

Fulbright Investigates the Vietnam War Sources

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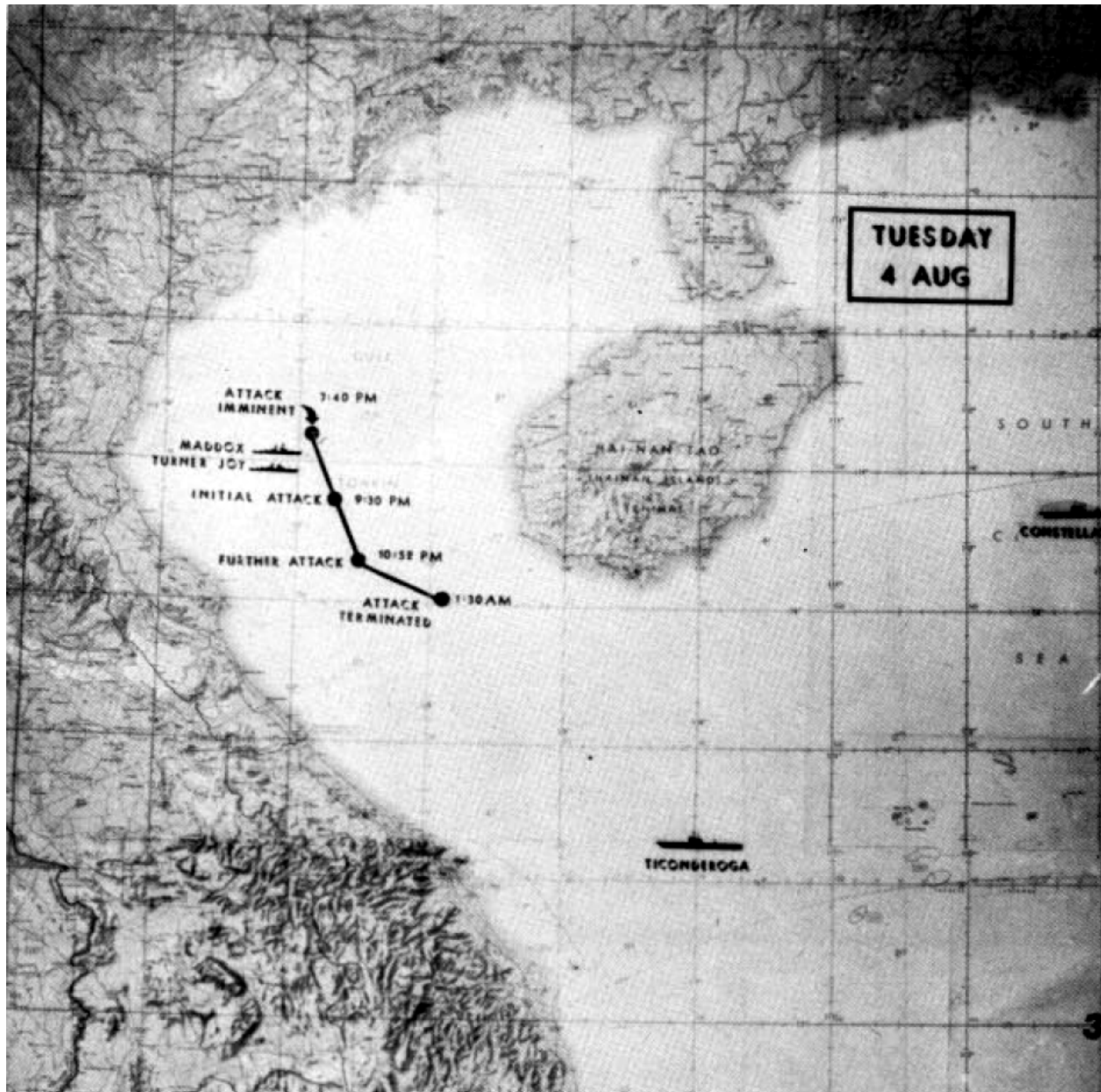
Source 1A

Map of Tonkin Gulf Second Tonkin Gulf Incident as reported by President Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to Congress (August 4, 1964)

U.S. Navy. (2016, June 11). File: Tonkin Gulf incident map of alleged attacks on 4 August 1964.png. Wikimedia Commons.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tonkin_Gulf_incident_map_of_alleged_attacks_on_4_August_1964.png

