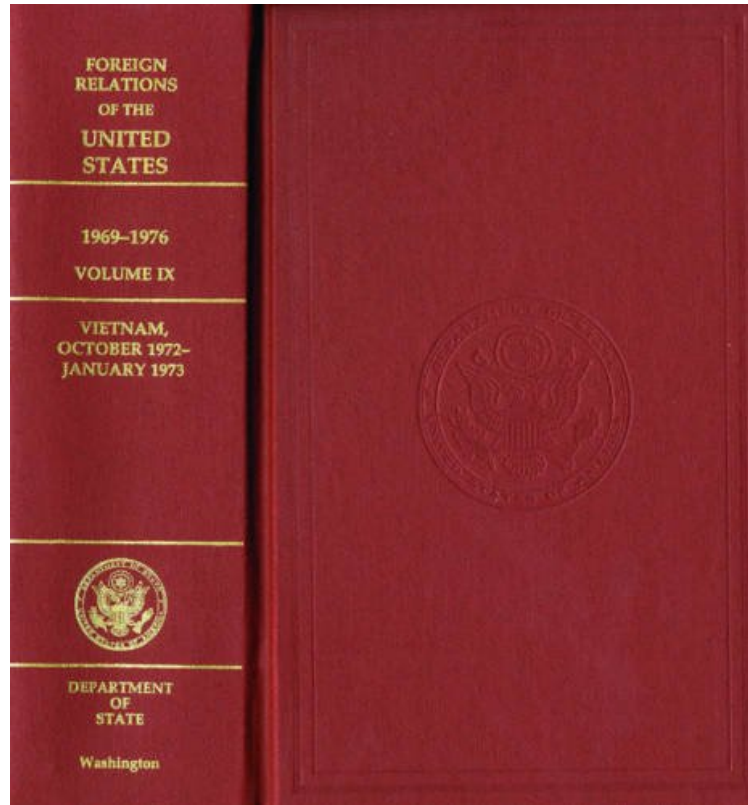


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The Easter Offensive, and its ramifications, represents the most significant event in Indochina for U.S. policy in this period, and documentary coverage of the event dominates the volume, concentrating mainly on what happened in North and South Vietnam, policy formulation and decision making in Washington, and the negotiations in Paris. Only a very small number of documents relate to events and policy in Laos and Cambodia, and then only as they relate to events and policy in Vietnam. Documents in this volume examine the link between force and diplomacy in U.S. national security policy toward the Vietnam war. In the period the volume covers, force drove diplomacy. Only by

recognizing this can the process by which America's Vietnam war policy was formulated and implemented be fully understood. Controlling the process was a small circle of men, led by President Richard M. Nixon, and which included the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Henry A. Kissinger; the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs, Major General Alexander M. Haig; and a few National Security Council officials trusted by Kissinger. Sources for this volume include messages and memoranda that illuminate the decision-making process in a bureaucracy. They can be found in Nixon's papers, in Kissinger's papers, in military and diplomatic records in the National Archives, and in other repositories. Transcripts of Nixon's taped conversations with senior policy advisers, as well as a collection of transcripts of Kissinger's telephone conversations, provide an additional level of detail. A third collection, less well known than the other two but almost as significant, is that of Admiral Thomas Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and includes diary excerpts and telephone conversations. This volume, therefore, documents the implementation of U.S. policy toward Vietnam during the Easter Offensive more thoroughly than ever before.