THE ATTACKS ON U.S. SHIPS IN THE GULF OF TONKIN
AND THE EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED DURING THE WEEK
AUGUST 2-8, 1964

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AMERICAN EMBASSY - TOKYO
THE ATTACKS IN THE TONKIN GULF AND RELATED EVENTS

(A Chronology)

August 2

0708 GMT (1508 Viet-Nam Time; 0308 Washington Time; 1608 Japan Time) -- The U.S. destroyer Maddox, on patrol in international waters about 30 nautical miles (56 kilometers) from the nearest land, reported an attack by three patrol torpedo boats. The destroyer opened defensive fire with 5-inch guns after three warning shots failed to slow down the attackers. Two of the PT boats fired torpedoes that missed. The U.S. carrier Ticonderoga sent four planes to provide air cover for the Maddox.

0721 GMT -- A 5-inch round from the Maddox directly hit a PT boat which stopped dead in the water. Ticonderoga aircraft made rocket and strafing attacks, damaging two PT boats. (See Documents I and II)

2230 GMT -- Secretary of State Rusk commented in New York: "The other side got a sting out of this. If they do it again, they'll get another sting."

August 3

1630 GMT (0030 VNT, Aug 4; 1230 WT; 0130 JT, Aug. 4) -- President Johnson announced that the U.S. patrol of international waters off North Viet-Nam had been doubled by addition of another destroyer. Directing that a combat air patrol be set up to protect the ships, the President told the patrolling ships and planes to attack and destroy any force which attacked them. (See Document III)

1645 GMT -- The State Department announced a formal protest was being made to the North Vietnamese regime and termed the incident an "unprovoked attack on an American ship in international waters." The Department warned that U.S. ships would continue to operate freely in international waters and would "take whatever measures are appropriate for their defense."

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August 4

1330 GMT (2130 VNT; 0930 WT, Aug. 4; 2230 JT) -- Maddox, on patrol in international waters about 65 nautical miles (120 kilometers) from the nearest land, reported observing unidentified surface vessels on radar. Aircraft from Ticonderoga arrived and commenced defensive patrol over the destroyers Maddox and C. Turner Joy.

1352 GMT -- Destroyers messaged they were under continuous torpedo attack and were firing in return.

1452 GMT -- Destroyers said they had evaded several torpedoes and had sunk two of the attacking craft.

1600 GMT -- U. S. destroyers reported no damage or casualties. Aircraft from Ticonderoga were illuminating area and firing on enemy boats.

1730 GMT -- Attacking craft broke off engagement and destroyers were directed to resume their patrols at daylight. (See Document IV)

2215 GMT -- President Johnson conferred with the National Security Council to discuss the attacks.

2245 GMT -- Mr. Johnson met with 16 Congressional leaders to give them a report on the Vietnamese attack. Congressmen also heard reports from Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

August 5

0340 GMT (1140 VNT; 2340 WT, Aug. 4; 1240 JT) -- President Johnson reported to the nation, announcing that limited U. S. air action was being taken, as he spoke, against torpedo boats and certain support facilities and bases in North Viet-Nam. He said the U. S. response to the North Vietnamese attack would be "limited and fitting" and that the United States still sought no wider war. (See Document V)

0355 GMT -- Adlai E. Stevenson, U. S. United Nations Representative, formally requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to "consider the serious situation created by deliberate attacks of the Hanoi regime on United States naval vessels in international waters."
0400 GMT -- Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara told a news conference that the United States as a precautionary measure was sending "substantial military reinforcements to Southeast Asia" in view of the unprovoked attacks on the U.S. destroyers. (See Document VI)

1300 GMT -- Mr. McNamara announced the results of 84 sorties by American planes in North Viet-Nam: four PT boat bases damaged, 25 patrol boats damaged or destroyed, and an oil storage depot supporting the boat bases 90 per cent demolished. Two U.S. aircraft were lost and two damaged. (See Document VII)

1500 GMT -- President Johnson in a speech at Syracuse University accused North Viet-Nam of "deliberate, willful and systematic aggression," and warned the Communists against any attempt to widen the aggression. He said, "There could be no peace by aggression, and no immunity from reply." (See Document VIII)

1900 GMT -- U.N. envoy Stevenson told a session of the Security Council that North Viet-Nam was guilty of "deliberate military aggression" against U.S. vessels in international waters. He said the Vietnamese attacks were part of a larger pattern designed to "subjugate the people of Southeast Asia to an empire ruled by means of force of arms, of rule of terror, or expansion by violence." (See Documents IX and X)

2200 GMT -- Leaders in the U.S. Congress introduced a resolution supporting President Johnson in any necessary steps to protect U.S. forces in the area and to assist free nations in Southeast Asia.

2330 GMT -- Secretary McNamara asked what would happen if another unprovoked attack was made against U.S. ships in the area, said, "our response will be firm, and, as President Johnson said, it will be limited and relevant to the aggressive actions of the North Vietnamese."

August 6

1300-1630 GMT (2100-0030 VNT, Aug. 6; 0800-1230 WT; 2200 Aug. 6 - 0130 Aug. 7 JT) -- Three key Congressional committees approved a resolution expressing unity of nation in support of Southeast Asia defense actions ordered by President Johnson (See Documents XI and XII)

1630 GMT -- Secretary of Defense McNamara told reporters that any escalation of the conflict in the area would be a decision for the Hanoi regime. (See Documents XIII and XIV)
August 7

1030 GMT (1830 VNT; 0630 WT Aug. 7; 1930 JT) -- Prime Minister Khanh decrees a state of emergency throughout South Viet-Nam to mobilize the country against Communist attack.

1700 GMT -- President Johnson names Henry Cabot Lodge to visit allied capitals to acquaint them with the Vietnamese situation.

1730 GMT -- U. S. Congress adopts a resolution supporting the President in "all necessary steps" to "repel any armed attack" against U. S. forces and "to prevent further aggression." (See Document XI)

1900 GMT -- The U. N. Security Council, meeting at U. S. request to consider the Viet-Nam situation, invites North Viet-Nam and the Republic of Viet-Nam to testify on Gulf of Tonkin clashes. North Viet-Nam subsequently turns down the invitation. (See Documents XV and XVI)

2100 GMT -- Secretary McNamara says U. S. announcement of its strikes on North Viet-Nam bases was intended to inform others of the limited nature of the attacks. Government leaders from countries around the world, including Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Viet-Nam, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea, express support for U. S. action. (See Document XVII)

2200 GMT -- U. S. officials say they see no signs of further overt action in the situation -- no sightings of Communist forces at sea, flights searching for targets, or significant troop movements.

August 8

1405 GMT (2205 VNT; 1005 WT; Aug. 8; 2305 JT) -- President Johnson says the situation remains serious, but without incident for previous 24 hours. He says the U. S. will remain "fully alert." He characterizes the Tonkin Gulf attacks against U. S. ships as "only part of a basic pattern of aggression already shown against South Viet-Nam and Laos. "Let me repeat again and again that in all our actions, our purpose is peace," he declares. He also says Ambassador Lodge may visit neutralist as well as allied capitals.

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DOCUMENT NO. I

TEXT OF AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE U.S. PACIFIC COMMAND
PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII, AUGUST 2, 1964

While on routine patrol in international waters at 4:08 P.M., Viet-Nam Time, the U.S. destroyer Maddox underwent an unprovoked attack by three PT type boats in Latitude 19-40 North, Longitude 106-34 East in the Tonkin Gulf. Attacking boats launched three torpedos and used 37 millimeter gunfire.

The Maddox answered with five-inch gunfire. Shortly thereafter four F8 aircraft from the USS Ticonderoga joined in defense of the Maddox, using Zuni rockets and 20 millimeter strafing attackers.

The PT's were driven off with one seen to be badly damaged and not moving. The other two were damaged and retreating slowly. No casualties or damage was sustained by the Maddox or the aircraft.

***
TEXT OF A CHRONOLOGY OF THE FIRST ATTACK
ISSUED BY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AUGUST 4, 1964

(All times are local times at destroyer's positions.)

