LOI -- it's just down the river.

ADM SHARP: Yes.

GEN BURCHINAL: Down closer to the coast.

ADM SHARP: Yes --- yes.

GEN BURCHINAL: And there are five altogether. Hear they eliminated the one near the big city HAIPHONG.

ADM SHARP: Yes.

GEN BURCHINAL: And kept four in and what Mr. McNamara wants is for you to move to assemble, move, and get on the TICO as quickly as you can, a mining capability as an option for these four. This was the purpose of the call to your people asking them to get a hundred Mark 50's with assembly teams to the TICO as quickly as possible and let us know when.

ADM SHARP: Okay. We might put them on the CONSTELLATION instead.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay. Either way.

ADM SHARP: Okay. We can do that. I still --- you know how we feel about -- mining, don't you.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. The other thing --

ADM SHARP: Did you see the message I sent you yesterday? Our evaluation of the vulnerability of a certain place down south?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes -- yes.

ADM SHARP: You've seen that one, have you?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. The other thing is we're just developing a number of options.

ADM SHARP: Yes.

GEN BURCHINAL: The other thing would be air, of course, against the bases and the boats themselves.

ADM SHARP: Well, how about an armed recco which would sort of fly up and down between HON ME and up around HON NE and hit any of this kind of craft we see --- either in the bay or at sea?

GEN BURCHINAL: I think that would be a good one.

ADM SHARP: Well, we can put that one on and all you have to do is say go.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right. The other is we're looking at the POL associated with the BEN THUY or PHUC LOI; there are two right there.

ADM SHARP: Uh huh, yes. There's that one at VINH.

GEN BURCHINAL: Uh huh, yes. That one and then there's one down river, a smaller one or about the same size actually it appears to support the base itself. Right at PHUC LOI.

ADM SHARP: Well, we can -- all these things -- we can do and all you have to do is say so.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right. Your people, I understand, are moving on the mining as Mr. McNamara wants that capability as fast as he can get it.

ADM SHARP: Okay. It'll take that -- let's see, I think we estimated 48-hours.

GEN BURCHINAL: 48 hours.

ADM SHARP: But, yes, it takes time.

GEN BURCHINAL: Can you fly them there?

ADM SHARP: Oh, we can fly them, yes, but, see the only thing you can fly aboard a carrier are these COD things and they don't carry too many.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes, yes.

ADM SHARP: And so, it'll be a little slow.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: Of course we can -- here's another thing we could do, we could carry quite a few of them in A-3D's from Subic.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. Sure.

ADM SHARP: So, that can always be done. Okay, we'll have both those capabilities cranked up then.

GEN BURCHINAL: Fine. I'll suggest these other two.

ADM SHARP: Yes. Okay. Okay, Dave. Tell Mr. McNamara that we've -- that the CONSTELLATION will be -- is close enough now pretty quick.

GEN BURCHINAL: To provide support if needed. Right, and understand things are a little tight out there at the moment.

ADM SHARP: We just -- we just got a report saying that DESOTO Patrol is under continuous torpedo attack. Did you get that?

GEN BURCHINAL: No.

ADM SHARP: We just got it.

GEN BURCHINAL: Keep them coming on the reports of action.

ADM SHARP: Okay.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay, Ollie. Right. Thank you.

A recording, Admiral Sharp to General Burchinal at 1118 AM, EDT, 4 August.

GEN BURCHINAL: Hello.

ADM SHARP: Hello, Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: I guess you know they've started shooting at them.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yep.

ADM SHARP: Both ways. One of them is -- said they've dodged five torpedoes and he's firing on the PT and one -- we had one message that said he was going to try to ram one. So they must be pretty close.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: Now, on this uh --

GEN BURCHINAL: Your air doing anything yet, or can you tell.

ADM SHARP: Can't tell yet, we haven't anything on that. Now on this mining deal. You know about this one?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yep.

ADM SHARP: What we ought to do with this is airlift these things to DANANG.

GEN BURCHINAL: Uum hum.

ADM SHARP: And then from there we can COD them out to the carrier --

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: Which would not be the TICONDEROGA but the CONSTELLATION probably, and then in addition, we'll get some ready over there at Subic for the A-3's.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: That's a long flight. But this is not the way to do this job. The way to do this job is with air.

GEN BURCHINAL: Understand. He just wants an option.

ADM SHARP: Yep. Okay, we'll get the option ready but this option, you know, is roughly 48 hours.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: So it's not something that's going to happen right away.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: And that constitutes a quick answer on when this is going to happen. About 48 hours.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: Now, have you seen -- here's one from DIRNSA to a lot of people out here. 041441.

GEN BURCHINAL: No.

ADM SHARP: Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: This talks about a place where the -- where these people are going into to hide.

GEN BURCHINAL: Oh, name -- you got a name there.

ADM SHARP: Yea, LOC CHAO Estuary.

GEN BURCHINAL: Uh huh. Okay, we'll run that one down.

ADM SHARP: It's 19.46 North.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: That'll give you a lead.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: So -- what we ought to have done -- this idea of an armed recco, running up and down between HON ME and HON NE, would cover this place.

GEN BURCHINAL: They want to do something that's -- probably -- maybe that to, but more severe than going right in and picking up secondaries.

ADM SHARP: Well, what we ought to do as soon as it gets light is put up an armed recco to go in and take these people because it would be reasonably simple with a good strong armed recco up there.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: Well, it's not simple but -- because these people are kind of hard to hit, running around 50 knots and turning fast.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay.

ADM SHARP: But, I would -- that's the first thing to do. If we want to really get them as soon as it ---

GEN BURCHINAL: At the first light background.

ADM SHARP: Well, right now if we can. If its open season on these boys which I think it is, we'll take it from there.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay. Any word we can get we're going to have a meeting with SECSTATE, White House, directly.

ADM SHARP: Okay.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay. Thank you and any more report of action out yonder, tune us in.

ADM SHARP: Okay.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thank you.

A recording, White House Situation Room to Pacific Desk, NMCC at 1213 PM, EDT, 4 August.

COL BUCKLEY: Pacific Desk, Col Buckley.

WHITE HOUSE: This is Werner, Sit Room. Tell me, we had a message earlier saying of the launch of some aircraft. What happened to the CAP. Weren't they --- Our last conference call there was no CAP, what's the --

COL BUCKLEY: Right, sir. I think the only thing we can draw conclusion here that they may of had to refuel, run out of gas or time, possibly.

MR. WERNER: So you think that they're back down on the carrier then?

COL BUCKLEY: I think this is probably right. It says no air support at present. In other words, it looked like he might have had some but they may have had to refuel somewhere.

MR. WERNER: Okay. Thank you.

COL BUCKLEY: We should have some more clarification on this and we'll give you a call as soon as we get something different.

MR. WERNER: Right.

COL BUCKLEY: Okay.

A recording, Admiral Sharp to General Burchinal at 1222 PM, EDT, 4 August.

ADM SHARP: Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes, go ahead.

ADM SHARP: There apparently have been at least 9 torpedoes in the water. All missed and apparently 2 of the boats have been sunk as far as we can tell.

GEN BURCHINAL: Good. How many were engaged? Do you know?

ADM SHARP: Let's see, there must of been a total of six engaged, I think. Not sure on that yet.

GEN BURCHINAL: Any aircraft?

ADM SHARP: You mean enemy?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: No, I don't --- wait a minute now. I'm not so sure about this number of engaged.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: We've got to check it out here. It may not be that high. NO. No report on - we did have a report on bogies at one time but we haven't any confirmation of that.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right. Were they sunk by gunfire or air attack? Do you know?

