

This is put out yearly by State Dept. Subtitled "Current Documents." Highly selective. Will later send more from 1963. I'm sending only what I think you might want for there is much more. HR.

958

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1964

Document IX-105

"I Can Conceive of No Alternative Other Than To Take All Necessary Measures Within Our Capability To Prevent a Communist Victory in Viet-Nam": STATEMENT MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (McNAMARA) BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, JANUARY 27, 1964 (EXCERPTS)¹

No region is more vulnerable and exposed to Communist subversion than southeast Asia. Lying in the shadow of the Communist giant to the north, the far smaller nations in this region are torn between the desire to be free and independent and their fear of being overrun by the Chinese hordes. It is quite understandable therefore that a policy of neutralism should look very attractive to some of them. Yet most of the governments in that area realize the danger of placing themselves at the mercy of Communist China and have sought to maintain the integrity and independence of the non-Communist nations in that area. We do not require that they be allied with us but we do attempt to convince them that any tendency to be neutral on the side of Communist China will inevitably lead to Communist control. Accordingly, we have tried in every possible way to support the independence of the non-Communist nations in southeast Asia wherever our help is wanted, and we have respected the positions of those nations which prefer to seek their security in neutrality.

In the case of South Vietnam, our help is clearly wanted, and we are deeply engaged in supporting the Vietnamese Government and people in their war against the Communist Vietcong. In addition to large-scale economic and military assistance, we are also maintaining a very substantial training and logistics mission in that country. Including the Military Assistance Advisory Group, there are now about 15,000 U.S. military personnel in Vietnam providing training, airlift, communications, and advice to the Vietnamese forces and administering the military assistance program.

But the situation there continues to grow grave. Last September we had hoped we could bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Diem government to persuade it to abandon its oppressive measures against the Vietnamese people and get on with the task of winning the war against the Vietcong. Although the military situation in the delta region was still very bad, good progress had been made in the northern part and especially noteworthy work had been done in the key coastal provinces where Vietcong strength had once threatened to cut the country in half. In the central area and the highlands, progress had been steady, though slower. The situation was still difficult in the

THE FAR EAST, SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

957

vinces to the west and north of Saigon itself. Throughout the northern two-thirds of the country, the strategic hamlet program had developed very well and freedom of movement in the rural areas had grown steadily. We concluded then that top priority should be given to the delta region which contains approximately 40 percent of the population. This region has traditionally resisted central authority. It is the center of Vietcong strength, and the swampy nature of the terrain makes it the most difficult area to pacify.

The first step in that direction had already been taken by September when a third division was moved to the delta. But we felt that additional measures were needed, particularly the consolidation, rather than the further spread, of strategic hamlets; the elimination of many fixed outposts; better hamlet defenses; and more trained hamlet militia. We also felt that the regular Republic of Vietnam Army units should be reserved for use in mobile actions and for "clear and hold" operations in support of the strategic hamlet program.

With these further measures in view, we felt that a start could be made in reducing the number of U.S. military personnel in Vietnam as their training missions were completed. Accordingly, we announced that about 1,000 men were to be withdrawn by the end of 1963 and expressed the hope that the major part of the U.S. military task could be completed by the end of 1965, although we recognized that there might be a continuing requirement for a limited number of U.S. advisory personnel.

In this connection, we must recognize that the U.S. advisory effort cannot assure ultimate success. This is a Vietnamese war, and in the final analysis it must be fought and won by the Vietnamese. To leave our advisers there beyond the time they are truly needed would delay the development of Vietnam's initiative. Therefore, it has been our policy to transfer U.S. responsibilities to the Vietnamese whenever this can be done without impairing the total war effort.

Unfortunately, the Diem government did not choose to follow the advice we offered. In November that government was overthrown and replaced by a new government made up of military officers and civilians. The Vietcong was quick to take advantage of the growing opposition to the Diem government and the period of uncertainty following its overthrow. Vietcong activities were already increasing in September and continued to increase at an accelerated rate in October and November, particularly in the delta area. And I must report that they have made considerable progress since the coup.

The new government, however, has considerably more popular support than its predecessor and the Military Revolutionary Committee is beginning to take action to intensify military operations and to improve civil administration. The strategic hamlet program which had been overextended in the delta area is now being built more solidly. And

¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 877, 884, footnote 30.

² See *ibid.*, p. 878.

³ A joint U.S.-Vietnamese team had made a critical report on Jan. 14 following a strategic hamlet program in the Mekong River delta area; see *The New York Times*, Jan. 15, 1964.

