

# Text of Fulbright's Statement and

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—Following are the text of a statement today by Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and excerpts from remarks on the Senate floor by Senator Wayne Morse, Democrat of Oregon:

## Fulbright Statement

Secretary of Defense McNamara charged yesterday that any suggestion that the United States induced the incident of 4 August as an excuse to attack North Vietnam was "monstrous." I agree with the Secretary that any suggestion would be monstrous, but it is equally monstrous to insinuate that any member of the committee holds such an opinion.

What Mr. McNamara has done is to impugn the integrity of the committee by suggesting that it believes there was a deliberate, planned conspiracy on his part to create the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

I want to make it perfectly clear that to the best of my knowledge no member of the Foreign Relations Committee either in statement, or suggestion, or by implication has indicated a belief that there was a deliberate conspiracy to create the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. I want also to make it clear that the staff study prepared for this committee contains no suggestion that there was a planned conspiracy involved.

Mr. McNamara does a disservice to this committee and to the truth to suggest that any member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee holds such an opinion. He suggests a straw man in order to knock it down.

In time, the committee will respond in full to the statement given to the press by Secretary McNamara. This statement was released, in spite of my request that he withhold it at least until the committee had an opportunity to consider it. I regret that Mr. McNamara saw fit to disclose only one side of the story.

The Secretary has not seen fit to declassify information relating to sonar on the Maddox; he has kept secret important communications from the task force that indicated doubt about the reported attack on Aug. 4, but released communications that served his purpose; he refers to highly classified information but releases that which serves his purposes.

## Deception Charged

Secretary McNamara's statement is a classic example of selective declassification of security material. Everything related to the Tonkin incidents is "secret" except that which the Pentagon deems should be made public. This, I believe, deceives the American public.



The New York Times  
Senator Wayne Morse



Senator J. W. Fulbright

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1968

## Excerpts From Morse's on

## Tonkin Incidents

Security classification is intended to protect the nation from an enemy, not to protect one branch of Government against another or the public, not to protect the American people from knowledge of mistakes.

I do not accept as valid the view of Mr. Arthur Sylvester, the former press officer of the Pentagon, that the Government has a right to

lie to the people of this country.

## Morse Remarks

I want to say in general comment first, Mr. President, that the Secretary of Defense's testimony before the committee on Aug. 6, 1964, was inaccurate in many respects and it was inaccurate yesterday in many respects.

I do not question his dedication to the policies of the Administration. In that respect, he is one of the most dedicated public servants we have. But he has been dedicated in carrying out wrong policies, and policies that are going to rise to the discredit of the history of the Republic.

Mr. President, on Aug. 6, 1964, the Secretary of Defense said before the Committee on Foreign Relations:

"Our Navy played absolutely no part in, was not associated with, was not aware of, any South Vietnam actions, if there were any."

I digress to ask, did he mean to imply there that the Secretary of Defense was not aware of them? He was aware of them and had been aware of them days before he testified on Aug. 6, 1964, and the record of his own department convicts him of that awareness.

He went on with his testimony, as follows:

"The Maddox was operating in international waters, was carrying out a routine patrol."

Mr. President, before I complete my remarks, I will point out that that was a misstatement. He calls it a "routine patrol." The Maddox was a spy ship at that time under instruction to stimulate the electronic instruments of North Vietnam to carry out a spying activity. That is not a routine patrol for a destroyer. That is the activity of a Pueblo or a Liberty or other spy ship.

May I say under the facts and circumstances that existed in the Gulf of Tonkin on Aug. 3, the time of the incident with the patrol boats of the North Vietnamese, we were in a position where, as I said in my speech on Aug. 5, and repeat today, the United States was a provocateur in the Gulf of Tonkin on Aug. 4, 1964, and history will so record. We were far beyond acting on a routine patrol with the Maddox on Aug. 4, 1964.

Going back to his statement:

"The Maddox was operat-

ing in international waters, was carrying out a routine patrol of the type we carry out all over the world at all times."

Mr. President, not with destroyers, and the Secretary knows it.

"It was not informed of, was not aware of, had no evidence of, and so far as I know today has no knowledge of any South Vietnamese actions in connection with the two islands that Senator Morse referred to."

He cannot explain it either on the basis of a lack of knowledge, for the records of his own Department of Defense at the time showed contrary evidence. What do the facts show?

With respect to the Navy's knowledge of South Vietnam's operation against North Vietnam, first, on July 15, 1964, in approving the patrol of the Maddox, the Joint Chiefs cautioned the naval commander-in-chief of the Pacific fleet that "activity in 34-A operation has increased."

Keep in mind that "34-A operations" is the identification mark for the South Vietnamese bombing boats fully equipped by the United States, with a staff trained by the United States Navy. Our Navy was not only well aware of the fact that those boats were going up to bomb those two islands three to six miles from the coast of North Vietnam, but our Navy was in constant contact with the operation and knew what was taking place step by step.

There is this message, for example, sent out to the naval commander-in-chief of the Pacific fleet:

"Activity in 34-A operations has increased."

These 34-A operations consisted of South Vietnamese patrol craft, the craft supplied by the United States, and with United States trained crews, bombarding for the first time North Vietnamese shore installations.

This clearly shows the Navy had knowledge of the South Vietnamese operation as early as July 15, 1964, and the Chief of Staff sent this message to the commander-in-chief in the Pacific. The Pentagon did not know about it? The Secretary of Defense did not know about it? Of course they did, step by step.

