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**THE BURDENS OF A WORLD POWER:
THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION AND DECOLONISATION IN
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, 1955-1960**

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RÉSUMÉ

À la fin des années cinquante, une vague nationaliste déferle sur l'Afrique sub-saharienne. L'administration Eisenhower (1953-1961) se trouve soudainement déchirée entre ses obligations envers l'Europe occidentale et les aspirations autonomistes des États africains nouvellement émancipés. Ces derniers reprochent à Washington ses liens privilégiés avec les métropoles et sa vision manichéenne du monde, dominée par la Guerre froide. Soucieuse de ménager l'appui de ces nouvelles nations, mais réticente à l'idée de sacrifier ses bonnes relations avec l'Europe, l'administration Eisenhower se lance prudemment dans l'aventure africaine, élaborant des programmes d'aide aux nouveaux États et adoptant une politique plus flexible envers le nationalisme et le neutralisme africains. L'année 1960, qui voit l'émancipation de dix-sept pays africains et l'irruption du problème congolais, va amener Washington à remettre en question certains aspects de sa politique eurocentrique et l'inciter à entamer des mesures plus dynamiques afin d'attirer la faveur de ces nouveaux États africains.

ABSTRACT

At the end of the 1950s, the African continent was overwhelmed by a torrent of nationalism, amidst an already tense international situation. The Eisenhower Administration (1953-1961) soon found itself torn along the lines of the colonial debate, caught between its traditional obligations to America's Western European allies and the political aspirations of the nascent African countries. These new states were often critical of Washington's close ties to the metropolitan powers and were suspicious of U.S. Cold War priorities. In an effort to sway the new African nations, the Eisenhower Administration cautiously elaborated an African policy, establishing a basic diplomatic framework, devising foreign aid programs and adopting a more flexible stance toward African nationalism and neutralism. The year 1960, which witnessed the independence of seventeen African states and the eruption of the Congo quagmire, induced Washington to question its Eurocentric policies and to undertake a more dynamic approach to African nationalism in the hope of preserving Western influence over the continent.

FOREWORD

I wish to acknowledge with sincere gratitude the patient guidance and support provided to me by my research director, Professor Bernard Lemelin. Since I started as a graduate student just over two years ago, I have benefited immensely from his thoughtful criticism as well as his tireless dedication to scholarship. In addition, his efforts to provide me with financial assistance in the form of research and teaching assistantships were instrumental in allowing me to finish this undertaking within reasonable delay.

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C.D.
Montréal, November 17, 2000

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIA:	Central Intelligence Agency
G.O.P.:	“The Grand Old Party,” i.e. the Republican Party
ICA:	International Cooperation Administration
MSP:	Mutual Security Program
NSC:	National Security Council
OCB:	Operations Coordination Board
UN:	United Nations
UNGA:	United Nations General Assembly
USIA:	United States Information Agency

INTRODUCTION

Either the spread of Soviet influence or colonialism's downfall - or both - was in the background of virtually every important international happening during the postwar years.¹

Six months before Dwight D. Eisenhower ascended to the presidency of the United States in 1953, a nationalist revolution occurred in Egypt which forebode the end of European domination over the African continent. The metropolitan powers, weakened and impoverished by the devastation of the Second World War, could no longer maintain their dwindling control over their Asian and African empires. The war had also unleashed a maelstrom of political ideas in what would soon be termed the "Third World"; imperial motives as well as racial assumptions were questioned by a new generation of Western-educated nationalist leaders who often became radical advocates of anti-imperialism and anticolonialism.²

The first major manifestation of this trend was the Bandung Conference of 1955, which united twenty-nine independent and nearly-independent countries of Asia and Africa. Although the conference produced few concrete results, it did foster the foundations for a common Third World consciousness and independence of thought in a world dominated by a bipolar struggle.³ The Suez crisis, the following year, was probably the sternest reminder to the colonial powers that Third World nationalism was on the march in Africa. If the emergence of nationalist aspirations was a bit slower in Africa south of the Sahara than in North Africa or in Asia, the independence movement nonetheless blossomed following the independence of Ghana (the former British colony of the Gold Coast), which was the first

¹ Henry Cabot Lodge, *As It Was: An Inside View of Politics and Power in the '50s and '60s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976), p. 14.

² See chapter 4 in S. Neil MacFarlane, *Superpower Rivalry and Third World Radicalism: The Idea of National Liberation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 42-130.

³ Robert A. Mortimer, *The Third World Coalition in International Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 9; George McT. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference: Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956). The four countries from sub-Saharan Africa that were present at the Bandung Conference were Ethiopia, the Gold Coast [Ghana], Liberia, and the Sudan.

nation in black Africa to attain self-government in the 1950s.⁴ These years witnessed the birth among African intellectuals of Pan-Africanism, *negritude*, and the call for the projection of an “African personality” in world affairs.⁵

Throughout history, the United States had paid very little attention to Africa, as the “Dark Continent” was considered to be Europe’s bailiwick. Even today, most Americans maintain what one scholar has called a “*National Geographic*” image of the African continent.⁶ Strategic considerations had elevated Africa to a position of importance during the Second World War, but American official interest in the continent declined steeply in the postwar period. Accordingly, U.S. policymakers gladly eschewed involvement in African affairs, and managed most of their dealings with Africa through European diplomatic and economic channels. As historians Peter Duignan and L.H Gann have observed, “[t]he ways to Dakar, Lagos, and Leopoldville still lay respectively through Paris, London, and Brussels.”⁷ United States non-involvement was also induced by what contemporaries considered “traditional American anticolonialism,” Washington’s dominion over the Philippines and Puerto Rico notwithstanding. But U.S. support for anticolonialism, which had reached a watershed during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s tenure of office, had, during the Truman and Eisenhower presidencies, been watered down to suit Cold War concerns.⁸ Washington’s policy toward the wave of independence movements in the Third World would have to be

⁴ Ghana achieved independence in March 1957. It is interesting to note that the Sudan had been independent since 1955, but was considered an exception as the country had formerly been governed by a British-Egyptian condominium. Liberia and Ethiopia were already independent nations, the former since 1847. Ethiopia had never been colonised by a European nation, the Italian occupation of 1935-1941 notwithstanding.

⁵ Thomas Hovet, Jr., *Africa in the United Nations* ([Evanston]: Northwestern University Press, 1963), pp. 26-34.

⁶ Peter J. Schraeder and Brian Endless, “The Media and Africa: The Portrayal of Africa in the *New York Times* (1955-1995),” *Issue*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1998), p. 29; also see Michael McCarthy, *Dark Continent: Africa as Seen by Americans* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. xvi.

⁷ Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, *The United States and Africa: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 285.

⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt’s anticolonialism was best exemplified by his wide-ranging interpretation of the Third Article of the Atlantic Charter (1941), which pertained to the self-determination for dependent peoples. This, of course, led to many tensions between the United States and the British Foreign Office during the postwar years. This topic has already received ample scholarly attention. See, especially, William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); John J. Sbraga, “The Anticolonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Reappraisal,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 101, no. 1 (Spring 1986), pp. 65-84; J. E. Williams, “The Joint Declaration on the Colonies: An Issue in Anglo-American Relations, 1942-1944,” *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1976), pp. 267-292.

balanced between American ideals of the right to self-government and the United States' incipient geopolitical and strategic concerns.

The Korean War was the first manifestation of a new cold war stalemate which ensured that the epic struggle between the two great powers would now be waged on the outer fringes of the European theatre, in Asia and Africa. The Third World had become an arena of proxy conflict for the confrontation of the two superpowers, through overt as well as covert means.⁹ Containment had halted the Soviet advance in Europe, but Washington feared that it might not prevent Moscow's advance in those parts of the world that had cause to remember – and to resent – what Europe had done to them over several centuries of colonial rule. African and Asian radicalism soon left Americans worried that “[t]he Cold War could yet be lost, so to speak, ‘by the back door.’”¹⁰ The Cold War and decolonisation were further intertwined because many of the Third World nationalist movements, radicalised by years of colonial rule, sought more than political independence. Many wanted freedom from economic exploitation, the elimination of Western influence and a voice in foreign affairs.¹¹ This was the case in Africa, where by the late 1950s, political ferment had precipitated events. By the end of 1960, in one of the most staggering developments in contemporary history, nineteen sub-Saharan countries had achieved nationhood.¹²

The United States would have gladly pursued a policy of noninvolvement toward the African continent had there not emerged a clash between African concerns for decolonisation and American goals in the Cold War. Yet, according to one contemporary observer, Africa, by the beginning of the 1960s, had “replaced the Middle East as the world’s chief trouble centre, and [was] likely to remain the main area of contest between West and East for many years to come.”¹³ Very quickly, Washington realised that it would be a dangerous gamble to leave the

⁹ Bruce Cummings, “The American Century and the Third World,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 23, no. 2 (Spring 1999), p. 363.

¹⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Know Now: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 152

¹¹ David Painter, “Explaining U.S. Relations with the Third World,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Summer 1995), p. 533.

¹² Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *American Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 245.

¹³ Walter Z. Laqueur, “Communism and Nationalism in Tropical Africa,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 4 (July 1961), p. 610.

responsibility of keeping Soviet influence out of Africa to Western Europe.¹⁴ Besides the backdrop of the Cold War context and the disintegration of the colonial system, which most observers agree was the main impetus for the rise of U.S. interest in Africa, Washington was also concerned with securing its access to the vast mineral deposits on the African continent. In the 1950s, Americans were beginning to recognise that natural resources were exhaustible and U.S. policymakers wanted to make sure that the precious mines of the Congo would remain in Western hands.¹⁵

The Eisenhower Administration moved rapidly to fill the vacuum left by the decline of Western influence in Africa. Unfortunately, it was hardly prepared to meet the challenges posed by the conundrum of African nationalism. Washington quickly discovered that it would be rough sledding to forge a policy between the rigid necessities of Cold War alliance politics and America's self-professed Wilsonian ideals of self-determination.¹⁶ How, then, did the Eisenhower Administration meet the challenge of African nationalism?

Since the beginning of the 1980s, an impressive number of studies have been published on the Eisenhower Administration's domestic and foreign policies. Spurred by the declassification of a monumental collection of documents in the late 1970s and early 1980s, scholars visiting the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, quickly painted a new image of the Eisenhower presidency. The first and foremost benefactor of what has been called "Eisenhower revisionism" was the thirty-fourth president himself. Viewed by his contemporaries as a bumbling and inarticulate politician, a lazy and ineffective leader who delegated too many responsibilities to his close advisers and who spent most of his energies on the golf course, Eisenhower soon emerged, through the writings of the revisionists, as a shrewd and astute politician who used behind-the-scene "hidden-hand" tactics to achieve his

¹⁴ Luc Durand-Réville, "La politique des États-Unis à l'égard de l'Afrique," *Revue des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, vol. 140, no. 3 (1985), p. 447.

¹⁵ Rupert Emerson, "The Character of American Interests in Africa," in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., *The United States and Africa*, (New York: The American Assembly, 1958), pp. 2-3. The strategic and economic importance of the mineral deposits of Central Africa will be examined further in Chapter 1.

¹⁶ Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis: mécanismes et conduites* (Paris: Economica, 1984), p. 3.

goals. Moreover, despite the popular myths, the former president emerged as a forceful and dynamic leader who maintained a firm grip on the decision-making process.¹⁷

Certainly, the new evidence unearthed from the Eisenhower Library was a decisive factor in the emergence of Eisenhower revisionism. But, as historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has aptly remarked, “[h]istorians should not overlook the capacity of presidents to do more for the reputations of their predecessors than for their own.”¹⁸ Likewise, historian Jeff Broadwater has recently noted that “[a]mid national nightmares like Vietnam, Watergate, double-digit inflation and the Iranian hostage crisis, Eisenhower became the beneficiary of a surge of nostalgia and a fall of expectations. He grew in stature by being viewed through the prism of his failed successors.”¹⁹ Indeed, after the foreign policy debacles of the Bay of Pigs and, most importantly, Vietnam, Eisenhower seemed, in retrospect, to have accomplished quite a feat: keeping the United States at peace – at least, theoretically – during a tension-filled decade that witnessed the Quemoy-Matsu, Berlin and Suez crises. Put more simply, it is not what Eisenhower *did*, but what he *did not* do. Eisenhower himself later boasted that “the United States never lost a soldier or a foot of ground in [*sic*] my administration. We kept the peace. People asked how it happened – by God, it didn’t just happen, I’ll tell you that.”²⁰ This led

¹⁷ Among some of the most influential revisionist works, see Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); and Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990). For an insightful synthesis of Eisenhower revisionism, see Stephen G. Rabe, “Eisenhower Revisionism: The Scholarly Debate,” in Michael J. Hogan, ed., *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations Since 1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 300-325; also see John Robert Greene, “Eisenhower Revisionism, 1952-1992, A Reappraisal,” in Shirley A. Warshaw, ed., *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), pp. 209-220; Vincent DeSantis, “Eisenhower Revisionism,” *Review of Politics*, vol. 38, no. 2 (1976), pp. 190-207; Jeff Broadwater, “President Eisenhower and the Historians: Is the General in Retreat?,” *Canadian Review of American Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1 (Summer 1991), pp. 47-59; Robert F. Burk, “Eisenhower Revisionism Revisited: Reflections on Eisenhower Scholarship,” *Historian*, vol. 50, no. 2 (1988), pp. 196-209; and Anthony James Joes, “Eisenhower Revisionism: The Tide Comes In,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 3 (1985), pp. 561-571.

¹⁸ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “The Ike Age Revisited,” *Reviews in American History*, vol. 11, no. 1 (March 1983), p. 2

¹⁹ Jeff Broadwater, “President Eisenhower and the Historians,” p. 52.

²⁰ Quoted in Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, p. 547. Actually, Eisenhower assumed office during the closing months of the Korean War, so his two-term tenure of office was not characterised, technically, by eight years of peace. Still, he subsequently presided over seven and a half years of peace. As early revisionist Richard Rovere once stated: “Eight years of Eisenhower: seven and a half of peace. Ten years of Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon: almost ten solid years of war.” Quoted in Vincent DeSantis, “Eisenhower Revisionism,” p. 198.

historian Robert Divine to conclude that “[t]he essence of Eisenhower’s strength, and the basis for any claim to presidential greatness, lies in his admirable self-restraint.”²¹

By the mid-1980s, however, a growing number of scholars had begun to question some aspects of this “historiographical revolution.”²² Advocates of what has since been labelled “postrevisionist” scholarship inferred that the revisionists had elevated process over policy, and had failed to evaluate the long-range impact of the Eisenhower Administration’s defence commitments and its dangerous penchant for clandestine operations in Third World countries.²³ One of the most telling criticisms of Eisenhower revisionism, which represents a significant interest for our present area of study, was delivered by historian Robert J. McMahon who argued in a 1986 article that the revisionists had neglected to consider Eisenhower’s response to Third World nationalism, a fact that had “led them to present a distorted and oversimplified view of American foreign relations during a critical eight-year period.”²⁴ Turning to the Administration’s record in dealing with Third World nationalism, he added that “by viewing the Third World through the invariably distorting lens of a Cold War geopolitical strategy that saw the Kremlin as the principal instigator of global unrest[, it] often wound up simplifying complicated local and regional developments, confusing nationalism with communism.”²⁵ As for the case of the Eisenhower Administration and African nationalism, which he remarked remained still “virtually uncharted territory,” McMahon concluded that the “administration [was] largely insensitive to this new force and [was] prone to view radical nationalism through the distorting prism of U.S.-Soviet relations.”²⁶

In his highly relevant study, McMahon raised a number of interesting points pertaining to U.S. relations with Africa during the Eisenhower years. Africa was, in fact, virtually “uncharted territory” for students of U.S. foreign relations at the time he wrote his seminal

²¹ Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 154.

²² Richard H. Immerman, “Confessions of an Eisenhower Revisionist: An Agonizing Reappraisal,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Summer 1990), p. 319n.

²³ Stephen G. Rabe, “Eisenhower Revisionism: The Scholarly Debate,” p. 324; Chester J. Pach, Jr. and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, rev. ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), p. xiii.

²⁴ Robert J. McMahon, “Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 101, no. 3 (Fall 1986), p. 457.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 469-470.

article and it can be said that not much has changed almost fifteen years later. Just as sub-Saharan Africa has been considered “the lowest priority” for U.S. policymakers in the postwar years²⁷, scholarly output on U.S.-African relations has been minimal compared to the impressive amount of publications dedicated to U.S. relations with other parts of the Third World. As historian Thomas J. Noer has wryly remarked, “the continent had no Fidel Castro or missile crisis.”²⁸

Actually, Eisenhower scholars, revisionist or postrevisionist, have yet to offer a comprehensive study of U.S.-African relations during the 1950s²⁹ although some authors have addressed the topic within the scope of larger studies.³⁰ An exception to this historiographical eclipse is the Congo crisis, “a classic cold war confrontation” between the United States and the Soviet Union which began in the summer of 1960 and subsequently endured, through variegated stages, until the Johnson Administration.³¹ Furthermore, an overview of the historiographical field would be incomplete without mention of Thomas J. Noer’s perceptive study on U.S. relations with Southern Africa, ranging from the Truman to the Johnson administrations.³²

²⁷ Jean Herskovits, “Subsaharan Africa: The Lowest Priority,” in Richard Hottel and Jean Herskovits, eds., *The Dynamics of World Power: A Documentary History of United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1973*, vol. 5: *The United Nations; Subsaharan Africa* (New York: Chelsea House, 1973), pp. 539-548.

²⁸ Thomas J. Noer, book review in *Journal of American History*, vol. 81, no. 1 (June 1994), p. 345.

²⁹ For a notable exception, see Éric Marquis, *Foreign Policy Considerations and the Eisenhower Administration’s Civil Rights Policies: The Case of Africa* (M.A. thesis, Concordia University [Montreal], 1992).

³⁰ See Chidiebere A. Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1995), pp. 256-318. Africanists Peter Schraeder and Peter Duignan remain surprisingly silent about the Eisenhower Administration’s African policies. See Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, *The United States and Africa*. For a balanced, if somewhat dated account, see Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 259-282.

³¹ Among the best analytical studies on the Congo crisis are Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974) and David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and US Policy in the Congo Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). For a highly readable journalistic account, see Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa – From Eisenhower to Kennedy* (New York: Macmillan, 1982). The quotation is from Kalb, p. xiv.

³² Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985); also from the same author, “Truman, Eisenhower, and South Africa: The ‘Middle of the Road’ and Apartheid,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1983), pp. 75-104. For an enticing study of U.S. policy toward South Africa during the Truman presidency, see Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid’s Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

While most of the aforementioned studies are highly meritorious, one cannot help but notice that the historiographical field remains rather sparse. What can explain the glaring paucity of scholarship that afflicts the field of U.S.- Africa relations for the early Cold War years? One fundamental explanation, already mentioned above, is that Africa, considered as a “foreign policy backwater” by contemporary U.S. policymakers, has warranted similar interest among students of foreign relations.³³ Another potential cause of academic disinterest which appears conspicuously in a survey of the historiography is that for many scholars, U.S.- African relations really “took off” during the subsequent the Kennedy Administration, under the impetus of the New Frontier. According to this conception, widely shared among liberal scholars, the Eisenhower Administration's African policy was “general and perfunctory,” “essentially defensive,” “marked by a lamentable lack of understanding and interest,” and characterised by “studied neglect.”³⁴ The Kennedy years did indeed mark a new beginning for U.S.-African relations, notably with the formation of the Peace Corps and the nomination of G. Mennen Williams as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, although most authors agree that the policy change was predominantly in tone more than in content.³⁵ In fact, it can be argued that much of the basic diplomatic and political machinery for U.S.-African relations had been established by the end of Eisenhower’s second term.³⁶

The lack of scholarly interest in U.S.-African policy can also be attributed to the predominant historiographical trend, outlined in the above review of Robert McMahon’s argument, namely that the Eisenhower Administration, obsessed with the Soviet menace, misunderstood Third World nationalism and needlessly alienated potential allies. Thus, according to this line of reasoning, Africa was to be considered as another Cold War arena, yet

³³ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa*, p. 2-5.

³⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 552; Richard D. Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 34; Van Mitchell Smith, “Africa: The Kennedy Years, 1961-1963,” in David C. DeBoe *et al.*, *Essays on American Foreign Policy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), p. 58; Melvin Gurtov, *The United States Against the Third World: Antinationalism and Intervention* (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 43.

³⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa*, pp. 7, 203; John Mayall, *Africa: The Cold War and After* (London: Elek Books, 1974), p. 105; Melvin Gurtov, *The United States Against the Third World*, pp. 45-48; Steven Metz, “American Attitudes Toward Decolonization in Africa,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 99, no. 3 (Fall 1984), p. 526; Immanuel Wallerstein, “Africa, the United States, and the World Economy: The Historical Bases of American Policy,” in Frederick S. Arkhurst, ed., *U.S. Policy Toward Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 18, 44.

³⁶ Waldemar Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, pp. 278-279; Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 347.

certainly not as important as the Middle East or Asia. Many scholars have applied this convenient leitmotiv in U.S.-Third World studies, echoing Hans J. Morgenthau's 1955 claim that the only interest the United States had in Africa was as a "by-product of the East-West struggle."³⁷ For example, Stephen Weissman, in his noteworthy study of the Congo crisis, offers a meaningful case in point of this predominant trend, contending that the Eisenhower Administration's outlook was swayed by a "from-chaos-to-communism" complex, which dominated its foreign policy concerns and distorted its understanding of African nationalist aspirations.³⁸ By the same token, historian Henry Jackson states that "[a]nti-Sovietism, as opposed to creative and independent goals emanating from the general aspirations and ideals of the American people, thus came to dominate U.S. policy toward Africa."³⁹

Surely, there is much truth to be found in this line of reasoning; anticommunism was, in the 1950s, a national obsession that pervaded all aspects of American life. This was certainly not limited to the political field.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the main problem with this approach is that by studying U.S. policy through the prism of anticommunism, many scholars have overlooked other significant sources of influence on the Administration's policy. Received wisdom has it that the U.S., blinded by the ideological struggle against communism, misunderstood African nationalism. This view had been questioned by historian H.W. Brands, who has convincingly argued that much of the Eisenhower Administration's anticommunist rhetoric was aimed at assuaging the right wing of the Republican party, and that, in reality, U.S. policy was guided by pragmatic geopolitical concerns.⁴¹

³⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, "United States Policy Toward Africa (1955)," in Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Impasse of American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 297-305.

³⁸ Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, p. 53.

³⁹ Henry Jackson, *From the Congo to Soweto: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Africa Since 1960* (New York: William Morrow, 1982), p. 18. More recently, Israeli scholar Yekutiel Gershoni has argued that United States' policy in Africa during the Cold War was "one-dimensional," essentially concerned with containing Soviet influence on the continent; see Yekutiel Gershoni, "The United States and Africa – The Fundamentals of a One-Dimensional Policy," *Asian and African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1992), pp. 119-132.

⁴⁰ See "Introduction" in Lary May, ed., *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 1-16; Melvin Small, *Democracy & Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 81.

⁴¹ H. W. Brands, Jr., *The Spectre of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 7-10, 307-313. Also see Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *The Elephants and the Grass: A Study of Nonalignment* (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 170-172.

Has previous scholarship on U.S.-African relations in the 1950s overemphasised the anticommunist bent of American policy to the detriment of the interplay between alternate sources of influence on foreign policy? Prominent Africanist Peter Schraeder has contended that “the US is not a monolithic actor that ‘speaks with one voice.’ Rather, Washington's foreign policy landscape is composed of numerous centres of power which have the ability to simultaneously pull policy in many different directions.”⁴² In the same vein, political scientist David N. Gibbs has minimised the importance of anticommunism on the Eisenhower Administration’s response to the Congo crisis, stressing the influence of economic factors on U.S. policy.⁴³

Pragmatic anticommunism was but one of the determining factors, albeit an important one, that influenced Washington’s response to decolonisation in Africa. In addition to anticommunist goals, Washington’s policy was shaped by a combination of domestic political concerns and geopolitical considerations, including internal pressure from within the Republican Party and the Administration.⁴⁴ Thus, this thesis explores sources of influence on the Eisenhower Administration’s African policy that have hitherto been neglected by mainstream scholarship, such as NATO politics, congressional pressures, civil rights issues and the 1960 presidential election. Furthermore, it contends that many authors have overlooked an important fact: namely, that by 1957, following the Suez crisis and perceived losses of Western influence in Asia and the Middle East, the Eisenhower Administration had significantly increased its sensitivity to neutralism and Third World nationalism. Indeed, the long enduring idea that prevails is that, during this period, U.S. policy was decidedly hostile to Third World aspirations. Many studies have basically repeated the contemporary criticism of the 1950s, deriding Secretary of State John Foster Dulles’s bombastic rhetoric and hostile official pronouncements against Third World neutralism.⁴⁵ This study will aim to demonstrate that by 1957, the beginning of the Administration’s second term, Eisenhower and Dulles had come to understand the potency of Third World nationalism and its implications for the global

⁴² Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa*, p. xii.

⁴³ David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), especially p. 144.

⁴⁴ This approach is indebted to Cary Fraser’s study on the U.S. and global decolonisation. See Cary Fraser, “Understanding American Policy Towards the Decolonization of European Empires, 1945-1964,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1992), p. 107.

context. Assuredly, this shift in policy came somewhat belatedly, but it was certainly not without consequence.⁴⁶

Most scholars have vehemently criticised the Eisenhower Administration for its pro-colonialist policies, particularly with regard to decolonisation in Africa. Caught between the nationalist aspirations of the nascent nations and the conservative expectations of its NATO allies, Eisenhower's policy has often been described as "fence-sitting," overly deferring to European concerns ("Eurocentric") and paternalistic.⁴⁷ This criticism, while being in tune with present-day ideas and values with regard to self-determination and nationalist aspirations, tends to overlook several significant factors. For instance, although the African nations were highly critical of American ties with the colonial powers, very few American public figures in the 1950s were vigorous advocates of a more pro-independence policy, except for a handful of liberal Democrats and the leading African-American organisations. In fact, the vast majority of the Republican Party elite, as well as most mainstream Democrats, had serious misgivings about granting "premature independence" to African peoples. Moreover, and ironically, the European policymakers, in stark contrast to Third World opinion, considered Eisenhower and Dulles to be staunch anticolonialists.⁴⁸

This study does not seek to sketch an apologia for the Eisenhower Administration's pro-colonialist policies or its paternalistic racial views – one could hardly argue that Eisenhower was a sympathetic patron of Third World aspirations. It does hope to establish, however, the fact that his views were quite analogous to those found in the contemporary political culture. Most American policymakers certainly felt, like British Labour's deputy leader Herbert Morrison, that granting independence to African colonies would be "like giving a child of ten a latch-key, a bank account, and a shot-gun."⁴⁹ Also, this paper will aim to

⁴⁵ For example, see Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, p. xxvii.

⁴⁶ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, pp. 436-437. This shift was also perceptible in the Administration's commitment to a more flexible stance on foreign aid to economically underdeveloped countries; see Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy, 1953-1961* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 151, 176, 208.

⁴⁷ Steven Metz, "American Attitudes Toward Decolonization in Africa," p. 525.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, William Roger Louis, "Dulles, Suez, and the British," in Richard H. Immerman, ed., *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 133-158.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Geir Lundestad, *East, West, North, South: Major Developments in International Politics, 1945-1996*, 3rd ed. (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997), p. 274.

demonstrate that despite the haphazard nature of the Administration's African policy, it was not, as some authors have simply inferred, a "non-policy" inspired by benign neglect.⁵⁰ As Scott L. Bills has stated in his study of the early Cold War years, U.S. policy "was not a product of ignorance. The pluses and minuses were listed and compared. The policy ledgers simply did not balance in favor of active support for colonial independence."⁵¹ The reality, as this essay will strive to demonstrate, was that policy choices were often dictated by hard political choices and after much deliberation.

The study of decolonisation requires objectivity and detachment – to the extent that achieving such a goal is possible. Too often, such subjects have tended to be treated from an ahistorical, ethically or morally militant perspective, as phenomena to be celebrated or criticised, but not carefully analysed.⁵² By studying such emotionally charged concepts as colonialism and nationalism⁵³ within their appropriate historical context, and eschewing judgement based on present day values, one can see most clearly the various considerations and pressures that influenced contemporary policymakers.

This study's chronological scope roughly corresponds to the years between 1955 and 1960, from the important milestone of Bandung to the end of Eisenhower's second term.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, prior events will be analysed and interpreted whenever it is necessary to shed light on particular historical developments. As for the geographical boundaries particular to this research, they concern the sub-Saharan African nations that were experiencing the

⁵⁰ Chidiebere A. Nwaubani, "The United States and Decolonization in West Africa," p. 486; David N. Gibbs, "Political Parties and International Relations: The United States and the Decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa," *International History Review*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1995), pp. 317-318.

⁵¹ Scott L. Bills, *Empire and Cold War: The Roots of US-Third-World Antagonism, 1945-1947* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. xi.

⁵² See J.G. Darwin, "In Search of Decolonisation," *History*, vol. 73, no. 237 (February 1988), p. 55; Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, pp. x-xi; Geir Lundestad, "Moralism, Presentism, Exceptionalism, Provincialism, and Other Extravagances in American Writings on the Early Cold War Years," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 13, no. 4 (Fall 1989), p. 530.

⁵³ *Colonialism* can be defined as an imperial nation's practice or policy of acquiring or controlling foreign countries, territories, or peoples, as dependent colonies for the purpose of exploiting them. See Michael E. Donoghue, "Colonialism," in Bruce W. Jentleson and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 291. Webster defines *nationalism* as "the policy of asserting the interests of one's own nation, viewed as separate from the interests of another nation or the common interests of all nations."

⁵⁴ Technically, Eisenhower's second term ended in January 1961; however, since no relevant documentation or events have been identified for that final month, our study's scope will not exceed December 1960.

decolonisation process from 1957 to 1960, with a particular emphasis on Ghana, Guinea and the Congo. Therefore, North Africa as well as the African countries still under white rule, mainly South Africa and the Portuguese colonies, are not discussed. These geographical boundaries are not merely artificial: North Africa was in the midst of the Algerian conflict and was considered separately by U.S. policymakers, as was South Africa, which Washington valued as an uncompromising bulwark against communist expansion in the region. Developments in South Africa and Algeria cases are examined when they affect U.S. policy in other parts of the continent.

The main sources used in this essay were gathered during a research trip to the Eisenhower Presidential Library in September 1999. Among the numerous records that have been consulted, many are drawn from the Ann Whitman File, the White House Central Files and the White House Office Files. This study also benefited from the recently declassified Sprague Committee Records and a number of oral history transcripts. In addition to material from the Eisenhower Library, published sources, such as the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, the *Department of State Bulletin*, the *Congressional Record* and some selected congressional reports, have also been consulted.⁵⁵

Eisenhower scholars benefit from the fact that many leading figures of the Administration's foreign policy elite, such as Henry Cabot Lodge, Robert Murphy and the former President himself, published revealing memoirs. Finally, two important publications, *Foreign Affairs* and the *New York Times*, have been analysed for the purposes of this research, and have furnished the author with an alternate perspective to the government's views. This array of sources is by no means complete, as many other pertinent materials could have been consulted; notably, the present study would certainly have benefited from archival research in Washington, as well as in British and French government sources. Also, several important documents from the Eisenhower Library which might have proved helpful are still classified or censored, and a number important materials are omitted from the *Foreign Relations*

⁵⁵ On using the *Congressional Record* as a primary source, see Donald A. Ritchie, "Beyond the *Congressional Record*: Congress and Oral History," *Maryland Historian*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1982), pp. 7-16; also see Oscar Handlin, *Truth in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 121.

series.⁵⁶ However, for the aims of the present study, which are to outline the major aspects of the Eisenhower Administration's policy toward sub-Saharan Africa, the sources used proved to be pertinent and satisfactory.

The thesis is divided into three chapters, which follow chronological and thematic lines. Chapter One, *Cautious First Steps: The Emergence of an African Policy*, surveys the range of U.S. interests in sub-Saharan Africa and describes Washington's initial reaction to decolonisation in Africa. Particular attention is given to the Administration's response to Third World nationalism and American and European contributions to the colonial debate. The second chapter, *New Exigencies and Old Priorities: The Difficulties of Forging a Policy*, details the many stumbling blocks and quandaries experienced by Washington in the process of establishing an African policy, including the reticence demonstrated by the European colonial powers in letting the U.S. forge new ties with the newly emancipated nations – the case of Guinea is delineated – as well as the challenges met by U.S. policymakers in developing foreign aid policies and dealing with a changing United Nations. Finally, Chapter Three, *The Eisenhower Administration and the Year of Africa*, explains the tumultuous events of 1960 and how they shaped the Administration's policies toward Africa; this final part considers the role of domestic influences on foreign policy-making, along with a number of external factors which marked U.S.-African policies during that crucial year.

A final caveat is in order. Africa has never occupied centre stage in U.S. foreign policy; it was, at best, a peripheral concern to American policymakers throughout the postwar years. Trade with Africa never exceeded the four percent mark of total U.S. trade, and the continent received less than two percent of total U.S. foreign aid from 1946 to 1960.⁵⁷ Africa was the lowest foreign policy priority, and the Eisenhower Administration did little to disturb this trend. Events occasionally prompted it to act. The late 1950s and early 1960s correspond to what has been called America's "African honeymoon." The rapid wave of independence,

⁵⁶ David Haight, "The Foreign Relations of the United States Series and Research at the Eisenhower Library," *The SHAFR Newsletter*, vol. 28, no. 2 (June 1997), p. 3; Richard W. Leopold, "The Foreign Relations Series Revisited: One Hundred Plus Ten," *Journal of American History*, vol. 59, no. 4 (March 1973), pp. 950-951; Claude Fohlen, "Les lieux de documentation historique," in Jean Heffer and François Weil, *Chantiers d'histoire américaine* (Paris: Belin, 1994), pp. 49-50.

⁵⁷ Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, *The United States and Africa*, pp. 301, 315.

which erupted in the midst of the tense Cold War atmosphere of the late 1950s, destabilised the international balance and, consequently, caught the eye of Americans to an extent that has rarely been seen since. Today, at a time where epidemics, famines or killings on a massive scale are required for Washington's policymakers to turn their attention to events in sub-Saharan Africa, it seems all the more pertinent to study this brief window on U.S.-African relations.

CHAPTER ONE

Cautious First Steps: The Emergence of an African Policy

The United States, as a nation, has no selfish interests in Africa except the preservation of our own security, which we consider, in present world circumstances, inextricably bound up with the kind of future the African countries desire for themselves.¹

[T]oday, I wish to call attention to the continuing revolution against colonialism that is now engulfing the continent of Africa – a revolution which we, in the United States, started in 1775.²

By the mid-fifties, nationalism was on the march in Africa, propelling the Third World to the forefront of American consideration and, in the process, calling into question the Cold War's bipolar framework. This chapter examines the Eisenhower Administration's initial response to nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa, giving particular emphasis to the impetus this new force conveyed to Washington's geopolitical position. U.S. economic and strategic interests on the African continent are treated as foundation elements in American policy toward Africa. A final section outlines the difficult position the United States occupied in the colonial debate, which juxtaposed the metropolitan powers of Western Europe and the emerging nations of Africa.

1.1 Communism and Nationalism on the "Dark Continent"

On February 28, 1957, only six weeks after Inauguration Day, Vice-President Richard M. Nixon, accompanied by his wife, left the familiar surroundings of Washington for a three-week tour of the African continent which the press could not resist dubbing "The Nixon Safari."³ This was the first time that a major U.S. dignitary had embarked upon an official trip to the "Dark Continent," although most Americans still remembered Theodore Roosevelt's

¹ George V. Allen [Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs], "United States Foreign Policy in Africa," *Department of State Bulletin*, April 30, 1956, p. 718.

² Representative Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., (D-NY), quoted in *Congressional Record*, March 23, 1959, p. 4992.

post-presidential expedition to East Africa for a “big game safari” earlier in the century.⁴ The tour grew out of a plan to send an official U.S. delegation to the ceremonies marking the independence of Ghana, but the itinerary was later expanded to include Uganda, Liberia, Ethiopia, and the Sudan as well as the North African countries of Morocco, Libya and Tunisia.

The Vice-President applied, as one U.S. foreign correspondent amusingly observed, “solid, old-fashioned American political campaign rules” during the visit, shaking hands, patting babies, and distributing autographed cards and ballpoint pens bearing his name while Mrs. Nixon handed out candy to children. To the thinly veiled resentment of British colonial authorities, the Vice-President even went beyond the police lines to shake the hands of the common folk.⁵ But the tour, beyond its ceremonial and goodwill aspect, was also destined to cement ties with independent and nearly independent African governments. Other than attending Ghana’s independence ceremonies, the purpose of this official tour was “to demonstrate U.S. interest in Africa, and to gain a better understanding of the continent.”⁶

The Nixon tour of Africa and the ensuing Nixon Report marked a symbolic turning point for U.S.-African relations, leading to a heightening of U.S. interest in Africa in both official and academic circles.⁷ Within the following year, the Department of State had inaugurated a separate Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. diplomatic representation in Africa was rising markedly and, as it will be seen later in this chapter, U.S. policymakers had begun to reassess their outlook toward the nascent countries of Africa.⁸ The first question that arises concerns the motivations for such a significant undertaking. For centuries, Africa was considered the backwater of U.S. foreign policy; in the words of Africanist Peter Schraeder, “US Africa policies from the founding of the Republic in 1789 to the present have been marked by

³ See, for instance, *New York Times*, March 17, 1957, IV, p. 4.

⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, *African Game Trails: An Account of the African Wanderings of an American Hunter-Naturalist* (New York: C. Scribners, 1910).

⁵ “Nixon Goes Barnstorming to Win Over Africa,” *New York Times*, March 17, 1957, IV, p. 4.

⁶ See *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII: *Africa* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1989), p. 57n.

⁷ Rupert Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 26.

⁸ The State Department established a separate Bureau of African Affairs on August 20, 1958. The African continent had previously been under the responsibility of the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs. See *State Department Bulletin*, September 22, 1958, pp. 475-476.

indifference, at worst, and neglect, at best.”⁹ What, then, compelled the Eisenhower Administration to set its sights on Africa in 1957, after decades of official U.S. neglect?

A popular and expediently convenient explanation among students of U.S.-African relations argues that American officials, concerned with Soviet advances on the African continent, acted to check the influence of communism. For instance, historian Richard Stebbins, in his yearly review of U.S. foreign affairs, asserted that “[a] recognition of the growing importance of Africa in the contest with international Communism provided the principal impetus behind Vice-President Nixon's twenty-two day tour of seven independent African countries in March 1957.”¹⁰ This line of reasoning fits the familiar Cold War mould of containment which, it must be said, was the dominant zeitgeist of the United States’ worldview throughout the postwar period. Accordingly, as one author has recently stated, “[t]he importance of the Black continent in American policy rose or fell in accordance with the spread or decline of Soviet political influence.”¹¹ But does this explanation wholly account for the increase of U.S. involvement in Africa in the late 1950s?

Concern about communist inroads in Africa had been expressed in official circles since the initial stages of the Cold War. As early as 1951, toward the end of the Truman Administration, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs George McGhee had described Africa as a “fertile field for communism,” although he did acknowledge that “[c]ommunism as such appears to have made no substantial progress in the area.”¹² In 1956, Congresswoman and Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Frances P. Bolton (R-OH), returning from a survey of twenty-four African countries, similarly reported the presence of “unfriendly influences” on the Black continent and warned of an imminent “Russia[n] invasion of Africa.”¹³ A few months later, McGhee’s Republican successor at the State

⁹ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 3.