Doc. IX-105

⁴ Hearings on Military Posture and H.R. 9037, Before the Committee on Armed Forces, House of Representatives, 85th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 6391-1-1 (extract taken from pp. 6003-6900).

⁵ See American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1964, pp. 870 ff.

Doc. IX-105

the new government is now applying "clear and hold" tactics in that area.

We hope that, with our full support, the new government can take hold and eventually suppress the Vietcong insurrection. The city sea-son will give us a firmer basis for this judgment. However, the survival of an independent government in South Vietnam is so important to the security of all of southeast Asia and to the free world that I can conceive of no alternative other than to take all necessary measures within our capability to prevent a Communist victory. We must prove that Communist aggression cannot succeed through subversion, but will fail as surely as it has failed in direct confrontation.

Document IX-106

"The Army [of Viet-Nam] Is Determined To Rise Up and Continue To Carry Out the National Revolution"; STATEMENT MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM (KHANH), JANUARY 30, 1964¹

On 1 November the main cause prompting the Republican Army to rise up and overthrow the dictatorial, rotten, and abusive regime of Ngo Dinh Diem was to strive to carry out a comprehensive revolution in order to build a truly democratic regime, to improve the life for every citizen, and to insure a free and following the coup the political, economic, and social situation of the country and has not brought any promise for the soldiers. Therefore, the aspirations of the compatriots and soldiers are not satisfied. The governmental organization has proved incompetent and counter-revolutionary. A number of persons desiring to protect their individual interests do not hesitate to ally themselves with the colonialists and have a tendency to advocate neutrality, thereby paving the way for the Communists to enslave our people.

The army is determined to rise up and continue to carry out the national revolution to satisfy the aspirations of all the people. The army is determined to wipe out the Communists and the Vietnamese traitors advocating neutrality. The army is determined to join the compatriots in restoring security and order so as to bring the people a plentiful and happy life. The army is determined to join the compatriots in building the future of the Fatherland on the basis of freedom and democracy.

The army insistently calls on the compatriots to unite in order to achieve the final victory quickly.

¹ Department of State files. This statement was made in a radio broadcast from Saigon. Also broadcast was the text of a proclamation designating Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council, Lt. Gen. Duong Van Minh was allowed to remain as Chief of State. Subsequently, on Feb. 8, Gen. Khanh assumed the office of Premier also.

On Jan. 31, the Department of State issued a statement that it was continuing relations with the new leaders of the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam and that no question of recognition was involved (Department of State Bulletin, Feb. 17, 1964, p. 250).

² See *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1963*, p. 878.

Doc. IX-106

Document IX-107

French Expression of Hope for a "Possible Neutrality Agreement Relating to the Southeast Asian States"; Reply Made by the President of the French Republic (General de Gaulle) to a QUESTION ASKED AT A NEWS CONFERENCE, JANUARY 31, 1964 (EXCERPTS)¹

Document IX-108

United States Lack of Optimism Concerning Neutralization of Viet-Nam; Replies Made by the President (Johnson) to QUESTIONS ASKED AT A NEWS CONFERENCE, FEBRUARY 1, 1964 (EXCERPTS)²

If we could have neutralization of both North Viet-Nam and South Viet-Nam, I am sure that would be considered sympathetically. But I see no indication of that at the moment. I think that if we could expect the Viet Cong to let their neighbors live in peace, we could take a much different attitude. But as long as these raids are continuing and people are attempting to envelop South Viet-Nam, I think that the present course we are conducting is the only answer to that course, and I think that the operations should be stepped up there.³ I see no sentiment favoring neutralization of South Viet-Nam alone, and I think the course that we are following is the most advisable one for freedom at this point.

You will have to ask General de Gaulle about the details of his proposal.⁴ But as I understand it, the neutralization talk has applied only to South Viet-Nam and not to the whole of that area of the world. I think that the only thing we need to do to have complete peace in that area of the world now is to stop the invasion of South Viet-Nam by some of its neighbors and supporters.

Document IX-109

United States Warning to Those Directing External Aggression in Viet-Nam; Remarks by the President (Johnson) at the 96th CHARTER DAY OBSERVANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES, FEBRUARY 21, 1964 (EXCERPTS)⁵

In South Viet-Nam, terror and violence, directed and supplied by outside enemies, press against the lives and the liberties of a people

¹ *Amb.*, doc. IX-30.
² *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-64*, vol. 1, pp. 257, 260.

