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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. On 20 September, a USAF F-104 Starfighter on patrol over the Gulf of Tonkin developed navigational problems and subsequently was downed over the northern Hainan Island area of Communist China. There are indications that the plane was probably shot down, apparently by Chinese Navy jet fighters from Haikou Airfield. NCNA--the official Chinese News Agency--announced that a Chinese naval air unit shot down a US F-104 aircraft on 20 September over northern Hainan Island and that the pilot--Captain Philips E. Smith--has been captured.

2. According to information from USAF officials, Captain Smith was proceeding alone as a spare to join a MIG combat air patrol over the Tonkin Gulf when his aircraft developed compass troubles. Unable to find his flight or the aerial tanker, Captain Smith orbited several minutes over the Gulf and then proceeded toward the Hainan Island area. his plane was downed about 15 miles south of Haikou. Two USAF F-104s sent out to search for Captain Smith's aircraft collided over the bay near Da Nang while returning to base. Both pilots were subsequently picked up by a navy patrol boat; one pilot suffered minor injuries.

3. Peking's initial public response to the alleged shutdown followed standard lines, threatening only that if the US persisted in efforts to force war on China the Chinese people would "resolutely repulse the US aggressors and completely smash their schemes." The spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense quoted by NCNA called the incident "another and still more serious" provocation and cited previous alleged intrusions over Hainan last April and over Yunnan in July. He linked the latest "provocation" with alleged Indian attacks on Pakistan and intrusions across the Sino-Indian border--in particular an effort to provoke an armed clash on 19 September--as part of a master plan by the US to expand the war in Asia.

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