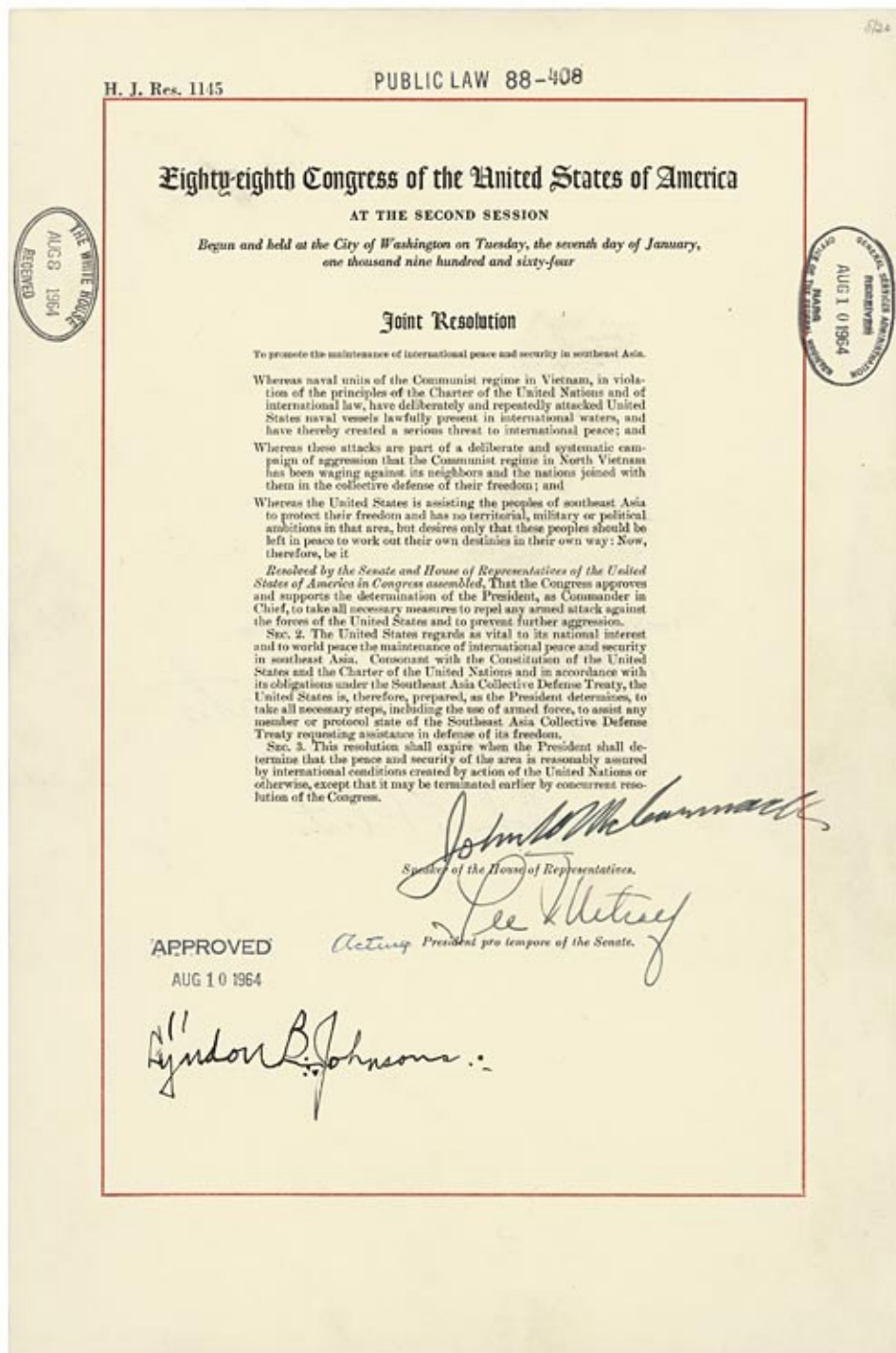
Note: The Ticonderoga is located at roughly the 17th Parallel (the border between North and South Vietnam)



Source 1C

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution

Tonkin Gulf Resolution; Public Law 88-408, 88th Congress, August 7, 1964; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives. Tonkin Gulf Resolution, Senate roll call tally sheet, 08/07/1964; SEN 88A-M1, Misc Roll Calls, 88th Congress, 2nd Session; Record Group 46, Records of the U. S. Senate; National Archives.



