

McNamara: ...the PT Boat Personnel and the intelligence reports of the interrogation, one of which reports Fulbright has, state that the PT Boat commander who gave a very detailed account of what happened on the 2nd of August states categorically that no PT Boats could have participated in an attack on the 4th, the second attack. Now he admits that Swatow boats might have participated, although the way the intelligence report came in, it indicates that if they had he probably would have known of that too. So we got a bit of a problem there, but I'm going to try to meet it head on and just say that he didn't know anything about Swatows and we knew Swatows were in and we had some other evidence of PT Boats.

I've included in my statement the information we got from communications intelligence reports and I simply identified it as highly classified intelligence from an unimpeachable source. We've just got to say it because it's the best evidence we have that an attack took place on the 4th.

Johnson: Hmm. Now what is it, we heard them say it?

McNamara: We— No, we got several message— Yes, we, we actually received the message and decoded it at the time and we had three messages. One said that an attack was planned; we got that before the attack took place, and I informed you of that at 9 o'clock in the morning the day of the attack. A second message said that the attack was taking place and then a third message said that two boats were destroyed, their boats.

Johnson: What time was this now, the other two messages?

McNamara: Well they came in, they came in—

Johnson: During the day?

McNamara: Yeah, before the, before the execute order went out.

Johnson: Hmm, and when did it go out, that night?

McNamara: Yeah, the execute order, well it went out, Sort of over a period of time such as from 5 o'clock PM to about 7 PM.

Johnson: But weren't they urging us to move faster really than we did move?

McNamara: No, I don't think so. But uh, there was a lot of doubt in the afternoon as to whether it took place and we went back and forth and did

they have evidence or didn't they have evidence. And the record is pretty clear that by the time the execute order was finally released, everybody signed on that an attack had taken place.

Johnson: Well as I remembered it, I haven't looked at my diary, but as I remembered it, they gave us a statement and asked us to make it from out there and we held it back for some time and—

McNamara: No, I don't think so, Mr. President, I went over all of it yesterday and I don't see any evidence of that.

Johnson: What day is this?

McNamara: The day is August 4th, which was a Tuesday, August 4th.

Johnson: Okay, alright you take the [inaudible]

McNamara: Yes, Sir.