10 A.M. August 2 -- Maddox reported observing an estimated 75 junks near her assigned patrol area off the North Viet-Nam coast. She reported changing her course in order to avoid the junk concentration.

2:40 P.M. August 2 -- Maddox reported she was being approached by the high-speed (estimated 45 to 50 knots) craft whose apparent intention was to conduct a torpedo attack and that she intended to open fire in self-defense if necessary.

3:08 P.M. August 2 -- Maddox reported she was being attacked by the three PT craft. She opened fire with her 5-inch battery after three warning shots failed to slow down the attackers.

3:08 P.M. August 2 -- The PT's continued their closing maneuvers and two of the PT's closed to 5,000 yards (4,500 meters), each firing one torpedo. The Maddox changed course in an evasive move and the two torpedoes passed close aboard on the starboard side (100 to 200 yards, 90 to 180 meters).

U. S. S. Ticonderoga (CVA-14) advised she was sending four already airborne F-8E's (Crusaders) with rockets and 20-millimeter ammunition to provide air cover for Maddox.

3:21 P.M. August 2 -- The third PT boat moved up to the beam of the Maddox and received a direct hit by a 5-inch round, and at the same time dropped a torpedo into the water which was not seen to run. Machinegun fire from the PT's was directed at the Maddox. However, there was no damage or injury to personnel. The Maddox continued in a southerly direction to join with the C. Turner Joy (DD951) as Ticonderoga aircraft commenced attacking the PT's. Zuni rocket runs and 20-millimeter strafing attacks were directed against two of the PT's and they were damaged. The third PT remained dead in the water after the direct hit by the Maddox. At 3:29 P.M., the aircraft broke off the engagement and escorted the Maddox towards South Viet-Nam waters. The C. Turner Joy joined with the Maddox and continued patrols in the area in international waters with carrier aircraft providing protective coverage.

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I have instructed the Navy (1) To continue the patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Viet-Nam, (2) To double the force by adding an additional destroyer to the one already on patrol, (3) To provide a combat air patrol over the destroyer, (4) To issue orders to the commanders of the combat aircraft and the two destroyers: (A) To attack any force which attacks them in international waters, (B) To attack with the objective not only of driving off the force but of destroying them. These instructions were conveyed yesterday (August 2) to the appropriate people, and they will be carried out.

***
(All times are local at the destroyer's position.)

After the first attack on the U.S.S. Maddox on Sunday, the Maddox joined with its sister destroyer the C. Turner Joy in the Gulf of Tonkin and resumed its patrol in international waters as directed by President Johnson. The patrol was uneventful during most of the daylight hours of Tuesday, August 4.

Late afternoon, August 4, the Maddox reported radar contact with unidentified surface vessels who were paralleling its track and the track of the Turner Joy.

7:40 P.M. August 4 -- The Maddox reported that from action being taken by the unidentified vessels, an attack by them appeared imminent. The Maddox was heading southeast near the center of the Gulf of Tonkin in international waters at approximately 65 miles, (104 kilometers) from nearest land.

8:36 P.M. August 4 -- The Maddox established new radar contact with two unidentified surface vessels and three unidentified aircraft. At this time, U.S. fighter aircraft were launched from the U.S.S. Ticonderoga to rendezvous with the Maddox and the Turner Joy to provide protection against possible attack from the unidentified vessels and aircraft, in accordance with the President's previously issued directives.

9:08 P.M. August 4 -- The Maddox reported that the unidentified aircraft had disappeared from its radar screen and that the surface vessels were remaining at a distance. The U.S. aircraft from the Ticonderoga arrived and commenced defensive patrol over the Maddox and the Turner Joy.

9:30 P.M. August 4 -- Additional vessels were observed on the Maddox radar, and these vessels began to close rapidly on the destroyer patrol at speeds in excess of 40 knots. The attacking craft continued to close rapidly from the west and south and the Maddox reported that their intentions were evaluated as hostile.

9:52 P.M. August 4 -- The destroyers reported they were under continuous torpedo attack and were engaged in defensive counterfire.
10:15 P.M. August 4 -- The destroyers reported that they had avoided torpedoes and had sunk one of the attacking craft.

10:42 P.M. August 4 -- The destroyers reported that they had evaded additional torpedoes and had sunk another of the attacking craft.

Other protective aircraft had arrived overhead, but weather and darkness were hampering their capabilities.

10:52 P.M. August 4 -- The Maddox reported that the destroyers were again under attack.

Midnight -- The patrol reported that, even though torpedoes had been fired at them, they had suffered no hits or casualties and that the defensive aircraft from the Ticonderoga were illuminating the area and attacking the enemy service craft.

12:32 A.M. August 5 -- The patrol reported that an additional enemy craft was believed to have been sunk and that low ceilings continued to hamper the aircrafts' operations.

12:54 A.M. August 5 -- The Turner Joy reported that during the engagement, in addition to the torpedo attack, she was fired upon by automatic weapons while being illuminated by searchlights.

1:30 A.M. August 5 -- The destroyers reported that the attacking craft had apparently broken off the engagement.

The Maddox and Turner Joy were directed to resume their patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin at daylight on the 5th of August.

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My Fellow Americans:

As President and Commander in Chief, it is my duty to the American people to report that renewed hostile actions against U.S. ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action in reply.

The initial attack on the destroyer Maddox, on August 2, was repeated today by a number of hostile vessels attacking two U.S. destroyers with torpedoes. The destroyers, and supporting aircraft, acted at once on the orders I gave after the initial act of aggression. We believe at least two of the attacking boats were sunk. There were no U.S. losses.

The performance of commanders and crews in this engagement is in the highest tradition of the United States Navy.

But repeated acts of violence against the armed forces of the United States must be met not only with alert defense, but with positive reply. That reply is being given as I speak to you tonight. Air action is now in execution against gun boats and certain supporting facilities of North Viet-Nam which have been used in these hostile operations.

In the larger sense, this new act of aggression, aimed directly at our own forces, again brings home to all of us in the United States the importance of the struggle for peace and security in Southeast Asia. Aggression by terror against the peaceful villagers of South Viet-Nam has now been joined by open
aggression on the high seas against the United States of America. The determi-
nation of all Americans to carry out our full commitment to the people and
Government of South Viet-Nam will be redoubled by this outrage.

Yet our response, for the present, will be limited and fitting. We
Americans know, although others appear to forget, the risks of spreading
conflict -- we still seek no wider war.

I have instructed the Secretary of State to make this position totally clear
to friends, to adversaries, and indeed to all. I have instructed Ambassador
Stevenson to raise this matter immediately and urgently before the Security
Council of the United Nations.

Finally, I have today met with the leaders of both parties in the Congress
of the United States, and I have informed them that I shall immediately request
the Congress to pass a resolution making it clear that our Government is
united in its determination to take all necessary measures in support of freedom,
and in defense of peace, in Southeast Asia. I have been given encouraging
assurance by these leaders of both parties that such a resolution will be
promptly introduced, freely and expeditiously debated, and passed with over-
whelming support. And just a few minutes ago I was able to reach Senator
Goldwater and I am glad to report he has expressed his support of the statement
I am making tonight.

It is a solemn responsibility to have to order even limited military
action by forces whose overall strength is as vast and as awesome as those
of the United States of America. But it is my considered conviction, shared
throughout your Government, that firmness in the right is indispensable today
for peace. That firmness will always be measured. Its mission is peace.

***
The President told the nation earlier tonight that the United States would take appropriate action in view of the unprovoked attacks in international waters on U.S. naval vessels by torpedo boats belonging to North Viet-Nam.

I can tell you some of the action that has already been undertaken. U.S. naval aircraft from the carriers Ticonderoga and Constellation in the Bay of Tonkin area where our destroyers have undergone two deliberate attacks by the North Vietnamese have already initiated air strikes against the bases from which these PT boats have operated. Our naval aircraft have conducted strikes against certain other targets directly supporting the operation of the PT boats.

Again, in view of the unprovoked and deliberate attacks in international waters on U.S. naval vessels, the United States has taken the precaution of moving substantial military reinforcements to Southeast Asia. It is also making replacement deployments to the Western Pacific from the continental United States.