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]





A. Anonymous letter received by Senator Fulbright, January 2, 1968

Received January 2, 1968

SENATOR J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT,
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE,
*Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

Dear SENATOR: Keep up the good work on your investigation into the *alleged* second Tonkin Gulf incident. You certainly have us here in DOD scurrying around trying to cover up the incident and inundate you with facts to circumvent the main point. That is, that the so-called second attack of 4 August never took place.

United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. (2010). *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series)*, S. Prt. 111-23, Volume 20, 90-2, 1968, Made Public 2010, *. [Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified].

B. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the second Gulf of Tonkin incident. August 6, 1964



I reported on Monday in my briefings to the Congress that I believed this to be an isolated incident, perhaps a miscalculation or misunderstanding by the North Vietnamese, and we did not anticipate it would be repeated.

Contrary to my estimate it was repeated on August 4 at which time between three and six North Vietnamese patrol boats attacked the *Maddox* and the *Turner Joy* which had been sent to accompany it on its patrol course.

At this time the vessels were about 60 miles off the coast of North Vietnam. The attack occurred at night. It appeared to be a deliberate attack in the nature of an ambush.

Torpedoes were launched, automatic weapons fire was directed against the vessels. They returned the fire. Aircraft from the *Ticonderoga* and by this time the *Constellation* which had been brought down [deleted] to support the *Ticonderoga*, were sent over the vessels and returned the patrol boat's fire.

We believe that two of the patrol boats were destroyed as a result of the fire. Engagement was broken off after 2 to 3 hours of fire. The meetings in Washington you are familiar with, the following day.

The President decided that this deliberate attack, and it was clearly a deliberate attack, a preplanned attack, required a military response. We, therefore, launched in the daylight hours about noon-

United States Senate, Committee On Foreign Relations, & Committee on Armed Services. (1966). *Southeast Asia Resolution: Joint hearing before the committee on foreign relations and the committee on armed services United States Senate Eighty-Eighth Congress Second Session on A joint resolution to promote the maintenance of international peace and security on southeast Asia*. U.S. Government Printing Office.

C. Washington Post September 24, 1964

Critics See Phantom in Tonkin Incident

By Warren Unna
Staff Reporter

News Analysis

ships did not fire at the while Hanoi first told the resent enemy craft with

By Warren Unna, S. R. (1964, Sep 24). Critics See Phantom in Tonkin Incident: News Analysis. The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973)

<https://proxy.lib.wayne.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/critics-see-phantom-tonkin-incident/docview/142160719/se-2>



D. Senator Frank Lausche of Ohio on the floor of the Senate, Aug. 5, 1964

Mr. LAUSCHE. Mr. President, I desire to speak briefly concerning the grave problem facing us in southeast Asia.

The course adopted by the President is not of his choosing, but has been forced upon him and our Nation by the offenses committed by the Communists of North Vietnam. Our ship that was attacked was in international waters, where it had a right to be free from attacks by North Vietnam or any other nation. Neither in the interests of the security of our country nor in the proper maintenance of our honor can we afford a course of action other than the one adopted.

Southeast Asia is our first line of defense; when an enemy attacks us there, he is, in principle, attacking us on our native land. To pull out of southeast Asia would be to surrender that entire area to the Communists. Not only would it mean the capture of South Vietnam and the other lands that once were French Indochina, but it also would definitely endanger all of the lands occupied by friends of the West, including the Philippines and Australia. The stakes are

United States Senate, Committee On Foreign Relations, & Committee on Armed Services. (1966). Southeast Asia Resolution: Joint hearing before the committee on foreign relations and the committee on armed services United States Senate Eighty-Eighth Congress Second Session on A joint resolution to promote the maintenance of international peace and security on southeast Asia. U.S. Government Printing Office.



E. Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Aug. 6, 1964

Well now, the important aspect of this resolution is, I venture to suggest, not so much in the constitutional field as in the broad political field here and abroad. We have, since 1945, been engaged in an effort to bring about a peaceful world situation. The main thrust of that has necessarily been to bring to a halt the kind of armed aggression and subversion and infiltration which have come, both as a matter of doctrine and as a matter of practice, out of the Communist world.

United States Senate, Committee On Foreign Relations, & Committee on Armed Services. (1966). Southeast Asia Resolution: Joint hearing before the committee on foreign relations and the committee on armed services United States Senate Eighty-Eighth Congress Second Session on A joint resolution to promote the maintenance of international peace and security on southeast Asia. U.S. Government Printing Office.





