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September 18, 1964

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

Subject: Unidentified North Vietnamese Fleet Command Authority In Direct Communication With Likely Attack Craft

The Gulf of Tonkin Situation Report Number 1, which was prepared by the National Security Agency and circulated on the evening of September 18, 1964, omitted mention of three, or portions of three, messages which were passed between North Vietnamese Naval units that imply the highest level of naval control being exercised over the North Vietnamese boats probably involved in the attack on the De Soto pa trol September 18.

Sub-unit Six Ordered to "Communicate With 'K' "

At about noon on September 17 (0452 Z September 17), Sub-unit 6 of the North Vietnamese Southern Fleet was alerted by its parent headquarters at Ben Thuy of the presence of the destroyers of the De Soto patrol and ordered to communicate directly with "K", an unidentified fleet command authority at Port Wallut. As Port Wallut is headquarters of t he North Vietnamese Northern Fleet, this can be construed as unusual communications arrangedment, and as will be shown one probably oriented to the presence of t he De Soto patrol

Sub-unit Six Boat Skipper Asks About Orders To Fight

In the afternoon of September 17 (0832Z September 17) Tonkin Bay time, the deputy commander of Sub-unit Six and probably the skipper of Swatow class PGM-495, asked the commander of Sub-unit Six to let him know whether he had received (one processing reads "whether you have not yet received") "orders to fight."

Haiphong Orders Coastal Radar Stations To Report Continuosuly To "K"

On the morning of September 18 Tonkin Bay time (0254Z September 18), the day of the attack , what appears to be North Vietnamese naval headquarters at Haiphong ordered the coastal radar station at My Duc (probably 17-14N 106-41 E) to "report continuously back to K" in a message that otherwise notified the station of the presence of t he De Soto patrol destroyers.

In sum, these three messages imply a very high level of North Vietnamese naval control over the probably attack vessels and this commands continuous monitoring of the De Soto patrol's course.

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