



**Foreign Relations of the
United States, 1969–1976**

Volume VI

**Vietnam,
January 1969–
July 1970**

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Preface

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series presents the official documentary historical record of major foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the United States Government. The Historian of the Department of State is charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series. The staff of the Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, under the direction of the General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, plans, researches, compiles, and edits the volumes in the series. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg first promulgated official regulations codifying specific standards for the selection and editing of documents for the series on March 26, 1925. These regulations, with minor modifications, guided the series through 1991.

Public Law 102-138, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, established a new statutory charter for the preparation of the series which was signed by President George H.W. Bush on October 28, 1991. Section 198 of P.L. 102-138 added a new Title IV to the Department of State's Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 4351, et seq.).

The statute requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant United States diplomatic activity. The volumes of the series should include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major foreign policy decisions and actions of the United States Government. The statute also confirms the editing principles established by Secretary Kellogg: the *Foreign Relations* series is guided by the principles of historical objectivity and accuracy; records should not be altered or deletions made without indicating in the published text that a deletion has been made; the published record should omit no facts that were of major importance in reaching a decision; and nothing should be omitted for the purposes of concealing a defect in policy. The statute also requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be published not more than 30 years after the events recorded. The editors are convinced that this volume meets all regulatory, statutory, and scholarly standards of selection and editing.

Structure and Scope of the Foreign Relations Series

This volume is part of a subseries of volumes of the *Foreign Relations* series that documents the most important issues in the foreign policy of the administrations of Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford. This volume documents U.S. policy towards the war in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from January 1969 to July 1970.

*Focus of Research and Principles of Selection for Foreign Relations,
1969–1976, Volume VI*

The scope of this volume is different from previous volumes on Vietnam in the *Foreign Relations* series. For the years 1955–1968 the series produced volumes exclusively on U.S. policy towards Vietnam and documented U.S. policy towards Laos and Cambodia in separate volumes. With the Nixon administration's decision to take the war to the enemy in Cambodia and integrate more fully the secret war in Laos into its strategy for Vietnam, this format was no longer valid. This volume covers Vietnam in the context of the larger war that included the conflicts in Laos and Cambodia, and in the case of the former, also the role of Thailand in Laos. Consequently, the editors had to make choices about what to cover. When Vietnam was the main concern of President Nixon and his principal advisers—primarily Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger and his NSC Staff; Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker in Saigon; Commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams; and Chief Paris Peace Talks negotiator, Henry Cabot Lodge—the focus is on Vietnam strategy, planning and operations. The focus of the volume later shifts to the issue of the deterioration of the secret war in Laos in March 1970. In March and April 1970, after the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia and his replacement by pro-American General Lon Nol, the volume moves its focus to Cambodia, culminating with the U.S.-South Vietnamese invasion of that country in an effort to attack the North Vietnamese troops in their sanctuaries. The volume concludes with the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Cambodia.

In addition to this shifting emphasis on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, the volume has as one of its principal themes the search for a negotiated settlement to the Vietnam War. In early 1969, the Nixon administration attempted to use the private sessions of the Paris Peace Talks as a potential venue for serious negotiations. When the administration concluded that this format was not productive, peace talks shifted to secret meetings between Henry Kissinger and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam Chief of the Paris delegation, Xuan Thuy and the Special Adviser, Le Duc Tho. The volume covers these initial secret talks in detail. Also, as part of the Nixon strategy for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger pressed the Soviet Union to moderate the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's demands in the peace negotiations by linking US-USSR détente with the supposed success of their efforts.

President Nixon was determined to use force to encourage the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to agree to a settlement in Vietnam. Coverage of war strategy to this end is also a theme of the volume but only in the broadest sense. Policy decisions to secretly bomb Cambo-

dia, to expand the bombing in Laos, to request and expedite the sending of Thai troops for fighting in Laos, to shore up the Lon Nol government, and to attack the North Vietnamese in Cambodia are documented as they reach the President and his principal advisers for decision. The implementation and the course of these campaigns are covered only as they are reported to the President or other senior officials. U.S. relations with the Republic of Vietnam, a major theme of many previous Vietnam volumes, is a secondary subject in this volume mainly because South Vietnam was in a period of relative political and social quiet at the time. Consultation with President Thieu and Vice President Ky is emphasized when it was significant. Nixon's desire to use covert operations more effectively in support of the war in Vietnam is documented, as is a program of clandestine support for the creation of a grass roots political organization to support President Thieu.

The question of the October 1969 nuclear alert and its relationship to the war in Vietnam is covered only briefly in this volume. Full coverage of the alert will be printed in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, Volume XXXIV, National Security Policy, 1969–1972.

Editorial Methodology

The documents are presented chronologically according to Washington time. Memoranda of conversation are placed according to the time and date of the conversation, rather than the date the memorandum was drafted.