F. Staff memorandum written for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee SUBJECT: The 1964 incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin January 17, 1968

**United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

January 17, 1968

STAFF MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The 1964 Incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin

This memorandum concerns three alleged instances of North Vietnamese attacks on American destroyers in the summer and fall of 1964.

The *first* attack occurred on August 2, 1964. The United States and Hanoi agree this attack took place. The only questions raised are whether the North Vietnamese attack on the *Maddox* occurred while it was on a "routine patrol" on the high seas as the committee was told.

The *second* alleged attack was on August 4. The question here is "Did this attack occur?" This is important because *but for* this attack the United States would not have retaliated against North Vietnam and there would presumably have been no urgent request for the Tonkin Resolution.

The *third* alleged attack was on September 17/18. It is mentioned here because after a full investigation the Navy concluded that the attack did *not* occur.

*United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. (2010). Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series), S. Prt. 111-23, Volume 20, 90-2, 1968, Made Public 2010, *. [Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified].*

G. Staff memorandum written for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee SUBJECT: The 1964 incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin January 17, 1968



Mr. McNamara's contention that the *Maddox* was "engaged in a routine patrol in international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin" is not an accurate description of the *Maddox's* real mission during late July and early August of 1964. Moreover, in responding to Senator Morse's suggestion at the hearing on the resolution that the *Maddox* was somehow involved in a prior South Vietnamese attack on the North Vietnamese island of Hon Me, Mr. McNamara said:

. Our Navy played absolutely no part in, was not associated with, was not aware of, any South Vietnam actions, if there were any. I want to make that very clear to you. The *Maddox* was operating in *international waters*, was carrying out a *routine patrol of the type we carry out all over the world at all times*. 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. (Hearings on the Southeast Asia Resolution, August 6, 1964, p.23)

The "routine patrol" description is not accurate. The Department of Defense materials reveal that the *Maddox* was engaged in an electronics spying mission along the North Vietnamese and Chinese coasts. The basic instruction for this mission (the code name

*United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. (2010). Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series), S. Prt. 111-23, Volume 20, 90-2, 1968, Made Public 2010, *. [Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified].*

H. Washington Post, August 16, 1964



The Tonkin Gulf Snafu

Anderson Says Maddox Didn't Know Saigonese Were Raiding

By Jack Anderson

NOW THAT all the facts are in regarding the recent Vietnamese crisis, diplomats are drawing one very definite conclusion: the White House is no place for a trigger-happy President.

There is even some quiet discussion among our NATO allies that the Johnson Administration was premature in retaliating so quickly against North Viet-Nam.

lected to inform the U.S. Seventh Fleet, which polices these waters.

THE DESTROYER Maddox, meanwhile, had entered Tonkin Gulf on a routine ELINT mission. This is the abbreviation for "electronic intelligence" and means that the Maddox carried super-sensitive electronic gear which could scout the North Vietnamese coast from outside the international boundaries.

for three torpedo boats to attack.

The Maddox skipper, Cmdr. Herbert Ogier, sounded general quarters. For two hours, the crew waited at their battle stations while they tracked the approaching Soviet-made PT boats on the destroyer's radar screen.

COMMANDER Ogier kept the destroyer's stern turned toward the approaching boats in order to present as

By J. A. (1964, Aug 16). *The Tonkin Gulf Snafu: Anderson Says Maddox Didn't Know Saigonese Were Raiding*. *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (1959-1973)
<https://proxy.lib.wayne.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/tonkin-gulf-snafu/docview/142176364/se-2>

I. Top Secret Paper Prepared by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (McNaughton)

Note: this was only given to Fulbright in 1971, and only by a whistleblower named Daniel Ellsberg



Washington, March 10, 1965.

ACTION FOR SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US aims:

70%—To avoid a humiliating US defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor).

20%—To keep SVN (and then adjacent) territory from Chinese hands.

10%—To permit the people of SVN to enjoy a better, freer way of life.

Also—To emerge from crisis without unacceptable taint from methods used.

Not—To "help a friend," although it would be hard to stay if asked out.

Department of State, Vietnam Negotiating Files: Lot 69 D 412, Project Mayflower. Top Secret; Sensitive. Copies were sent to McGeorge Bundy, Unger, McNamara, and Vance.