It is not wise at the moment to identify or give the detailed strength of these movements, but I can assure you that they are appropriate to the provocation.

I would like to review, in chronological order, the two unprovoked attacks on our vessels as they were initiated by the North Vietnamese, not only on Sunday, August 2, but again today, Tuesday, August 4. (See Documents II and IV.)

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(Secretary McNamara) As you know, on August 2nd, and again on August 4th, North Vietnamese surface vessels attacked U.S. destroyers operating on routine patrol in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.

In retaliation for this unprovoked attack on the high seas, our forces have struck the bases used by the North Vietnamese patrol craft. During the night, 64 attack sorties were launched from the U.S. carriers Ticonderoga and Constellation against the four North Vietnamese patrol bases and certain support facilities associated with those bases.

The points are located on this map showing the Gulf of Tonkin, South China, North Viet-Nam. The first base is at Hon Gay in North Viet-Nam; the second at Loc Chao; the third at Phuc Loi; the fourth at Quang Khe; and the fifth strike was against the Vinh oil storage depot, which is associated with the Swatow torpedo base.

The oil storage depot, which contains 14 tanks, approximately 10 per cent of the total petroleum storage capacity of North Viet-Nam, was 90 per cent destroyed. Smoke was observed rising to 14,000 feet. In addition to the damage to the torpedo boat bases and their support facilities, approximately 25 of the boats were damaged or destroyed.

Two of our aircraft were lost, two of our aircraft were damaged, all others have been recovered safely on the carriers. The destroyers Maddox and Turner Joy, which have been operating on routine patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin, have resumed their patrol operations in international waters.

Last night I announced that moves were underway to reinforce our forces in the Pacific area. These moves include the following actions: first, an attack carrier group has been transferred from the First Fleet on the Pacific coast to the Western Pacific. Secondly, interceptor and fighter bomber aircraft have been moved into South Viet-Nam. Thirdly, fighter bomber aircraft have been moved into Thailand. Fourthly, interceptor and fighter bomber squadrons have been transferred from the United States into advance bases in the Pacific. Fifthly, antisubmarine task force group has been moved into the South China Sea. And finally, selected Army and Marine forces have been alerted and readied for movement.
I want to emphasize that the damage report which I gave to you is based on preliminary reports received shortly after the completion of operations.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, were the planes that we lost, the two planes, downed by ground fire, and also, was there any air action from North Viet-Nam?

(The Secretary) The two planes we lost were downed by anti-aircraft fire. There was no enemy air reaction.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, can you tell us the height of the attack? How low did they come?

(The Secretary) Generally, the strikes were at low level.

(Question) And the local times, Mr. Secretary?

(The Secretary) The local times ranged from on the order of noon to 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

(Question) Can you tell us, sir, how long the attack --

(The Secretary) These are local Vietnamese times.

(Question) Can you tell us how long the entire strike lasted?

(The Secretary) Roughly four to five hours.

(Question) How was the weather?

(The Secretary) Bad.

(Question) Rainy?

(The Secretary) Low ceiling.

(Question) What types of anti-aircraft fire?

(The Secretary) There was heavy anti-aircraft fire over several of the targets.

(Question) Missiles?
(The Secretary) Guns rather than missiles.

(Question) Small caliber or big caliber?

(The Secretary) I can't tell you the caliber other than it was heavy anti-aircraft fire.

(Question) Can you tell us at which of these places the planes were downed?

(The Secretary) No, I can't.

(Question) What was the question?

(The Secretary) The question was at which point were the two aircraft lost. I can simply say that the heaviest anti-aircraft fire was received at Hon Gay, the most northerly of the bases attacked.

(Question) Is that also the largest?

(The Secretary) It is the largest; yes.

(Question) At the torpedo bases themselves, can you describe the damage itself as light or heavy?

(The Secretary) It is too early to say. We will have to wait until the pilots' reports have been assessed.

(Question) And the number of American casualties?

(The Secretary) Two. Two pilots were lost, one in each of the two downed aircraft.

(Question) Are you giving out their names?

(The Secretary) Not until their nearest of kin have been notified.

(Question) That will be sometime today?

(The Secretary) Yes, it will.

(Question) Were they picked up?
(The Secretary) We believe they were lost.

(Question) At sea or land?

(The Secretary) At sea.

(Question) Will we take reconnaissance missions over there?

(The Secretary) We will take such action as is necessary to determine the results of our operations.

(Question) How much of the petroleum supply did you say?

(The Secretary) Approximately 10 per cent of the petroleum capacity of North Viet-Nam is located at Vinh, the point that was struck. Approximately 90 per cent of that 10 per cent was destroyed.

(Question) Are these the only four torpedo boat bases?

(The Secretary) These four are the main bases. With a coastline such as this, of course, the boats occasionally use other areas for staging areas.

(Question) Can you tell us what percentage it is of their total fleet?

(The Secretary) No, I can't, except that it is a very substantial percentage.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, how do you explain these attacks?

(The Secretary) I can't explain them. They were unprovoked. As I told you last night, our vessels were clearly in international waters. Our vessels, when attacked, were operating in this area, roughly 60 miles off of the North Vietnamese coast.

(Question) There have been reports that South Vietnamese vessels were showing or taking some sort of action against North Viet-Nam approximately at this time.

(The Secretary) No, to the best of my knowledge, there were no operations during the period I was describing last night.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, what orders now for either the 7th Fleet or for these particular units of the 7th Fleet?
(The Secretary) Our orders to the commanders are to continue their patrols, to protect themselves against aggression on the high seas with whatever force is necessary.

(Question) Has there been any word --

(Question) Mr. Secretary, would you say this will be all that will be necessary, that the attack has met its objectives?

(The Secretary) Whether this is all that is necessary depends entirely on the North Vietnamese.

(Question) Do you think the air strike accomplished its objectives?

(The Secretary) The air strike very clearly made clear to the North Vietnamese our intention to maintain our right to operate on the high seas. That was the objective. I think that has been accomplished.

(Question) Wasn't the objective to wipe out the PT boat fleet?

(The Secretary) Our objective was to deter the PT boat fleet from further attacks on our vessels. I believe we have accomplished that.

(Question) Were any attempts made, Mr. Secretary, to go after the anti-aircraft batteries?

(The Secretary) There were no actions against the anti-aircraft batteries. The attack was against the patrol boat bases and the associated facilities.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, last night there were three Bogies reported, three unidentified aircraft. Did we ever find out in which direction they came from?

(The Secretary) We have no identification on those aircraft. They did not participate in the attacks on our vessels.

(Question) Sir, are there villages or towns adjacent to or linked up with these bases?

(The Secretary) There were no civilian centers close to the bases which were attacked last night.
(Question) Mr. Secretary, could you give us the estimate of how many per cent of the North Vietnamese patrol boat fleet has been destroyed or damaged?

(The Secretary) No, I can't estimate for you the exact per cent destroyed or damaged, other than to say that it was a very substantial percentage of their fleet.

One more question.

(Question) From what you say, there are no further actions of this kind going on at the moment, or planned. Is that correct?

(The Secretary) No operations are being carried on by our forces at the present time, other than the continuation of the routine patrol activities of the Turner Joy and the Maddox, the two destroyers which have been operating in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.

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On this occasion, it is fitting that we are meeting to dedicate this new Center to better understanding among all men. For that is my purpose in speaking now.

Last night I spoke to the people of this nation.

This morning I speak to the people of all nations -- so they may understand without mistake our purposes in actions we have been required to take.

On August 2, the United States destroyer Maddox was attacked on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin by hostile vessels of the Government of North Viet-Nam.

On August 4, that attack was repeated in those same waters against two of our destroyers.

The attacks were deliberate.

The attacks were unprovoked.

The attacks have been answered.

Throughout last night and in the last 12 hours, air units of the United States 7th Fleet have sought out the hostile vessels and certain of their supporting facilities. Appropriate armed action has been taken against them.
The United States is now asking that this be brought immediately -- and urgently -- before the Security Council of the United Nations.

We welcome -- and we invite -- the scrutiny of all men who seek peace, for peace is the only purpose of the course we pursue.

The Gulf of Tonkin may be distant.

