

Transcript of Tonkin Gulf Resolution (1964)

Eighty-eighth Congress of the United States of America AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the seventh day of January, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-four

Joint Resolution

To promote the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia.

Whereas naval units of the Communist regime in Vietnam, 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; and

Whereas these attackers are part of deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom; and

Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protest their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these people should be left in peace to work out their 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, That the Congress approves 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.

Section 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 of the United States 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.

Section 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.

[endorsements]

Transcription courtesy of [the Avalon Project](#) at Yale Law School

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution Questions

Source Questions

1. When was this resolution created?
2. From whom does this document come from?

Contextualization Questions

3. What prompted the United States to pass this resolution?

Close Reading

4. What is the purpose of the resolution?
5. Who are named as the aggressors?
6. What is the goal of the United States?
7. What are the powers that are granted to the president in the resolution?
8. When does this resolution expire?

Beyond the Text Questions

9. How could this resolution change the face of the Vietnam Conflict?
10. Why do you think this resolution of the United States of America mentions consent of the United Nations?