¹⁰ Richard Stebbins, *The United States in World Affairs 1957* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations: 1958), pp. 200-201.

¹¹ Yekutiel Gershoni, “The United States and Africa – The Fundamentals of a One-Dimensional Policy,” *Asian and African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1992), p. 123.

¹² George McGhee, “Africa’s Role in the Free World Today,” *State Department Bulletin*, July 16, 1951, p. 97.

¹³ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Report of the Special Study Mission to Africa, South and East of the Sahara*, by Frances P. Bolton (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1956), p. 11. Throughout her political tenure,

Department, George V. Allen, coming back from a three-week tour of sub-Saharan Africa, warned that “the Communist bloc is well aware of the potential of Africa and is making a concerted effort to penetrate the continent.”¹⁴

These alarmist pronouncements are pregnant with significance; however, it must not be forgotten that they are *political* statements and, as with any political message, one must consider their intent. For instance, it is noteworthy to consider that Allen’s warning was delivered before a suspicious and notoriously frugal Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, as he was requesting an additional authorisation of \$100 million for the Middle East and Africa.¹⁵ Obtaining appropriations for foreign aid and information programs from a Republican Congress was always an extremely difficult task, although by exaggerating the communist threat, Allen could probably expect a more favourable hearing. Regarding congressional hearings, former USIA director Edward Barrett once ironically remarked that “if you dressed it up as warfare, money was very easy to come by.”¹⁶ Likewise, John Foster Dulles privately admitted that “[i]t’s a fact, unfortunate though it may be, that in promoting our programs in Congress we have to make evident the international communist menace. Otherwise such programs . . . would be decimated.”¹⁷

This evidence leads us to question the assumptions underlying the Administration’s official rhetoric. How deep was the Administration’s true concern about Soviet gains in Africa? Most certainly, many African intellectuals of the 1950s expressed sympathy for socialist ideas, but this was a far cry away from deliberate Soviet intervention on the African continent.¹⁸ In fact, the Soviet Union was conspicuously ignoring sub-Saharan Africa until the

Bolton, who served in Congress from 1940 to 1969, was a leading civil rights advocate as well as an outspoken proponent of strengthened ties with Africa.

¹⁴ George V. Allen, “The Mutual Security Program for the Near East, South Asia, and Africa,” *State Department Bulletin*, May 28, 1956, p. 877.

¹⁵ Unless otherwise specified, all figures are in U.S. dollars.

¹⁶ Quoted in Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1998), p. 15.

¹⁷ Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 144. In a similar vein, the *New York Times*, commenting on the state of foreign aid programs to Africa, editorialised in 1959: “The reason why the cold war angle has had overemphasis in all the discussion of foreign aid was that this was apparently the only way in which Congress could be persuaded to make the necessary appropriations.” *New York Times*, July 6, 1959, p. 26.

¹⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1991), p. 350.

late 1950s. While, after the mid-fifties, timid overtures were made to Liberia, Ghana and Ethiopia, Moscow's first concrete steps in sub-Saharan Africa were not taken until Guinea's independence in 1958 and, more importantly, the Congo crisis in 1960.¹⁹

The danger of communism in Africa was not, up to late 1957, perceived as a predominant concern in Washington. It represented, as most, a threat of a *potential* nature, not to be taken lightly, but still not deemed to constitute a pressing matter. In a December 1955 letter to John Foster Dulles, George Allen described Africa as a "most fertile field for *future* (and not so distant future) Soviet activity."²⁰ Likewise, a subsequent National Intelligence Estimate on conditions and trends in Tropical Africa further demonstrates the Eisenhower Administration's view of communism in Africa as a potential threat. Out of ten conclusions offered by the 1956 report, only one (the seventh) dealt with communism; although it did express misgivings about recent Soviet aid offers to African countries and a possible increase in Moscow's activities, the report stressed "the present weakness of the Communists" in sub-Saharan Africa.²¹ In contrast to the relative unimportance given to communism, the report's other conclusions hinted about matters that deeply worried and perplexed U.S. policymakers, such as the rise of nationalism and radical political ideas, the potential economic problems of the nascent countries, and the precarious American position with regard to the colonial debate²² (on this last subject, see 1.3).

Indeed, although the chimera of communism was very much in the background, U.S. apprehensions about growing Soviet influence in Africa do not provide a satisfactory explanation for Washington's increased interest in Africa. The Cold War was still, in 1957, a faint echo on the African continent. The Eisenhower Administration's initial response to African developments was not solely dictated by anticommunism; rather, its policies were conditioned by a series of geopolitical considerations, such as its perception of Third World and African nationalism, concerns over the fall of colonialism and the fear of a power vacuum

¹⁹ Christopher A. Stevens, *The Soviet Union and Black Africa* (London: MacMillan Press, 1976), pp. 7-11, 19; Alexander Erlich and Christian R. Sonne, "The Soviet Union: Economic Activity," in Zbigniew Brzezinski, ed., *Africa and the Communist World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), pp. 70-71.

²⁰ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Allen) to the Secretary of State, December 28, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, p. 23. Emphasis added.

²¹ National Intelligence Estimate, August 14, 1956, in *Ibid.*, p. 46.

in the area. In order to understand the Eisenhower Administration's outlook with regard to Africa in 1957, one must consider its perception of the rise of nationalism and neutralism throughout the Third World in the 1950s.

Since the end of the Second World War, the rise of nationalism in the Third World had concerned U.S. policymakers. Once a geo-strategic stalemate had been reached on the European continent, it became increasingly clear to the Truman Administration that the growing assertiveness of dependent peoples would be one of the most pressing issues of the postwar world. The first shocks came in Asia, notably India's independence in 1947 and, in 1949, the Communist Revolution in China. The latter event, combined with the era's anticommunist hysteria, dramatically demonstrated that America's reaction to political emancipation in Asia and Africa would be perceived through the prism of the Cold War. The shadow of the "loss of China" would loom ominously over U.S. policy throughout the 1950s and 1960s.²³

From the outset of his presidency, Eisenhower was well aware of the potency of Third World nationalism. Nonetheless, he could not help but view this new force in light of the bipolar struggle that opposed the United States to the Soviet Union. On January 6, 1953, he confided to his diary that "[n]ationalism is on the march and world communism is taking advantage of that spirit of nationalism to cause dissension in the free world. Moscow leads many misguided people to believe that they can count on communist help to achieve and sustain nationalistic ambitions. . . . In this situation the two strongest Western powers must not appear before the world as a combination of forces to compel adherence to the status quo."²⁴

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was also alarmed at the pace at which nationalism was sweeping throughout Asia and Africa; most assuredly, he dreaded the destabilising effect this powerful new trend could inflict on Western Europe's ability to wage the Cold War. James Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary, recounts in his diary that, as early

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.

²³ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 159-170; Melvin Small, *Democracy & Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 94-95.

²⁴ Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), p. 223.

as 1954, Dulles expressed concern about the spread of “the Spirit of 1776” on the African continent. On the occasion of a Cabinet meeting, the Secretary of State dourly warned that “Indochina will be repeated in North Africa very shortly and that North Africans are rising against French colonialism.” He further added that “nationalism would sweep through Africa within 10 to 15 years and the African continent would then be lost to the control of the West,” and that “the United States must have a long-range program of planning for Africa to meet contingencies that are going to arise. He said he thought we should side in the long run with the nationalist feeling in Africa and get them on our side....”²⁵

Despite these early apprehensions, the Eisenhower Administration’s response to the rise of Third World nationalism during its first term was devised in a sluggish and perfunctory fashion, leaving Washington without a clearly defined policy.²⁶ The fall of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 was the first severe jolt to Western hegemony in Asia, but it was the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia the following year, with its call for world peace, decolonisation, and non-alignment, that most sharply reminded the Administration that the global balance of power was shifting rapidly. At Bandung, the developing nations of Asia and Africa rejected the bipolar worldview of the Cold War and replaced it by an alternate model, one that divided the world between the colonisers and the colonised.²⁷ For Africa, the implications of the Asian-African conference were of the utmost significance, as Indian Premier Jawaharlal Nehru’s closing speech starkly demonstrated. His emotional oration drew a striking parallel between the slave trade and the Western powers’ colonial domination of the African continent and called for the independent nations of Asia and Africa to put an end to the “Infinite Tragedy” of Asia’s “sister continent.”²⁸ Thus, Bandung linked the plights of the emerging nations of Asia and Africa and spawned the foundations of a Third World consciousness in international affairs.

²⁵ Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Diary of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower in Mid-Course, 1954-1955* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 73-74. Diary entry for June 23, 1954.

²⁶ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 272.

²⁷ Historian H.W. Brands has argued that “Bandung represented a rejection of Yalta as a model for international relations.” H.W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 3.

²⁸ The speech can be found in George McTurnan Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 75.

Publicly, Washington welcomed the conference, but behind the scenes, U.S. leaders were worried and less than sure of how to respond to this new phenomenon.²⁹ The State Department was so concerned that it had even considered discreetly discouraging Liberia and Ethiopia, two countries with strong ties to the U.S., from attending.³⁰ Washington also tried to pull some strings in order to encourage the conference to condemn communism.³¹ Although many Americans sympathised with the aspirations of these emerging nations, the seemingly radical nature of Bandung's calls for an end to colonialism and the Cold War alarmed the Eisenhower Administration, which perceived the emergence of a Third World coalition as detrimental to the national interest of the United States. This soon became evident in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), where the U.S., according to one diplomat, was increasingly "on the losing side of the fence" with regard to colonial and Third World issues.³²

But, without a doubt, it was the emergence of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser as a spokesman for anti-Western nationalism that most worried the United States. At first, Washington had tried to woo Nasser into a defence pack, but the 1955 arms deal between Egypt and Czechoslovakia, the failure of presidential envoy Robert Anderson's 1956 mission to Egypt and, more importantly, Cairo's diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China in May 1956, had left the Eisenhower Administration deeply suspicious of the nationalist leader. By the spring of 1956, American policy was moving in a decidedly anti-Nasser direction.³³ In his diary, Eisenhower ominously considered the possibility of having "to build up some other individual as a prospective leader of the Arab world."³⁴ Besides

²⁹ James Hagerty to John Foster Dulles, April 11, 1955, Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library. Also see Cary Fraser, "Grappling with the Specter of Neutralism: The United States and the Bandung Conference," Paper presented at the 1997 Meeting of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations held at Georgetown University, 19-22 June 1997; H.W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism*, pp. 3-5. For the Administration's public reaction to the Bandung Conference, see *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1955* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1959), p. 231n.

³⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Washington, February 1, 1955, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII: *Africa* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1989), p. 1. In the end, this course of action was not taken, for the Administration worried that the backlash could be "dangerous."

³¹ John Foster Dulles to Eisenhower, February 26, 1955, Box 4, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

³² Draft Report Prepared by Lincoln Bloomfield, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, February 9, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XI: *United Nations and General International Matters* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1988), p. 44.

³³ H.W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism*, p. 267.

³⁴ Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries*, p. 323. Diary entry for March 28, 1956. In his memoirs, Eisenhower designated the Czech arms deal with Egypt as the "first evidence of serious Communist penetration

threatening Western interests in the Middle East, Nasser's increasingly defiant speeches left Americans worried that his aim was to impose hegemony on whole African continent. One State Department insider observed that "Dulles had read Nasser's book from cover to cover, and felt it was another *Mein Kampf*."³⁵ To add fuel to the fire, Cairo started broadcasting anti-Western radio transmissions to sub-Saharan Africa in 1956 with newly-acquired Eastern Bloc equipment.³⁶ With the situation heating up in Algeria and U.S. fears that the Soviet Union was establishing, through the auspices of Nasser, a beachhead in the Middle East, the Eisenhower Administration wanted to prevent Nasser's radical, anti-Western brand of nationalism from spreading south of the Sahara.

African nationalism, U.S. policymakers well knew, was not inherently communist in nature. Foremost among their worries was that the rise of political radicalism would create turmoil in this hitherto stalwart Western *chasse gardée* and undermine the position of their European allies in Africa. As Cornell historian Walter LaFeber once commented, Americans, despite their revolutionary tradition, "disliked revolutions that went beyond the political, social, and economic boundaries of their own."³⁷ In sub-Saharan Africa, the rise of nationalism was perceived as being even more volatile because of the weakness of social cohesion and the inchoate sense of national identity that was still barely rooted in the incipient countries.³⁸ State Department observers, like their counterparts in London, Brussels and Paris, surely must have shuddered at Ghanaian Premier Kwame Nkrumah's plea, following his country's release from colonial tutelage, that "[t]he independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked to the liberation of Africa."³⁹

in the Middle East." See Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 24.

³⁵ Andrew H. Berding Oral History Transcript [OH 16], Columbia University Oral History Project, p. 34, Eisenhower Library. Berding was Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs from 1957 to 1961. The book to which Berding is referring to is Nasser's *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* (1955).

³⁶ *New York Times*, September 9, 1957, p. 2.

³⁷ Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1996*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), p. 151.

³⁸ One renowned American Africanist noted that in sub-Saharan Africa, "the effective sense of the 'we' who together form a community has normally not reached far afield." See Rupert Emerson, "The Character of American Interests in Africa," p. 15.

³⁹ Quoted in Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination* (Boulder, Co.: Westview, 1988), p. 215.

The menace brought forth by revolutionary radicalism was two-pronged: first, the U.S. considered that the African colonies were an important, even essential, part of the metropolitan powers' still brittle postwar economies and that they were needed in order that Europe might pursue its economic recovery; secondly, the undermining of Western influence in the area entailed the dangers of creating a power vacuum in the area which, of course, could ultimately benefit, at least potentially, the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ Although radical nationalism in Africa was not yet perceived as an imminent danger in 1957, U.S. policymakers were concerned that forthcoming events in sub-Saharan Africa could take a turn for the worse. The American response to the rise of nationalism in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa could not, by any standard, be hailed as a resounding success: the "loss" of China, the fall of Dien Bien Phu, Algeria and especially the Suez debacle were stern reminders that a shift in U.S. policy toward the emerging nations of the Third World was an important requirement.

Most historians have criticised the Eisenhower Administration's response to African nationalism, and to Third World developments in general, as being inherently conservative, perfunctory, unsympathetic and, at best, unimaginative.⁴¹ Yet, many scholars have overlooked the Administration's second-term efforts to sketch out a more flexible response to the rise of Third World nationalism. This trend was most evident in the Administration's adoption of a more receptive stance regarding Asian and African neutralism. Neutralism, or non-alignment, a widely popular political philosophy among Third World nations in the 1950s, basically represented a repudiation of the bipolar Cold War model for international relations. Eschewing one-sided identification with either of the two superpowers, advocates of non-alignment argued that the interest of developing nations did not lie with participation in a global ideological struggle. Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah eloquently defended this ideology in a 1958 *Foreign Affairs* article:

⁴⁰ [Author unknown], "An Exploratory Study to Identify the Problems Incident to Africa South of the Sahara, to Define the Interest of the United States Therein and to Establish a Requirement for a Psychological Strategy Plan Therefor.[sic]," April 13, 1953, PSB 091.4, Box 14, PSB Central Files Series, NSC Staff Papers, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library. Also see chapter 2, "The Western Powers and Africa, 1949-1974," in Christopher Coker, *NATO, the Warsaw Pact and Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), pp. 19-47.

⁴¹ Robert J. McMahon, "Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 101, no. 3 (Fall 1986), pp. 453-473; Steven Metz, "American Attitudes Toward Decolonization in Africa," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 99, no. 3 (Fall 1984), pp. 521, 525. Please consult the introduction for a more extensive discussion of this topic.

Thus it is not indifference that leads us to a policy of non-alignment. It is our belief that international blocs and rivalries exacerbate and do not solve disputes and that we must be free to judge issues on their merits and to look for solutions that are just and peaceful, irrespective of the Powers involved. . . . Powers which pursue policies of good will, coöperation and constructive international action will always find us at their side. In fact, perhaps “non-alignment” is a misstatement of our attitude. We are firmly aligned with all the forces in the world that genuinely make for peace.⁴²

The Eisenhower Administration’s initial response to non-alignment, as has been amply documented elsewhere, has been perceived as unequivocally hostile. This attitude was epitomised by John Foster Dulles who possessed, in the words of historian Chester Pach, “an unfortunate penchant for apocalyptic phrases.”⁴³ In a 1956 speech, the Secretary of State sullenly described neutralism as an “obsolete,” “immoral and short-sighted conception,” a statement that was later widely criticised in the Third World.⁴⁴ Still, however impolitic his language, Dulles’ assertion that neutralism was “immoral” unquestionably described the dominant conviction of the American people and the prevailing sentiment in Congress.⁴⁵ Most Americans had difficulty understanding how other countries could affirm being in support of freedom and yet not support the United States’ struggle against “Soviet totalitarianism.” This trend was most evident in Congress, where the right wing of the Republican Party invariably balked when the Administration considered allocating foreign aid to neutral nations.⁴⁶ *Sunday Star* columnist Fred Theroux keenly observed that “few indeed are the Representatives and Senators who are willing to face their constituents with a defense of American aid to nations publicly unwilling to espouse the West’s cause in the cold war.”⁴⁷

One must also consider that governmental opposition to aiding non-aligned nations was not limited to Capitol Hill; at the time, hostility to neutralism also pervaded the State Department establishment. This feeling was vividly expressed by Foggy Bottom elder statesman Robert Murphy, one of the most influential members of the State Department during the 1950s. In his memoirs, the diplomat reflects that “[h]aving listened to leaders of the

⁴² Kwame Nkrumah, “African Prospect,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 1 (October 1958), p. 49.

⁴³ Chester J. Pach, Jr. and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, rev. ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), p. 85.

⁴⁴ *Department of State Bulletin*, June 18 1956, pp. 999-1000.

⁴⁵ Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *The Elephants and the Grass: A Study of Nonalignment* (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 172.

⁴⁶ *Congressional Record*, February 20, 1955, p. A1525.

block of so-called unaligned nations . . . I am curious as to their motivation. Is it a desire for peace, sincere antimilitarism, ambition to play an independent role, eagerness to obtain maximum benefits from the West and also from the Communist orbit, or is it an effort to deceive one side or the other or both ?”⁴⁸

Most contemporary observers dismissed the Administration’s hostility to neutralism as an outgrowth of Secretary Dulles’s moralising and manichean policies; yet, some scholars have astutely grasped the intricate complexities of 1950s-era politics. Historian Cecil Crabb has remarked that “what is less well known is that [Dulles] found many ‘exceptions’ to his dictum that neutralism was ‘immoral’ – so many as to leave a substantial question as to what particular versions or manifestations of neutralist thought and conduct he found acceptable.” In fact, Crabb argues, “American attitudes and policies toward neutralism have been highly *episodic* and *pragmatic*.”⁴⁹ More recently, H.W. Brands has stated that Dulles’ sermonising against neutralism was intended to assuage domestic pressure, particularly from the right wing of the G.O.P., drawing attention away from the essential pragmatism that lay at the heart of the Administration’s policy.⁵⁰

While Dulles was appeasing the Administration’s hard-line critics, Eisenhower’s rhetoric was decidedly more conciliatory. Indeed, the President’s public and private record demonstrates convincingly that, by 1956, he was steering the Administration in the direction of a more flexible policy toward Third World neutralism, despite bureaucratic and congressional hostility. In an April 1956 speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Eisenhower urged the United States to bear the burden of social and economic development for the nations of Asia and Africa. He mentioned that these new nations had “many . . . sensitivities,” were “proud of their independence” and “quick to resent any slight to their sovereignty.” Drawing a parallel between Third World non-alignment and America’s inter-war isolationism, Eisenhower pleaded that Americans “understand and respect these

⁴⁷ *Sunday Star* [Washington], April 7, 1957. Quoted in *Congressional Record*, April 9, 1957, p. A2887.