On July 10, the commander-in-chief of the United States forces in the Pacific authorized fleet units involved in the DeSoto patrol—and the DeSoto patrol is the name of the patrol of the Maddox at that time—to contact the

United States military assistance group in Vietnam for any additional intelligence required for prevention of mutual interference with 34-A operations and such communications arrangements as may be desired.

There is not one word of that by the Secretary of Defense in his testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations on Aug. 6, 1964.

Third, early in the morning of Aug. 4, 1964, the Commander in Chief of the Pacific fleet cabled the Maddox and in that cable pointed out:

"The above patrol will: (A) Clearly demonstrate our determination to continue these operations. (B) Possibly draw NVN [North Vietnamese Navy] PGMS [patrol boats] to northward away from area of 34-A ops. (C) Eliminate De Soto patrol interference with 34-A ops."

Why, it was a decoy operation. That is what that message means. You follow the course that will draw the North Vietnamese Navy northward away from the direction of the bombing of the islands of North Vietnam by the South Vietnamese boats equipped by the United States and a crew trained by the United States.

#### "Shoddy Performance"

History will record in regard to our involvement in the shoddy performance in the Gulf of Tonkin, where our officers in the Pentagon building apparently think it was proper to wave that flag that stands behind the presiding officer's desk into tatters and give the impression that because we were on the high seas we had a right to do what we want to do.

Do not forget that we can commit an act of aggression on the high seas. Do not forget that we can be provocateurs on the high seas. Being on the high seas does not justify a course of action that involves ourselves in the kind of operations that this course of action got us into on the Gulf of Tonkin incident, which led to the unfortunate resolution voted for by many sincere men in the Senate who believed—contrary to the views of the Senator from Alaska [Senator Gruening] and the Senator from Oregon [Senator Morse] at the time—that our hands were lily white.

Again this message shows that while the patrol at this time, consisting of both the Maddox and the Turner Joy, was ordered not to interfere directly—watch them for their semantics—was ordered not to interfere directly with the operations of the South Vietnamese, it might possibly assist by drawing patrol vessels of the North Vietnamese forces away from the South Vietnamese operations. This again shows that the Navy knew of the operations contrary to the testimony of Secretary McNamara.

Patrol instructions issued in January, 1964, in part were as follows:

"The closest approach to the Chicom [Chinese Communist] coast is 15 nautical miles. The closest point of approach to the North Vietnamese coast is 8 miles, CPA [closest point of approach] to the North Vietnamese islands is 4 miles.

If we hold to the point of view that we were bound only by a 3-mile limit, our ships were always in international waters. But do not forget

that there is another point of view—of the enemy, namely. They do not recognize the 3-mile limit. They take the position—the Secretary of Defense disputed it yesterday, but I think the record is perfectly clear—that North Vietnam along with China insist on a 12-mile limit.

There is no question about the fact that we were within that 12-mile limit from time to time during the operation of the so-called routine patrol of the destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin.

But, giving them all the benefit of the doubt. Secretary McNamara was accurate in stating that the Maddox was operating in international waters based upon a 3-mile limit, because that is viewed as being international waters by the United States but not so viewed by China, North Vietnam, North Korea, and many other countries.

If technically accurate, the Secretary's statement was, nevertheless, misleading, not only in reference to international waters but also in his testimony that the patrol was routine and nonprovocative.

Second, in performing this intelligence mission, the Maddox was authorized, during

the mission, to stimulate a North Vietnamese electronic reaction. I will say that under the circumstances, with the shelling taking place on North Vietnamese islands, with this kind of activity on the part of our destroyer, which was not a routine patrol, that that constituted an act of constructive aggression on the part of the United States, that it constituted picking a fight, that it constituted a hostile action, that it constituted an action on the part of the United States seeking to try to get the North Vietnamese to involve themselves in a dispute with us, entirely uncalled for, if peace was what we wanted, entirely uncalled for, if what we were trying to do was to find some way to bring an end the very unfortunate holocaust we got ourselves involved in.

#### Beginning of Escalation

That was really the beginning of the escalation into North Vietnam. I would have the American people remember that prior to the Gulf of Tonkin incident the Administration did not produce witnesses before the Committee on Foreign Relations

who testified about any infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam.

That infiltration began after the Gulf of Tonkin incident. We are going to have to take note of the date of the Gulf of Tonkin incident because, in my judgment, history will also record that our action in the Gulf of Tonkin made perfectly clear to the North Vietnamese that they would have to "go for broke."

As for the second incident itself, Mr. McNamara told the committee that there was no doubt that the attack on the Maddox and the Turner Joy had taken place as described. He even told the committee that two North Vietnamese PT boats had been destroyed. His testimony gave no indication that there was any doubt as to what had occurred. The reports, however, show that as the hours went by after the second incident there was increasing concern that the attack may not have taken place at all.

Within a few hours after the Maddox and Turner Joy had reported that the attacks had broken off, doubts began to grow about the incident.

The first reaction of skepticism about the incidents came from the naval communications center in the Philippines.

Subsequently, doubts came from the ships themselves. The operational commander of the two ships aboard the Maddox cabled that "entire action leaves many doubts except for apparent ambush at beginning. Suggest thorough reconnaissance by aircraft at daylight."

The commander-in-chief of the Pacific fleet, only a few hours before the retaliatory air strike on North Vietnam, sent a telegram to the operational commander of the Maddox and Turner Joy as follows:

"(1) Can you confirm absolutely that you were attacked? (2) Can you confirm sinking of PT boats? (3) Desire reply directly supporting evidence."

Well, after the message of the commander of the Pacific fleet, Adm. [Thomas H.] Moorer, urgently asking for the information, the President appeared on television to announce that the strikes against North Vietnam had commenced.