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HOAX 3-7

NEW ORLEANS (UPI)--THE U.S. COAST GUARD SAID TUESDAY A HOAX MESSAGE WAS TRANSMITTED BY A COAST GUARDSMAN TO 22 UNITS ALONG THE GULF OF MEXICO DURING PRESIDENT NIXON'S CHINA VISIT TO THE EFFECT THAT NIXON HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED AND THAT WORLD WAR III HAD BEEN DECLARED BY VICE PRESIDENT SPIRO T. AGNEW.

IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY, THE COAST GUARD'S EIGHTH DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS IN NEW ORLEANS SAID, "A HOAX MESSAGE WAS TRANSMITTED ON AN INTRA-DISTRICT TELETYPE NET TO 22 UNITS OF THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT ON THE MORNING OF FEB. 27, 1972."

THE COAST GUARD SAID "THE GIST OF THE MESSAGE WAS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED AND THAT WORLD WAR III HAD BEEN DECLARED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT."

HOWEVER, A COAST GUARD SPOKESMAN SAID, "THE MESSAGE WAS IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED AS SPURIOUS AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE, VERIFIED, AND THE UNITS ON THE NET DE-ALERTED."

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT "IN VIEW OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF SENDING UNAUTHORIZED MESSAGES OF ANY NATURE ON THE COAST GUARD COMMUNICATIONS CIRCUITS AN INVESTIGATION WAS LAUNCHED TO IDENTIFY THE PERPETRATOR WHO WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ALLEGEDLY IDENTIFIED AS A WATCH-STANDBY AT A SMALL COAST GUARD STATION IN TEXAS."

AS A RESULT OF "HIS INEXPLICABLE ADMITTED BEHAVIOR IN COMMITTING SUCH A GRAVE OFFENSE," SAID THE SPOKESMAN "THE MAN IS PRESENTLY UNDERGOING MEDICAL EVALUATION."

HE SAID THAT "INVESTIGATION WAS REQUIRED BY THE UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE IS ALSO BEING CONDUCTED PRIOR TO INITIATING ANY CHARGES AGAINST THE ACCUSED."

THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT COMPRISES THE STATES OF NEW MEXICO, TEXAS, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA AND FLORIDA.

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