⁴⁸ Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 446.

⁴⁹ Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *The Elephants and the Grass*, p. 170. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁰ H.W. Brands, *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower's Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 18.

points of view. We must accept the right of each nation to choose its own path to the future.”⁵¹ Revealingly, this speech was delivered three months *before* Dulles uttered his “immoral” remark. This apparently schizophrenic policy was standard practice for Dulles-Eisenhower team, a strategy designed to advance the Administration’s objectives while thwarting right-wing opposition.⁵²

The President’s sympathy for Third World non-alignment does not seem to have been only window-dressing, for he expressed these views privately as well. In a reply to Edgar, his politically conservative brother who, citing a David Lawrence article, had lamented America’s solicitousness toward neutral nations, Eisenhower explained that “the concept of neutrality for a nation does not necessarily mean that a nation is trying occupy a position midway between right and wrong.” While asserting that “we want every nation we can reach to stand with us in support of the basic principles of free government,” he warned that “it is a very grave error to ask some of these nations to announce themselves as being on our side in the event of a possible conflict.”⁵³ A few months later, the Suez crisis and growing U.S. fears of losing the favour of developing nations led to Eisenhower’s flexible approach being cast to the forefront of American policy. By 1957, the Administration’s hostile pronouncement against non-alignment had virtually disappeared. As French political scientist Léo Hamon observed, “sous la pression des faits, la politique des Etats-Unis est passée d'une phase dans laquelle la neutralité a été considérée comme une immoralité, une manière de péché, à une attitude dans laquelle la neutralité tout étant regrettée, se voit expliquée, comprise . . . et secourue.”⁵⁴

In fact, by the start of his second term in January 1957, Eisenhower gave the Third World priority status in the foreign policy objectives of his administration. In his Second Inaugural Address, the thirty-fourth president highlighted the importance of “new forces” and

⁵¹ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1958), pp. 411, 414, 420.

⁵² John M. Hightower Oral History Transcript [OH 75], Columbia University Oral History Project, p. 12, Eisenhower Library. Hightower was diplomatic correspondent for the *Associated Press* during the 1950s. Right-wing opposition to foreign aid to neutral countries will be explored further in Chapter Two.

⁵³ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Edgar N. Eisenhower, February 27, 1956, Box 13, DDE Diary, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library. David Lawrence was a politically conservative columnist who wrote for the *U.S. News & World Report*.

“new nations,” and pleaded for the United States to accept the burden of “help[ing] others rise from misery, however far the scene of suffering may be from our shores.”⁵⁵ This speech set the tone for a more flexible foreign policy toward the emerging nations which, as will be seen in the following chapter, permeated several aspects of the Administration’s foreign policies, such as world economic development and America’s voting record in the UN. In the more specific realm of U.S.-Africa policy, the first tangible evidence of this new approach manifested itself with the aforementioned Nixon tour of Africa and, subsequently, an increased diplomatic presence and official interest in African affairs.

The preceding lines have sought to demonstrate that the Eisenhower Administration’s response to the rise of nationalism in Africa was not dictated solely by ideological concerns about communism, at least not in its initial stages. At most, communism, in 1957, was perceived as a threat of a potential nature. In trying to pursue more flexible course toward African nationalism, the Administration was devising policies that cannot wholly be explained by the shibboleth of “International Communism,” which was constantly raised in public pronouncements; on the contrary, policymaking was influenced in an important way by pragmatic and geopolitical concerns. New Left historian Richard Barnet was only stretching the truth a little when he asserted that, despite the rhetoric, “[b]oth powers have found that they can coexist comfortably and compete for power and influence [in the Third World] without attempting to convert the other. This is an ideological conflict like the one between Ford and General Motors.”⁵⁶ This argument is further developed in the following part of this essay, which will offer a summary of the United States strategic, economic, and political interests on the African continent.

⁵⁴ Léo Hamon, “Non-engagement et neutralisme des nouveaux Etats,” in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle and Jean Meyrial, eds., *Les nouveaux Etats dans les relations internationales* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962), p. 355. Also see Rupert Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1957* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1958), pp.60-65.

⁵⁶ Richard J. Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution: The United States in the Third World* (New York: World Publishing, 1968), p. 24.

1.2 Mines and Markets: America's Stake in Africa

From the outset, the student of U.S. foreign policy in the 1950s must consider the limits of American power and freedom of action in African affairs. Sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia, was still perceived in U.S. policymaking circles as Europe's bailiwick. Accordingly, American policy more often than not deferred to European considerations. George Allen once remarked to John Foster Dulles: "Since the colonial powers will continue to play a significant role in Africa, it follows that our relationships with the Continent must necessarily be of a triangular nature. We shall have to take into account not only our own needs and interests but also the policies of the Metropolitan country and the aspirations and attitudes of the Africans involved."⁵⁷ As we shall see later, this particular relationship would be fraught with many tensions and disagreements, as American and European goals often differed and Washington, despite its predominant position in the Western alliance, was far from wielding infinite power in influencing its European allies.⁵⁸

But European interference was not the only determinant swaying U.S. policy; a second triangular relationship pervaded Washington's perception of African politics: the Cold War. Africanist Crawford Young once noted that "African policy is shaped . . . in a triangular arena: the United States, Africa, and the Soviet Union."⁵⁹ Even though one of the core arguments of this paper contends that scholarship has generally overstressed the importance of anticommunism in evaluating U.S. policy toward Africa, the Eisenhower Administration certainly was concerned by Soviet advances in Africa. These worries escalated during 1957 and reached a critical juncture when, in December, the stridently anti-Western and anticolonial "Asian-African Peoples Solidarity Conference" was held in Cairo, an event widely viewed as being a Moscow-sponsored, Soviet-dominated event.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Allen) to the Secretary of State, August 12, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, p. 17.

⁵⁸ Chidiebere Augustus Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1995), p. 119.

⁵⁹ Crawford Young, "United States Policy toward Africa: Silver Anniversary Reflections," *African Studies Review*, vol. 27, no. 3 (1987), p. 2.

⁶⁰ Vernon McKay, "External Political Pressures on Africa Today," in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., *The United States and Africa*, p. 72.

Undoubtedly, the intertwining of these two triangular relationships influenced the manner in which the United States perceived its interests in Africa and, consequently, formulated its policies. Although these interests were indistinguishable from Cold War concerns, an intricate web of diverse, and sometimes conflicting, factors determined America's African policy. This discussion will outline the main elements of the United States' strategic, economic and political stake in sub-Saharan Africa at the outset of the rapid wave of decolonisation that would sweep the continent in the late 1950s.

NSC 5719/1⁶¹ was the Eisenhower Administration's first statement of policy relating specifically to sub-Saharan Africa. Elaborated during the summer of 1957, and drawing considerably from the recommendations formulated by the Vice-President following his African voyage, this policy paper started from the assumption that "[t]here is a growing awareness in the world that Africa is emerging as an area which will have an increasingly important influence in the course of world events and that the political alignment of the present and future independent nations of the continent will be deeply affected by the policies which Western nations, including the United States, pursue in the future." The document further expressed U.S. preference for political development in an "orderly manner," one which "will preserve the essential ties which bind Europe and Africa."⁶² The Administration was extremely concerned that if political unrest came to dislodge the metropolitan powers from Africa, many of the social and economic programs marshalled by the European countries (which accounted about \$300 million annually in excess of ordinary budget expenditures) would be terminated, bringing economic dislocation and, ultimately, a dire situation which "extremist elements, particularly Communists," could exploit to the detriment of Western interests.⁶³

⁶¹ The Eisenhower Administration developed a highly organised bureaucratic framework for elaborating its foreign policies. The high-level policymaking process was centered around the National Security Council, an organ inherited from the Truman Administration. The NSC regularly held meetings where the President and most of his senior advisers would discuss the major international issues facing the United States. The reports issued by the NSC were identified by such codes. For an extensive analysis of the Eisenhower Administration's foreign policymaking process, see Richard H. Immerman and Robert R. Bowie, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), especially Part 2, "Processes and Inputs." Also see Benjamin Fordham, "National Security Council," in Bruce Jentleson and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 216.

⁶² National Security Council Report (NSC 5719/1), August 23, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, p. 76.

Aside from identifying Western Europe's hegemony over Africa as in America's best interest, NSC 5719/1 defined the region's strategic value to the U.S. as "limited at present."⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the report did acknowledge that Africa possessed a certain degree of military and strategic importance for the U.S.; its value stemmed principally from the area's geographical position and its wealth in natural resources and raw materials. To begin with, Africa South of the Sahara's geographical importance was twofold. First, the loss of control or access to the ports, airfields, and support facilities in the bulge of West Africa and in the Horn of Africa would pose serious threats to the vital sea lines of communication between North America and Western Europe to and from the Persian Gulf regions. The latter route was all the more important because of America's and Western Europe's growing dependency on Middle Eastern oil.⁶⁵ Secondly, Western access to major facilities in southern Africa, especially South Africa, was needed to control the Cape route, which, in turn, had direct military importance to the West and was also an extremely important sea route for maritime commerce.⁶⁶

During the 1950s, U.S. military and strategic interests were concentrated on two points: Liberia and Ethiopia. These two countries which, as it has been stated earlier, were independent long before the wave of decolonisation, had developed military ties to the United States since the Second World War.⁶⁷ Of course, the absence of strong direct ties to other vital countries of Africa, like the Congo or Nigeria, did not necessarily imply a lack of U.S. interest in the stability of the region. Indeed, the massive outpouring of Marshall Plan dollars to Europe had indirectly contributed to strengthening the European colonial and military presence in Africa.⁶⁸ South Africa was also considered a crucial part of the West's strategic position, and the ruling National Party's propinquity for U.S. views, namely stringent

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 77.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Burton I. Kaufman, *The Arab Middle East and the United States: Inter-Arab Rivalry and Superpower Diplomacy* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), pp. 1-2.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Kemp, "U.S. Strategic Interests and Military Options in Sub-Saharan Africa," in Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, ed., *Africa and the United States: Vital Interests* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), pp. 123-124.

⁶⁷ Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis: mécanismes et conduite* (Paris: Economica, 1984), pp. 139-148.

⁶⁸ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, pp. 251-254.

anticommunism and pro-business attitudes, ensured U.S. support for Pretoria's widely condemned apartheid policies, at least until the late 1950s.⁶⁹

In Liberia, the U.S. military presence was centred around the Roberts Field air base and the port of Monrovia, the latter built with United States lend-lease funds in 1943. The naval installations in Monrovia were located on the strategic "bulge" of West Africa and constituted the closest point to South America and the South Atlantic sea lanes, both of which were of vital importance to American interests.⁷⁰ The United States, in addition to its military installations, also furnished the Liberian government with a modest amount of military assistance, although total yearly aid did not exceed \$120,000 in direct grants and \$200,000 in reimbursable loans, a negligible amount by all standards.⁷¹

U.S. military commitments were far more important in the East African country of Ethiopia. Strategically located on the Horn of Africa, by the shores of the Red Sea and its exit at the Strait of Babel-Mandeb, the country was near the Middle East oil fields and oil routes. For many years, the Kagnew Station was the biggest of all the U.S. strategic air bases, harbouring over 3,000 U.S. military personnel and dependents. Situated near the Eritrean city of Asmara, the base sheltered highly sensitive radio installations and was one of the United States Army's most important communication hubs in the world.⁷² The Kagnew base was originally leased from Great Britain in 1943; when the British withdrew in 1952, the U.S. signed a 25-year military agreement with Ethiopia to secure the use of the military base. The agreement, formally signed on May 22, 1953, also committed the United States to provide equipment and training for the Ethiopian armed forces, composed of some 20,000 men, in addition to technical and economic assistance.⁷³

⁶⁹ Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985), pp. 34-60; also, from the same author, "Truman, Eisenhower, and South Africa: The Middle of the Road and Apartheid," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1983), pp. 75-104.

⁷⁰ Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 275.

⁷¹ Mutual Security Program Fiscal Year 1958 Estimates (8), Box 42, Subject Series, Confidential File, White House Central Files, Eisenhower Library.

⁷² Lutfullah Mangi, "US Military Bases in Africa," *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 40, no. 2 (1987), pp. 95-97; Christopher Coker, *NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and Africa*, p. 42.

But Ethiopia's importance to U.S. policy transcended its relatively minor place on the world stage. Haile Selassie, the emperor of Ethiopia, was one of the rare African leaders to espouse an unabashed pro-Western orientation. Fiercely anticommunist, he generally supported U.S. policy in the United Nations and even provided a battalion of combat troops during the Korean War (the Kagnev Station was named after the Ethiopian brigade that fought in Korea). Selassie's forthcomingness did come at a price, however, as the emperor persistently tried to foster U.S. support against Eritrean separatism and, later, Somali land claims regarding the Ogaden region.⁷⁴

In exchange for adopting a pro-Western position, Selassie constantly pressured Washington for more military aid. Although the 1953 defence agreement initially quelled Ethiopian demands for arms, reticence within the Department of Defence about building such a strong military presence in a single country to the detriment of regional stability had, by 1956, considerably curtailed military shipments.⁷⁵ Selassie, on several occasions, voiced his displeasure about Department of Defence procrastination. The situation eventually came to deeply concern Eisenhower, who stated during a NSC meeting "his great anxiety to be assured of the friendship of Ethiopia."⁷⁶ Evidently, the arms were not required for distinctly military purposes; they were destined to buy Selassie's cooperation. This led the Administration to adopt its first independent policy statement on Ethiopia, NSC 5615/1, which concluded that it was "important to the United States to provide evidence of long-term interest in a strong Ethiopia by programs of military and economic assistance." The report further added that "the justification for providing U.S. military equipment and training to [Ethiopia] continues to be primarily political."⁷⁷ Yet, this initiative does not seem to have been overly successful, for when Richard Nixon called on the Ethiopian emperor during his 1957 African tour, Selassie

⁷³ Harry N. Howard, "The Development of United States Policy in the Near East, South Asia, and Africa During 1953: Part III," *State Department Bulletin*, March 8, 1954, p. 369.

⁷⁴ See Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Policy toward Africa*, pp. 115-124, for a good overview of U.S.-Ethiopia relations; also see Baissa Lemmu, "United States Military Assistance to Ethiopia 1953-1974: A Reappraisal of a Difficult Patron-Client Relationship," *Northeast African Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1989), pp. 51-70.

⁷⁵ For an example of Secretary of Defence Charles Wilson's lack of enthusiasm for the idea, see Memorandum of Discussion at the 304th Meeting of the NSC, Washington, November 15, 1956, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, pp. 332-333.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

⁷⁷ National Security Council Report (NSC 5615/1), November 19, 1956, in *Ibid.*, pp. 337, 338.

expressed his extreme dissatisfaction at the state of U.S. arms shipments.⁷⁸ By 1959, Selassie's disenchantment had grown to the extent that, playing "the Soviet card," he made a widely publicised official trip to Moscow and accepted \$110 million worth of Soviet economic credits.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the reticence of the U.S. defence establishment to award military aid to Ethiopia must not be understood as a lack of interest in strategic planning for Africa. On the contrary, the Joint Chiefs of Staff repeatedly pressed the Administration into increasing military operations in Africa. Military planners simply wanted to avoid building up a strong military power that would threaten the strategic balance in the region.⁸⁰ One of the first manifestations of the military establishment's pressures for greater U.S. military involvement was seen in the 1957 Nash Report. Commissioned by the President "to carry out a study of and make recommendations with respect to our system of overseas military bases and facilities," the report, completed in December 1957, suggested, among 123 various recommendations, serious consideration for a chain of new military bases across Central Africa. After studying the report, the NSC Planning Board saw "no reason to change the position taken" in NSC 5719/1.⁸¹

In fact, the evidence suggests that the Eisenhower Administration was seeking to limit its military presence on the African continent.⁸² During a 1958 NSC meeting, General Thomas

⁷⁸ Aide-Mémoire From the Imperial Ethiopian Government to the Embassy in Ethiopia, March 12, 1957, in *Ibid.*, pp. 339-343.

⁷⁹ It must be added that the United States' support of the unification of the Italian and British Somaliland territories had also attracted the displeasure of the Emperor. Not surprisingly, soon after Selassie's trip to the U.S.S.R., the U.S. signed additional military agreements with Ethiopia in 1959 and 1960. See Peter Schraeder, *United States Policy toward Africa*, pp. 122-123.

⁸⁰ See, for example, J.C. Satterthwaite to Kenneth Iverson, May 8, 1959, President's Committee to Study U.S. Military Assistance (12), Box 51, Subject Series, Confidential File, White House Central Files, Eisenhower Library; Arnold Rivkin, "Arms for Africa?," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 38, no. 1 (October 1959), pp. 86-87.

⁸¹ NSC 5719/1 concluded that "[n]o immediate action appears called for" regarding military operations in sub-Saharan Africa. NSC Memorandum on Nash Report (February 27, 1958), NSC 358, March 13, 1958, Box 9, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

⁸² This approach was consistent with the Administration's efforts, undertaken in 1953, toward reducing U.S. military commitments overseas. Often referred to as the "New Look" strategy, this plan called for significant reductions in the number of American troops serving in Europe and Asia, relying instead on the retaliatory power of "tactical" nuclear weapons as a deterrent. Mainly motivated by budgetary reasons, the New Look promised, according to Republican exponents, to deliver "more bang for the buck." Although the concept of "tactical" nuclear weapons remained nebulous throughout Eisenhower's tenure, the New Look strategy did succeed in

D. White, Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, warned that the deterioration of Western position in the Near East “had enhanced the importance of Africa South of the Sahara” and advocated the construction of naval bases, air routes, and guided missile sites across Africa. He justified his position by arguing for the need “to anticipate the next Soviet moves.”⁸³ Responding to White, Eisenhower agreed on the rise of Africa’s strategic importance, but he questioned the necessity of expanding U.S. military presence on the continent. The President noted that military activity was a poor way to develop new ties with emerging nations: “We should first work through education and cultural relations, and perhaps Africa will later invite our military help . . . Our military installations are useless if the people don’t want them. We must win Africa, but we can’t win it by military activity.”⁸⁴ The Administration’s reluctance to commit military resources underscores a fundamental aspect of U.S. policy toward Africa: the preferred U.S. goal was not so much to control the logistical facilities of Africa, although this would have obvious benefits, but rather to deny the Soviet Union such control.⁸⁵ This, Eisenhower reasoned, could best be accomplished through non-military means.

The African continent’s high level output of minerals and natural resources was also considered by U.S. policymakers as an extremely valuable asset, both in strategic and economic terms, and definitely constituted a critical reason for keeping the Soviet Union out of Africa. The postwar years had shown Americans that their natural resources were not inexhaustible and, to many contemporary observers, this meant Africa’s raw materials assumed increased importance for the U.S.⁸⁶ The “Dark Continent,” sometimes labelled “the continent God kept in reserve,”⁸⁷ possessed promising hydro-electric potential and its vast “uncharted markets” (a redundant theme in U.S.-African relations) was seen as a momentous potential opportunity. It was Africa’s mineral resources, however, that were at the forefront of

reducing the U.S. military budget from \$35 to \$31 billion. See Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 37.

⁸³ Memorandum of Discussion at the 375th Meeting of the NSC, August 7, 1958, Box 10, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ National Security Council Report (NSC 5719/1), in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, p. 77; Geoffrey Kemp, “U.S. Strategic Interests and Military Options in Sub-Saharan Africa,” p. 124.

⁸⁶ For instance, see Chester Bowles, *Africa’s Challenge to America* (Westport: Negro Universities Press, 1956), pp. 41-42, 100.

American concerns. The continent's share of international mineral output was staggering, providing almost the totality of the West's diamonds and lithium requirements, over half its gold as well as other important materials such as uranium and copper (see ANNEX II).