ADM SHARP: By gun I think. TURNER JOY.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: Now the CONSTELLATION has six A-4's and two F-4's on the scene. She launched them at 2300 H which, of course, is an hour and a half ago, and she sent in another four A-1's at2315. Her present position is 18-07 N and 112 E, and she is closing 77.5. The CVA's have flare aircraft up there. There are also some C-123's at DANANG which we are telling them they can use if they want to.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: I told PACAF to send four F-102's to either of two fields, either DANANG or TAN SON NHUT.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: And I told him to get 12 F-102's down to Clark - as back up.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: And thats about it. The two carriers are close enough now that they can support each other.

GEN BURCHINAL: Are they still exchanging fire?

ADM SHARP: I've been so busy doing other things that I haven't looked at the last - whether they're still shooting each other or not.

GEN BURCHINAL: (UNREADABLE)

ADM SHARP: I can't - I don't see that they have. Here's another one now, just got it. Let me see - The MADDOX says she has evaded about 10 torpedoes. Two craft are sunk. No casualties to us and they got some AD's and A-4D's on the scene but they're having trouble with illumination. The TURNER JOY or one of the two was giving star shell illumination for the planes. As far as we can tell there were only three boats. But that doesn't count up to that many torpedoes I don't think. It sounds to me like there are more boats than just three. Well that's about the size of it, Dave. Now I have sent out one telling them to take care of them in the general area of the problem. It's open season on PT's and Swatow's. I've also told MACV to keep those ones down, you know in DANANG, in port so that they don't get mixed up in this thing.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right. So you're calling them off for three or four days.

ADM SHARP: I've called them off, yes. That's just about it Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay. Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Of course, we would like to see that 11 miles changed to three.

GEN BURCHINAL: Understand. We're working on it.

ADM SHARP: Okay. And also we would like to do hot pursuit with aircraft.

GEN BURCHINAL: Understand. We're working on that.

ADM SHARP: I'm sending a message to you now suggesting an armed recco between HON NE and HON ME.

GEN BURCHINAL: For your info Ollie you might dig out the target material to be sure that the boys in the CVA's have them.

ADM SHARP: Target material?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. On two southern Swatow bases. QUANG KHE and PHUC LOI.

ADM SHARP: QUANG KHE and PHUC LOI.

GEN BURCHINAL: PHOC LOI, I guess it is. PHOC LOI plus the VINH and PHOC LOI POL.

ADM SHARP: VINH and PHOC LOI?

GEN BURCHINAL: POL.

ADM SHARP: Thats PHUC LOI?

GEN BURCHINAL: It's PHOC LOI, I think. It's just down the river from BEN THUY.

ADM SHARP: BEN THUY.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes, just down the river from BEN THUY base.

ADM SHARP: Okay, Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: You might have those target materials on hand.

ADM SHARP: Okay, thanks a lot.

A recording Adm Sharp to Gen Burchinal at 1:01 PM EDT 4 Aug

ADM SHARP: Dave?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: We need to give these people some rules of engagement on aircraft and here is what I am suggesting. I would say to CINCPACFLT/7th FLT "Authority granted to declare hostile, and engage, any DRV/CHICOM aircraft whose actions and behavior indicate within reasonable certainty that an attack on US forces is intended".

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. Do you have any indication of those screwing around out there?

ADM SHARP. Yes. There have been a couple which flew down south of HAINAN, that went down almost, as I recall, to DA NANG - out at sea.

GEN BURCHINAL: Do you know what kind they were?

ADM SHARP: No. They were Jets - their speeds were, as I recall, about 400 kts.

GEN BURCHINAL: From HAINAN down as far as DA NANG?

ADM SHARP: What?

GEN BURCHINAL: HAINAN down as far as DA NANG?

ADM SHARP: Yes.

GEN BURCHINAL: When did that happen - last night?

ADM SHARP: Yes. I don't - (Do you have that piece of paper we had about the two aircraft we saw flying around?) Dave, we've got quite a few aircraft on HAINAN you know, roughly 50, something like that.

GEN BURCHINAL: 28's and what else? Do you know?

ADM SHARP: T28's and MIG 17's, 15's. There is a total of 79, I have here. So there is a considerable force there and these CVA's are too close right now to let these fellows fly over us.

GEN BURCHINAL: I understand.

ADM SHARP: And he's got some, matter of fact, he's got some F8's in the air right now with sparrows on them and some F4's. So we've got to have something other - we can't allow these people to fly over our carriers at this point.

GEN BURCHINAL: Understand Ollie.

ADM SHARP: And, do you want me to wait until you give me an OK on it? Or shall I go out with it?

GEN BURCHINAL: Well, all I can do at the moment is note it because we're meeting at the White House. If you think it's necessary for the security of your forces, I think that's your job to put it out.

ADM SHARP: Well, I'm going to go ahead with it.

GEN BURCHINAL: And I'll just note it and tell the Chief that's what you've done. And if anything comes up we'll be in a countermanding position, but I think from the point of view of security of your forces you can't do anything less.

ADM SHARP: Yes - I'm going to go ahead and put it out.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK

ADM SHARP: Right

GEN BURCHINAL: Fine Ollie. Bye.

A recording - <u>White House Situation Room to Command Center Operations Team Chief at 1:03 PM EDT 4 AUG</u>

MR. HAYS: Col Nickols, this is Bob Hays in the White House Situation Room. The NSC meeting has broken up now. Your Secretary, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Rusk and Mr. McCone are going to be having lunch with the President.

COL NICKOLS: Would you say that again and let me write it down.

MR. HAYS: Right

COL NICKOLS: Now, who's meeting with the President?

MR. HAYS: Well, the NSC meeting has broken up and McCone, Rusk and McNamara will be having lunch with the President along with Mr. Bundy. What we wanted to do was to make sure we were getting all these MADDOX messages on Priority and we will take care

of servicing all four of them upstairs, and with the President.

COL NICKOLS: Okay. They are having lunch in the White House.

MR. HAYS: Pardon me?

COL NICKOLS: They are having lunch in the White House?

MR. HAYS: Yes, they are having lunch with the President. So if you get anything, shoot it over as fast as you can. I know you have been, but we wanted to let you know his whereabouts.

COL NICKOLS: We'll do it.

MR. HAYS: Fine - thank you. Bye.

A recording - Secretary McNamara to Gen Burchinal at 1:24 PM EDT 4 AUG

SEC McNAMARA: Hello, Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes sir.

SEC McNAMARA: Dave, any further reports?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. Well, I talked to Adm Sharp on another matter. He called and said he, for the security of his forces, had to give his air CAP some instructions in case any enemy aircraft showed up - and he's done that. Last night they did spot two that they think were IL28s flown from HAINAN, down off DA NANG, and back again. The Chiefs have considered courses of action, sir. They considered three: the first, was a low level type retaliatory which would take just the

PT base at PHUC LOI and the oil associated with it at VINH. They are all in the same area. The second, was to take the two Swatow bases south of the 20th, plus that estuary which our intelligence says these boats run up in the daytime - with armed recce, and the two oil. The third, was to take all five of the Swatow bases, plus the two oil south there, and HAIPHONG. They are unanimously agreed on the second course of action. That south of the 20th you would take the Swatow bases at PHUC LOI and QUANG KHE, and the estuary at LOC CHAO. With those three PT targets you would also take the oil storages at VINH and PHUC LOI. That is their unanimous recommendation.

SEC McNAMARA: What further action reports do you have?

GEN BURCHINAL: I don't have any except for one intercept that came in somewhat garbled form that said that one enemy boat wounded and one enemy airplane seen falling from the sky.

SEC McNAMARA: Would you call Ollie Sharp and find out from him what his latest information is? Almost an hour has gone by since we last had a report. Has the engagement broken off? and, if so, with what results?

GEN BURCHINAL: The last I had was that there was no further indication of engagement. I'll get him right back again . . .

SEC McNAMARA: If he doesn't have any further information, ask him to radio to the task force and get it.