But none can be detached about what has happened there.

Aggression -- deliberate, willful and systematic aggression -- has unmasked its face to the entire world. The world remembers -- the world must never forget -- that aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed.

We of the United States have not forgotten.

That is why we have answered this aggression with action.

America's course is not precipitate.

It is not without long provocation.

For 10 years, American Presidents and the American people have been actively concerned with threats to the peace and security of the peoples of Southeast Asia from the Communist Government of North Viet-Nam.

President Eisenhower sought -- and President Kennedy sought -- the same objectives I still seek:

That the governments of Southeast Asia honor the international agreements which apply in the area.

That those governments leave each other alone.

That they resolve their differences peacefully.

That they devote their talents to bettering the life of their peoples by working against poverty and disease and ignorance.

In 1954 we made our position clear toward Viet-Nam.
In June of that year, we stated we "would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the (1954) agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security."

In September of that year, we signed the Manila pact on which our participation in SEATO is based. That pact recognized that aggression by means of armed attack on South Viet-Nam would endanger the peace and safety of the nations signing that solemn agreement.

In 1962 we made our position clear toward Laos.

We signed the Declaration of Neutrality of Laos. That accord provided for the withdrawal of all foreign forces -- and respect for the neutrality and independence of that country.

The agreements of 1954 and 1962 were also signed by the Government of North Viet-Nam.

In 1954 that government pledged it would "respect the territory under the military control of the other party and engage in no hostile act against the other party."

In 1962 that government pledged that it would "not introduce into the Kingdom of Laos foreign troops or military personnel."
That government also pledged that it would "not use the territory of the Kingdom of Laos for interference in the internal affairs of other countries."

That Government of North Viet-Nam is now willfully and systematically violating those agreements of 1954 and 1962.

To the south, it is engaged in aggression against the Republic of Viet-Nam.

To the west, it is engaged in aggression against the Kingdom of Laos.

To the east, it has now struck out on the high seas in an act of aggression against the United States of America.

There can be, there must be no doubt about the policy, no doubt about the purpose.

So there can be no doubt about the responsibilities of men and nations devoted to peace.
Peace cannot be assured merely by assuring the safety of the United States destroyer Maddox -- or other vessels of other flags.

Peace requires that the existing agreements in the area be honored.

Peace requires that we and all our friends stand firm against the present aggressions of the Government of North Viet-Nam.

The Government of North Viet-Nam is today flouting the will of the world for peace. The world is challenged to make its will against war known and known clearly -- felt and felt decisively.

To our friends of the Atlantic alliance, let me say this. The challenge we face in Southeast Asia today is the same challenge we have faced with courage and met with strength -- in Greece and Turkey, in Berlin and Korea, in Lebanon and Cuba.

To any who may be tempted to support -- or to widen -- the present aggression, I say this. There is no threat to any peaceful power from the United States of America. But there can be no peace by aggression, and no immunity from reply. That is what is meant by the actions taken yesterday.

Finally, to ally and adversary alike, I would say this about the United States itself.

Let no friend needlessly fear -- and no foe vainly hope -- that this is a nation divided in this election year. Our free elections -- our full and free debate -- are America's strength, not America's weakness.

There are no parties -- there is no partisanship -- when our peace or the peace of the world is imperiled by aggressors in any part of the world.

We are one nation united and indivisible.

United and indivisible we shall remain.

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I have asked for this urgent meeting to bring to the attention of the Security Council acts of deliberate aggression by the Hanoi regime against naval units of the United States.

Naval vessels of my Government on routine operations in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin, have been subjected to deliberate and repeated armed attacks. We therefore have found it necessary to take defensive measures.

The major facts about these incidents were announced last night by the President of the United States and communicated to other governments at the same time I was instructed to request this meeting. I shall recount these facts for you, Mr. President, in chronological order so that all the members may have all the information available to my Government.

At 8:08 A.M. Greenwich Meridian Time, August 2, 1964, the United States destroyer Maddox was on routine patrol in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin, proceeding in a southeasterly direction away from the coast about 30 miles at sea from the mainland of North Viet-Nam.

The Maddox was approached by three high-speed North Vietnamese torpedo boats in attack formation. When it was evident that these torpedo boats intended to take offensive action, the Maddox, in accordance with naval practice, fired three warning shots across the bows of the approaching vessels. At approximately the same time, the aircraft carrier Ticonderoga, which was also in international waters and had been alerted to the impending
attack, sent out four aircraft to provide cover for the Maddox, the pilots being under orders not to fire unless they or the Maddox was fired upon first.

Two of the attacking craft fired torpedoes which the Maddox evaded by changing course. All three attacking vessels directed machine-gun fire at the Maddox. One of the attacking vessels approached for close attack and was struck by fire from the Maddox. After the attack was broken off the Maddox continued on a southerly course in international waters.

Now, Mr. President, clearly this was a deliberate armed attack against a naval unit of the United States Government on patrol on the high seas -- almost 30 miles (48 kilometers) off the mainland.

Nevertheless, my Government did its utmost to minimize the explosive potential of this flagrant attack in the hopes that this might be an isolated or uncalculated action. There was local defensive fire. The United States was not drawn into hasty response.

On August 3, the United States took steps to convey to the Hanoi regime a note calling attention to this aggression, stating that United States ships would continue to operate freely on the high seas in accordance with the rights guaranteed by international law, and warning the authorities in Hanoi of the "grave consequences which would inevitably result from any further unprovoked offensive military action against United States forces." This notification was in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva accords.

Our hopes that this was an isolated incident did not last long. At 2:35 P.M. Greenwich Meridian Time August 4, when it was nighttime in the Gulf of Tonkin the destroyers Maddox and C. Turner Joy were again subjected to an armed attack by an undetermined number of motor torpedo boats of the North Vietnamese Navy. This time the American vessels were 65 miles (104 kilometers) from shores twice as far out on the high seas as on the occasion of the previous attack. This time numerous torpedoes were fired. The attack lasted for over two hours.

There no longer could be any shadow of doubt that this was a planned, deliberate military aggression against vessels lawfully present in international waters. One could only conclude that this was the work of authorities dedicated to the use of force to achieve their objectives regardless of the consequences.
My Government therefore determined to take positive but limited and relevant measures to secure its naval units against further aggression. Last night aerial strikes were thus carried out against North Vietnamese torpedo boats and their support facilities. This action was limited in scale -- its only targets being the weapons and facilities against which we had been forced to defend ourselves. Our fervent hope is that the point has now been made that acts of armed aggression are not to be tolerated in the Gulf of Tonkin any more than they are to be tolerated anywhere else.

I want to emphasize that the action we have taken is a limited and measured response fitted precisely to the attack that produced it and that the developments of additional U.S. forces to Southeast Asia are designed solely to deter further aggression. This is a single action designed to make unmistakably clear that the United States cannot be diverted by military attack from its obligations to help its friends establish and protect their independence. Our naval units are continuing their routine patrolling on the high seas with orders to protect themselves with all appropriate means against any further aggression. As President Johnson said last night, "we still seek no wider war."

Mr. President, let me repeat that the United States vessels were in international waters when they were attacked.

Let me repeat that freedom of the seas is guaranteed under long-accepted international law applying to all nations alike.

Let me repeat that these vessels took no belligerent actions of any kind until they were subject to armed attack.

And let me say once more that the action they took in self defense is the right of all nations and is fully within the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The acts of aggression by the North Vietnamese in the Gulf of Tonkin make no sense whatsoever standing alone. They defy rational explanation except as part of a larger pattern with a larger purpose. As isolated events, the kidnapping of village officials in the Republic of South Viet-Nam makes no sense either. Neither does the burning of a schoolhouse -- or the sabotage of an irrigation project -- or the murder of a medical worker -- or the random bomb thrown into a crowd of innocent people sitting in a cafe.
All these wanton acts of violence and destruction fit into the larger pattern of what has been going on in Southeast Asia for the past decade and a half. So does the arming of terrorist gangs in South Viet-Nam by the regimes in Hanoi and Peking. So does the infiltration of armed personnel to make war against the legitimate government of that nation. So does the fighting in Laos -- and all the acts of subversion -- and all the propaganda -- and the sabotage of the international machinery established to keep the peace by the Geneva agreements -- and the deliberate, systematic, and flagrant violations of those agreements by two regimes which signed them and which by all tenets of decency, law, and civilized practice are bound by their provisions.