These numbers were all the more impressive when one considers that most of the African continent was still economically underdeveloped. Keeping these mineral resources at the disposal of the West was viewed as a high priority in Washington, particularly the mines of the Belgian Congo's Katanga province and South Africa. Katanga's Shinkolobwe mine dramatically increased American interest in the stability of the Congo's colonial regime and in the southern African region as a whole. In South Africa, the rich uranium deposits were, according to one scholar, "the most important single interest of the United States in southern Africa."⁸⁸ In addition to these vast mineral deposits, the African continent also supplied a number of basic commodities for the United States, including most of its arabic gum, wattle bark and extract, and palm oil; furthermore, it provided at least half of America's consumption of cocoa, cloves, vanilla beans, extra long staple cotton and mahogany logs.⁸⁹

These raw materials constituted the bulk of trade between the U.S. and Africa. Still, U.S. trade with Africa was not economically vital to the United States. In the word of one economist, "[w]e could get along without African commodities and African markets with an imperceptible ripple in our standard of living."⁹⁰ Despite sub-Saharan Africa's wealth in natural resources, U.S. commercial activity with the continent was, on the whole, relatively low. By the late 1950s, the United States' yearly trade with the continent had reached about \$1 billion, almost four times its worth in 1945, but this figure constantly remained under five percent of total U.S. international trade. Moreover, over a third of this economic activity was conducted with South Africa and most of it was centered in white-controlled areas.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Andrew M. Kamarck, "The African Economy and International Trade," in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., *The United States and Africa*, p. 120.

⁸⁸ Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 44.

⁸⁹ Andrew M. Kamarck, "The African Economy and International Trade," p. 118.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁹¹ Rupert Emerson, *African and United States Policy*, pp. 32-33; Gordon Bertolin, "U.S. Economic Interests in Africa: Investment, Trade, and Raw Materials," in Jennifer S. Whitaker, *Africa and the United States*, pp. 21-59.

Besides South Africa, another notable exception to America's low involvement in the African economy was the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company's activities in Liberia, which were established in 1926. Operating an important rubber plantation in the independent country, American financier and rubber manufacturer Harvey Firestone led an increasingly powerful American business community which influenced Liberian affairs until the 1960s.⁹² In Ethiopia, another independent country where the U.S. retained an "open door," Washington encouraged and provided incentives to such major industrial giants as the Sinclair Oil Company and Trans World Airlines to invest in the Ethiopian economy. According to French historian Annick Cizel, U.S. policymakers wished to transform Ethiopia into a model for the emergent countries of Africa, a showcase to demonstrate that the keys to prosperity were the free flow of business and anticommunism.⁹³

Nevertheless, the "open door" was not available to American business everywhere in Africa. Most of the economies of the countries under colonial rule were managed under the supervision of the metropolitan powers, who jealously guarded their exclusive commercial privileges. Although, by a certain measure, the United States had much to gain economically from the end of European colonialism and the termination of preferential trading conditions which the colonial relationship granted to the mother countries, this form of protectionism was not perceived as an impediment by U.S. policymakers, for the simple reason that Africa was an essential part of Western Europe's economy.⁹⁴ Africanist Vernon McKay remarked that this was America's "indirect economic interest in Africa."⁹⁵

⁹² Although interpretations differ as to the benefits of U.S. business for the small country's economy, most authors agree that Firestone's entry into Liberia marked the beginning of a "neocolonial phase" in Liberian history. Peter Duigan and L.H. Gann, in *The United States and Africa: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 202, 220-221, hold a relatively favourable view of Firestone's activities in Liberia. For a more critical view, see Emily Rosenberg, "The Invisible Protectorate: The United States, Liberia, and the Evolution of Neocolonialism, 1909-40," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 9, no. 3 (Summer 1985), pp. 191-214. The State Department's tacit support of Firestone interests during the early days of the Liberian venture has been documented by historian Frank Chalk, in "The Anatomy of an Investment: Firestone's 1927 Loan to Liberia," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1967), p. 12-32.

⁹³ Annick Cizel, "Un modèle de développement à l'américaine? Quelques aspects de la politique des États-Unis en Éthiopie dans les années cinquante," *Revue française d'études américaines*, vol. 22, no. 83 (January 2000), pp. 90-99; also see Peter Schwab, "Cold War on the Horn of Africa," *African Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 306 (1978), p. 11.

⁹⁴ Richard Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941-1991* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 174.

⁹⁵ Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, p. 279.

Western Europe's hegemony over the African economy did not necessarily close the colonies to American investment; for decades, American trade with Africa had flowed through colonial channels.⁹⁶ Of course, this arrangement was not conducive to encouraging middle-size businesses to invest in Africa, since there was no significant U.S. government presence to defend American commercial interests. Large-scale American financial enterprises who could finance their ventures independently, such as petroleum, steel, and copper producers, formed the main body of U.S. business involved in Africa.⁹⁷

These large enterprises fostered a cooperative relationship with the colonial powers. Political scientist David N. Gibbs has shown that many of the Eisenhower Administration's high-ranking officials were close to investors who were linked to Belgian mineral resource companies. Among them were Christian Herter, who would replace John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State in 1959 and had married into the Standard Oil family through a family association with Mobil Oil, a Standard Oil subsidiary which had extensive investments in Africa. Likewise, Under Secretary of State C. Douglas Dillon held family ties to Dillon, Read, and Company, which had issued a \$15 million loan to the Belgian colonial government in April 1958.⁹⁸ Although one must not reach sweeping conclusions from this evidence, the record clearly shows that Washington considered that the colonial control of the African economy was an important economic asset for the United States. It ensured that Western Europe obtained a significant supply of raw materials and provided markets for its exports. Suffice it to say that Washington also favoured the metropolises' tight control of the colonial economy because it also promised a reliable bulwark against Soviet advances in Africa.⁹⁹

But for European and American business to flourish and the economic climate to be favourable, political stability was an essential prerequisite. As the decolonisation movement

⁹⁶ Edward H. McKinley, *The Lure of Africa: American Interests in Tropical Africa, 1919-1939* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974), p. 93.

⁹⁷ George W. Shepherd, Jr., "The Conflict of Interest in American Policy on Africa," *Western Political Quarterly*, vol. 12 (1959), pp. 997-998.

⁹⁸ David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 3, 100; Centre de Recherche et d'Information Socio-Politiques [Belgium], *Congo 1959*, 2nd ed. (Brussels, C.R.I.S.P., 1961), p. 72. According to Stephen Weissman, Dillon's "family firm had a moral and reputational interest in the success of its 1958 loan to the Belgian Congo." See Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 48.

rapidly gained ground during the 1950s, the United States nursed two main political objectives for the newly emerging nations: first, to ensure their loyalty to the West and, second, vigorous opposition to the spread of political radicalism.¹⁰⁰ This second objective implied, of course, limiting the spread of communist influence in Africa, although NSC 5917/1 admitted that “Communism has not been a major problem in Africa South of the Sahara up to the present.”¹⁰¹

Almost prophetically, Harvard Professor Rupert Emerson noted in 1957 that “it could be said that Africa has not yet become a hot enough danger point to command American attention in a world where the warning sirens are constantly shrieking in one quarter or another. . . . Under present conditions the one sure-fire stimulant for greater American attention to Africa would be an increase in Communist activity.”¹⁰² Washington’s Cold War concerns were awakened in late 1957, when several Asian and African nations convened in Cairo for the First All Peoples Afro-Asian Conference. This gathering, described by one scholar as “a marriage of convenience” between Nasserist anticolonialism and communist anti-imperialism, witnessed an impressive level of Soviet and Communist Chinese diplomatic activity. Not surprisingly, the conference played on militantly anticolonialist themes.¹⁰³ In the United States, the conference was perceived as a Soviet-dominated hoax. The *New York Times* correspondent in Cairo viewed it as “the latest and most impressive evidence of Moscow’s growing efforts to win over the minds and hearts of Asia and Africa’s millions”¹⁰⁴ while an editorial writer charged that “Moscow is giving Cairo a strong dose of slapstick” and characterised the conference as a “mockery of an Asian- African meeting staged by Communist forces.”¹⁰⁵

In Washington, the Cairo Conference was seen by the State Department as “a new instrument for penetration,” one which would cleverly “keep Communist objectives hidden

⁹⁹ National Security Council Report (NSC 5719/1), August 23, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, “Africa, the United States, and the World Economy: The Historical Bases of American Policy,” in Frederick S. Arkhurst, ed., *U.S. Policy Toward Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 16-17.

¹⁰¹ National Security Council Report (NSC 5719/1), August 23, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, p. 81.

¹⁰² Rupert Emerson, “The Character of American Interests in Africa,” p. 18.

¹⁰³ Robert A. Mortimer, *The Third World Coalition in International Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁴ *New York Times*, January 5, 1958, p. 14.

under the cloak of Nationalism.”¹⁰⁶ For the administration, it had become clear that the United States had to win over African nationalism if the West’s influence over the continent was to be sustained. The Nixon Report had suggested two courses of action to order to ensure that “we have laid the best possible foundation for a close relationship” with the new nations: the first one was the granting of “moderate amounts of technical and economic assistance to the dependent territories”¹⁰⁷; the second policy guidance was to demonstrate American sympathy through the undertaking of concrete actions. This second suggestion presented more complications for the Administration, as the U.S. found it very difficult to show a favourable inclination toward emerging Africa without irritating its Western allies. This dilemma was painfully obvious in Washington’s efforts to navigate a steady course through the choppy waters of the colonial debate.

1.3 Walking the Tightrope: The U.S., Western Europe, and the Colonial Issue

“Colonialism,” wrote one contemporary student of foreign affairs, “is the emotional issue of the decade.”¹⁰⁸ As the new nations of Asia and Africa were swiftly gaining a voice on the world scene, the colonial question became one of the most contentious debates of the late 1950s. This was most notably perceptible in the UN, where the newly emancipated states of the Third World were increasingly voting as a single bloc on issues relating to colonialism, racialism and global economic matters. For the United States, a self-professed anticolonial nation, the dilemma presented itself acutely, as Assistant Secretary of State Lincoln Bloomfield described in a 1955 report:

The US could probably pick up large-scale support in the UN, and ease its troubled national conscience in the bargain, if it adopted a doctrinaire anti-colonial position across the board. To do so would, of course, be to abdicate the bulk of our other responsibilities and commitments, not to mention our judgement. Thus, we will doubtless have to maneuver precariously and thanklessly between two conflicting forces in the UN. . . . [T]here is not

¹⁰⁵ *New York Times*, December 29, 1957, p. 16 and December 30, 1957. Both are editorials.

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum From the Secretary of State’s Special Assistant (Holmes) to Secretary of State Dulles, February 6, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV: *Africa* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1992), p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Report by the Vice President, April 5, 1957 (Report to the President on the Vice President’s Visit to Africa), in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII, p. 65. For a thorough discussion on foreign aid to Africa, see 2.1.

¹⁰⁸ Stefan T. Possony, “Colonial Problems in Perspective,” in Robert Strausz-Hupé and Harry W. Hazard, eds., *The Idea of Colonialism* (New York: Praeger, 1958), p. 17.

much real latitude for American policy here under present conditions, and it would be wise to realize that we are not going to win any popularity contests on the colonial issue within the framework of our present [policy.]¹⁰⁹

Previously, the U.S. had been willing to look the other way as the European powers, sometimes brutally, reaffirmed their colonial presence over their African dominions.¹¹⁰ By the late 1950s, however, the United States was starting to realize that, despite its best efforts, its policy of preserving a facade of Wilsonian-type support for self-determination, while carefully avoiding any affront to the European metropolises, was drawing fire from both the metropolitan powers and the developing nations. Washington went to great pains to portray itself as an “honest broker” between the two sides, but neither of them saw it that way.¹¹¹

By supporting, more often than not, the European powers in the UN on important policy issues, Washington’s anticolonial rhetoric had begun to wear thin in the eyes of the Afro-Asian nations. The U.S. was further hindered by its strategic and economic ties with segregationist South Africa, Israel and the European colonial powers in general: from the beginning, Americans were, in a way, guilty by association.¹¹² But the Eisenhower Administration’s lackluster voting record on self-determination issues in the UN, coupled with its unsympathetic rhetoric toward self-determination, probably caused the most resentment among the African nations. M’hamed Yazid, the Algerian FLN representative at the UN, derided U.S. policy as “anti-colonialism de dimanche.”¹¹³

The emerging nations looked askance at U.S. efforts to convince them of the potential dangers of the “Soviet brand” of colonialism, as it was practiced in Eastern Europe.¹¹⁴ The

¹⁰⁹ Draft Report Prepared by Lincoln Bloomfield, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, February 9, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XI, p. 56.

¹¹⁰ For instance, in 1947, when the French violently crushed a supposedly communist-led political insurrection in Madagascar, killing nearly 100,000 civilians, Washington stood by quietly even though most of the funds used to finance the French onslaught were drawn from the Marshall Plan. See Douglas Little, “Cold War and Colonialism in Africa: The United States, France, and the Madagascar Revolt of 1947,” *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 59, no. 4 (1990), pp. 527-528, 543.

¹¹¹ Cary Fraser, “Understanding American Policy Toward the Decolonization of European Empires, 1945-1964,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1992), p. 106; Steven Metz, “American Attitudes toward Decolonization in Africa,” p. 524.

¹¹² Hugh Tinker, *Race, Conflict and the International Order: From Empire to United Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 113.

¹¹³ Immanuel Wallerstein, “Africa, the United States, and the World Economy,” p. 19.

¹¹⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 112.

Soviets, by adopting a position as unabashed supporters of immediate self-determination for all peoples, had succeeded, by the late 1950s, in gaining a genuine fund of sympathy in Asia and Africa. The new states were wary of the West's Cold War rhetoric, which to them was a subterfuge to prolong the binding ties of colonial tutelage. One West African newspaper plainly stated these views in a 1953 editorial:

Judging from what we see and experience from day to day, we feel that all this talk of the so-called "free world" and "iron curtain" is a camouflage to fool and bamboozle the colonial peoples. . . . We shall judge every nation strictly on the merits of the attitude of that nation towards our national aspirations. We have every cause to be grateful to the Communists for their active interest in the fate of colonial peoples and for their constant denunciation of the evils of imperialism [and apartheid]. It is then left to the so-called "free" nations to convince us that they are more concerned about our welfare than the Communists, and in this regard we believe more in action than in mere words.¹¹⁵

Although the Eisenhower Administration understood many of the apprehensions of the emerging African states, a series of factors hindered Washington's efforts to adopt a more positive policy toward self-determination. Foremost among these concerns was the extreme reluctance expressed by the European powers every time the U.S. attempted to press them into seeing the wisdom of decolonisation. Highly mindful of the preservation of NATO unity, the Administration constantly curtailed its policy choices to avoid irritating its allies. This was not blind deference to the European powers; these choices were thoroughly debated within the Administration, and the U.S. often adopted pro-European positions half-heartedly. Another important factor that prevented the U.S. from earnestly supporting African independence was the simple fact that a mainstream consensus existed among American political leaders that sympathised with the European position and was doubtful of the viability of these African nations once they attained independence.

The Eisenhower Administration's first policy statement on the African colonial question was delivered by Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs Henry A. Byroade in November 1953. In what has been described as "the classic masterpiece of American ambiguity on the colonial question,"¹¹⁶ the address awkwardly

¹¹⁵ From a June 1953 edition of Nigeria's *West African Pilot*. Quoted in Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle*, p. 203.

¹¹⁶ Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, p. 320.

struck a precarious and often contradictory equilibrium between the European and African views. Byroade, in a glaringly paternalistic way, lectured “our friends in Asia and Africa” that independence was not “a magic solution to all their problems” and warned them of the dangers of “premature independence”; on the other hand, he also affirmed the United States’ “belief in eventual self-determination for all peoples . . . with minimal delay.”¹¹⁷ Not surprisingly, this self-contradictory pronouncement, which would set the tone for the Eisenhower Administration’s official statements until 1960, displeased both Europeans and Africans. The United States would pursue this fence-sitting policy throughout its two terms, often “walking the diplomatic tightrope” between its NATO allies and the new African nations.¹¹⁸

Eisenhower, however, was not naive about America’s anticolonial dilemma. Indeed, he sympathised with many of the aspirations of the emerging nations for self-determination.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, he did not condone political radicalism – for the thirty-fourth president, “[s]elf-determination did not include the right to choose a radical road to development.”¹²⁰ The historical consensus has criticised Eisenhower for his lack of sympathy for African colonial aspirations and his unequivocal support of Western colonialism. Yet, the evidence hints that he was painfully aware of the colonial dilemma and that, even though he mostly supported America’s Western allies, he often did so with profound misgivings.

The President held deeply rooted anticolonial views, although they were tempered by his conservative outlook. Following a June 1954 meeting with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Eisenhower complained in his diary that the ageing British leader took “the rather old-fashioned, paternalistic approach” to the colonial question and that the U.K. should recognise the wisdom of granting autonomy to its colonies.¹²¹ In a personal letter to NATO commander General Alfred Gruenther, Eisenhower lamented that despite his efforts to

¹¹⁷ Henry A. Byroade, “The World’s Colonies and Ex-Colonies: A Challenge to America,” in *Department of State Bulletin*, November 16, 1953; the quotes are from pp. 655, 656 and 657.

¹¹⁸ Charles Yost Oral History Transcript [OH 416], p. 19, Eisenhower Library. Yost was the Minister at the American Embassy in Paris from 1956 to 1958; Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis*, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Blanche W. Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1981), p. 184; Robert H. Immerman and Robert R. Bowie, *Waging Peace*, p. 252.

¹²⁰ Robert Griffith, “Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 87, no. 1 (February 1982), p. 119.

¹²¹ Robert H. Ferrell, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, p. 224.

convince Churchill, “[m]y steel struck no spark from his flint. He is completely victorian [*sic*] in this regard, even though he is absolutely right in his contention that a number of these people who are screaming for independence are not yet equipped to support it.” He added that “[i]n this day and time no so-called ‘dependent people’ can, by force, be kept indefinitely in that position.”¹²²

Since the early 1950s, Eisenhower had also been pressuring Paris into granting gradual independence to its colonial dominions, but to little avail. Concerning his frustrated efforts in convincing the French about the wisdom of decolonisation, Eisenhower privately fretted to a *Newsweek* editor: “It is a tragedy, an example of the stupidity of men, that we cannot see it clearly enough to make a virtue out of a necessity.”¹²³ In another letter, this time to his boyhood friend, Everett “Swede” Hazlett, the President deplored the fact that the French government’s “basic trouble is that they are still trying to act as if they headed a great empire, all of it, as of old, completely dependent on them. If they would centre their attention mainly on their European problems and work with others in their solution, they could be a happy and prosperous country.”¹²⁴

As the rise of national aspirations in Africa gained in intensity in the late 1950s, the colonial dilemma was becoming more acute for U.S. policymakers. During a 1958 NSC meeting, an exasperated Eisenhower complained “that rather than slow down the independence movement, he would like to be on the side of the natives for once.”¹²⁵ He was immediately reminded by Christian Herter and Clarence Randall that “such a policy would raise delicate questions in our relations with our NATO partners.”¹²⁶ A memorandum from a subsequent 1959 NSC meeting further captures the essence of Eisenhower’s feelings toward the colonial issue. Deeply dismayed by French policy in Algeria,

¹²² Dwight D. Eisenhower to [SACEUR Commander] Alfred Gruenther, November 30, 1954, Box 8, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library. Also see, Dwight D. Eisenhower to John Cowles, December 7, 1955, Box 11, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹²³ Conversation with Malcolm Muir on about [*sic*] Colonialism, May 25, 1955, Box 5, Ann Whitman Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹²⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower; Robert Griffith, ed., *Ike's Letters to a Friend, 1941-1958* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984), p. 192. Letter dated 18 November 1957.