GEN BURCHINAL: I will.

SEC McNAMARA: And then call me here over at the Mansion.

GEN BURCHINAL: I will.

A recording - Gen Burchinal to Adm Sharp at 1:28 PM EDT 4 AUG

GEN BURCHINAL: Ollie, Mr. McNamara just called me from the White House. What's your very latest on the engagement?

ADM SHARP: The best we know is two sunk.

GEN BURCHINAL: I've given him that.

ADM SHARP: We don't know how many are involved really. There is some indication that one of our aircraft might have been hit but that is just an indication, nothing else.

GEN BURCHINAL: He wanted to know if you could get on the radio out there and find out really what the latest is. Has the engagement broken off? There is one report we received which said that one of our aircraft was seen falling into the sea.

ADM SHARP: Yes. That's the one I saw. You know what kind that was.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. Is there any way you can get on the horn to Moore and find out what the status of engagement is?

ADM SHARP: I'll see if PACFLT has a circuit open to him.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. I'll hold on.

ADM SHARP: It will take some time. No use in holding on, I will call you back.

GEN BURCHINAL: All right. He wants to be called over there on the latest status of engagement if you can get any word.

ADM SHARP: Well, I would say that we haven't had a report of any shooting now - there have been 13 torpedoes launched at the ships. None of them have hit. The aircraft were attacking, and let me see, a total of 12 torpedoes, 2 PTs destroyed. The TICONDEROGA aircraft are illuminating and attacking. The CONSTELLATION has aircraft on the scene now, and also the CONSTELLATION has four F-4's up armed with Sparrows as a CAP.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK. When you get through, call me.

ADM SHARP: I'll get anything I can in addition.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thanks, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Welcome.

A recording between Adm Sharp and Gen Burchinal at 1:59 PM EDT 4 AUG

ADM SHARP: Dave, we aren't able to contact them by voice. We have sent a message saying expedite your SITREPS. The latest thing we have is one from 72.1 which says he has reviewed the action now, he said, many of the reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Have you seen

this one?

GEN BURCHINAL: No.

ADM SHARP: Freak weather effects on radar and overeager sonarmen may have accounted for many reports. No actual visual sightings by MADDOX. Of course, this doesn't take anything away from the other destroyer and, of course, we know that there has been contacts because we got the dope on the destruction, as you know. So there we are, and we can't get them by single side band.

GEN BURCHINAL: You don't know whether the air attacks are still going on or not?

ADM SHARP: The latest thing that I have is that we have some A-1s airborne. As far as we know, they still have aircraft up, in fact I'm sure they do.

GEN BURCHINAL: Do you know if they're attacking, engaging or not?

ADM SHARP: No, the last indications we have were that they were illuminating and it didn't say whether they were attacking or not, but they had flare ships up.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay. Well, I'll tell Mr. McNamara this, and if anything else comes in to you . . .

ADM SHARP: I'm afraid what's happened is that our Flash

messages have choked up the circuit. I have just told everybody to knock off using Flash. That is from here. That is the best I can give you Dave, sorry.

GEN BURCHINAL: Okay. Many thanks, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: As soon as I get any more I will let you know.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thanks a lot.

ADM SHARP: OK. Goodbye.

A recording - Adm Sharp to Gen Burchinal at 2:08 PM EDT 4 August

ADM SHARP: Dave. We have a more recent one from 77.5. He said three PT's reported sunk now. He talks about the weather. He says weather over De Soto past three hours varied 800 to 3000 broken. And I don't know miles visibility. It is deteriorating which is hampering aircraft in the location of targets. And an EA-1B moved from a middle man position to De Soto to attempt to vector planes to contact. Two F4's are on the scene, and two are about to launch. No torpedo firings in the last 15 minutes. De Soto patrol reports no contacts on the radar screen.

GEN BURCHINAL: And what's the date time group?

ADM SHARP: This was 041732 Z.

GEN BURCHINAL: That's about 1315 our time, about an hour ago, the attack.

ADM SHARP: Not quite an hour ago.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right. OK, that will do it.

ADM SHARP: OK.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thank you.

ADM SHARP: It does appear now that a lot of these torpedoes attacks were torpedoes reported in the water from the Sonarman, you see, and probably a lot of them inaccurate because whenever they get keyed up on a thing like this everything they hear on the Sonar is a torpedo.

GEN BURCHINAL: You're pretty sure there was a torpedo attack?

ADM SHARP: No doubt about that, I think. No doubt about that. Oh, there is one report here that says they think that maybe one PT was sunk by another PT. But that's - this is still in the conjecture stage.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK, well that's fine. As far as we know then the aircraft are still attempting to maintain contact?

ADM SHARP: They are - they definitely are - right.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thank you, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Welcome - Bye.

A recording - Adm Mustin to the DDO for Operations B/Gen Smith at 3:34 PM EDT 4 AUG

ADM MUSTIN: Bob - Jim Miller is getting the execute

message typed up on this thing. Its got a few modifications in it from what I discussed with you, but that's neither here nor there. He's going to bring it up here, and I'm going to take it into the tank for the Chiefs to look at finally before it goes. When they say it's ready to go, then I want it to go on that open line which I trust you are still holding.

DDO: We've just sent them a little message to check it out and they are just bringing the message back. They "Rogered" for the one I sent.

ADM MUSTIN: OK. I've just been talking to Adm Sharp on the phone and he knows this is expected momentarily and he may call back for it, so keep your tape cutters and whatever else you need right there ready to roll.

DDO: I told him the Joint Chiefs were in session and that we would have something for him shortly.

ADM MUSTIN: Righto.

DDO: All right, sir.

ADM MUSTIN: OK.

A recording - Adm Sharp to Gen Burchinal at 4:40 PM EDT 4 AUG

ADM SHARP: Hi, Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: The message is up in SECDEF's office now. We should have it on the wire to you directly.

ADM SHARP: I talked to him just a few minutes ago and he

said what's the dope, and I told him that there is still a slight amount of doubt.

GEN BURCHINAL: As to whether he actually had one or not?

ADM SHARP: So he said what do you think, and I said I had told Moore about a half hour before that we had to get some definite information from these characters out there and he's gone out for it. I told him I thought we would have it within 2 hours.

GEN BURCHINAL: One report said no question of that they were illuminated and had guns fired at them.

ADM SHARP: Yes. We have another one here which I am just calling your attention to now.

GEN BURCHINAL: East 11 fires.

ADM SHARP: Hmmmmmmm?

GEN BURCHINAL: The one - there was about -- well -

ADM SHARP: No, this one said certain that original ambush was bonafide. Details of action following present a confusing picture. Have interviewed witnesses who made positive visual sightings. Have you seen that one?

GEN BURCHINAL: No.

ADM SHARP: Of cockpit lights or similar passing near MADDOX. You haven't seen that one?

GEN BURCHINAL: No.

ADM SHARP: Well. This is . . .

GEN BURCHINAL: Hasn't got in yet.

ADM SHARP: This is 041848 from CTG 72.1. That's the latest thing we have. It looks fairly certain. But anyway, I'm to call him and tell him.

GEN BURCHINAL: The minute you get an answer?

ADM SHARP: Yes - and we're not to go until we are confident that we have had one.

GEN BURCHINAL: You think you can launch by seven?

ADM SHARP: Yes, I think so. It'll be tight.

GEN BURCHINAL: And the idea being only to ---

ADM SHARP: But it may be just as well to wait an hour or so if we have to, to be certain.

GEN BURCHINAL: And the only one of course is the one major go at these places, except for the possibility of the recce which may be continued.

ADM SHARP: Well, that's new - now I was figuring on a recycle, if necessary.

GEN BURCHINAL: Oh - well if it's on an as-necessary basis, I think that's probably OK.