³ In a statement at the opening of the news conference, President Johnson quoted a letter which he had just sent to General Khanh expressing satisfaction at their agreement on the need for accelerating the pace of operations against the Viet Cong (1964, p. 250).

⁴ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-64*, vol. 1, pp. 303-305.

Docs. IX-107, 108, 109

Document IX-117

Request for Additional Funds for United States Aid to Vietnam: MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (JOHNSON) TO THE CONGRESS, May 16, 1964.²

Last January, in my budget message to the Congress, I pointed out that this budget made no provision for any major new requirements that might emerge later for our mutual defense and development program. I stated then that if such requirements should arise I would request prompt action by the Congress to provide additional funds.¹

That need has emerged in Vietnam. I now request that the Congress provide \$125 million in addition to the \$3.4 billion already provided for foreign assistance; \$70 million is required for economic and \$55 million for military uses in Vietnam.

Since the 1965 budget was prepared, two major changes have occurred in Vietnam:

First, the Viet Cong guerrillas, under orders from their Communist masters in the north, have intensified terrorist actions against the peaceful people of South Vietnam. This increased terrorism requires increased response.

Second, a new government under Prime Minister [Nguyen] Khanh has come to power, bringing new energy and leadership and new hope for effective action.³ I share with Ambassador [Henry Cabot] Lodge the conviction that this new government can mount a successful campaign against the Communists.

In March, Prime Minister Khanh declared his intention to mobilize his nation.⁴ This intention has now been confirmed by his new and enlarged budget for 1964. It provides for:

Expanding the Vietnamese Army, Civil Guard, Self-Defense Corps, and police forces, and integrating their operations with political, economic, and social measures in a systematic clear-and-hold campaign.

Greatly expanding and upgrading the Vietnamese civil administrative corps to increase the Government's effectiveness and service at the village, district, and Province level. Local government capacity, responsiveness to popular needs, and initiatives are to be strengthened.

Better pay scales for the men and adequate budgets for the organizations engaged in this struggle of many fronts.

Manifold expansion of training programs, to provide teachers, health workers, agricultural, financial, and administrative staffs for the rural areas.

¹ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1964, pp. 891-893. The funds requested were provided for in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1964, Public Law 88-603, approved Oct. 7, 1964; see part, doc. IX-115-9.

² *Ibid.*, June 8, 1964, pp. 891-893.

³ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1964, pp. 891-893.

⁴ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1964, pp. 891-893.

⁵ See ante, doc. IX-106.

⁶ See ante, doc. IX-113-114.

Doc IX-117

These and other measures, if promptly carried out, will require an increase of about 40 percent in Vietnam's domestic budget expenditures over the 1963 level—a far greater expansion of Vietnamese effort than was assumed in the assistance plans submitted in January. Under present circumstances, Vietnam's domestic revenues cannot be increased proportionately. Severe inflation resulting from a budget deficit would endanger political as well as economic stability, unless offsetting financial actions are taken. We expect the Vietnamese Government to take all possible self-help measures to deal with this problem internally, but substantial increases in economic assistance also will be required. We must share the increased costs of the greatly intensified Vietnamese effort.

Our more direct support of the expanded Vietnamese military and civil operations also must keep pace with the intensified Vietnamese effort. On the civil side—through AID's [Agency for International Development] counterinsurgency program—this means more fertilizer, medical supplies and services, repair parts and replacements for war-damaged railway rolling stock, school supplies and building materials, well-drilling equipment and teams to bring fresh water to the villages, and enlarged advisory staffs in the Provinces.

On the military and paramilitary side, additional equipment, ammunition, training, and supplies will be needed as the organization and functioning of the armed forces improves. Additional aircraft, pilot training for the Vietnamese, and airfield improvements are required. Increased activity will require additional ammunition. Additional support equipment is required for all forces.

The vigorous decisions taken by the new Government of Vietnam to mobilize the full resources of the country merit our strongest support. Increased Communist terror requires it.

By our words and deeds in a decade of determined effort, we are pledged before all the world to stand with the free people of Vietnam. Sixteen thousand Americans are serving our country and the people of Vietnam. Daily they face danger in the cause of freedom. Daily requires and the American people demand, that we give them the fullest measure of support.

We have reviewed the entire budget for mutual defense and development programs once again to determine whether we can accommodate within it these added requirements. We cannot. In fact, recent events in Brazil⁵ and elsewhere may add to the economic programs originally planned. Military programs have already been cut to the bare minimum. We cannot respond to the new situation in Vietnam within the limits of the original budget proposal without unacceptable danger to our other basic security interests.