The attempt to sink United States destroyers in international waters is much more spectacular than the attempt to murder the mayor of a village in his bed at night. But they are both part of the pattern, and the pattern is designed to subjugate the people of Southeast Asia to an empire ruled by means of force of arms, of rule by terror, of expansion by violence.

Mr. President, it is only in this larger view that we can discuss intelligently the matter that we have brought to this Council.

In his statement last night, President Johnson concluded by emphasizing that the mission of the United States is peace. Under the explicit instructions of President Johnson, I want to repeat that assurance in the Security Council this afternoon: our mission is peace.

We hoped that the peace settlement in 1954 would lead to peace in Viet-Nam. We hoped that that settlement, and the supplementary Geneva accords of 1962, would lead to peace in Laos. Communist governments have tried aggression before, and have failed. Each time the lesson has had to be learned anew.

We are dealing here with a regime that has not yet learned the lesson that aggression does not pay, cannot be sustained, and will always be thrown back by people who believe, as we do, that people want freedom and independence, not subjection and the role of satellite in a modern empire.

In Southeast Asia, we want nothing more, and nothing less, that the assured and guaranteed independence of the peoples of the area. We are in Southeast Asia to help our friends preserve their own opportunity to be free of imported terror, alien assassination, managed by the North Viet-Nam Communists based in Hanoi and backed by the Chinese Communists from Peking.
Two months ago, when we were discussing in this Council the problems created on the Cambodia-South Viet-Nam frontier by the Communist Viet Cong, I defined our peace aims in Southeast Asia. I repeat them today:

"There is a very easy way to restore order in Southeast Asia. There is a very simple, safe way to bring about the end of the United States military aid to the Republic of Viet-Nam.

"Let all foreign troops withdraw from Laos. Let all states in that area make, and abide by the simple decision to leave their neighbors alone. Stop the secret subversion of other people's independence. Stop the clandestine and illegal transit of national frontiers. Stop the export of revolution and the doctrine of violence. Stop the violations of the political agreements reached at Geneva for the future of Southeast Asia.

"The people of Laos want to be left alone.

"The people of Viet-Nam want to be left alone.

"The people of Cambodia want to be left alone.

"When their neighbors decide to leave them alone -- as they must -- there will be no fighting in Southeast Asia and no need for American advisers to leave their homes to help these peoples resist aggression. Any time that decision can be put in enforceable terms, my Government will be only too happy to put down the burden that we have been sharing with those determined to preserve their independence.

"Until such assurances are forthcoming, we shall stand for the independence of free peoples in Southeast Asia as we have elsewhere."

That is what I said to this Council in May. That is what I repeat to this Council in August.

When the political settlements freely negotiated at the conference tables in Geneva are endorsed, the independence of Southeast Asia will be guaranteed. When the peace agreements reached long ago are made effective, peace will return to Southeast Asia and military power can be withdrawn.

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United Nations -- Under the United Nations Charter every nation has the right to defend itself against armed attack, such as the United States did when its naval vessels were attacked by Communist North Vietnamese torpedo boats.

Article 51 of the Charter reads:

"Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."
To the Congress of the United States:

Last night I announced to the American people that the North Vietnamese regime had conducted further deliberate attacks against U.S. naval vessels operating in international waters, and that I had therefore directed air action against gun boats and supporting facilities used in these hostile operations. This air action has now been carried out with substantial damage to the boats and facilities. Two U.S. aircraft were lost in the action.

After consultation with the leaders of both parties in the Congress, I further announced a decision to ask the Congress for a resolution expressing the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in Southeast Asia.

These latest actions of the North Vietnamese regime have given a new and grave turn to the already serious situation in Southeast Asia. Our commitments in that area are well known to the Congress. They were first made in 1954 by President Eisenhower. They were further defined in the Southeast Asia collective defense treaty approved by the Senate in February 1955.

This treaty with its accompanying protocol obligates the United States and other members to act in accordance with their constitutional processes to meet Communist aggression against any of the parties or protocol states.

Our policy in Southeast Asia has been consistent and unchanged since 1954. I summarized it on June 2 in four simple propositions:

1. America keeps her word. Here as elsewhere, we must and shall honor our commitments.

2. The issue is the future of Southeast Asia as a whole. A threat to any nation in that region is a threat to all, and a threat to us.
3. Our purpose is peace. We have no military, political or territorial ambitions in the area.

4. This is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity. Our military and economic assistance to South Viet-Nam and Laos in particular has the purpose of helping these countries to repel aggression and strengthen their independence.

The threat to the free nations of Southeast Asia has long been clear. The North Vietnamese regime has constantly sought to take over South Viet-Nam and Laos. This Communist regime has violated the Geneva accords for Viet-Nam. It has systematically conducted a campaign of subversion, which includes the direction, training, and supply of personnel and arms for the conduct of guerrilla warfare in South Vietnamese territory. In Laos, the North Vietnamese regime has maintained military forces, used Laotian territory for infiltration into South Viet-Nam, and most recently carried out combat operations -- all in direct violation of the Geneva agreements of 1962.

In recent months, the actions of the North Vietnamese regime have become steadily more threatening. In May, following new acts of Communist aggression in Laos, the United States undertook reconnaissance flights over Laotian territory, at the request of the Government of Laos. These flights had the essential mission of determining the situation in territory where Communist forces were preventing inspection by the International Control Commission. When the Communists attacked these aircraft, I responded by furnishing escort fighters with instructions to fire when fired upon. Thus, these latest North Vietnamese attacks on our naval vessels are not the first direct attack on armed forces of the United States.

As President of the United States, I have concluded that I should now ask the Congress, on its part, to join in affirming the national determination that all such attacks will be met, and that the U.S. will continue in its basic policy of assisting the free nations of the area to defend their freedom.

As I have repeatedly made clear, the United States intends no rashness, and seeks no wider war. We must make it clear to all that the United States is united in its determination to bring about the end of Communist subversion and aggression in the area. We seek the full and effective restoration of the international agreements signed in Geneva in 1954, with respect to South Viet-Nam, and again at Geneva in 1962, with respect to Laos.
I recommend a resolution expressing the support of the Congress for all necessary action to protect our armed forces and to assist nations covered by the SEATO treaty. At the same time, I assure the Congress that we shall continue readily to explore any avenues of political solution that will effectively guarantee the removal of Communist subversion and the preservation of the independence of the nations of the area.

The resolution could well be based upon similar resolutions enacted by the Congress in the past -- to meet the threat to Formosa in 1955, to meet the threat to the Middle East in 1957, and to meet the threat in Cuba in 1962. It could state in the simplest terms the resolve and support of the Congress for action to deal appropriately with attacks against our armed forces and to defend freedom and preserve peace in Southeast Asia in accordance with the obligations of the United States under the Southeast Asia treaty. I urge the Congress to enact such a resolution promptly and thus to give convincing evidence to the aggressive Communist nations, and to the world as a whole, that our policy in Southeast Asia will be carried forward -- and that the peace and security of the area will be preserved.

The events of this week would in any event have made the passage of a Congressional resolution essential. But there is an additional reason for doing so at a time when we are entering on three months of political campaigning. Hostile nations must understand that in such a period the United States will continue to protect its national interests, and that in these matters there is no division among us.

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Following is the text of the resolution, introduced August 5 in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, expressing Congressional support for President Johnson's decisions on Southeast Asia:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled;

Whereas, naval units of the Communist regime in Viet-Nam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace;

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Whereas, these attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Viet-Nam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom;

Whereas, the United States is assisting the peoples of Southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desire only that these peoples should be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled:

The Congress approve and supports the determination of the President, as Commander-in-Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

Sec. 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia collective defense treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia collective defense treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions, created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress.

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TEXT OF A STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN R. WICK
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS AND
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES, AUGUST 6, 1954

The immediate occasion for this resolution is of course the North Vietnamese attacks on our naval vessels, operating in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin, on August 2nd and August 4th.