ADM SHARP: Yes, because there were quite a few -

GEN BURCHINAL: You get reports on some soft stuff that they didn't get, and there is something to go back again.

ADM SHARP: Yes - well - that's right. Especially on VINH.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes - that one you put enough on initially to really clean it up and if . . .

ADM SHARP: Well - we're going after so many places at once, that it looks like a redo would have to be on one of these.

GEN BURCHINAL: And that would probably be the best.

ADM SHARP: Yes.

GEN BURCHINAL: If you can make that northern one a one go, it would be better too.

ADM SHARP: Right, right. I agree.

GEN BURCHINAL: Because of the reaction possibility.

ADM SHARP: Yes, and I told them a recce is feasible so that we don't necessarily have to go up there. I just want to call your attention to that one message which indicates . . . a little better.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK - well, we'll wait for your call back on the confirmation routine, then we'll have the operator roll.

ADM SHARP: OK.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thanks, Ollie - Bye.

ADM SHARP: Hey, Dave, tell Dave MacDonald that he was about right on 70 total.

GEN BURCHINAL: On both?

ADM SHARP: That's 70 for the two of them. Not 70 each.

GEN BURCHINAL: Right. Right. OK.

ADM SHARP: OK. Right. Goodbye. Thank you.

A recording - Col Jones in the JCS conference room to the NMCC Pacific Desk, Cdr Hattaway, at 5:00 PM EDT 4 AUG

CDR HATTAWAY: Hello, This is Cdr Hattaway on the Pac Desk.

COL JONES: This is Col Jones, I'm up at the Gold Room. The Chiefs would like to get the forecasters to give us a forecast of the weather as of 0700 local time out at the target area.

CDR HATTAWAY: Forecast as of 0700?

COL JONES: That's right, out there about 2 hours from now.

CDR HATTAWAY: OK, all right.

COL JONES: Over the target area, and we would like the information up here as soon as you get it.

CDR HATTAWAY: All right.

COL JONES: Thank you.

A recording - Adm Sharp to Gen Burchinal at 5:23 PM EDT 4 AUG

ADM SHARP: Dave, reference DIRNSA 041933Z.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: Have you seen it?

GEN BURCHINAL: No. Well, I'm not sure I have.

ADM SHARP: Well, here now they came out definitely and said they sacrificed two ships and the rest are ok.

GEN BURCHINAL: Oh, yes, we've seen that. I couldn't tell whether they meant ships. They said comrades.

ADM SHARP: No, no, I remember that one. This was a different

one. Now this is where they say they sacrificed two ships and all the rest are ok. You haven't seen that one?

GEN BURCHINAL: No.

ADM SHARP: I just got it. You ought to look at it because this pins it down better than anything so far.

GEN BURCHINAL: Indicates that they were out there on business, huh?

ADM SHARP: Oh, yes. Very definitely.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK.

ADM SHARP: They thought that they shot down a couple of planes. Now we also have one from 7th Fleet recapping and he says that TURNER JOY reports two.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes - we got that.

ADM SHARP: And

GEN BURCHINAL: SECDEF is satisfied with the evidence.

ADM SHARP: He is, huh?

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: Well, now - I'm waiting for one more from the TURNER JOY. We're expecting one more. And actually I'm satisfied too. But then another thing. Now this thing is coming off at 2000 your time.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: Because we're shooting on GOLF time. Now we were using - HOTEL time in our message, but we're going to change it. Tom used GOLF in his.

GEN BURCHINAL: So it's 2000 our time.

ADM SHARP: Right.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK.

ADM SHARP: Now I think I'll give you a call pretty soon - I'll talk with Mr. McNamara pretty quick.

GEN BURCHINAL: He's right here with us.

ADM SHARP: OK - well - I'm waiting for one more message then I'll give you the dope.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thank you, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: OK - goodbye.

Recorded conversation, Admiral Mustin to the DDO NMCC General Smith at 5:29 PM, EDT, 4 August.

ADM MUSTIN: Bob, there is again this confusion about what time it is in the Gulf of Tonkin. I wish you'd get on that Teletype circuit or something and get this straightened out once and for all. We want to know not only what time do they keep in Saigon, but we also want to know what time those carriers are keeping at sea up there in the Gulf of Tonkin, in case there is any difference.

DDO: Yes, sir, there should be no. . .

ADM MUSTIN: There seems to be some confusion whether we have a 12 hour difference, 11 hour difference, or what

we have; and we want to know, and we want to know right here in the tank right now. So put somebody through on a wire that will go through for sure, like to CINCPAC's War Room, and ask him to check a little further to resolve the possibility of differences between what's kept in Saigon, which may be an artificial time, and what time the carriers are keeping, and let us know back here, and use whatever it takes to get through at the desk.

GEN SMITH: I'll do that.

ADM MUSTIN: Righto.

Recorded conversation, the Deputy Director for Operation General Smith to General McCutcheon at 5:33 PM, EDT, 4 August.

GEN SMITH: This is Smith at the NMCC. I have just had a call from Admiral Mustin out at the tank and apparently a big discussion has come up over the imte in the Bay of Tonkin that you CVA's are carrying, as opposed to the time in Saigon. Can you straighten this out for me?

GEN McCUTCHEON: That's correct. We had told CINCPACFLT in our message to go on HOTEL time, but they had previously gone out to 7th fleet and used GOLF time. The particular real estate in question is about halfway between GOLF and HOTEL. Realizing that they can use that extra hour, Admiral Sharp has told them to plan on using GOLF time. That would

make it 2000 Washington time if it comes off as scheduled.

GEN SMITH: 2000 at Saigon time would be waht, 1900?

GEN McCUTCHEON: Negative - 2000 Washington time.

GEN SMITH: 2000 Washington time. I am with you.

GEN McCUTCHEON: That would be 1400 here in Honolulu and would be 0700 out there.

GEN SMITH: 0700 out there. Alright now. If they use the HOTEL time what time would it be?

GEN McCUTCHEON: Well, if they went on HOTEL time it would be one hour earlier; it would be 1900 Washington time.

GEN SMITH: Right and 0600 out there. Right?

GEN McCUTCHEON: Negative. If they went on 0700 HOTEL it would be 1900 in Washington. If they go on 0700 GOLF it would be 2000 in Washington.

GEN SMITH: OK, I am with you. That's fine. OK, I'll call that into them. Thank you ever so much.

Recorded conversation, Admiral Sharp to General Burchinal at 5:39 PM, EDT, 4 August.

ADM SHARP: Hi, Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes - I read that message you referenced.

ADM SHARP: Good.

GEN BURCHINAL: Indicates there may be some other activity under way.

ADM SHARP: Well -

GEN BURCHINAL: They said in the message that they were -

ADM SHARP: They were carrying out the hunt.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: Right - Now I just wanted to be sure that we understood each other on this as to the time that will be launch time.

GEN BURCHINAL: At 0700 local.

ADM SHARP: Right.

GEN BURCHINAL: Launch time - that's right.

ADM SHARP: Yes.

GEN BURCHINAL: Now - we were having an argument here with the clocks again. We're on eastern daylight - Saigon is 12 hours - is this different than Saigon?

ADM SHARP: According to our clock here you're on Queen time. What time is it there now?

GEN BURCHINAL: Right now at here it is 5:40 - 1740.

ADM SHARP: Right - that's right - and we check on that. And it's 4:40 in the morning.

GEN BURCHINAL: In that local area, not in Saigon.

ADM SHARP: No, no. It's Saigon's. They're on a special time.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

ADM SHARP: 4:40.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK.

ADM SHARP: So we're checked. We got you on, right?

GEN BURCHINAL: Right.

ADM SHARP: OK, Dave - I just wanted to check - I'm still waiting for one more.

GEN BURCHINAL: Did you get that other word on possible things from the North moving down?

