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Mayaguez Warning Delay

Washington

U.S. merchant ships were not warned for nearly 19 hours that the freighter Mayaguez had been captured by Cambodian naval vessels, the General Accounting Office says.

The Mayaguez was captured about 3:18 a.m. (EST) May 12, 1975, after Cambodian naval assaults on two other ships. The GAO said in a report released yesterday that the first warning to U.S. merchant

ships did not go to the Pacific until 9:27 p.m. that day.

The GAO said the first draft message warning ships to stay more than 12 nautical miles off Cambodia and its islands was ready by 10:30 a.m. but was not sent because the State Department director for Cambodia decided to delay it until after a National Security Council meeting scheduled for later in the afternoon.

Associated Press