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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

P.L. 86-36

Subj

TO : DDO (Mr. [redacted] /Mr. [redacted]

Serial: D4/SRE-016-75
DATE: 28 August 1975

FROM D4/SRE

SUBJECT: Tonkin Gulf Inquiry Key Questions/Document Request

Responses below relate to questions numbered similarly in the Church Committee staff request.

1. a. Key individuals. NSA individuals with knowledge of planning aspects of the 34-A and DeSoto programs are Dr. Louis Tordella, Milton Zaslow, Donald Oliver, David Gaddy, Delmar Lang, Fred Cole, Renee Jones, and William Gerhard. These individuals would have knowledge of communications intelligence measures taken in support of these programs. They did not plan, however, the 34-A or DeSoto missions themselves.

b. Coordination. Normally, NSA received advance information that 34-A or DeSoto operations would take place and used that information to adjust the SIGINT production process to support the operations.

2. a. Role of NSA in DeSoto patrols. NSA worked, ~~as noted already,~~ in an intelligence-support capacity. That is to say, NSA and associated field units obtained intelligence on North Vietnamese and Chinese military forces affecting the safety of the missions and providing a measure of the reaction, if any, of these forces to the U.S. missions.

b. Special communications unit aboard Maddox. Referred to as a "direct support unit" (DSU) or "supplemental radio detachment" (SUPRAD), the element in question was under the operational control of Maddox commander. The DSU emphasized intelligence collection which would yield information affecting the ship's safety. It also maintained communications with Naval Security Group, other associated shore-based units, and NSA in order to facilitate exchange of intelligence and technical information pertaining to the ship's mission.

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3. a. SWITCHBACK. No information available.

[redacted]

c. MAC/SOG's knowledge of DeSoto patrols. NSA has no evidence that MAC/SOG was or was not aware of the DESOTO schedules and routes. CINCPAC controlled DESOTO patrols; MAC/SOG, the 34-A operation.

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[redacted]

NSA has no specific information on this subject.

10. NSA reports/documents on DeSoto patrols of 1964. NSA has in some volume message traffic, reports with chronologies and resumes, and intelligence product relating to 1964 DeSoto patrols, including the one of 31 July. For the most part in microform, these will require some time for processing and reproduction.

11. Mission directives to Lt. [redacted] NSA believes it has both general and specific instructions/directives and is currently searching its microform files for them.

An NSA publication of 1969 (inclosure) gives in summary form NSA actions in support of 34-A and DESOTO operations. See the following pages of inclosure for additional information on subjects listed:

P.L. 86-36

DeSoto patrols	pp 50, 138
OPLAN 34-A and NSA's KIT KAT Support Plan	pp 110-113, 116, 119-20, 127-28, 134-35, 137

Bill Gerhard
W. D. Gerhard
D4, Staff Research Element

Incl:
Cryptologic History Series publication, In the Shadow of War (NSA, 1969)

cc: D4, Mr. [redacted]
SF