

~~TOP SECRET DINAR~~

15 Sept 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Special Annex, USIB-M-345, Item 8, Article by Jack Anderson on "The Tonkin Gulf Snafu" in the 16 August 1964, Washington Post

1. At the subject meeting, Admiral Taylor raised a question in Executive Session regarding para. 5 of the NSA memorandum on the Anderson article (Serial N1017, 25 August 1964). The point at issue was the statement in para. 5 to the effect that none of the SIGINT items received by the Maddox (on 2 August) could be identified as providing the specific two hour warning time mentioned in the Anderson article. Admiral Taylor read a "message" which he said bore a date time group of 021412H and which reflected an order from an unidentified shore station to North Vietnamese vessel T-146 to "... leave the T-135 and turn back to the path of the enemy to attack." Admiral Taylor said that he concluded from this that the Maddox, which had reported that it was under attack at 1607H, had in fact had two hour prior warning. General Carroll was then moved to question the accuracy of the second sentence of para. 6 of the NSA memo which cited factual errors in the Anderson article as suggesting that none of the article was actually based on SIGINT reporting.

2. General Blake, upon his return, asked me to look into the question raised by Admiral Taylor simply to set the record straight. He pointed out that he had, during the USIB discussion, taken care of General Carroll's point on para. 6. General Blake further remarked that he did not want any action taken to re-write the memorandum in the event that Admiral Taylor was right, since the Board had already:

a. Noted the NSA memorandum.

b. Agreed with the NSA member that no further legal or investigative action appeared warranted.

3. In checking with Admiral Taylor's staff (Y1, Y2 and Intelligence Plot) it became apparent that all of them were as mystified as I was as to where Admiral Taylor had gotten hold of this "message." The briefings given to Admiral Taylor prior to the USIB meeting were completely in line with the sense of our para. 5. All were based on a message from the Commander of USN467N, the SIGINT detachment on the Maddox (AGI No. 48861, 150515Z Aug) in which he listed those SIGINT reports which had provided advance warning of the North Vietnamese attack. The "message" cited by Admiral Taylor was not listed among them.

4. Later on I spoke to Commander Nutt, Intelligence Plot, ONI, who explained that Admiral Taylor had been referring to a chronology of events which he had prepared for him. Commander Nutt was aware of the

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fact that the message in question (from a North Vietnamese shore station to T-146) had not been broken out and reported by USN-27 until 022032H (1232Z) nearly 6½ hours after the attack had taken place. He had pointed out the error to Admiral Taylor who promised to call the Executive Secretary and "set the record straight." [redacted] called me and told me that Admiral Taylor had indeed called him, but had left the impression that he believed there was something to be said on both the NSA and the ONI sides of the issue. Although somewhat disappointed, I agreed with [redacted] that no further action was required in the way of an explanatory note to the minutes or a correction thereto.

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5. Attached hereto are copies of the relative messages.

[redacted]

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