J. President Johnson's Video Address to the nation, August 4, 1964



TheLBJLibrary. (2012). President Johnson's Vietnam Address, 8/4/64. MP498. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dc9qJvpV8xo>

K. Washington Post, June 3, 1966



Simpson Demands Fulbright Explain Remark on Tonkin

By Bryce Nelson

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. Milward L. Simpson (R-Wyo.) demanded yesterday that Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) explain his characterization of the 1964 Tonkin Gulf naval battle as "very questionable."

Fulbright made his statement about the character of the North Vietnamese attack on U.S. ships in the Tonkin Gulf in August, 1964, in his questioning of Secretary of State Dean Rusk in a committee hearing on May 9.

In a Senate speech, Simpson said that he was "inclined to accept the White House version of Tonkin Gulf" although "I will certainly acknowledge that utter candor is not a hallmark of this Administration."

By Bryce Nelson Washington Post, Staff Writer. (1966, Jun 03). Simpson Demands Fulbright Explain Remark on Tonkin. The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973) <https://proxy.lib.wayne.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/simpson-demands-fulbright-explain-remark-on/docview/142671864/se-2>

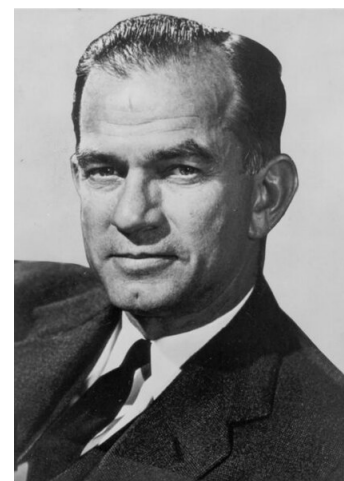
Source 2A

Who Was J. William Fulbright?

Seventy-Third Congress, 2nd Session. (1934, June 16). Report of the Committee on Banking and Currency. Senate.gov.
Retrieved September 20, 2024, from <https://www.senate.gov/about/resources/pdf/pecora-final-report.pdf>

From 1966 to 1971, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a series of oversight hearings about the Vietnam War. Popularly called the “Fulbright hearings” after its chair, Arkansas Democrat Senator J. William Fulbright, these televised congressional hearings educated Congress and the American public about unknown facts, forced greater scrutiny of U.S. military actions, exposed misrepresentations by the executive branch, and helped shift public opinion against the war. The hearings illustrate the powerful role that congressional inquiries can play in informing the public about their government and shaping public opinion.

Sen. Fulbright was a well-known, popular senator when he launched the hearings¹. A foreign policy expert, he chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for 16 years from 1959 to 1974, becoming the longest serving chair of that committee in Senate history.² Sen. Fulbright’s relationship with President Johnson before he started to investigate the Vietnam war was a warm one. They regarded one another as mutual friends, and it was Fulbright himself who led the charge for quick passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in the senate.³ When Fulbright began to publicly question the wisdom of the Vietnam war and Gulf of Tonkin Resolution however, their relationship soured. President Johnson viewed Sen. Fulbright’s hearings and public statements as



Sen. J. William Fulbright

Source: US. Senate



Sen. J. William Fulbright and Lyndon B. Johnson in Washington DC, June 21, 1960.

Source: Christie’s, NY.

disloyal, especially given that Sen. Fulbright was a former supporter and from the same political party. Sen. Fulbright once remarked, “With a man like President Johnson, you either went along or you got off. He didn’t tolerate differences of opinion very easily.”⁴

At the same time, Sen. Fulbright told a journalist that he was convinced President Johnson had engaged in deception when it came to the Gulf of Tonkin: “I personally feel that the committee, the public and [me] personally were duped, that we were lied to.... You can’t have an opportunity to exercise judgment if the facts are misrepresented.”

¹ Fulbright-1-sized.jpg. (2023, August 3). Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fulbright-1-sized.jpg>

² U.S. Senate. (n.d.). J. William Fulbright: A featured biography. https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_Fulbright.htm

³ Yergin, D. (1974, November 24). Fulbright’s last frustration: The great dissenter finally found himself a compatible Secretary of State. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/11/24/archives/fulbrights-last-frustration-the-great-dissenter-finally-found.html>

⁴ U.S. Senate. (n.d.). J. William Fulbright: A featured biography. https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_Fulbright.htm