¹²⁵ Memorandum of Discussion at the 375th Meeting of the NSC, August 7, 1958, Box 10, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

the President responded by saying that this [to encourage the French in Algeria without attracting criticism from the emerging nations] would be the trick of the week if we could do it. How could we say we support the French and still not damage our interests? The whole of our history, the President stated, is anti-colonial, and the French action in Algeria is interpreted as militant colonialism. To support the French would run counter to everything we have done in the past. . . . To stand up with the colonial powers would be to cut ourselves from our own moorings; it was an adventurous idea.¹²⁷

Yet, despite these sweeping pronouncements, Eisenhower, like most of the members of his administration, held a rather special, limited view of anticolonialism, which was influenced by deep racial assumptions, as well as a Eurocentric worldview. American anticolonialism, historian Scott Bills has argued, was “more a leap of faith, a self-conscious testament to virtue, than a coherent doctrine or policy.”¹²⁸ The rich white men of the Eisenhower Administration retained, at best, a paternalistic view of Africans and many of them questioned the wisdom of granting “premature independence” to native peoples. In a 1959 NSC meeting, the President, citing his experience with “primitive peoples in the Philippines,” expressed “some wonder as to how the natives of Somalia could expect to run an independent nation and why they were so possessed to do so.”¹²⁹ Other conservative-minded members of his entourage, such as Clarence Randall, found the idea of granting independence to some African countries “terrifying,”¹³⁰ while Director of the Bureau of the Budget Maurice Stans, returning from a 1959 tour of Africa, asserted that “he had formed the impression that many Africans still belonged in the trees.”¹³¹

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles showed less enthusiasm than Eisenhower for anticolonialism. For Dulles, independence was for “those who are capable of holding it.”¹³²

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* At the time, Herter was Under Secretary of State and Randall was Chairman of the U.S. Council on Foreign Economic Policy.

¹²⁷ Memorandum of Discussion at the 417th Meeting of the NSC, August 18, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. VII, part 2: *Western Europe* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1993), p. 244.

¹²⁸ Scott L. Bills, *Empire and Cold War: The Roots of US-Third-World Antagonism, 1945-1947* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 6.

¹²⁹ Memorandum of Discussion at the 397th Meeting of the NSC, February 26, 1959, Box 11, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library. During his military career, Eisenhower had served in the Philippines.

¹³⁰ Memorandum of Discussion at the 365th Meeting of the NSC, May 8, 1958, Box 10, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹³¹ Memorandum of Discussion at the 432nd Meeting of the NSC, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 77.

¹³² Memorandum of a Telephone Call to Congressman Richards re. Anti-Colonialism, June 18, 1955, Box 4, Telephone Calls Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

This meant that the transition of power “should be orderly,” and this was best achieved by educating “an informed, discriminating citizenry, building durable representative institutions, and creating a stable economic and social structure.”¹³³ The European presence on the African continent was seen by Dulles as essential for political stability; yet, he did not condone an unbridled colonial presence in Africa. To him, colonialism was clearly on the way out and the metropolises had to acknowledge that fact.¹³⁴ Although Dulles never chastised the European powers publicly, preserving the Atlantic Alliance’s unified facade, he often shared his worries during private discussions. During a 1958 NSC meeting, for example, Dulles direly warned that “we may have soon to make a choice as to whether to continue to support [the European powers] at the expense of losing all of Africa.”¹³⁵

Interestingly, the British and French saw Dulles as an outspoken anticolonialist, which reveals that the Secretary probably did pressure them on the colonial issue. Sir Roger Makins, the British ambassador in Washington, even remarked that “I have noticed before this deep seated feeling about colonialism, which is common to so many Americans, occasionally welling up inside Foster [Dulles] like a dormant volcano.”¹³⁶ Another revealing example of the Secretary’s tactics can be found in Dulles’ reaction to Senator John F. Kennedy’s 1957 speech on Algeria. The widely-publicised speech, often considered to be the young Massachusetts legislator’s springboard into national politics, sharply criticised the Administration’s support of France in the Algerian conflict. Although Dulles publicly admonished Kennedy for his “irresponsible” statement, he privately confided to Kennedy that he used his speech “to advantage in putting quiet heat on the French.”¹³⁷

American pressure on the metropolitan powers was not welcome in the European capitals. The colonial powers resented American “preaching” about the virtues of granting

¹³³ Memorandum From John Foster Dulles to the President, July 19, 1958, Box 16, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹³⁴ John W. Hanes, Jr., Oral History Transcript [OH 188], Columbia University Oral History Project, p. 25, Eisenhower Library. Hanes was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.

¹³⁵ Memorandum of Discussion at the 356th Meeting of the NSC, February 27, 1958, Box 9, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹³⁶ Quoted in William Roger Louis, “Dulles, Suez, and the British,” in Richard Immerman, ed., *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 133-134.

¹³⁷ Quoted in Ronald J. Nurse, “Critic of Colonialism: JFK and Algerian Independence,” *Historian*, vol. 39, no. 2 (1977), p. 315.

self-determination to dependent peoples and considered America's anticolonial rhetoric dangerous and disruptive to the stability of their African colonies.¹³⁸ London's *Daily Telegraph* once cynically remarked, concerning the U.S. position on the colonial debate, that Washington appeared to be simultaneously "a pillar of society and a patron of revolution."¹³⁹ One French journalist notoriously quipped in *Le Figaro* that the U.S. was as dangerous a revolutionary force as the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁰

London had been at odds with Washington over the colonial debate since the Second World War. Britain and America each interpreted the 1941 Atlantic Charter declaration differently, and Prime Minister Churchill, irked at U.S. support for decolonisation, had scathingly remarked one month before Yalta that " 'Hands off the British Empire' is our maxim and it must not be weakened or smirched to please sob-stuff merchants at home or foreigners of any hue."¹⁴¹ Throughout the postwar years, Britain had grown uneasy toward the United States increasing presence in its previously undisputed colonial sphere. Many Britons lamented the fact that Americans seemingly believed all colonial peoples were "ripe for full self-government" and saw "the hidden hand of American finance . . . behind every move on the international chessboard."¹⁴²

Much of this widening American presence was spawned by the non-government sector. In 1957, for example, the AFL-CIO, one of the first major U.S. labour unions to involve itself in sub-Saharan Africa, granted \$56,000 to a young Kenyan activist, Tom Mboya. He used these funds to found the Kenyan Federation of Labor, which later became a leading force in Kenya's road to independence.¹⁴³ This infuriated the British Colonial Office, as did

¹³⁸ John Hay Whitney to John Foster Dulles, March 8, 1957, Box 5, General Correspondence and Memo Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Robert C. Good, "The United States and the Colonial Debate," in Arnold Wolfers, ed., *Alliance Policy in the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), p. 224.

¹⁴⁰ Vernon McKay, "External Political Pressures on Africa Today," p. 80.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 433.

¹⁴² British Prime Minister Clement R. Attlee addressed the British-American rift over the colonial issue in a 1954 *Foreign Affairs* article. See "Britain and America: Common Aims, Different Opinions," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2 (January 1954), pp. 191-193.

¹⁴³ Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis*, p. 92.

other growing activities in Africa led by U.S. private foundations.¹⁴⁴ London was also annoyed by some of the more progressive members of the U.S. government, such as Mason Sears, the Representative to the UN Trusteeship Council; the Colonial Office even went through the trouble of sending a quiet request to Secretary Dulles to the effect that Sears be prevented from attending Ghana's independence celebrations.¹⁴⁵

The United States repeatedly reassured the colonial powers that it had no intention of dislodging them from their colonies and ex-colonies. On March 20, 1956, Undersecretary of State Douglas Dillon delivered the Eisenhower Administration's first official statement designed to quell European concerns before the Paris Diplomatic Press Association. Several similar pronouncements were issued in the following years.¹⁴⁶ Despite these reassurances, the colonial powers remained deeply suspicious of American motives. Indeed, many Europeans believed that Washington's anticolonialism was nothing but a facade to mask its expansionist aims.¹⁴⁷ Naturally, the Suez crisis of 1956 had done nothing to alleviate these fears.

France was especially sensitive to America's anticolonial policy. There, criticism of the U.S. was particularly sharp, the widespread feeling being that America's anticolonialism was a hypocritical sham, considering its own avuncular relationship to Hawaii, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The French were particularly critical of U.S. activities in Africa; the African continent had become, by the late 1950s, France's last trump card on the world stage, and Paris was intent on maintaining its position of predominant influence.¹⁴⁸ Washington was mindful of France's attitudes toward the colonial question, most importantly because of its essential place in the Atlantic alliance. Secretary Dulles, for one, frequently expressed his concerns about the frailty of NATO, a delicate situation caused mainly by France's unstable political and economic condition. American policy, Dulles reasoned, could not publicly

¹⁴⁴ E. Jefferson Murphy, *Creative Philanthropy: Carnegie Corporation and Africa, 1953-1973* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1976), p. 35.

¹⁴⁵ Telephone Call to Ambassador Lodge, February 1, 1957, Box 6, Telephone Calls Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁴⁶ Memorandum for the President, March 20, 1956, Box 6, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library; *New York Times*, January 11, 1957, p. 6; John Foster Dulles, "The Strategy of Victory," *State Department Bulletin*, January 13, 1958, p. 53.

¹⁴⁷ David N. Gibbs, "Political Parties and International Relations: The United States and the Decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa," *International History Review*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1995), p. 310.

contravene French interests without running the risk of unseating the weak French “center” and bringing to power the radical alternatives, left or right.¹⁴⁹ The weak link in the West’s global strategy, France, according to historian Noraogo Kinda, “tenait l’Alliance atlantique en otage.”¹⁵⁰

The predicament over U.S.-France policy manifested itself conspicuously during the Algerian crisis. The French already maintained several thousand troops in North Africa and, when the Algerian war broke out, they had withdrawn an army division from the Cold War front line in Germany without consulting their allies.¹⁵¹ This greatly perplexed U.S. policymakers, who were worried that French armed forces – supplied with U.S. military aid – were being sent to Algeria to the detriment of the NATO defence system on the European continent. Furthermore, Washington had already concluded that eventual Algerian independence was inevitable and that prolonging the war would do nothing more than worsen the situation and impoverish France. Still, the U.S. was wary of interceding in the Algerian question, fearing French retribution. A 1957 National Intelligence Estimate summarised the problem: “France will persist in measuring US friendship by the yardstick of support – or at least lack of opposition – on its Algerian policy. Moreover, the French are likely to weigh their actions in other areas against the U.S. position.”¹⁵² Thus, supporting France in Algeria was the price for preserving the integrity of the Atlantic Alliance.

In the United States, the debate on European colonialism was mainly restricted to the Algerian question, to which the American press devoted far more attention than political developments in Black Africa.¹⁵³ From the beginning, congressional leaders had been

¹⁴⁸ Jean Marchand, “Les États-Unis et l’Afrique noire,” *Revue de Défense Nationale*, vol. 20, nos. 8-9 (1964), pp. 1366-1371; Chiedebere A. Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁹ Robert C. Good, “The United States and the Colonial Debate,” p. 252; Richard H. Immerman and Robert R. Bowie, *Waging Peace*, p. 203.

¹⁵⁰ Noraogo Kinda, “Les États-Unis et le nationalisme en Afrique noire à l’épreuve de la décolonisation,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer*, vol. 79, no. 297 (1992), p. 546.

¹⁵¹ Christopher Coker, *NATO, the Warsaw Pact and Africa*, p. 31.

¹⁵² National Intelligence Estimate, August 13, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XXVII: *Western Europe and Canada* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1992), pp. 139, 159; also, National Security Council Report (NSC 5721/1), October 19, 1957, in *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

¹⁵³ David Gardinier, “France’s African Policy under DeGaulle (1958-1960) as seen in the American Press,” in Patricia Galloway, ed., *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, no. 17 (Chicago: University Press of America, 1991), p. 131.

reluctant to approve the Administration's quiet support of French colonial policy and had earlier specified that military aid to France (through NATO auspices) should not be used for purposes outside the European theatre. In 1955, Senate majority leader William Knowland (R-CA) complained to John Foster Dulles that "one of these days we [are] apt to get a 'blow-off' here at home that [*sic*] our equipment [is] being used to further colonialism when the taxpayers had furnished such equipment for the protection of Europe against Soviet aggression."¹⁵⁴ Knowland's fears were certainly not unfounded; by the mid-fifties, the United States had become the *de facto* arms supplier for France's colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria.¹⁵⁵

If the opening salvo against the Administration's support of French colonial policy was delivered when John F. Kennedy pronounced his aforementioned July 1957 speech on Algeria, the "blow-off" Knowland had dreaded effectively occurred in February 1958 when, to the outrage of the world community, French planes bombed a Tunisian village near the Algerian frontier, killing 68 Tunisians and injuring 130.¹⁵⁶ The Administration immediately suffered a backlash in Congress, where a bipartisan consensus was emerging in opposition to French policy in Algeria. Such prominent Democrats as William Proxmire (D-WI), Mike Mansfield (D-MT) and Wayne Morse (D-OR) criticised the Tunisian bombing and the Administration's support of French policy while, on the other side of the political spectrum, ultra-conservative Senator Karl Malone (R-NV) complained that U.S. military aid was funding France's colonial ambitions.¹⁵⁷ By the fall of 1958, domestic and international pressure had induced the Eisenhower Administration to adopt a more critical stance toward French colonial policy in Algeria, to the great displeasure of newly-elected President Charles De Gaulle.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Memorandum of Conversation with Sen. Knowland, Aug. 12, 1955, Box 4, Telephone Conversation Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁵⁵ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, pp. 253-254.

¹⁵⁶ Irving Wall, "Les relations franco-américaines et la guerre d'Algérie, 1956-1960," *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, vol. 110, no. 1 (1996), p. 73.

¹⁵⁷ *Congressional Record*, February 10, 1958, pp. 1937-1940; February 13, 1958, p. 2030; April 21, 1958, pp. 6757-6758; August 22, 1958, pp. 19150-19151. For the record, Senator Wayne Morse had switched from the Republican to the Democratic Party for the 1956 election following a brief hiatus under an independent banner.

¹⁵⁸ Irving Wall, "Les relations franco-américaines," pp. 73-89; Egeya Sangmuah, "Eisenhower and Containment in North Africa," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 44, no. 1 (Winter 1990), pp. 83-89; Yahia H. Zoubir, "U.S. and Soviet Policies towards France's Struggle with Anticolonial Nationalism in North Africa," *Canadian Journal of History*, vol. 30, no. 3 (December 1995), pp. 461-466.

However, it would be spurious to claim that the prevailing anticolonial sentiment in Congress concerning the Algerian question was applied equally to the situation in sub-Saharan Africa. The oppressive character given to French colonial policy in American public attitudes was not extended to European colonialism in Africa. To most Americans, Black Africa had not reached, politically, socially, or economically, a sufficient degree of readiness to warrant the ending of colonial tutelage. In his widely-read "Foreign Affairs" column, C.L. Sulzberger of the *New York Times* pondered: "Ultimate freedom is a certainty for the backward African masses. But freedom is a gift for those prepared and worthy of it."¹⁵⁹ English writer Elspeth Huxley, who grew up in Kenya and was the *New York Times*' most frequent contributor on African affairs, predicted that in granting premature independence to countries "where university graduates are as scarce as pearls in an oyster-bed," the West was sowing "the seeds of disaster," for, as Huxley warned, "the continent is as yet too raw and underdeveloped, the people too disunited and inexperienced, to seize these opportunities without continued guidance from the outside world – the White world of the West."¹⁶⁰

The *New York Times* was not isolated in its support of European colonialism in Africa. Most popular U.S. journals, such as *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report*, warmly praised European colonial administration in Africa.¹⁶¹ In the late 1950s, a statement like the one delivered by Liberia's representative at the UN, who claimed that his country "lagged materially" behind some of the new African nations "because it had always been independent and had never reaped the benefits of colonialism,"¹⁶² was not particularly unusual. For the majority of American observers, most countries of Africa were not yet ready to "assume the responsibilities" of independence and a colonial policy of benevolent paternalism was seen as a better alternative than the granting of "premature independence." In 1958, it could be argued that colonialism had not yet attained the "dirty word" connotation that the bitter UN debates of 1959 and 1960 would foster. Even E. Frederic Morrow, the first Afro-American presidential

¹⁵⁹ *New York Times*, July 13, 1957, p. 16.

¹⁶⁰ *New York Times*, September 5, 1957, VI, pp. 27, 30. The editorial page of the *Times* was hardly more sympathetic to calls for untrammelled African independence; in an April 1958 editorial, the *Times* argued that although the end of colonialism was a desirable goal, it would be irresponsible to demand independence "for all African peoples by a fixed date irrespective of their capacity of self-government, which may be doubted in the case of the more primitive peoples." April 23, 1958, p. 32.

¹⁶¹ Martin Staniland, *American Intellectuals and African Nationalists* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 218.

adviser who accompanied Nixon on his African tour, admitted that “[d]espite my extreme dislike for colonialism and everything it denotes, I cannot deny that the British really benefit any place into which they move. They provide all the preliminary essentials such as good roads, fine water systems, functional hotels, and the ever-present golf courses.”¹⁶³

What could be described as conditional support of anticolonialism prevailed in most governmental circles. A 1958 bipartisan Congressional Report on Africa gathered that:

premature dissolution of colonial ties runs the risk of creating an illusion of independence that may only pave the way for further fragmentation. This study mission is of the opinion that no constructive purpose is served by playing upon the anticolonial theme. There is enough emotional content in the reconstruction of societies and the readjustment of relationships in Africa without injecting more.¹⁶⁴

This sceptical attitude toward granting independence to African nations was not only shared by conservative-minded politicians. Congresswoman Frances P. Bolton, a foremost proponent of independence for Africa in Congress, privately mused to UN Representative Henry Cabot Lodge that “small countries too new to responsibility to be able to act for the general benefit of the free world” perhaps constituted a risk for the West. She went on to wonder: “Why should there not have been set up a trial period for all ‘emerging’ countries?”¹⁶⁵ Needless to say, this view was also shared by the State Department establishment, which was highly

¹⁶² *New York Times*, March 24, 1957, p. 32.

¹⁶³ E. Frederic Morrow, *Black Man in the White House: A Diary of the Eisenhower Years by the Administrative Officer for Special Projects, The White House, 1955-1961* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1963), pp. 136-137. Despite its mostly tepid record on civil rights issues, the Eisenhower Administration was the first to offer a White House position to an Afro-American; Morrow, a former CBS executive, was hired by the Administration in 1955.

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Report of the Special Study Mission to the Near East and Africa*, by Representatives Hays, O’Hara, and Church, 85th Congress, 2nd sess. (Washington, 1958), p. 4; Representative Wayne L. Hays (D-OH), on his return from the study mission, expressed his personal views somewhat more tersely, affirming that “[we] can’t turn these countries over to these half-baked half-educated natives.” Quoted in Michael Krenn, *Black Diplomacy: African Americans and the State Department, 1945-1969* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), p. 72.

¹⁶⁵ Letter From Congresswoman Frances P. Bolton to the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge), June 6, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XI, p. 500. Similarly, in her 1956 Congressional Report on Africa, Bolton had praised colonial administration, concluding that “[n]o matter how imperfect the methods employed by the imperialistic powers, the system nevertheless was a progressive force and brought a civilizing program to the Dark Continent.” In U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Report of the Special Study Mission to Africa, South and East of the Sahara by Frances P. Bolton*, pp. 136-137.

sympathetic to European colonial rule in Africa and was notorious for its support of a paternalistic approach with regard to African independence.¹⁶⁶

Even the Democratic critics of the Eisenhower Administration were circumspect in their criticism of European rule in Africa and cautiously supported anticolonialism. Chester Bowles (D-CT), a congressman who had previously been U.S. ambassador to India and who would later be at the forefront of President John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier" approach, was one of the Administration's most persistent critics on foreign relations with the Third World. In a 1956 book dedicated to the U.S. and Africa, Bowles scored Washington's colonial policy, which, he decried, "maneuve[rs] us into appearing to support the hated and doomed status quo."¹⁶⁷ Yet, he held a seemingly approving view of British colonialism and warned against "indiscriminate and reckless support of African nationalism," which would instead encourage "racial and religious conflict."¹⁶⁸ Likewise, John F. Kennedy, in a 1957 *Foreign Affairs* article, warned that the U.S. should not "seek to displace European rule where it is making visible and sustained progress in establishing bases for political independence."¹⁶⁹

Indeed, for many contemporary observers, the best interests of the United States lay not with the wholesale condemnation of colonialism, but rather in trying to influence the metropolitan powers to adopt a more progressive form of colonial administration, one that would eventually lead to self-government.¹⁷⁰ Historian Melvin Gurtov has perceptively asserted that Bowles and other critics of colonialism "called for a revision of tactics, not objectives. [They were] arguing that Eisenhower wanted the right things – vital minerals, protection of investments, bases, the minimization of communist influence – but was going about getting them in the wrong way."¹⁷¹ Rare were the voices on the U.S. political scene that

¹⁶⁶ See, for instance, Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, p. 330; E. Frederic Morrow, *Black Man in the White House*, p. 289.