ADM SHARP: No, I don't believe I did.

GEN BURCHINAL: NSA stuff again. I haven't seen it. I just heard a report. There is a report that some stuff from the north - north - north would move into the north. . .

ADM SHARP: You mean air?

GEN BURCHINAL: Chi stuff, yes, into Dien Bien.

ADM SHARP: No, I haven't seen that one.

GEN BURCHINAL: We'll keep an eye out for it and be sure.

ADM SHARP: OK, Dave.

GEN BURCHINAL: OK, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Call you later.

Recorded conversation, Admiral Sharp to General Burchinal at 6:07 PM, EDT, 4 August.

ADMIRAL SHARP: Hey, Dave. A couple things here. I've been waiting for another one from TURNER JOY but she keeps passing them through 77.5 and he interprets instead of sending us the thing, but I'm satisfied myself.

GEN BURCHINAL: We are, too. There will be no change.

ADM SHARP: Alright. Now a couple things -

GEN BURCHINAL: You've got the message that says go?

ADM SHARP: We have it. And that's it, huh? Is that agreeable with SECDEF?

GEN BURCHINAL: He was sitting there listening and he says he's satisfied.

ADM SHARP: OK, OK.

GEN BURCHINAL: He considers you're on the highway, friend.

ADM SHARP: He wanted me to call him and -

GEN BURCHINAL: I didn't realize it.

ADM SHARP: You've been relaying.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes. He was in the meeting with the Chiefs all the time you were calling. I was relaying. He's satisfied and he considers that the show is on the road.

ADM SHARP: Well, you tell him that I'm going ahead.

GEN BURCHINAL: That's correct.

ADM SHARP: Two things now; suppressive fire is part of this game, right?

GEN BURCHINAL: There is no question in my mind about that.

ADM SHARP: Alright, I've told CINCPACFLT that suppressive fire is part of the game.

GEN BURCHINAL: Where you have identified positions that may interfere with your forces, clean them up on the way in.

ADM SHARP: Right. Now the press should not get this story at 1900 your time.

GEN BURCHINAL: We are cognizant of that and will probably not - we will insure that nothing comes out here until we know that you're off target.

ADM SHARP: Alright. That's going to be 2100 your time.

GEN BURCHINAL: We're making plans to have it late.

ADM SHARP: Well, I notice that there is going to be a meeting across the river.

GEN BURCHINAL: It's going on right now, but nothing;s coming out of it at the moment. They will delay that until they are sure that there is no possibility of anyone reading it.

ADM SHARP: OK. I'm going to tell CINCPACFLT to GO.

GEN BURCHINAL: Alright - Now - One thing your staff might be thinking of, Ollie - We have in hand, a series of actions out of 37, of alerts and deployments to build up the posture in the area and improve our ability to react. If they clear that across the way, they will send it to you and it will bring in not only your forces, but some outside ones. And it will ask you for any others you need, to put a peak posture out there. And you people might be thinking of it. We're using 37 as the basis. But they can go on from there and anything they think they need. So those will be both alerts and deployments.

ADM SHARP: OK - I'm not going to call you again on this - this is my telling you that I'm going to execute.

GEN BURCHINAL: This is my telling you that that's our understanding here firmly.

ADM SHARP: OK.

GEN BURCHINAL: Fine, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Thank you, Dave. Goodbye.

Recorded conversation, NMCC PAC desk to the CINCPAC D/O at 7:59 PM, EDT, 4 August.

LCOL LINDSEY: This is Commander Hattaway, NMCC.

CDR HATTAWAY: Some of the wheels are concerned about this CTG 77.6's 141759Z.

LCOL LINDSEY: Let me get it - just a minute.

GEN WISMAN: Hattaway, you got the PAC D/O there?

LCOL LINDSEY: Yes sire, on.

GEN WISMAN: OK, now what we need is the off-times, numbers and types ASAP.

LCOL LINDSEY: Yes, sir.

GEN WISMAN: You got anything yet?

LCOL LINDSEY: Not a thing.

GEN WISMAN: OK,now you'll come through on the KY 9, right?

LCOL LINDSEY: Yes, sir.

GEN WISMAN: OK, and the NMCC here is supposed to have a circuit open for you, a hot line, so you can come right up on the KY 9 and get it in here to us.

LCOL LINDSEY: OK. I have that one.

CDR HATTAWAY: They want to make sure this has no relation to the current operation.

LCOL LINDSEY: That's correct.

CDR HATTAWAY: This is just some CAP or effort against the earlier attack.

LCOL LINDSEY: Yes, sir.

CDR HATTAWAY: That's the way you read it, too?

LCOL LINDSEY: Yes, sir.

CDR HATTAWAY: Thank you very much. Goodbye.

Recorded conversation, General Wheeler to General Burchinal at 8:05 PM, EDT, 4 August.

GENERAL WHEELER: Dave? Anything happening?

GEN BURCHINAL: We're standing by with a clear line. Have heard nothing yet.

GEN WHEELER: OK. Well, I'm in the President's office, the outer office. If you get any word, pass the word to me. They can call me to the phone. I'm in the cabinet room, actually.

GEN BURCHINAL: I will indeed.

GEN WHEELER: OK, Dave. Goodbye.

Recorded conversation, Secretary McNamara to Admiral Sharp at 8:39 PM, EDT, 4 August.

MR. MCNAMARA: Ollie, what have you heard about the launch?

ADM SHARP: We have not heard yet, sir. I think what probably will happen will be that they will give us a coordinated report when the launch is completed.

MR. MCNAMARA: Can't you radio out to them and ask them whether they are taking off, and if not, when they plan to take off?

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir. I'll try it.

MR. MCNAMARA: It's forty minutes after the ordered time of take off.

ADM SHARP: I think what they're probably doing is planning on giving us a coordinated take off report, which they do at the completion of take off.

MR. MCNAMARA: "Let's get an immediate statement from them if we can. Part of the problem here is just hanging on this news, you see. The President has to make a statement to the people and I am holding him back from making it, but we're forty minutes past the time I told him we would launch."

ADM SHARP: Alright. I will have CINCPACFLT, who has a direct line to them, see if he can raise an answer from them.

MR. MCNAMARA: How long will it take them after launch to get over the targets?

ADM SHARP: Well, it's going to take some of them a little over an hour.

MR. MCNAMARA: I don't think we need worry - How soon will the first ones be over target?

ADM SHARP: We don't have the plan of their launch. Now, if they let them all go at once, which they may do, then of course they will hit the southern targets quite quickly.

MR. MCNAMARA: See if you can find out when they are launching and when you think their first flights will be over tartets.

ADM SHARP: All right, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Very good. And then just call me back directly. I will be in my office.

ADM SHARP: All right, sir. Thank you.

MR. MCNAMARA: All right, Ollie. I appreciate it.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir. Bye.

Recorded conversation, Admiral Sharp to Secretary McNamara at 9:09 PM, EDT, 4 August.

MR. MCNAMARA: McNamara.

ADM SHARP: This is Ollie, Sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: I just got one from one carrier.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes.

ADM SHARP: He may be talking for both of them because he is the senior one. And he says, "Time of launch is going to be 0200Z," which means not for another 50 minutes. In other words, they couldn't make the time.

MR. MCNAMARA: Oh, my God.

ADM SHARP: And last time over target will be 0400.

MR. MCNAMARA: 0400.

ADM SHARP: 0400Z.

MR. MCNAMARA: Let's see - 0400Z, which would mean. . .

ADM SHARP: Which would mean three hours.

MR. MCNAMARA: Eleven o'clock. Three hours from now.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: And that is over target?

ADM SHARP: That is the last one over target.

MR. MCNAMARA: What is the first over target?

