

Friday, March 8, 1968
1:30 p.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Russ Wiggins just called. In connection with yesterday's Senate debate on Vietnam, he said:

-- for the Congress to intervene with respect to the number of troops would be unprecedented and most unwise;

-- on the other hand, it may be proper for the Congress to vote on either a new resolution or a repeal of Tonkin Gulf;

-- it would be quite proper to make those who were now "wringing their hands," "shedding crocodile tears," "caterwauling," and expressing their "concern" to be forced to stand up like men and vote one way or the other. He does not believe, that, in the end, there would be more than 12 votes for the repeal of Tonkin Gulf, especially at a time when an important battle was being fought;

-- in addition, he thinks that there are some in the Congress who feel it would be constitutionally proper at this time to have an expression of the will of the Congress.

Russ said he was not absolutely sure in his mind on this matter, but he would think it important -- if possible -- to force the dissenters to vote rather than simply make a lot of noise.

He asked me my view. I told him that I had no firm personal judgment because I did not know enough about the Congress. I did tell him that I would pass his views along to the President.

W. W. Rostow