However, it is obvious that these attacks were not an isolated event but are related directly to the aggressive posture of North Viet-Nam and to the policy that the United States has been pursuing in assisting the free nations of Southeast Asia and particularly South Viet-Nam and Laos, to defend themselves against Communist aggression, and thus to preserve the peace of the area.

When Indochina was divided and the independent states of South Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia were created under the conditions of the Geneva accords of 1954, it was at once clear that in the face of the North Vietnamese threat South Viet-Nam and Laos could not maintain their independence without outside assistance. The Government of South Viet-Nam turned to the United States for such assistance, and President Eisenhower in December 1954 made the decision that it should be furnished, stating that our purpose was to "assist the Government of Viet-Nam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means."

In the fall of 1954, Secretary Dulles negotiated, and the Senate in early 1955 consented to, the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, sometimes known as the Manila pact. This treaty provided for the collective defense of the parties to this treaty -- Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. It provided further that the protection of the treaty should extend, under an annexed protocol, to the territory of South Viet-Nam and to Laos and Cambodia.
I do not need to review for you the subsequent history of North Vietnamese efforts to subvert and conquer South Viet-Nam and to do the same in Laos. Having found that South Viet-Nam would not collapse of itself but was on the contrary making remarkable progress, Hanoi in 1959 initiated a systematic campaign of terror and subversion in South Viet-Nam, directed and supplied with key personnel and equipment from the North. By 1961, the situation had reached a critical point and the United States greatly increased its advisory and supporting assistance to the Government of South Viet-Nam.

Despite this assistance, the task of countering the extensive Viet Cong effort remains a long and arduous one, and as you know we have moved within the last two weeks to further increase our support while recognizing always that the struggle in South Viet-Nam must essentially be the responsibility of the South Vietnamese themselves.

In Laos, the agreements reached at Geneva in 1962 have been consistently violated by Hanoi and in May of this year the situation took on a more critical character when a Communist military offensive drove neutralist forces from the area of the Plain of Jars they had held in 1962. Our response to these events, the provision of additional T-28's to the Government of Laos and the carrying out of reconnaissance flights, with the incidents resulting therefrom, are well known to you.

The present attacks, then, are no isolated event. They are part and parcel of a continuing Communist drive to conquer South Viet-Nam, control or conquer Laos, and thus weaken and eventually dominate and conquer other free nations of Southeast Asia. One does not need to spell out a "domino theory;" it is enough to recognize the true nature of the Communist doctrine of world revolution and the militant support that Hanoi and Peiping are giving to that doctrine in Southeast Asia.

**U.S. Policy and Objectives**

Although the United States did not itself sign the Geneva accords of 1954, Under Secretary Walter Bedell Smith made a formal statement that the United States:

"Would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security."
We have repeatedly made clear that the independence and security provided for South Viet-Nam under those accords was a satisfactory status for South Viet-Nam. All that is needed, as I have myself often said, is for Hanoi and Peiping to leave their neighbors alone.

The same is true with respect to the 1962 accords for Laos. These provided a reasonable arrangement for the status of Laos, and what is needed, again, is simply that the Communist side should honor the commitments it undertook.

Above all, there can be no doubt of United States objectives for these nations and for the area as a whole. Here, as elsewhere, we believe that nations are entitled to remain free and to develop as they see fit. The United States has no military, territorial, or political ambitions for itself in Southeast Asia. We seek only the restoration of peace and the removal of Communist subversion and aggression.

Essentially, the outcome of this conflict, and the course of events in the area as a whole, is up to the Communist side. It has the option of accepting the freedom and independence of neighboring nations, or of continuing its aggressive tactics. For our part, as President Johnson stated on June 23: "The United States intends no rashness, and seeks no wider war. But the United States is determined to use its strength to help those who are defending themselves against terror and aggression. We are a people of peace -- but not of weakness or timidity."

Purpose of the Resolution

This, then is the background of the resolution before you. We have never doubted the support of the American people for the policies that have been followed through three Administrations over a period of a decade. But in the face of the heightened aggression on the Communist side, exemplified by these latest North Vietnamese attacks, it has seemed clearly wise to seek in the most emphatic form a declaration of Congressional support both for the defense of our armed forces against similar attacks and for the carrying forward of whatever steps may become necessary to assist the free nations covered by the Southeast Asia treaty.

We cannot tell what steps may in the future be required to meet Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. The unity and determination of the American people, through their Congress, should be declared in terms so firm that they cannot possibly be mistaken by other nations. The world has learned over 50 years of history that aggression is invited if there is doubt about the response. Let us leave today's aggressors in no doubt whatever.
I now turn to the specifics of the resolution before you.

The Preamble, I believe, speaks for itself. It spells out in the simplest and shortest terms possible the fact of North Vietnamese attacks, their relation to the over-all campaign of aggression by North Viet-Nam, and the purposes and objectives of the United States in Southeast Asia.

As to the operative sections of the resolution, Section 1 declares the approval and support of the Congress for actions, in response to armed attack on United States forces, which the President has the authority and obligation to take in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief.

Turning next to Section 2 of the draft resolution, let me make clear at the outset what the resolution does not embrace. It does not cover action to assist any nation not a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization or a protocol state. It does not cover any action in support of a nation unless such nation requests it. It does not cover any action to resist aggression that is not Communist in origin. The Southeast Asia treaty includes a United States understanding that is directed solely against "Communist aggression."

The language, "to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force", is similar to the authority embraced in the Formosa resolution of 1955, the Middle East resolution of 1957, and the Cuba resolution of 1962. Copies of each of these have been made available to you for comparative purposes. The Formosa resolution authorized the President "to employ the armed forces of the United States". The Middle East resolution stated that the United States was "prepared to use armed forces". The nearest parallel to the language of the present resolution is in the first clause of the Cuba resolution, that the United States is "determined... to prevent by whatever means may be necessary, including the use of arms", Cuban subversive activities extending to any part of the hemisphere.

I shall not take your time this morning to review the constitutional aspects of resolutions of this character. I believe it to be the generally accepted constitutional view that the President has the constitutional authority to take at least limited armed action in defense of American national interests; in at least 85 instances, Presidents of the United States have in fact taken such action. As I have said before, we cannot now be sure what actions may be required.
The Formosa resolution of 1955 was followed by the use of United States warships to escort supply convoys to the offshore islands in 1958; the Middle East resolution was followed by President Eisenhower's sending of troops to Lebanon in 1958; the Cuba resolution was followed by the well-known events of October 1962. I do not suggest that any of these actions may serve as a parallel for what may be required in Southeast Asia. There can be no doubt, however, that these previous resolutions form a solid legal precedent for the action now proposed. Such action is required to make the purposes of the United States clear and to protect our national interests.

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(Secretary McNamara) I have four brief announcements to make, after which I will endeavor to answer your questions.

First, there have been no further enemy attacks on our vessels operating in the Gulf of Tonkin since I spoke to you last night.

Secondly, the routine patrol of our destroyers operating in that gulf, in the area shown on this map, between Hainan Island and the coast of North Viet-Nam, has been resumed.

Thirdly, the preliminary analysis of the photo reconnaissance taken following our strikes yesterday tends to confirm the damage assessment which I reported to you yesterday morning. You recall that at that time, I stated our aircraft striking the bases of the patrol boats at Hon Gay, Loc Chao, Phuc Loi, Quang Khe had destroyed or damaged approximately 25 of the torpedo boats; that in addition, our aircraft striking at the petroleum storage dump at Vinh, in support of the patrol boats, had destroyed 90 per cent of that storage dump.

At Vinh is located about 10 per cent of the petroleum storage capacity of North Viet-Nam. The additional information brought out by the photo-reconnaissance analyses is that in addition, we destroyed approximately seven of the anti-aircraft installations at Vinh.

Fourthly, I have asked Admiral McDonald to award the Navy Unit Citation to the men of the ships and aircraft participating in the operation, both in recognition of their bravery and also in recognition of the effectiveness of their operations. Admiral McDonald has enthusiastically agreed with that recommendation and is taking steps to put it into effect.
Now I will be happy to try to answer your questions.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, does our Government have any information from the North Vietnamese Government through diplomatic channels about the possible prisoner?