I am today forwarding to the Speaker of the House of Representatives amendments to my 1965 budget, increasing my request for appropriations for supporting assistance from \$335 million to \$405 million, and for military assistance from \$1 billion to \$1.055 billion.⁶ Both of

¹ See ante, docs. III-74-75.

² H. Doc. 305, 86th Cong.

these increases are covered by the budget's allowance for contingencies, so that they will not affect overall budget totals.

I ask the Congress to enact authorization for supporting assistance and military assistance sufficient to permit appropriations in these amounts.

I strongly urge the Congress to provide this additional \$125 million to Vietnam, and to appropriate the full \$3,317 million now required for our mutual defense and development programs.

Document IX-118

"Viet-Nam Is the Country of the Forward [Defense] Group Which Now Faces the Most Serious and Direct Armed Action"; Address by the Secretary of Defense (McNamara) Before the National Industrial Conference Board, New York, May 21, 1964.⁵⁴

Document IX-119

Possible Expansion of the War in Viet-Nam "if the Communists Persist in Their Course of Aggression"; Address by the Secretary of State (Rusk) Before the American Law Institute, May 22, 1964.⁵⁵

Document IX-120

Four Basic Themes of United States Policy in Southeast Asia: Statement Made by the President (Johnson) at a News Conference, June 2, 1964 (Excerpts).⁵⁶

It may be helpful to outline four basic themes that govern our policy in Southeast Asia.

- First, America keeps her word.
- Second, the issue is the future of Southeast Asia as a whole.
- Third, our purpose is peace.
- Fourth, this is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity.

... Like a number of other nations, we are bound by solemn commitments to help defend this area against Communist encroachments. We will keep this commitment. In the case of Viet-Nam our commitment today is just the same as the commitment made by President Eisenhower to President Dien in 1954—a commitment to help these people help themselves.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Post, doc. XII-5.

⁵⁵ Department of State Bulletin, June 8, 1964, pp. 88f-89f.

⁵⁶ Radio Report 738-734.

⁵⁷ See American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents, vol. II, pp. 240-240a.

Docs. IX-118, 119, 120

We are concerned for a whole great geographic area, not simply for specific complex problems in specific countries.

We have one single, central purpose in all that we do in Southeast Asia, and that is to help build a stable peace. It is others, and not we, who have brought terror to small countries and peaceful peasants. It is others, not we, who have preached and practiced the use of force to establish dictatorial control over their neighbors.

It is others, not we, who have refused to honor international agreements that aim at reasonable settlement of deep-seated differences. The United States cannot fail to do its full share to meet the challenge which is posed by those who disturb the peace of Southeast Asia, but the purpose of America will not change. We stand for peace.⁵⁸

Document IX-121

Appointment of General Maxwell D. Taylor as American Ambassador to the Republic of Viet-Nam; Statement Read by the President (Johnson) at a News Conference, June 23, 1964.⁵⁹

Document IX-122

"Peace Ought To Be Possible in Southeast Asia Without Any Extension of the Fighting"; Replies Made by the Secretary of State (Rusk) to Questions Asked at a News Conference, June 1, 1964 (Excerpts).⁶⁰

Peace ought to be possible in Southeast Asia without any extension of the fighting. Therefore, the first objective of our policy and our desire in Southeast Asia is to exploit that possibility. I say that it ought to be, because there are firm agreements, precise agreements, subscribed to by all those involved in this present situation, which

⁵⁸ In reply to a question asked during the news conference, President Johnson said that he knew of no plans made by the United States to extend the war into North Viet-Nam (source text, p. 739).

⁵⁹ On the following day, Secretary of Defense McNamara stated, upon returning from a conference in Honolulu, June 1-2, with Secretary of State Rusk, General Maxwell D. Taylor, Ambassador to South Viet-Nam, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. (North Viet-Nam) have been recommended to the President for approval, and none has been approved." (*The New York Times*, June 4, 1964.)

⁶⁰ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-64*, vol. I, pp. 802-804. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge's letter of resignation, dated June 19, and President Johnson's reply, June 23, are printed *ibid.* At the same time, President Johnson announced that U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, would become Deputy Ambassador to the Republic of Viet-Nam. Gen. Earle G. Wheeler was nominated to replace Gen. Taylor as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Department of State Bulletin, July 20, 1964, pp. 64-80. For other excerpts, see text, doc. IX-18.

Docs. IX-121, 122

nical aid be furnished to all of Indochina by the States which have the means for it, in order that development replace cruel division. France, for her part, is ready to observe these two conditions.