ADM SHARP: Well, the first one would be about 0300. He gave this one TOT, which could mean that he is trying to make a coordinated attack. But you see what happened, this compression of time has got him and he has had to delay his launch.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, now, let's get clear. His time of launch is fifty minutes from now?

ADM SHARP: That's right, yes, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Which would make it ten PM Washington time.

ADM SHARP: That is right. Yes, sir. And the TOT would be midnight, your time.

MR. MCNAMARA: Two hours?

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Is it two hours to the closest target?

ADM SHARP: We assume that that meant the last TOT.

MR. MCNAMARA: Alright, what is the first TOT for ten PM Washington launch?

ADM SHARP: I don't know yet. We are trying to get an amplifying report. But as I say he could be making a coordinated attack, which would mean that he would try to get them all over at the same time, you see?

MR. MCNAMARA: How serious do you think would be a Presidential statement about the time of launch that would say

this, "At this moment air action is now in execution against gun boats and supporting facilities in and near four ports of North Vietnam which have been used in support of hostile operations"?

ADM SHARP: I don't think it would be good, sir. Frankly. Because it will alert them. No doubt about it.

MR. MCNAMARA: They will be alerted as soon as these planes start coming into the coast.

ADM SHARP: Well. They won't know where they are going. You see. Of course, they are going to be alerted as soon as they get in the air because HAINAN is going to pick them up and so will the other people. But they won't know where they are going. It wouldn't recommend it. I am sorry we can't get it foo any faster, but I know what would happen.

MR. MCNAMARA: Sure.

ADM SHARP: It's a compression all along the line, you know, and communications take time.

MR. MCNAMARA: Alright. Keep me informed as the night goes by.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir. Sure will.

MR. MCNAMARA: Thank you.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir. Goodbye.

Recorded conversation, Admiral Sharp to Secretary McNamara at 9:22 PM, EDT, 4 August.

MR. MCNAMARA: McNamara.

ADM SHARP: Sir, this is Ollie again.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: We have some indications, in a channel, you know, that we can't talk about, that these PTs are going in close to the shore and they are told to stay clase and they are going into these various estuaries. This brings up this three mile prohibition. See, we are going in to hit these various places but we still have to stay outside of three miles; otherwise, and it looks as though we are giving them a three mile sactuary which they are already taking advantage of. Of course, they wouldn't know it but what they are doing is getting in close to try to hide. This is a. . . Well, I am not sure that you are on this one.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes, I am on it.

ADM SHARP: But on that particular message?

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, no, but I know basically what you are talking about.

ADM SHARP: Then I would suggest, sir, that. . .

MR. MCNAMARA: I think we have enough on our hands at the moment, Ollie. Let's just stay with the targets we have and strike those and worry about the three mile limit later.

ADM SHARP: Well, I was just concerned that we are apt to run these things in close and then won't be able to do anything about it.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, I think that is right, but the orders are to hit those targets and as I understand it, you will use your whole force for that.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir. We will have a. . .

MR. MCNAMARA: We don't need to fight in the three mile limit.

ADM SHARP: Well, here is what I anticipate is going to happen. That some of the ones down south will probably be vacant. There probably won't be anybody there because I think they are up a little farther North and we will find them up there in close to the beach, I think. They will have had time to get there, you see. I think that is what we are going to run into. However, that is. . .

MR. MCNAMARA: I would think that the aircraft going in on these initial strikes, the ones you are launching now or will launch shortly against the bases, could be authorized to attack these vessels where ever they find them.

ADM SHARP: That is what I think to°, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: That is alright. You go ahead and instruct them to that; but after the first strike, I mean after you have launched your first wave and they come back to the ships, then the patrols should attack only outside the three mile limit. Buzz Wheeler and Cy Vance are here and all are nodding their heads.

ADM SHARP: Alright, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: So that means that on the way in.

ADM SHARP: Go ahead.

MR. MCNAMARA: Go ahead and attack any place you find them

ADM SHARP: Alright, sir, I will tell them that.

MR. MCNAMARA: Very good. Thanks. Get them off though, Ollie - That is the main thing.

ADM SHARP: Sir?

MR. MCNAMARA: Get them off, that is the main thing.

ADM SHARP: We will get them off.

MR. MCNAMARA: Good night.

ADM SHARP: Good night, sir.

Recorded conversation, Secretary McNamara to Admiral Sharp at 10:26 PM, EDT, 4 August.

ADM SHARP: Sharp.

MR. MCNAMARA: Bob McNamara. Have we had any word that they have launched?

ADM SHARP: No, sir. We haven't, although I am sure the one outfit is going to go, or has gone at 0200, I am quite sure. The other one, however, this is the one that came down from the North, you know --

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes.

ADM SHARP: - and also is taking the targets that are farthest away. She is not going to launch until 1300 their time, with the slow aircraft. And then she is going to launch the others at 1430. Apparently she is

not able to get in position in time. That is their time. Two and one half hours from now, she launches one set and the other set a four hours from now. You got that, sir?

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes. My God.

ADM SHARP: Here is the problem, she is coming down from the North and she had the farthest North targets so she had to come down around that place, you know.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes.

ADM SHARP: And in order to get in there, she had to use a good many of her aircraft for refuelers. So while one of them is going to get off at the time I said, which was the Southern one, you know.

MR. MCNAMARA: Which got off a half an hour ago, is that right?

ADM SHARP: It should have gotten off a half an hour ago. We haven't heard yet but we will be hearing any minute, I am sure.

MR. MCNAMARA: But shouldn't she. . . Why don't you get in touch with her right away and make Damn sure she got off.

ADM SHARP: Right.

MR. MCNAMARA: Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Now this other one will get off four hours from now and then how long is it to the target?

ADM SHARP: Let's see - 1545, which will be five hours and fifteen minutes from now. Of course, those are the farthest away.

MR. MCNAMARA: But no announcement here is going to influence what they think about those aircraft coming in because you will already have launched a half an hour ago against the other targets.

ADM SHARP: That's right. As long as they don't know what the targets are.

MR. MDNAMARA: Yes. Well, I have cut that out of the statement.

ADM SHARP: Good. Yes, sir. So I think we are alright on that, as long as you don't say what they are.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes.

ADM SHARP: There will still be the element of surprise.

MR. MCNAMARA: OK, Ollie. And check with. . .

ADM SHARP: I will give you the word, as soon as we get in touch with them.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, get in touch with them right away.

ADM SHARP: Yes, sir.

A Recording, Mr. McNamara to Admiral Sharp at 10:46 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

ADM SHARP: Yes Sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Any confirmation of Launch yet Ollie?

ADM SHARP No Sir. I have just called for it again and I have not had it, Sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Can't you go in the clear on this and ask "Did you do what you said you were going to do at 10 O'Clock?"

ADM SHARP: We have to go through Sangley on it Sir, and I just told them to go back on it again. But they have not had it. It is just a matter of getting it through this communications system. I will give it to you -

MR. MCNAMARA: How long should it take? The President wants to go on the air at 1115, that is the problem, and he shouldn't go on unless he has a confirmation of launch.

ADM SHARP: I should think we will have it by that time, Sir. I am needling them like mad but it is just a question of getting it through this circuit and apparently the circuit is a little jammed up or something.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well can't you get priority on this?

ADM SHARP: Actually it is coming from the other end and I am sure he got it up to FLASH right now sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, keep after him.

ADM SHARP: I will keep after him.

MR. MCNAMARA: Next Ollie, after you get this out of the way and the launch, be sure that you let them know that we want post strike flash reports promptly. He ought to report every half hour through the night as to what he has done launching, post strike information, any attacks on him, any unidentified aircraft, he just ought to have a half hourly report so that you can keep up to date.

ADM SHARP: All right, I will tell him that.

MR. MCNAMARA: Very Good, Thanks Ollie.

ADM SHARP: All right Sir.