Editorial treatment of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series follows Office style guidelines, supplemented by guidance from the General Editor. The documents are reproduced as exactly as possible, including marginalia or other notations, which are described in the footnotes. Texts are transcribed and printed according to accepted conventions for the publication of historical documents within the limitations of modern typography. A heading has been supplied by the editors for each document included in the volume. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are retained as found in the original text, except that obvious typographical errors are silently corrected. Other mistakes and omissions in the documents are corrected by bracketed insertions: a correction is set in italic type; an addition in roman type. Words or phrases underlined in the source text are printed in italics. Abbreviations and contractions are preserved as found in the original text, and a list of abbreviations is included in the front matter of each volume.

Bracketed insertions are also used to indicate omitted text that deals with an unrelated subject (in roman type) or that remains classified after declassification review (in italic type). The amount and, where possible, the nature of the material not declassified has been noted by indicating the number of lines or pages of text that were omitted.

Entire documents withheld for declassification purposes have been accounted for and are listed with headings, source notes, and number of pages not declassified in their chronological place. All brackets that appear in the original text are so identified in footnotes.

The first footnote to each document indicates the source of the document, original classification, distribution, and drafting information. This note also provides the background of important documents and policies and indicates whether the President or his major policy advisers read the document.

Editorial notes and additional annotation summarize pertinent material not printed in the volume, indicate the location of additional documentary sources, provide references to important related documents printed in other volumes, describe key events, and provide summaries of and citations to public statements that supplement and elucidate the printed documents. Information derived from memoirs and other first-hand accounts has been used when appropriate to supplement or explicate the official record.

The numbers in the index refer to document numbers rather than to page numbers.

Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, established under the *Foreign Relations* statute, reviews records, advises, and makes recommendations concerning the *Foreign Relations* series. The Historical Advisory Committee monitors the overall compilation and editorial process of the series and advises on all aspects of the preparation and declassification of the series. The Historical Advisory Committee does not necessarily review the contents of individual volumes in the series, but it makes recommendations on issues that come to its attention and reviews volumes as it deems necessary to fulfill its advisory and statutory obligations.

Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act Review

Under the terms of the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act (PRMPA) of 1974 (44 U.S.C. 2111 note), the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has custody of the Nixon Presidential historical materials. The requirements of the PRMPA and implementing regulations govern access to the Nixon Presidential historical materials. The PRMPA and implementing public access regulations require NARA to review for additional restrictions in order to ensure the protection of the privacy rights of former Nixon White House officials, since these officials were not given the opportunity to separate their personal materials from public papers. Thus, the PRMPA and implementing public access regulations require NARA to formally notify the Nixon Estate and former Nixon White House

staff members that the agency is scheduling for public release Nixon White House historical materials. The Nixon Estate and former White House staff members have 30 days to contest the release of Nixon historical materials in which they were a participant or are mentioned. Further, the PRMPA and implementing regulations require NARA to segregate and return to the creator of files private and personal materials. All *Foreign Relations* volumes that include materials from NARA's Nixon Presidential Materials Project are processed and released in accordance with the PRMPA.

Declassification Review

The Office of Information Programs and Services, Bureau of Administration, conducted the declassification review for the Department of State of the documents published in this volume. The review was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth in Executive Order 12958 on Classified National Security Information and applicable laws.

The principle guiding declassification review is to release all information, subject only to the current requirements of national security as embodied in law and regulation. Declassification decisions entailed concurrence of the appropriate geographic and functional bureaus in the Department of State, other concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, and the appropriate foreign governments regarding specific documents of those governments. The declassification review of this volume, which began in 2000 and was completed in 2003, resulted in the decision to withhold 1 document in full, excise a paragraph or more in 6 documents, and make minor excisions of less than a paragraph in 28 documents.

The Office of the Historian is confident, on the basis of the research conducted in preparing this volume and as a result of the declassification review process described above, that the documentation and editorial notes presented here provide an accurate and comprehensive—given limitations of space—account of the Nixon administration's Vietnam war policy from January 1969 to July 1970.

Acknowledgments

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of the Library of Congress was responsible for expediting access to the Kissinger Papers, including the transcripts of Henry Kissinger's telephone conversations. The editors were able to use the Kissinger Papers, including the transcripts of telephone conversations, with the kind permission of Henry Kissinger. The editors would like to also thank Sandy Meagher for her valuable assistance in expediting the use of files of the Department of Defense.

Carolyn Yee collected the documentation for this volume for 1969, made an initial selection, and edited the documents she selected based on the assumption that the volume would only cover 1969. Edward C. Keefer, then Chief of the Asia and Americas Division, selected the documents for 1970, and revised and reedited the entire volume with its current coverage of just over a year and a half. Susan C. Weetman, Chief of the Declassification and Publishing Division, coordinated the declassification review. Vicki E. Futscher and Florence M. Segura did the copy and technical editing. Max Franke prepared the index.

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