Document IX-125

"If Others Would Keep the Solemn Agreements Already Signed at a Conference Table, There Would Be No Problem in South Viet-Nam": STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRESIDENT (JOHNSON) AT A NEWS CONFERENCE, JULY 24, 1964 (EXCERPT)¹⁸

It is true that there is [in Viet-Nam] danger and provocation from the North, and such provocation could force a response, but it is also true that the United States seeks no wider war. Other friends suggest that this problem must be moved to a conference table¹⁹ and, indeed, if others would keep the solemn agreements already signed at a conference table,²⁰ there would be no problem in South Viet-Nam.

If those who practice terror and ambush and murder will simply honor their existing agreements, there can easily be peace in Southeast Asia immediately. But we do not believe in a conference called to ratify terror, so our policy is unchanged. For 10 years²¹ and in three different administrations, the United States has been committed to the freedom and the independence of South Viet-Nam, helping others to help themselves.

In those 10 years, we have taken whatever actions were necessary, sending men and supplies for different specific purposes at different times. We shall stick to that policy and we shall continue our effort to make it even more effective. We shall do the same in our support for the legitimate Government of Laos.²²

¹⁸ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-64*, vol. II, p. 888.

¹⁹ See *supra*. U.N. Secretary-General U Thant, in a news conference on July 8, had also recommended such a conference of the 1964 Geneva Conference (see The New York Times, July 9, 1964).

²⁰ Text of the 1964 Geneva Agreements on Indochina printed in *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents*, vol. I, pp. 750-788; text of the 1962 Accord on Laos printed in *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, 1962, pp. 1075-1083.

²¹ See *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents*, vol. II, pp. 240-2408.

²² See *ante*, doc. IX-89-99.

Doc. IX-125

Document IX-126

United States Intention To Increase Its Forces in Viet-Nam as Required by the Situation: REPLY MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE (RCS) TO A QUESTION ASKED AT A NEWS CONFERENCE, JULY 31, 1964 (EXCERPT)²³

We are increasing our effort [in Viet-Nam]²⁴ in the hope that we can move the situation along more rapidly than it otherwise would more without that additional help.

Now, the numbers, as I say, will grow within certain limits over a period of some time, but those numbers are not—there is nothing mysterious or strange about those.

The figures of Americans present in South Viet-Nam will be made available right along as we go. There will be several thousands, as indicated, or more personnel sent to South Viet-Nam in the months ahead. But I didn't want to leave the impression that there is some sort of theoretical figure.

That is required will be sent there, and if they are not required they will be brought home. And what that figure will be from month to month, I can't tell you now. We will have to wait and pick up those figures on a month-to-month basis.

Document IX-127

United States Protest Directed to the Government of North Viet-Nam Concerning an "Unprovoked Attack" on an American Naval Vessel: TRANSMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AUGUST 3, 1964²⁵

The United States Government takes an extremely serious view of the unprovoked attack made by Communist North Vietnamese torpedo boats on an American naval vessel, the U.S.S. *Madox*, operating on the high seas, in the Gulf of Tonkin, on August 2. United States ships have traditionally operated freely on the high seas, in accordance with the rights guaranteed by international law to vessels of all nations. They will continue to do so and will take whatever measures are appropriate for their defense. The United States Government expects that the authorities of the regime in North Viet-Nam will be

²³ Department of State Bulletin, Aug. 17, 1964, p. 228.

²⁴ On July 27 the Republic of Viet-Nam announced that additional U.S. troops would be sent to that country. Subsequently, U.S. officials in Washington indicated that the number would be approximately 5,000, bringing the total there to 21,000 (see *The New York Times*, July 28, 1964).

²⁵ Department of State Bulletin, Aug. 24, 1964, p. 238. The text of the protest was read to correspondents on Aug. 4 by Department of State spokesman Robert J. McCloskey. Since the United States had no diplomatic contacts with North Viet-Nam, the protest was transmitted, via the American Embassy in Saigon, through the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Viet-Nam. A Department of Defense statement, Aug. 2, reporting on the attack is printed in *The New York Times*, Aug. 3, 1964; see also *post*, doc. IX-126.

Doc. IX-126, 127

approaching craft disappeared without closing sufficiently to open fire on the destroyers.²¹
 The destroyers are continuing their patrols in the international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin and United States air and sea forces remain prepared to respond immediately to any attack.