A recording, General Clifton to Deputy Director for Operations, General Wisman, at 10:48 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

DDO: Hello.

GEN CLIFTON: Hi.

DDO: General.

GEN CLIFTON: Yes.

DDO: We have the Chairman here now in another conversation with SECDEF and Admiral Sharp, can I help you?

GEN CLIFTON: Yes. Let me tell you what my problem is. We are looking over this CONSTELLATION Plan. -

DDO: Yes.

GEN CLIFTON: and I know -

DDO: We have new launch times now that we just received from the CONSTELLATION.

GEN CLIFTON: Right.

DDO: Which is considerable later than the TICONDEROGA.

GEN CLIFTON: Right.

DDO: The TICONDEROGA should have launched at 10 and if we hear differently we will notify you.

GEN CLIFTON: Well. Mr. Bundy and the President are together up there.

DDO: Right.

GEN CLIFTON: And they are talking about 1115.

DDO: For what?

GEN CLIFTON: For their statement, and I am looking at the statement to see whether, . . . let's say that they go with this early launch time, how much are they going to reveal and warn the people?

DDO: Well now Admiral Sharp and Secretary McNamara have discussed that and McNamara has deleted that portion from the message and this is what he told Sharp on the phone.

GEN CLIFTON: He has deleted that portion from the President's message, but even when he makes a statement will he alert them this many hours in advance?

DDO: Admiral Sharp said not so as long as he doesn't give the targets.

GEN CLIFTON: I see. OK.

DDO: That was his conversation with the SECDEF.

GEN CLIFTON: The SECDEF has had it with the President I am sure.

DDO: Right.

GEN CLIFTON: All right. Thank you.

A recording, the Deputy Director for Operations, General Wisman, to General Burchinal at 11:05 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

GEN BURCHINAL: Hello.

DDO: General, Wisman, Sir.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

DDO: Still nothing from getting airborne get. And also new info from the one that was moving down from up North, not in position yet. So, they will not be launching for a few hours. And the latest deal is that the Chief out there has called the Chief here, and he wants to scrub that ones launching because of bad weather.

GEN BURCHINAL: What does that do to the operation?

DDO: Well, it cuts out some of the targets that they had split up between the two. Of course, the hand will already be tipped if you go in with the one force. That is the only thing that comes to my mind immediately. The Chairman is up with the SECDEF and Admiral Sharp just talked to the SECDEF, with this information that I am giving you.

GENERAL BURCHINAL: Did he tell him which ones they couldn't hit?

DDO: Sir?

GEN BURCHINAL: Did he tell him which ones they couldn't hit?

DDO: No. They didn't go into that but the Chairman just left here and we showed him on the map which was which. So he knows, and he is sitting there with him.

GEN BURCHINAL: What happened to them. Hell, they are supposed to have been together an hour, you know.

DDO: Well the latest guidance was the directive from SECDEF, "Don't scrub anything until you call me back."

GEN BURCHINAL: That is not good.

DDO: No Sir.

GEN BURCHINAL: The other one has no weather problem?

DDO: Well he doesn't think so but it is funny that he can't confirm anything getting airborne. I am beginning to suspect it now.

GEN BURCHINAL: Of course, if he is waiting for a coordinated go, that is one thing that could have held up the other ones.

DDO: Yes Sir, it could have.

GEN BURCHINAL: Call me if you get anything tonight.

DDO: All right Sir, will do.

GEN BURCHINAL: In 10 or 15 minutes I will be coming over.

DDO: All right, Sir.

GEN BURCHINAL: Thank you very much.

A recording, Mr. McNamara to Admiral Sharp at 11:11 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

ADM SHARP: Yes Sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Ollie, if you don't launch against those northernly targets because of bad weather.

ADM SHARP: Yes Sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: Is there any reason why the CONSTELLATION couldn't launch against the southernly targets, including the oil depot?

ADM SHARP: No Sir. That is exactly what we would do.

MR. MCNAMARA: Is the weather ok down there?

ADM SHARP: It is better down ther, Sir. It's not good, it's deteriorating now.

MR. MCNAMARA: I think the point is, that as a Nation we just can't sit here and let them attack us on the high seas and not do something.

ADM SHARP: No Sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: So I think the President has to say that we are going to retaliate.

ADM SHARP: We are going to do it sir. There is no doubt about that, it is just that I don't think that there is any question that they have launched. It is just the question of getting the doggone report.

MR. MCNAMARA: OK.

ADM SHARP: I have just blasted them again.

MR. MCNAMARA: OK Ollie. Thanks again.

ADM SHARP: Doing my best.

MR. MCNAMARA: Right O.

ADM SHARP: Right O.

A recording, the Deputy Director for Operations, General Wisman, to General Burchinal at 11:20 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

GEN BURCHINAL: Hello.

DDO: General at the recent conversation the SECDEF called him back and said, "All right now why can't you put Connie down on those Southern targets too if they can't go north so we do something." So that is what they are looking at now. In other words his point to him was that as a nation we cannot sit here and not retaliate.

GEN BURCHINAL: Yes.

DDO: So they are thinking.

GEN BURCHINAL: Do you mean put both out there?

DDO: Yes. If necessary in order to insure success.

GEN BURCHINAL: Nobody go North?

DDO: If the weather absolutely prevents it.

GEN BURCHINAL: Up North?

DDO: Yes Sir. If it does.

GEN BURCHINAL: If the weather up North.

DDO: Yes Sir.

GEN BURCHINAL: How the Hell they going to know that?

DDO: Evidently they got some recon in the area. I don't know.

GENERAL BURCHINAL: OK.

DDO: All right, Sir.

GEN BURCHINAL: I will be leaving in just a few minutes.

DDO: All right Sir.

A recording, Admiral Sharp to Mr. McNamara at 11:20 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

MR. MCNAMARA: McNamara

ADM SHARP: Sir, this is Ollie.

MR. MCNAMARA: Yes, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: She got her planes off at 0243. 0243

MR. MCNAMARA: How long ago was that?

ADM SHARP: That is one hour, no not quite an hour ago. 50 minutes ago, and they will be over the target at 0510Z.

MR. MCNAMARA: What time? How much is that from now?

ADM SHARP: That is one hour and 50 minutes from now.

MR. MCNAMARA: Well, now, it couldn't have taken off 40 minutes ago or 50 minutes ago; and be one hour and 50 minutes from now.

ADM SHARP: They have taken off in two waves so that they all get there at the same time. And the slow ones took off at 0243 and the fast ones will take off later. They will all join over the target. So they are making a coordinated attack, you see.

MR. MCNAMARA: Right. So they took off about how long ago now?

ADM SHARP: They took off 40 minutes ago.

MR. MCNAMARA: 40 minutes ago.

ADM SHARP: 40 minutes ago. Yes Sir.

MR. MCNAMARA: And they will be over the target when?

ADM SHARP: They will be over the target in one hour and 10 minutes. No, No, one hour and 50 minutes!

MR. MCNAMARA: One hour and 50 minutes.

ADM SHARP: Right.

MR. MCNAMARA: Right O.

A recording, the CINCPAC DO to the NMCC Pacific Desk at 11:23 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

CDR HENSON: Military Command Center, Cdr. Henson.

MAJ JONES: Cdr. Henson, this is Maj. Joines CINCPAC Duty.

CDR HENSON: Yes, Major.

MAJ JONES: On the TICO first TOT 0510Z.

CDR HENSON: 0510Z. Now what do we base this on, Major?

MAJ JONES: Off at 0243Z.

CDR HENSON: Off at 0243Z. What was the time again?

MAJ JONES: 0243Z

CDR HENSON: 0243Z

MAJ JONES: Roger. Now this dope has already been given to Mr. McNamara.

CDR HENSON: It has. Well how are we going to get this stuff in here? Is it all going to come in here like this?