¹⁶⁷ Chester Bowles, *Africa's Challenge to America*, p. 56. Also see Arlene Lazarowitz, "Chester Bowles," in Cathal J. Nolan, ed., *Notable U.S. Ambassadors Since 1775: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), pp. 29-35.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 127. For examples of Bowles' paternalistic attitude toward Africans, see pp. 6, 17, 49, 61, 77.

¹⁶⁹ John F. Kennedy, "A Democrat Looks at Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 36, no. 1 (October 1957), p. 53.

¹⁷⁰ Philip W. Bell, "Colonialism as a Problem in American Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, vol. 5, no. 1 (October 1952), p. 109.

¹⁷¹ Melvin Gurtov, *The United States Against the Third World: Antinationalism and Intervention* (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 45.

advocated a more forceful brand of anticolonialism. Even the Afro-American community had not yet developed, in the 1950s, a unified voice in foreign affairs, although a common consciousness had begun to take root. Historically, Black Americans had rarely expressed a single, monolithic opinion on international matters and deemed civil rights and employment issues more important. With the exception the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-1936, Afro-Americans rarely took a widespread interest in African affairs and were not a potent force in influencing foreign policy.¹⁷²

In retrospect, it seems that the Eisenhower Administration's well-documented tendency to follow an Eurocentric policy toward the African colonial question was rooted in the dominant political consensus of the era. U.S. policymakers perceived the nations of sub-Saharan Africa as unprepared to assume the challenges and responsibilities of nationhood and tempered their anticolonialist views accordingly. They considered the European *mission civilisatrice* on the African continent as a favourable, if imperfect, *modus vivendi*. Historian William Stivers has appropriately remarked that "Eisenhower's opinions on Europe put him squarely in the mainstream of the bipartisan consensus on foreign policy. Internationalists in both Democratic and Republican parties viewed European and American interests as inseparable, not only for economic and strategic reasons but also by virtue of a shared heritage and kindred institutions."¹⁷³

Furthermore, the Eisenhower Administration, mindful of preserving the unity of NATO, was reluctant to alienate America's European allies over the fate of the newly emerging colonies of Africa. In the overall balance of U.S. global strategy, concerns for the political emancipation of nascent African nations weighed far less in the balance than European stability and communist containment, which were deemed, rightly or wrongly, as

¹⁷² Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 1; Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), p. 145; Also see Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Herschelle S. Challenor, "The Influence of Black Americans on U.S. Policy Toward Africa," in Abdul Aziz Said, ed., *Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy*, rev. ed., (New York: Praeger, 1981), pp. 143-162; Mark Solomon, "Black Critics of Colonialism and the Cold War," in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Cold War Critics: Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971), pp. 214-216.

the cornerstone of American security. These policies were by no means the brainchild of a few overzealous anticommunist leaders in Washington. They originated from the Eurocentric Cold War consensus that permeated all levels of U.S. political culture in the 1950s. This consensus would be severely strained in the closing years of the decade, as it quickly became evident that the decolonisation process was no longer a hypothetical debate, but had instead evolved into an undeniable certainty. The following chapter will discuss the policies undertaken by the Eisenhower Administration in 1958 and 1959 to respond to the incoming wave of African decolonisation.

¹⁷³ William Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," in Richard A. Melanson and David Mayers, eds., *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), p. 194.

CHAPTER TWO

New Exigencies and Old Priorities: The Difficulties of Forging a Policy

It is by now a truism that for a complicated set of reasons the giver of aid often makes more enemies than friends in the process¹

The year 1958 witnessed the independence of only one African state, the Republic of Guinea. However, the troublesome manner by which this new nation severed its ties to France, added to the growing assertiveness of the Afro-Asian Bloc in international matters, dramatically amplified Africa's international standing and, consequently, American concerns. These worries were further heightened by the Soviet Union's increasing interest in the decolonisation process in Africa, which threatened to drag the Cold War onto the African continent. By 1958, the State Department was frankly acknowledging that it had to adopt a more dynamic African policy. In an important policy speech, one high-ranking diplomat asked: "Is the United States doing enough with [its] programs, with the means and opportunities at its disposal, to meet the challenges before us? The answer is 'No.' We must do more. And we plan to do so."² Washington's fresh outlook toward African nationalism manifested itself in a series of perceptible policy shifts, the most apparent surely being the Eisenhower Administration's enhanced flexibility with regard to the self-determination issue. As the present chapter will show, the Administration also responded to the sweeping changes in Africa by adjusting its foreign aid policies as well as its perception of the UN's role in African development.³

Yet, the Eisenhower Administration would encounter many impediments in trying to implement this new policy. First, the rapid wave of African independence had done nothing to

¹ Joseph S. Berliner, *Soviet Economic Aid: The New Aid and Trade Policy in Underdeveloped Countries* (New York: Praeger, 1958), p. 191.

² Julius C. Holmes, "Africa: Its Challenge to the West," *State Department Bulletin*, February 17, 1958, p. 261.

soothe the explosive colonial debate; even after the new African nations had attained independence, efforts seeking to build a stronger U.S. political and diplomatic presence on the continent would often be undertaken to the detriment of Washington's relationship with its NATO allies.⁴ At the other end of the spectrum, the U.S. was consistently condemned by the Third World nations for its deference to the metropolitan powers.

Meanwhile, on the domestic political front, Eisenhower's second term would be characterised by dire straits. Early 1957 was a "high point" for the Eisenhower presidency: "Ike" had just won a landslide reelection in November, the Suez crisis had been successfully defused, which in turn led to congressional support for the Middle East resolution, and, on the personal side, he had fully recovered from a string of health problems.⁵ But within a year, what one scholar has described as the "Eisenhower equilibrium" had dissolved.⁶ In the fall of 1957, the first problems appeared with the eruption of the Little Rock crisis and the launching of Sputnik by the USSR, two events that significantly affected U.S. prestige around the world. The Administration also encountered considerable difficulties with Congress, a problem that was further compounded by the 1958 legislative elections debacle, in which the G.O.P. suffered a devastating setback, and the worst economic recession to hit America since the Great Depression. Moreover, by 1959, much of Eisenhower's cabinet had changed, notably following the scandal-tainted resignation of presidential adviser Sherman Adams and the death of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in March 1959. On Eisenhower's embattled second term, historian Chester Pach commented: "Assailed by both the left and right, Eisenhower found the middle of the road a rocky and lonely route."⁷

³ For an insightful analysis of the Eisenhower Administration's shift in the direction of a more flexible African policy, see Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 343-346.

⁴ This tense relationship between Western Europe and Washington still lives on to this day, particularly with regard to France. See Peter J. Schraeder, "From Berlin 1884 to 1989: Foreign Assistance and French, American, and Japanese Competition in Francophone Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 33, no. 4 (1995), pp. 539-567.

⁵ Eisenhower suffered a severe heart attack in the fall of 1955 and, in late November 1957, an ileitis attack. See Clarence G. Lasby, *Eisenhower's Heart Attack: How Ike Beat Heart Disease and Held On to the Presidency* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), pp. 395-397, 455-457.

⁶ Gary W. Reichard, *Politics as Usual: The Age of Truman and Eisenhower* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1988), pp. 129-132.

⁷ Chester J. Pach, Jr. and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, rev. ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), pp. 159-160. The "middle of the road" was Eisenhower's self-professed political philosophy.

This chapter will outline the main difficulties encountered by Washington in adapting its foreign policies to the new international realities imposed by political change in Africa at the end of the 1950s. The first section will examine how the Administration's foreign aid strategy evolved to accommodate developments in the Third World; the second part, a case study of U.S. policy toward Guinea in 1958-1959, will illustrate the resistance of the European colonial powers to the establishment of a U.S. diplomatic presence in newly independent African countries; finally, we will explore how U.S. officials adapted their policies to a changing United Nations.

2.1 "Losing the Monopoly on Santa Claus": The Soviet Economic Offensive in Africa

From the outset, the Eisenhower Administration was unprepared to meet the challenges the Third World would impose on it. This was most evident in its initial outlook on foreign aid to developing nations. Secretary of State Dulles explained the Administration's position in a 1954 *Foreign Affairs* article. Although Dulles asserted that the U.S. had the responsibility of "providing a major part of the effort required for the healthy growth of underdeveloped areas," he warned that "[e]conomic aid in the form of grants is on its way out as a major element of our foreign policy. . . . Trade, broader markets and a flow of investment are far more healthy than intergovernmental grants-in-aid."⁸ Thus, as historian Burton Kaufman has argued, the Eisenhower Administration's foreign aid philosophy was, from its inception, founded upon the "trade, not aid" principle.⁹

While it pleased the notoriously stingy Republican Old Guard that ruled Capitol Hill, the Administration gradually came to recognise that policy-wise, the "trade, not aid" approach was far from proving to be a resounding success. First of all, U.S. policymakers realised that attracting U.S. private investment in Africa was a strenuous task. American business interests

⁸ John Foster Dulles, "Policy for Security and Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 3 (April 1954), pp. 354, 363.

⁹ Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy, 1953-61* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 2-7, 33. Nevertheless, some foreign aid initiatives were taken in the early fifties, such as the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, commonly referred to as Public Law 480, which provided for the distribution of surplus agricultural commodities to developing countries. See Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis: mécanismes et conduite* (Paris: Economica, 1984), p. 44.

were reluctant to invest in what could be considered as a risky venture, especially when so many profitable alternatives were available in the better known areas of Europe and Latin America.¹⁰ Moreover, it was becoming increasingly evident that the growing needs of the emerging nations could never be met by relying on private investment alone.

This led the Administration to question the nature of its foreign aid programs. Initially, most aid for Third World countries was largely military in nature or served a distinctly military purpose. Within a few years, however, and especially during Eisenhower's second administration, Washington was forced to pay increased attention to the economic needs of these developing countries. Military aid, which since the Korean War had been constituted as the mainstay of U.S. foreign aid programs, was gradually replaced by economic and technical assistance.¹¹ On February 19, 1958, for the first time since the Korean War, the White House asked for less money for military hardware (\$1.8 billion) than for economic programs (\$2.1 billion) and, by the late 1950s, the "trade, not aid" philosophy had definitely been eclipsed by a new "trade and aid philosophy."¹² Indeed, as the White House's priorities shifted from Europe to the Third World, so did its foreign aid programs. From 1949 to 1952, 84 percent of all U.S. foreign aid was granted to Europe; by the late 1950s, approximately 94 percent of all U.S. economic programs were destined for Third World nations.¹³

Although altruistic motives unquestionably played an important role in bringing the needs of the poorer nations to the forefront of Washington's concerns, the fact that the Soviet Union had set its sights on the Third World since the mid-fifties also accounted for much of Washington's heightened interest. In 1956, on the occasion of the Twentieth Congress of the

¹⁰ Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State For Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Jernegan) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Kalijarvi), April 14, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. IX: *Foreign Economic Policy; Foreign Information Program* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1987), p. 334; Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, p. 46.

¹¹ The impetus for U.S. aid to the Third World had begun under the Truman Administration with the Point Four program. In January 1949, President Truman asked Congress to enact "a bold new program" committing the United States to helping the "underdeveloped" countries through foreign aid and technical cooperation programs. Although Point Four was passed in May 1950, it held a relatively limited impact on U.S. policy, being eclipsed by more pressing Cold War concerns. Stephen A. Flanders and Carl N. Flanders, *Dictionary of American Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan, 1993), pp. 488-489.

¹² Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, pp. 135, 175.

¹³ Robert Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World: Political Development Ideas in Foreign Aid and Social Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 54.

Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a decisive shift occurred in the Kremlin's approach to Third World nationalism. Nationalist leaders, who were portrayed as "imperialist tools" during the Stalinist era, became, according to the new Soviet rhetoric, "champions of a downtrodden people."¹⁴ Soviet leaders had astutely perceived the emotionally-charged aspect of colonialism and reasoned that by unconditionally supporting anticolonialism, the USSR could reap a rich diplomatic harvest among the developing nations of Asia and Africa. By spearheading an ambitious program of visiting trade delegations and awarding well-publicised foreign aid grants, the Soviet Union had been successful, by 1957, in developing significant, if somewhat limited, economic, cultural and political ties to the Middle Eastern countries of Syria and Egypt and, in sub-Saharan Africa, had begun to court the independent nations of Liberia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Ghana.¹⁵

In Washington, CIA Director Allen Dulles, the Secretary of State's younger brother, was the first to sound the alarm warning of the "Soviet economic offensive" in the Third World. At a November 1955 NSC meeting, he submitted an intelligence report that described recent Soviet moves in the Middle East and Southeast Asia; the situation, according to Dulles, "indicated a pattern of co-ordinated long-term and high-level operations designed to advance Communist influence in all these areas."¹⁶ At a subsequent NSC meeting, the CIA director noted that many of the "underdeveloped countries" had been tremendously impressed by the economic progress and rapid industrialisation accomplished by the Soviet system in such a short period of time and that these new nations may look to the Soviet system as a solution to their economic woes.¹⁷

¹⁴ Joseph S. Berliner, *Soviet Economic Aid*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, ed., *Africa and the Communist World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), pp. 11-13; Christopher Stevens, *The Soviet Union and Black Africa* (London: Macmillan Press, 1976), pp. 7-9; Stanley J. Zyzniewski, "The Soviet Bloc and the Under Developed Countries," *World Politics*, vol. 11, no. 3 (April 1959), pp. 378-398. For foreign policy purposes, the State Department considered Egypt a Middle Eastern country.

¹⁶ Memorandum of Discussion at the 266th Meeting of the National Security Council, November 15, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. X: *Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1989), p. 28. According to Dulles' report, Soviet overtures had been made to India, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Burma.

¹⁷ Memorandum of Discussion at the 267th Meeting of the National Security Council, November 21, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. X, pp. 32-33; also see Memorandum of Discussion at the 320th Meeting of the National Security Council, April 17, 1957, Box 8, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

Eisenhower found these reports disturbing. In a letter to the Secretary of State, the President pondered the irony of the Soviet “economic challenge”: “we have always boasted that the productivity of free men in a free society would overwhelmingly excel the productivity of regimented labor. So at first glance, it would appear that we are being challenged in the area of our greatest strength.”¹⁸ C.D. Jackson, the Administration’s most persistent advocate of an expanded foreign aid program to the developing world, colourfully described this new predicament in a letter to Nelson Rockefeller:

all of a sudden the Soviets have in the past few months executed a brilliant series of forward economic forward passes, while we are still in our huddle trying to work out some elementary signals. . . The moment of decision is upon us in a great big way on world economic policy. So long as the Soviets had a monopoly on covert subversion and threats of military aggression, and we had a monopoly on Santa Claus, some kind of seesaw game could be played. *But now the Soviets are muscling in on Santa Claus as well, which puts us in a terribly dangerous position.*¹⁹

These considerations led the Administration to commission a working group to study “Soviet economic penetration” in the Third World, which released its first report in March 1957. With specific regard to Africa, the document stated that “Bloc economic activities in Africa (other than Egypt) have to date been minor. However, Bloc willingness to exploit opportunities which may arise in the newly independent countries can be expected.”²⁰

By 1958, however, rapid strides by the Soviet Bloc in Asia and Africa led the Administration to revise its perfunctory commitment to counter the “Soviet economic offensive” in Africa. Worried U.S. policymakers believed that especially in Africa south of the Sahara, the growing economic needs of the nascent nations and the political ferment wrought by the tortuous decolonisation process combined to create a “fertile field” for communist gains. Moreover, it soon became evident that U.S. foreign aid programs were not as

¹⁸ Letter From the President to the Secretary of State, December 5, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. IX, p. 11.

¹⁹ Letter From C.D. Jackson to the President’s Special Assistant (Rockefeller), November 10, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. IX, pp. 8, 9. Emphasis added; Sherman Adams, *Firsthand Report: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 115; Blanche Wiesen Cook, “First Comes the Lie: C.D. Jackson and Political Warfare,” *Radical History Review*, no. 31 (1984), pp. 42-70. Jackson, a former *Time-Life* executive, served on and off in the Eisenhower Administration from 1953 to 1960. An ardent Cold War warrior, he made no secret of his strong views in support of foreign aid and “psychological warfare,” a contemporary term for political propaganda activities.

²⁰ Report by the Working Group of the Subcommittee on Soviet Economic Penetration, March 11, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. IX, p. 46.

appreciated in Third World countries as their Soviet counterparts. Moscow's offers of economic aid, unhampered by congressional scrutiny, were widely seen by the new nations as being "without strings," an attribute that appealed to the independent spirit of these countries, which guarded their sovereignty with suspicion.²¹ While the State Department ominously admonished the new nations that "[i]n due course . . . strings will appear. These will presumably be designed really to ensnare the victim,"²² Moscow was achieving considerable success in courting the African nations, particularly those who had grown disenchanted with the West. The abrupt increase in the number of trade missions from the USSR, its growing participation in world exhibitions and fairs, and a noticeable rise in the number of visits of high-ranking Soviet officials to Africa – all these new trends were far from welcome news in Washington.²³

Nevertheless, the Kremlin's first incursions into sub-Saharan Africa were quite modest, mostly consisting of minor economic gestures and low-level diplomatic activity. For instance, in 1957, in an attempt to make a good impression, the USSR purchased Ghana's excess cocoa crop at a price exceeding the market value.²⁴ Since 1956, Moscow had also been making every effort to lure Liberia into signing a "treaty of friendship and commerce," which basically amounted to diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union by the Liberian government. William Tubman, the pro-Western president of Liberia, had continually rebuffed Soviet advances but, by late 1957, U.S. diplomats were sensing that his resolve to deny recognition to Moscow was perceptibly weakening.²⁵

The December 1957 Cairo Conference, in which the Soviets had played a major role, had further sharpened Washington's concerns. In early 1958, the *New York Times* was already

²¹ Joseph S. Berliner, *Soviet Economic Aid*, pp. 14-15. Most of the aid offered by Western nations was, in varying degrees, linked to a series of economic and political conditions, hence offers with "strings."

²² Willis C. Armstrong, "Soviet Economic Challenge to U.S. Policy," *State Department Bulletin*, February 10, 1958, p. 205.

²³ Douglas Dillon, "Economic Activities of the Soviet Bloc in Less Developed Countries," *State Department Bulletin*, March 24, 1958, pp. 469-470.

²⁴ Alexander Erlich and Christian R. Sonne, "The Soviet Union: Economic Activity," in Zbigniew Brzezinski, ed., *Africa and the Communist World*, pp. 71-72.