(The Secretary) No, we have not received any such information, but we are taking steps to endeavor to obtain his release, if he has been captured, as has been alleged by them.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, Radio Hanoi claims that North Viet-Nam shot down eight attacking U. S. planes Wednesday and damaged three others.

(The Secretary) I think this is typical of the veracity of their reports. We lost two aircraft, as I reported to you yesterday, one an A-4, which is a jet attack aircraft, naval aircraft, and the other an A-1, which is a propeller-driven naval aircraft, both operating off the carriers Ticonderoga and Constellation. In addition, there was minor damage to two other aircraft, both of which returned safely.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, do you have any information over the last four days that would indicate the Chinese Communists made any military efforts to assist or respond with the North Vietnamese, to respond to our attacks?

(The Secretary) No, I have no information that the Communist Chinese in any way assisted the North Vietnamese in their attacks on our vessels. I think it probable that the Communist Chinese will introduce some combat aircraft into North Viet-Nam in support of them. As I told you before, North Viet-Nam does not possess any combat aircraft of its own.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, you say you think it is highly probable. Does that mean you already have indications?

(The Secretary) No, I have no indication of it, but I would think that that would be a likely response.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, have you had any word one way or another that there has been a third incident of any kind as claimed by Radio Hanoi?
(The Secretary) No, we have no indication of any third incident. There have been no attacks or hostile actions directed toward our vessels operating in the gulf. I explained to you yesterday that our routine patrol is functioning in this area (indicating) and moving south. We have two carriers, the Ticonderoga and the Constellation, in approximately this position (indicating). They, in turn, are escorted by destroyers. There have been no attacks or reported attacks or attempted attacks at any of the vessels operating in that area.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, have there been any incidents that you know of involving the South Vietnamese vessels and North Vietnamese?

(The Secretary) No, none that I know of, although I think I should mention to you the South Vietnamese naval patrol activities that are carried on to prevent the infiltration of men and materiel from the North into the South. In the last seven months of 1961, for example, about 1,400 men were infiltrated across the 17th Parallel from North Viet-Nam into South Viet-Nam. To prevent further infiltration of that kind, the South Vietnamese, with our assistance, have set up a naval patrol which is very active in that area, which continues to inspect and examine junks and their personnel. In one 8-month period that I can recall they discovered 140 Viet Cong infiltrators.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, there have been reports about considerable troop movements by U.S. aircraft in South Viet-Nam to the 17th Parallel. Could you give us an assessment about those?

(The Secretary) We have, to the best of my knowledge, moved no South Vietnamese troops nor have we moved U.S. troops into South Viet-Nam. We have, as I reported to you yesterday, moved interceptor aircraft into South Viet-Nam to be prepared for whatever eventuality develops. We have, in addition, moved certain fighter aircraft into South Viet-Nam. We moved certain fighter aircraft into Thailand. We made reinforcement of our advance bases in the Pacific; reinforcements moved out of the United States for that purpose. We have moved certain fleet units; I mentioned the attack carrier group moving from the First Fleet, which is homed in Pacific waters off the Pacific coast, out into the Western Pacific, and we also moved an anti-submarine task group down into the South China Sea, this in order to provide protection to our carriers and destroyers operating in these waters, both in the gulf and in these waters south of Hainan Island.
(Question) Mr. Secretary, could you tell us why you think it is highly probable that the Chinese will move planes into North Viet-Nam?

(The Secretary) As they have no combat aircraft of their own, I would assume that they would make such a request and that it would be answered.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, the Nationalist Chinese reported rather large troop movements on the mainland through the province of Yulin. Is there any indication that there was a large-scale Communist--

(The Secretary) We have no indication that there have been any substantial movements of Communist Chinese forces either by land or air.

(Question) In the months preceding...

(The Secretary) I am speaking now of the recent past, the last few days. I know of no large movements of the kind you suggested, for that matter, during the past several months.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, it has been some 48 hours now since that first attack. In studying the situation further, have you arrived at any answer to the mystery of why this was done?

(The Secretary) No, I can offer no explanation. We considered a number of alternative explanations, but it would be sheer speculation on my part to express them to you, and I think it would be better not to do so.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, you said that the South Vietnamese patrols which are inspecting junks were set up with United States assistance. Could you tell us what form that assistance took?

(The Secretary) Yes. At the time we began the expanded program of assistance to South Viet-Nam in December 1961, at which time we analyzed in some detail the extent of infiltration during the previous six months. It was on that basis that I reported to you the very extensive infiltration that took place then. We concluded the best form of prevention would be the establishment of a junk patrol. To that end, we provided the funds necessary to construct about 500 junks. These fall into four categories: command junks, which are motorized, carry a crew of about 10 men, are armed with automatic weapons, equipped with radios; motorized sailor junks, which are also armed, which
patrol the coasts; sailing junks, which act as picket ships to carry our
surveillance of particular areas; and motor junks, without sails. This force
of some 500 junks was constructed in the shipyards of South Viet-Nam,
equipped with engines, in some cases, supplied from this country, and
generally financed by the military assistance program of this country.

(Question) And they operate on their own?

(The Secretary) They operate on their own. They are part of the South
Vietnamese Navy, commanded by the South Vietnamese Navy, operating in the
coastal waters, inspecting suspicious incoming junks, seeking to deter and
prevent the infiltration of both men and materiel from North Viet-Nam into
South Viet-Nam.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, do these junks go north, into North Viet-Nam
waters?

(The Secretary) They have advanced closer and closer to the 17th
Parallel, and in some cases I think have moved beyond that in an effort to stop
the infiltration closer to the point of origin.

(Question) Do our naval vessels afford any cover for these junks in those
operations?

(The Secretary) Our naval vessels afford no cover whatsoever. Our naval
personnel do not participate in the junk operations.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, if the North Vietnamese are holding an
American pilot, does it appear that it is your Lt. Alvarez?

(The Secretary) There is some indication that if they hold one of our
pilots, it is he.

(Question) What are the indications?

(The Secretary) We believed that he bailed out of his aircraft. There was
an indication from the automatic beeper attached to a parachute that he did so.

(Question) What sort of status does a man like this have and what steps
can be taken?
(The Secretary) He is a captive of war and we would seek through neutral channels to obtain his release. Whether we are successful in doing so, I don't know, but we are bringing to bear every possible pressure to that end.

I have time for one more question, gentlemen.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, you said the destroyer patrol had been resumed in the Gulf of Tonkin. Was it broken off?

(The Secretary) It was broken off during the attack upon it in the darkness the night before last and, of course, during the action of yesterday it was also broken off. But it has been resumed and will continue until completed some time later this week or early next.

(Question) Sir ---

(The Secretary) Thank you.

One question.

(Question) Are the reinforcements semi-permanent? In other words, if there is no additional incident in a week or two weeks, will these planes start coming back?

(The Secretary) The reinforcements will stay in position as long as required.

(The Press) Thank you, Mr. Secretary.
DOCUMENT NO. XIV

TEXT OF A STATEMENT CONCERNING THE U. S. AIR STRIKE
ISSUED BY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 6, 1964

Following are the results, based on latest reports, of the 64 attack
strike sorties flown from the U. S. Navy aircraft carriers U. S. S. Ticonderoga
and U. S. S. Constellation to five targets in the Gulf of Tonkin, North Viet-Nam:

(A) Of the some 30 patrol craft sighted during the attacks, it is
estimated that 25 patrol boats were destroyed or damaged.

(B) Ninety per cent of the petroleum storage facility at Vinh was
destroyed.

(C) Seven anti-aircraft installations in the Vinh area destroyed or
severely damaged.

The U. S. S. Ticonderoga aircraft conducted three of the attacks against
North Viet-Nam patrol boat concentrations and their associated support
facilities. One strike was on the boats and facilities located at Quang Khe.
The second and third were on additional boats and activities at Phuc Loi and
on the petroleum storage area located at nearby Vinh. In addition, there was
also a restrike made on the Vinh oil storage area.