MAJ JONES: Well I couldn't say. I am just giving it to you because I didn't think you had it.

CDR HENSON: Well, you are right I didn't have it.

MAJ JONES: So, I just wanted to tell you that it was given just now to Mr. McNamara, and I thought maybe it might have had something to do with your notification.

CDR HENSON: It sure would. Thank you very much, Major. Is that all you have on it?

MAJ JONES: That is all I've got.

CDR HENSON: Where did you get this?

MAJ JONES: This came from CINCPACFLT.

CDR HENSON: OK. Thank you very much.

MAJ JONES: Roger.

A recording, the NMCC Pacific Desk to the ARMY Wr Room, NFP, AFCP, MC Command Center, State Operations, White House Sit Room, and CIA, at 11:27 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

CDR HENSON: This is Cdr. Henson Military Command Center calling. I am making a Pierce Arrow notification. I repeat a Pierce Arrow notification. The first aircraft were launched from the TICONDEROGA at 0243Z estimated time on target 0510Z. Any questions, over.

No questions White House.

Army copied.

Air Force copied.

Navy copied.

Marines copied.

State copied.

A recording, the Deputy Director for Operations, General Wisman, to Admiral Mustin at 11:37 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

ADM MUSTIN: Admiral Mustin.

DDO: Yes Sir. About two minutes ago we got the word that they were off.

ADM MUSTIN: Good.

DDO: It may be that the one that was coming down from up North will put her forces down South also.

ADM MUSTIN: Yes. Oh goodness, are they going to send her up to the most northern targets?

DDO: Yes Sir.

ADM MUSTIN: It'll give them a long flight.

DDO: It sure did.

ADM MUSTIN: Well, we didn't give them much notice to get this thing going.

DDO: That is right.

ADM MUSTIN: OK, Bill. Well let me know if you get any news.

DDO: OK Sir.

ADM MUSTIN: Thanks.

A recording, the Deputy Director for Operations, General Wisman, to General Reaves at 11:38 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

GEN REAVES: Hello.

DDO: Kelsey? Wisman. They are airborne.

GEN REAVES: Good.

DDO: OK Kelsey.

GEN REAVES: OK Bill, thanks a lot.

DDO: Right O.

A recording, Admiral Sharp to General Wheeler at 11:51 PM, EDT, 4 August 1964.

GEN WHEELER: General Wheeler.

ADM SHARP: Buzz, this is Ollie.

GEN WHEELER: Yes, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: I talked to SECDEF about coming off of that most Northern one.

GEN WHEELER: Right.

ADM SHARP: Because of the bad weather and the long distance, and the fact that we are squeezed for planes.

GEN WHEELER: Right.

ADM SHARP: So, we are going to shift them down to the next one.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: What we want to do here is to send this group back to the carriers. And, launch another one at that particular place that we want to be sure is knocked down.

GEN WHEELER: Right.

ADM SHARP: And, it is pretty hard to tell from your message whether that means we have to ask for authority for a second; or whether this is called the second.

GEN WHEELER: No. That is right Ollie. If you are going to recycle then you are going to ask for it.

ADM SHARP: Then I am asking for it right now.

GEN WHEELER: You say you are going to send it back to the carrier and go back and hit which one?

ADM SHARP: Vinh.

GEN WHEELER: OK, I will talk to the SECDEF about it right away.

ADM SHARP: In the quantity that is needed.

GEN WHEELER: In the quantity needed.

ADM SHARP: Right.

GEN WHEELER: OK.

ADM SHARP: And, I would like to get that authority, you see, so that I can get on with the planning. Our plannings are pretty well advanced, and because of the long distances, you see, its pretty necessary to do it.

GEN WHEELER: OK.

ADM SHARP: These are all maximum distance strikes for these people.

GEN WHEELER: I'll go up and talk to him right away Ollie and call you back.

ADM SHARP: OK, fine Buzz.

GEN WHEELER: I think it will probably be all right. But, I'll just have to give you a ring on it.

ADM SHARP: Well, I hope so because otherwise there is some danger of not doing the job properly.

GEN WHEELER: I got your point.

ADM SHARP: OK.

GEN WHEELER: Right O, thanks, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Right. Bye.

GEN WHEELER: Bye.

A recording, from General Wheeler to Admiral Sharp at midnight, EDT, 4 August 1964.

ADM SHARP: Sharp.

GEN WHEELER: Ollie.

ADM SHARPL Yes Sir.

GEN WHEELER: I practically missed him because he has a pack of avid news hounds on his neck. So, I though I'd just make sure that I got all of this right down to the gnat's eyebrow. Then I'll call you back in a very few minutes, and give you an answer. If I understand it. You are having weather problems to the North.

ADM SHARP: That's right.

GEN WHEELER: Check. Now the second package.

ADM SHARP: Now, here, let me tell you a little more.

GEN WHEELER: All right, good.

ADM SHARP: Not only weather problems but: A. It's a very long distance, ...

GEN WHEELER: Yes.

ADM SHARP: That they've set up there. Apparently the fellow that, the ship that, had to come down from North you know,

GEN WHEELER: Right.

ADM SHARP: It was just joining up.

GEN WHEELER: Check.

ADM SHARP: See, they both ran air ops all last night so that:
A. They are kinda pooped out.

GEN WHEELER: Check

ADM SHARP: B. The one that was coming down from the North didn't make as much headway as she would have because she apparently had to turn in the other direction for a landing and launching.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: So that she is behind her hoped for position.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: So that's the reason she had to launch late.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: Then, the other one is also quite a long run from where she is to these various targets; and she being a small carrier doesn't have as many airplanes either.

GEN WHEELER: Right.

ADM SHARP: So that it's a lot of targets for a one shot job. You see what I mean.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: So they got these fellows kinda thin.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: Now, I'm not happy with the number of airplanes they are getting out.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: Because they are having to use refuelers undoubtedly and this takes away from the strike aircraft.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: It's therefore important, as far as I'm concerned, to let these people recycle, which they can do easily, and go back in.

GEN WHEELER: This will be from both.

ADM SHARP: I think it will only be the TICO.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: But, I'd like to have the flexibility of doing it with both of them.

ADM SHARP (CONT): If I have that we can tell them. You see, the problem is it takes so dámn long to get word out to them.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: That I'm afraid we'll run through the day, if we are not careful.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: If I have permission to use both of them, then we can tell the Task Group Command out there that both of them can go after this place on the second strike, if that's necessary. I'm sure it won't be, I mean I think it won't be.

GEN WHEELER: Yes.

ADM SHARP: But, I'd like to have that assurance.

GEN WHEELER: In other words you're afraid you're just going to be thin on the ones that you can get at.

ADM SHARP: That's right, thin on the first strike.

GEN WHEELER: And they do have something to launch against it on the first strike?

ADM SHARP: Oh yes, definitely.

GEN WHEELER: But you just want to make sure?

ADM SHARP: But I want to make sure, that's right.

GEN WHEELER: OK but you are going to have to lose out on those Northern ones?

ADM SHARP: Just one. Just the most Northern one. Now for two reasons. It's pretty close to the other country.

GEN WHEELER: I got you.

ADM SHARP: The weather's bad and they would have difficulty locating the target and might stray. We also know that we got some people coming down from that other country.

GEN WHEELER: I see. I understand.

ADM SHARP: You know?

GEN WHEELER: Yes, I see.

ADM SHARP: And we've got some opposition to bother about.

GEN WHEELER: Right.

ADM SHARP: So I'd like to concentrate on it a little bit.

GEN WHEELER: I got the picture now.

ADM SHARP: Good.

GEN WHEELER: OK, Ollie.

ADM SHARP: Right O.

GEN WHEELER: I'll call you a little later.

ADM SHARP: Right O.

GEN WHEELER: Bye.

ADM SHARP: Bye.