Document IX-141

"We Are Not Going North [—Into North Viet-Nam—] and Drop Bombs at This Stage of the Game": REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT (JOHNSON) TO THE NEW HAVENSHIRE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER EDITORS ASSOCIATION, MANCHESTER, N.H., SEPTEMBER 29, 1964 (EXCERPT)²²

As far as I am concerned, I want to be very cautious and careful, and use it only as a last resort, when I start dropping bombs around that are likely to involve American boys in a war in Asia with 700 million Chinese.

So just for the moment I have not thought that we were ready for American boys to do the fighting for Asian boys. What I have been trying to do, with the situation that I found, was to get the boys in Viet-Nam to do their own fighting with our advice and with our equipment. That is the course we are following. So we are not going north and drop bombs at this stage of the game, and we are not going south and run out and leave it for the Communists to take over.

Now we have lost 190 American lives, and to each one of those 190 families this is a major war. We lost that many in Texas on the Fourth of July in wrecks. But I often wake up in the night and think about how many I could lose if I made a misstep.

When we retaliated in the Tonkin Gulf, we dropped bombs on their nests where they had their PT boats housed,²³ and we dropped them within 35 miles of the Chinese border. I don't know what you would think if they started dropping them 35 miles from your border, but I think that that is something you have to take into consideration.

So we are not going north and we are not going south; we are going to continue to try to get them to save their own freedom with their own men, with our leadership, and our officer direction, and such equipment as we can furnish them. We think that losing 190 lives in the period that we have been out there is bad. But it is not like 180,000 that we might lose the first month if we escalated that war.

²¹ The Soviet News Agency Tass reported on Sept. 21 that five unidentified ships had been involved in the incident and that three of them were sunk. *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XVI, No. 38, Oct. 14, 1964, p. 117. In response to a question at a news conference, Secretary of Defense McNamara attributed the leak of information disseminated by the news agency to the fact that the ships themselves did not fully understand what had happened, since the incident occurred at night and the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965-67, vol. II, pp. 1160-1169.

²² See ante, doc. IX-129, 132.

So we are trying somehow to evolve a way, as we have in some other places, where the North Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists will finally, after getting worn down, conclude that they will leave their neighbors alone. And if they do, we will come home to a narrow.

Document IX-142

United States Review of the Situation in South Viet-Nam: STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE WHITE HOUSE, DECEMBER 1, 1964²⁴

The President today reviewed the situation in South Viet-Nam with Ambassador [Maxwell D.] Taylor²⁵ and with the Secretaries of State [Dean Rusk] and Defense [Robert S. McNamara], the Director of Central Intelligence [John A. McCone], and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [Gen. Earle G. Wheeler].

Ambassador Taylor reported that the political situation in Saigon was still difficult but that the new government under Prime Minister [Tran Van] Huong was making a determined effort to strengthen national unity, to maintain law and order, and to press forward with the security program, involving a combination of political, economic, and military actions to defeat the Viet Cong insurgency.²⁶ The Ambassador also reported that, although the security problems have increased over the past few months in the northern provinces of South Viet-Nam, with uneven progress elsewhere, the strength of the armed forces of the government was being increased by improved recruiting and conscription and by the nearly 100-percent increase in the combat strength of the Vietnamese Air Force. Also, the government forces continue to inflict heavy losses on the Viet Cong.

On the economic front, Ambassador Taylor noted that agricultural output was continuing to increase, with U.S. assistance in fertilizers and pesticides playing an important role. He also noted that the prices of goods and the value of the piaster have remained remarkably stable. On the other hand, the Ambassador reported that increased interdiction of the communication routes by the Viet Cong is interfering to some extent with commerce within the country, and the recent typhoons and floods in central Viet-Nam have destroyed a large percentage of the crops and livestock in that region. The Vietnamese Government, with U.S. assistance, has moved promptly to organize a program which is bringing relief and rehabilitation to the stricken areas.

²⁴ Department of State Bulletin, Dec. 21, 1964, pp. 880-870.

²⁵ Ambassador Taylor arrived in the United States on Nov. 20 for consultations and returned to Saigon on Dec. 6.

²⁶ Tran Van Huong became Prime Minister of the Republic of Viet-Nam on Nov. 1, after appointment by Chief of State Phan Khanh Suan, under the council of the new Vietnamese constitution promulgated by the High National Council on Oct. 20. The High National Council was established on Sept. 20 to effect the change from a primary ministry to a more civilian government in South Viet-Nam (see ante, doc. IX-135-139).

THIS IS A
 REPRODUCED