The Quang Khe attack, which took place at 1:15 A.M. EDT (0515 GMT)
(1415 JST), was accomplished by six F-8 Crusader jets. The strike at Phuc
Loi, including the nearby oil storage area at Vinh, was conducted at 1:25
A.M. (0525 GMT) (1425 JST) by six F-8 Crusader, six A-4 Skyhawk and
four A-1 Skyraider aircraft. Ten A-4 Skyhawk and four F-8 Crusader jets
participated in the restrike at Vinh at 4:45 A.M. EDT (0845 GMT) (1745 JST).
An estimated eight storage tanks were set ablaze during the first attack on
Vinh. From two to four additional tanks were set ablaze during the second
raid.
Moderate anti-aircraft fire was encountered during the first strike on Vinh and two anti-aircraft positions near the oil storage area were attacked and destroyed. During the restrike, a heavier concentration of anti-aircraft fire was encountered and an estimated five guns of a six-gun position were subsequently destroyed.

One Crusader aircraft sustained flak damage during the first attack on Vinh but proceeded safely to Da Nang in South Viet-Nam.

Navy aircraft from the carrier Constellation began a simultaneous attack on the remaining two targets, Hon Gay and Loc Chao, at 3:45 A.M. EDT (0745 GMT) (1645 JST). Ten A-4 Skyhawks, two F-4 Phantoms and four A-1 Skyraiders participated in the attack on Hon Gay. Five A-4 Skyhawks, three F-4 Phantoms and four A-1 Skyraiders participated in the raid on Loc Chao.

Five patrol craft were sighted during the attack on Hon Gay and it was estimated that all five were destroyed. At Loc Chao two of the six patrol craft sighted were seriously damaged. Both attacks lasted 25 minutes.

Aircraft attacking Hon Gay experienced moderate to heavy anti-aircraft fire from numerous gun positions on the hill overlooking the harbor. Also, all operating guns aboard all of the patrol craft were fired throughout the attack. The Navy aircraft utilized 2.75-inch rocket and 20-millimeter strafing attacks at both Hon Gay and Loc Chao.

A one A-4 Skyhawk from the Constellation was shot down by anti-aircraft fire during the attack on Hon Gay. The pilot reported he was hit after completing his second attack on the patrol boats in Hon Gay Harbor. He indicated that his plane was uncontrollable and that he was ejecting. Witnessing pilots, who were also being subjected to heavy anti-aircraft fire, indicated they saw a splash approximately three miles from the harbor entrance, which could have been the downed Skyhawk. A 60-second "beeper" which is normally activated when a chute opens was heard over the radio, but there has been no confirmed report of the sighting of a parachute.

A second aircraft from the Constellation, an A-1 Skyraider, was lost due to anti-aircraft fire during the attack on Loc Chao. No parachute was seen and the aircraft was observed to crash into the sea in the vicinity of the Loc Chao estuary.

A third aircraft from the Constellation, an A-4 Skyraider, was hit by anti-aircraft fire in the vicinity of Loc Chao but made a safe return to the ship with minor damage.

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The Security Council, for its further consideration of the complaint against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam referred to in the letter dated the Fourth of August 1964 from the Permanent Representative of the United States to the President of the Security Council, would welcome such information relating to this complaint as the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam would desire to make available to the Council, either through taking part in the discussion of the complaint in the Council, or in the form which it might prefer. Furthermore, the Security Council would receive in the same manner such information relating to the complaint as the Republic of Viet-Nam would desire to make available to the Council.
First Statement:

Mr. President:

I had not expected to address the Council this afternoon but, because of what has been said by the distinguished Representative of Czechoslovakia, I feel obliged to address the Council briefly on two points.

First, I want to state that there is absolutely no foundation in fact for the wholly false impression which the distinguished colleague of Czechoslovakia has sought to create -- namely: that the willful, deliberate, and planned attack by North Viet-Nam torpedo boats against United States ships on the high seas on August 2 -- which has been admitted by North Viet-Nam -- was nothing more than a natural reply to alleged provocative attacks by the United States against North Viet-Nam in the days preceding. He has echoed the efforts of Peiping and Hanoi to evade responsibility by calling the United States a liar.

He has alleged -- incidently using statements from Hanoi and Peiping as source material -- that on the evening of July 30-31, American war ships intruded into the territorial waters of North Viet-Nam and shelled the islands of Hon Me and Hon Ngu.

This allegation is false. No United States ships intruded into the territorial waters as alleged -- nor did United States ships shell the islands
referred to or any other North Viet-Nam islands on July 30-31, or at any other time before or since. On those days the closest American ship was at the 17th parallel, about 70 miles off shore and about 120 miles from the site of the alleged action on July 30-31.

The Representative of Czechoslovakia has now even gone so far as to assert that the North Viet-Nam attack of August 4 may not even have occurred; that it may be nothing more than a myth fabricated by the United States Government. Perhaps because these attacks took place in the dead of night the Hanoi regime thinks they can be hidden from the world.

These attacks were very real indeed. The facts concerning them have been publicly described by President Johnson, by the Secretary of Defense, and by me in my remarks to this Council last Wednesday afternoon.

During the night of August 4, the two American vessels were on patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin, in international waters -- 65 miles from the shore, more than twice as far out in the high seas as on the occasion of the August 2 attack -- when radar picked up high speed craft moving rapidly toward the destroyers. Prior to that, the destroyers had ascertained that for a number of hours they had been tracked by radar of a type that is carried on torpedo boats used by the North Vietnamese Navy. At firing range, typical torpedo launching maneuvers were detected, sonar immediately picked up torpedo tracks, and subsequently torpedoes were actually seen passing the destroyers by personnel on the vessels under attack as they were making evasive maneuvers. Search lights and gun flashes from the attacking boats were also seen at close quarters by personnel on the vessels under attack and by supporting planes, and torpedo boats themselves were seen in illumination provided by flares dropped by aircraft. Counter fire from the destroyers were continued until contact was lost in the darkness.

The attack was very real to those whose lives were in danger. The attack was also extremely serious in the view of my Government coming as it did less than two days after the previous attacks on the Maddox, coming as it did without warning or without provocation: coming as it did on the high seas -- there was only one conclusion to be drawn. The attack constituted a planned, calculated and deliberate act of military aggression against United States vessels on the high seas, fully as deliberate and more serious in its implications than the daylight attack of August 2 which the North Vietnamese have admitted.
Under the circumstances, the United States Government had no choice but to reply. Reply we did. Our reply was limited and relevant to the provocation. The distinguished Representative of Czechoslovakia has averred that our response to the "non-existent" attack of August 4 should have been limited to, I suppose also a "non-existent," defensive fire.

I would call his attention to the fact that on August 2 the United States did limit its response to counter attacking the torpedo boats.

In order to avert further difficulties the United States the next day despatched a warning note to North Viet-Nam, asking the ICC to transmit it, and releasing it to the press so that there was no doubt that North Viet-Nam would know about it.

In spite of this North Viet-Nam again the next day -- this time in the dead of night -- attacked our vessels on the high seas, where they have been every night and where they have been for years. In the light of this proof that North Viet-Nam's actions were not casual but deliberate and calculated, we had no choice but to respond by making it impossible for these piratical attacks to continue with impunity. This was a limited, this was a relevant response of self defense directed only against the boats and their supporting bases in response to a deliberate assault on our armed forces, and I trust that the Government of Czechoslovakia will use all of its influence to persuade its North Vietnamese friends to cease its dangerous provocations.

We did not on August 5, nor do we now, seek to extend the conflict in Southeast Asia. We sought I repeat only to destroy those weapons of war and support facilities which had been used in armed aggression against us. We sought at the same time, to demonstrate again to those who seem determined to remain oblivious to the lessons of history that armed aggression -- whether in the Gulf of Tonkin or anywhere else -- will not be tolerated, will not go unanswered.

I had not wanted to comment on the political attack of Czechoslovakia on the Republic of Viet-Nam which has been struggling for years to protect itself from aggression from North Viet-Nam. It is with some exercise of patience that I confine myself to pointing out that we have listened to the Representative of Czechoslovakia make a typical Communist attack on a free people trying to defend themselves from Communist attack.