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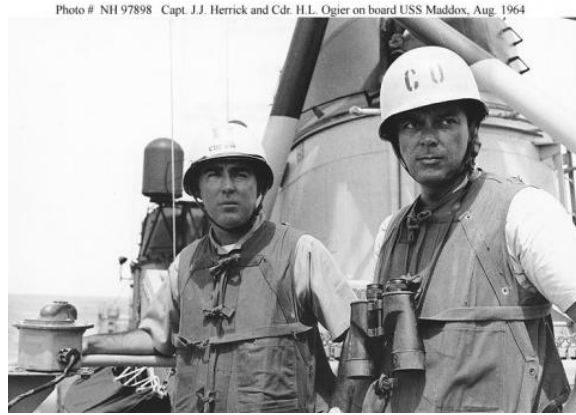
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Even the men involved in the alleged second Gulf of Tonkin incident, on 4 August 1964, doubted that there was really an attack. One of those men was John J. Herrick. The U.S. Naval Institute, in its February 2008 article entitled "[The Truth about Tonkin](#)," describes this photo (by PH3 White): "Navy Captain John J. Herrick (left), pictured with *Maddox* skipper Commander Herbert L. Ogier on board the destroyer, kept his superiors informed during the alleged battle with North Vietnamese PT boats on 4 August. But several hours later he forwarded his doubts about what had happened up the chain of command."

The National Archive's descriptive notes for LBJ's August 4th "Presidential Daily Diary" state that the President

...received word that American ships in the Gulf of Tonkin were under attack, presumably from the North Vietnamese. The President discussed the reported attack at a previously scheduled National Security Council meeting on Cyprus and at lunch with his senior foreign policy advisors where the decision was reached to respond with a forceful limited air attack. After clarifying conflicting reports about the attack, he met once again with the National Security Council and with the Congressional leadership about the Vietnam situation and the need for a Congressional resolution on the subject...Shortly after 11:30 p.m., on live television, the President issued a statement to the American public regarding Vietnam.

But what does the [actual diary for that date](#) show?

- LBJ had a 23-minute [meeting](#) with his National Security Council where the reported second attack was discussed.
- He also had a luncheon meeting with his senior foreign policy advisors which resulted in the decision to respond with a limited air attack. That [meeting](#) lasted 1 hour and 20 minutes.
- Immediately afterwards, the President met with Mrs. Johnson's "tea group," sent flowers to friends and [submitted](#) judicial nominations to the Senate.

[Later](#) in the day:

- The President met with various people;
- Returned phone calls; and
- Spent 22 minutes with his National Security Council regarding the Vietnam situation.
- He met with the Congressional leadership for 1½ hours, briefing them on Vietnam. The Administration wanted

a resolution from Congress giving LBJ power to respond to all North Vietnamese aggression with the force he deemed appropriate.

Just before midnight, the President told the American people about the second attack in a live, televised report. The next day, he addressed Congress.

Reviewing LBJ's actual diary prompts an interesting question. If North Vietnam had really commenced an unprovoked attack against American ships, requiring Congress to give the President extraordinary powers, why doesn't his official diary reflect that sense of urgency?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-SECOND-ATTACK-Pentagon-Papers>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-SECOND-ATTACK-Pentagon-Papers>

Media Stream



President Johnson - Gulf of Tonkin Address

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/President-Johnson-Gulf-of-Tonkin-Address>