²⁵ Despatch From the Embassy in Liberia to the Department of State, December 4, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XVIII: *Africa* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1989), p. 412.

predicting that Africa “was going to be a major battlefield in the Cold War.”²⁶ The Cold War atmosphere influencing African affairs was further compounded by Communist China’s growing assertiveness on the Third World scene. In what some scholars have perceived as a first sign that China was pursuing a policy distinct from Moscow’s, Beijing began its “African offensive” on the occasion of the First Conference of Independent African States, held in Accra in April 1958. China’s first *coup d’éclat* was its prompt recognition, well before Moscow, of the GPRA, the Algerian rebels’ provisional government.²⁷ This set the tone for Beijing’s African policy, which basically supported radical anticolonialism and revolutionary groups within the Western colonial dominions. By the same token, an increasing number of Communist Chinese diplomatic and trade delegations visited Africa, and many of Afro-Asian leaders and leading intellectuals were invited for stays in China. Beijing’s foremost goal was, of course, to obtain diplomatic recognition from these emerging countries and to strengthen its position on the world scene; the Sino-Soviet rift was to explode in public conflict only two years later, in 1960.²⁸

Thus, by 1958, U.S. officials had arrived at the conclusion that Africa and the Third World in general was now menaced by a “Sino-Soviet economic threat.” At a January 1958 Cabinet meeting, John Foster Dulles advocated the theme with renewed urgency. The Secretary of State suggested that the Administration “quickly initiate a study of [the Sino-Soviet economic threat’s] potential and means of counteracting it. He cited the advantage that a Communist dictatorship has over a ‘profit’ economy through dumping goods or providing them at a price below cost so as to eliminate competitors and dominate various international markets.”²⁹ Dulles’ concern for the Eastern Bloc’s potential for “manipulation and

²⁶ *New York Times*, editorial, January 19, 1958, IV, p. 10.

²⁷ Bruce D. Larkin, *China and Africa, 1949-1970: The Foreign Policy of the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 35-38. GPRA stands for *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne*. The 1958 Nuclear Test Ban Agreement between Washington and Moscow, which announced a brief thaw in the Cold War, directly contributed to the Sino-Soviet schism. The fact that the Kremlin had undertaken negotiations without consulting Beijing was a major cause of Chinese resentment. See Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 126-131.

²⁸ Most Western countries still recognised Chiang Kai-shek’s Republican regime, in great part because of Washington’s efforts to isolate Beijing diplomatically. See Alaba Ogunsanwo, *China's Policy in Africa 1958-1971* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 27. Also see John K. Cooley, *East Wind Over Africa: Red China's African Offensive* (New York: Walker and Company, 1965); Emmanuel John Hevi, *The Dragon's Embrace: The Chinese Communists and Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

²⁹ Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, January 10, 1958, Box 10, Cabinet Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

disorganization of staple markets such as wheat, cotton, metals, and so forth” was further expressed in a memo to Vice President Nixon on the same date.³⁰

The ensuing report, entitled “The Nature of the Sino-Soviet Bloc Economic Threat in the Underdeveloped Areas,” expressed alarm at the Eastern Bloc’s increasing interest in Africa and direly advised that “unless effectively countered, these psychological and economic inroads will continue to erode the Western position in the underdeveloped world.”³¹ Yet, the White House still committed relatively few resources to the African continent. For the fiscal year 1958, U.S. Mutual Security appropriations destined to sub-Saharan Africa amounted to a meagre total: \$4.9 million in military aid, all of it for Ethiopia, and \$5.9 million in technical aid (\$3 million for Ethiopia, \$2.1 million for Liberia, and \$800,000 Ghana).³² To this total of \$10.8 million, however, can be added P.L. 480 agricultural surplus grants and Export-Import Bank loans, which roughly doubled that amount.³³

By 1960, however, U.S. aid to Africa had doubled from its 1958 total and, by 1961, the amount had quadrupled.³⁴ Undoubtedly, the “Sino-Soviet threat” was a major reason for America’s widening military and economic presence on the continent. In the words of Burton Kaufman, “[t]he president’s concern with the Communist menace led to a dangerously expanded and ill-defined concept of national security that was also apparent in the formulation of foreign economic policy.”³⁵ This new economic approach was hinged upon the theory of economic development advanced by such influential intellectuals as John Kenneth Gailbraith and Walt W. Rostow. According to its main premise, economic aid to “underdeveloped nations” was to provide long-term immunity against the spread of communism in the Third

³⁰ Memorandum From Secretary of State Dulles to Vice President Nixon, January 10, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. IV: *Foreign Economic Policy* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1992), p. 3.

³¹ National Intelligence Estimate, August 5, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. IV, pp. 34, 35.

³² “Africa,” Subject Series, Confidential File, White House Central Files, Eisenhower Library. These totals, like all subsequent figures quoted in this paper unless specifically mentioned, exclude the Republic of South Africa.

³³ Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, pp. 364-368.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

³⁵ Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, p. 9.

World.³⁶ “Development,” points out historian Michael H. Hunt, “was the younger sibling of containment.”³⁷

Still, to argue that Soviet advances in Africa were the only challenge that motivated the increase in U.S. economic aid to Africa from 1958 to 1961 would be to oversimplify the complex nature of America’s national interest.³⁸ For instance, Foreign Economic Adviser Clarence Randall believed that “even if there were no Soviet Union or International Communism to threaten the security of the United States, there would be other reasons of national self-interest which would dictate that the United States provide assistance to certain foreign countries.”³⁹ The sharp increase can also be attributed to the fact that most of African countries, once they had attained independence and were freed from the colonial bond, massively turned to the U.S. for economic aid and technical assistance.

One of the main quandaries met by the Eisenhower Administration in promoting its foreign aid policies resided in the fact that in order to sell their program to Congress and to the public, U.S. officials had to evoke the “Communist menace”; on the other hand, foreign aid, as John Foster Dulles explained to the President, must not seem to the recipient nations as “merely a cold war project to counter Soviet efforts.”⁴⁰ Another difficulty encountered by the White House was that in using the time-tried tactic, inherited from the Truman presidency, of frightening Capitol Hill with the “Red Menace,” obtaining military aid was relatively easy; however, the same scare tactics were not as effective in obtaining authorisations for economic and technical aid. Conservative elements within Congress, it seems, were not swayed by the gospel of development.

³⁶ M.F. Millikan and W.W. Rostow, “Foreign Aid: The Next Phase,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 36, no. 3 (April 1958), pp. 418-436; John Kenneth Galbraith, “A Positive Approach to Economic Aid,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 3 (April 1961), pp. 444-457. Rostow would later serve in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

³⁷ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 159.

³⁸ Hans Heymann, Jr., “Soviet Aid as a Problem for U.S. Policy,” *World Politics*, vol. 12, no. 4 (July 1960), pp. 525-540.

³⁹ Memorandum of Discussion at the 320th Meeting of the National Security Council, April 17, 1957, Box 8, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library. For a more thorough discussion of U.S. interests in sub-Saharan Africa, see I.2.

⁴⁰ John Foster Dulles to Dwight D. Eisenhower, August 6, 1957, Box 15, Chronological Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

Eisenhower has been criticised by historians for his lack of leadership in pushing the foreign aid bill through Congress, a weakness often attributed to his limited view of presidential power.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the record shows that the White House, and Eisenhower personally, made considerable efforts to muster public and congressional support for the Mutual Security Program.⁴² The President stated his views on foreign aid frequently in public; at a March 13, 1957 press conference, he qualified mutual security as “one of the cheapest ways we have of insuring the position in the world we want to maintain.”⁴³ Two weeks later, he expressed his idea more eloquently, reading from a prepared statement: “there are no dollars today that are being spent more wisely for the future of American peace and prosperity than the dollars we put in foreign aid.”⁴⁴ He even went on the air with a televised address on May 21, 1957, dedicated to “The Need for Mutual Security in Waging the Peace,” in which he warned Congress about the dangers of cutting foreign aid appropriations: “To try to save money at the risk of the [weakening of our nation] is neither conservative nor constructive. It is reckless.”⁴⁵

The President also campaigned behind the scenes in Washington, chairing bipartisan meetings with congressional leaders to gather support for the Mutual Security Program,⁴⁶ and personally pressuring certain influential legislators into adopting a more flexible stance.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Burton Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, p. 8; Diane B. Kunz, *Butter and Guns: America's Cold War Economic Diplomacy* (New York: Free Press, 1997), p. 58. For more on Eisenhower's low-key leadership style, see Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), especially part 2.1.

⁴² Opposition to “foreign aid” had become a rallying cry for congressional conservatives and, in 1956, the White House decided to label its foreign economic program differently, calling it the “Mutual Security Program”. As long-time foreign aid proponent Paul Hoffman remarked to Eisenhower, “Semantics are important, and we could think of no two words that handicap a program more than *foreign* and *aid*.” Quoted in Letter From Paul G. Hoffman to the President, December 17, 1956, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. IX, p. 404.

⁴³ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1957* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1958), p. 197.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 220. This press conference was held on March 27, 1957.

⁴⁵ Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Need for Mutual Security in Waging the Peace, May 21, 1957, in *Ibid.*, pp. 385, 397.

⁴⁶ Memorandum of Discussion at a Bipartisan Congressional Meeting, White House, Washington, May 9, 1957, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. X, pp. 190-197.

⁴⁷ Conversation between the President and Senator Style Bridges, May 21, 1957, in May '57 Diary – acw(1), Box 9, Ann Whitman Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

Eisenhower also lobbied hard for foreign aid during his notorious “stag dinners,” to which he invited prominent leaders of the business community.⁴⁸ According to his leading biographer,

Eisenhower put his time, prestige, energy, and persuasive powers into the effort to get his foreign aid package through the Congress. He met interminably with the Republican leaders, with Democratic leaders, with groups and associations interested in the subject. He made speeches. He devoted nearly every one of his stag dinners to convincing his guests to become missionaries for foreign aid. But he could not get the money. Time and time again, Congress cut his requests. It left Eisenhower furious.⁴⁹

What maddened the President even more was his belief that congressional opposition was due in great part to narrow-minded electoral purposes. In his diary, he complained that “[t]he foreign aid bill is having pretty rough sledding, mostly because of the hope on the part of a lot of opponents that their opposition will make them popular in their districts this fall.”⁵⁰

Hostility to foreign aid had been growing on Capitol Hill since the mid-fifties, to the point where renowned political commentator Walter Lippmann sardonically referred to it as “the annual headache of Congress.”⁵¹ For a large number of Congressmen, especially the Republican Old Guard, foreign aid was nothing but “pouring money down a hole.”⁵² Congressional disfavour for the program was not restricted to conservative Republicans, as a number of Southerners, who were mostly Democrats, vented their anger over the Civil Rights Act by voting against foreign aid.⁵³ Otto Passman (D-LA), who prided himself on having voted against every foreign aid authorisation since the inception of the program, chided the White House for its apostasy: “Trade, not aid. What happened to this vote-getting promise?” quipped Passman on the floor of Congress.⁵⁴ Old Guard Republicans were led by Senators

⁴⁸ Memorandum for the Record by the President’s Assistant (Harlow), January 30, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. IV, pp. 409-413; also see Henry Cabot Lodge, *As It Was: An Inside View of Politics and Power in the '50s and '60s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976), p. 113.

⁴⁹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 438.

⁵⁰ Robert H. Ferrell, *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), p. 326. Diary entry for May 18, 1956.

⁵¹ Quoted in *Congressional Record*, April 27, 1959, p. 6864.

⁵² John M. Hightower Oral History Transcript [OH 75], Columbia University Oral History Project, p. 24, Eisenhower Library.

⁵³ Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, p. 108. The White House pushed the Civil Rights Act through Congress in 1957. This bill, in addition to the 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka* Supreme Court ruling and the Administration’s stern response to the Little Rock crisis, alienated much of the South’s political support for Eisenhower.

⁵⁴ *Congressional Record*, March 25, 1958, pp. 5301-5303. Passman once notoriously confided to a State Department official: “Son, I don’t smoke and I don’t drink. My only pleasure in life is kicking the shit out of the

Karl Malone (R-NV) and William Jenner (R-IN), who lamented that the Administration's foreign aid programs for Third World countries were "designed to fit the will-o'-the-wisp nonsense that . . . American spending in poor areas of the world will prevent Communists from getting in. This idea is so completely fallacious," deplored Jenner, "that it has been used again and again by the Communists to help spend our way to bankruptcy."⁵⁵

The White House could count on the progressive Democrats in Congress to support foreign aid to Asia and Africa. They were led by Hubert Humphrey, John F. Kennedy and, of course, Chester Bowles, who had been calling for a "Marshall Plan for the Third World" since the early fifties.⁵⁶ Kennedy, whose progressive credentials had not yet been clearly established, had been particularly critical of the West's "loss" of China in 1949 and pushed for additional U.S. assistance to developing nations in order to prevent similar disasters from happening. Although these Democrats advocated more foreign aid, they were certainly not ready, or willing, to throw their wholehearted support behind the Eisenhower Administration. The main point of contention tackled by the Democratic leadership, led by Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Senator J. William Fulbright (D-AR), pertained to the Mutual Security Program's emphasis on military aid, which amounted roughly to twice the total devoted to economic aid.⁵⁷ In August 1958, Fulbright led a group of eight senators who publicly released a letter to Eisenhower criticising the Administration's reliance on military aid, even though they had supported MSP appropriations for 1959. They considered the military emphasis "a serious distortion", particularly concerning the "less developed countries." They also argued that the U.S. program tended to keep rightist and unpopular regimes in power and that it gave America a militaristic image.⁵⁸ This criticism led the

foreign aid program of the United States of America." Quoted in Chester Pach and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, p. 165.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, p. 55. Also see *Congressional Record*, Aug. 23, 1958, p. 19371.

⁵⁶ Harold B. Schaffer, *Chester Bowles: New Dealer in the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 132. Also see *Congressional Record*, June 4, 1958, p. 10104; March 11, 1959, pp. 3893-3894; April 21, pp. 6327-6329.

⁵⁷ The Korean War had significantly affected the rationales and objectives of U.S. aid. In 1949, the ratio of economic to military aid was about 4 to 1; by the end of 1950, that ratio had been reversed, and throughout the 1950s the ratio of military to economic aid averaged about 2 to 1. See Robert Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World*, p. 49.

⁵⁸ Blanche Wiesen Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 330-331; Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, p. 168; Harin Shah, *The Great Abdication: American Foreign Policy in Asia & Africa* (New Delhi: Atma Ram & Sons, 1957), pp. 54-72. For Fulbright's views, see

Administration to commission the Draper Committee, which released its first report in March 1959.⁵⁹

By 1959, legislative support for the Administration's foreign aid programs was at an all-time low, a situation that considerably worried Foggy Bottom. In a letter to the President, Christian Herter warned that "opposition to the Program at present is more widespread and vigorous than at any time in the past." Estimating that Congress would cut the Mutual Security appropriation down to "around \$3 billion," almost a 25 percent reduction, Herter reasoned that the effects of such a cut "would be grave indeed" and urged Eisenhower to continue his efforts to promote the program.⁶⁰

As if congressional defiance was not enough, the White House encountered substantial opposition to foreign aid from within its own ranks. Indeed, many contemporary observers attributed the Administration's shortcomings over foreign aid to the dominance of right-wing thinking and "budgetary obsession" of some senior officials.⁶¹ These observations most surely referred to Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey who, it was said, almost feared deficits more than Communists. A staunch fiscal conservative, Humphrey worried that the Soviet strategy was to "make us spend ourselves into bankruptcy."⁶² Secretary of Defence Charles Wilson was also sceptical of foreign aid, and often interceded in NSC meetings to suggest important cuts in the program.⁶³ However, both men left the Administration in 1957 to return to the business world and were replaced by less outspoken figures.⁶⁴ Opposition to

Congressional Record, January 28, 1958, pp. 1177-1178; William J. Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York: Random House, 1966), especially chapter 11, "A New Concept of Foreign Aid" (pp. 223-242).

⁵⁹ The "Draper Committee" was short for the "President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program." See Box 12, Draper Committee Records, Eisenhower Library.

⁶⁰ Memorandum From Acting Secretary of State Herter to President Eisenhower, March 19, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. IV, pp. 449-450.

⁶¹ W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena: An Essay in Recent History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 384-385.

⁶² John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 135; Diane B. Kunz, *Butter and Guns*, p. 74; Richard J. Barnet, *The Economy of Death* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 93; James R. Shepley Oral History Transcript [OH 51], Columbia University Oral History Project, pp. 28-29, Eisenhower Library.

⁶³ Memorandum of Discussion at the 320th Meeting of the National Security Council, April 17, 1957, Box 8, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library; Memorandum of Discussion at the 266th Meeting of the National Security Council, November 15, 1955, in *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. X, p. 29.

⁶⁴ In 1957, Eisenhower named Neil H. McElroy as Secretary of Defence and Robert Anderson as Secretary of the Treasury.

foreign aid for Third World nations was also perceptible within the State Department, especially within the ranks of the old school diplomats. Veteran ambassador Ellis Briggs once remarked that “the closer to the palm tree the object of American aid is, the less likely it [the country] is likely to utilise American assistance to his or our advantage.”⁶⁵

Its difficulties in selling its policies at home notwithstanding, the Eisenhower Administration was also intent on making sure the African countries accepted economic aid from the West, and not the Eastern Bloc. In this, the Soviets possessed some basic advantages. First, the Soviets could devise grants and make transactions without being hindered by the realities of the market; a good example can be found in Moscow’s purchase of Ghanaian cocoa, mentioned above. This prospect startled Secretary Dulles, who feared the “Sino-Soviet industrialized totalitarian state system” could “operate[] without regard to profits and . . . channel the economic efforts of its people into international economic warfare.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, Soviet loans were often more favourable to the recipient countries than the American ones. Interests on U.S. loans were fixed according to the current market rate (about 5 percent) while the Soviets charged between 2 to 2½ percent. Of course, Soviet propaganda represented the U.S. as striving to exploit the poverty of the underdeveloped countries by charging so much.⁶⁷ But what often spoiled much of the goodwill U.S. foreign aid could generate was the intensely hostile climate in which Congress untied American purse strings. One contemporary scholar remarked that “[a] United States grant presented over the malediction of an articulate, isolationist Congressman enjoys a different reception from a Soviet gift presented with the unanimous approval of the Soviet press and officialdom.”⁶⁸

Meanwhile, the Cold War rationale that seemingly motivated U.S. policymakers had little appeal for the emerging peoples of the Third World. As historian Walter LaFeber has argued, “[t]hey wanted only political independence and release from grinding poverty. To obtain these, they were willing to borrow from both systems, and if Soviets and Americans

⁶⁵ Ellis Briggs Oral History Transcript [OH 172], Columbia University Oral History Project, pp. 3-4, Eisenhower Library.

⁶⁶ Memorandum for the Vice President, January 10, 1958, Box 15, Chronological Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁶⁷ Joseph S. Berliner, *Soviet Economic Aid*, p. 158.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 167.

would compete for their allegiance and resources, so much the better.”⁶⁹ Indeed, some of the new nations quickly discovered that they could use the Cold War context to increase their bargaining power with the Great Powers. In other words, if U.S. officials decided not to grant economic aid to a new country, they ran the risk of seeing it entering the fold of Soviet aid. Although some U.S. officials deplored it as “standard blackmail,”⁷⁰ what came to be known as “the pendulum tactic” offered interesting possibilities to the newly independent nations, which could gain some advantages from either Moscow or Washington without having to choose sides in the Cold War.⁷¹

As has already been discussed in the first chapter, Ethiopian ruler Haile Selassie’s use of the pendulum tactic was in fact quite successful; not only did the United States come to support Ethiopia in its border dispute with the Somali Republic, but Washington also awarded a generous military package to Addis Ababa.⁷² Nevertheless, this episode was but a ripple in Ethiopia’s otherwise staunchly pro-Western balance sheet. On the other hand, Guinean leader Sékou Touré’s diplomacy showed Washington that the pendulum tactic could not always be dealt with as easily. The Eisenhower Administration had come a long way from its “trade, not aid” policy, but still found it difficult to win the favour of the newly emancipated countries of Africa, especially those who cherished their independence and refused to take sides in the Cold War. As the following section will examine, the independence of Guinea presented new challenges, leaving Washington officials scrambling for a policy.

⁶⁹ Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1996*, 8th ed. (Montreal: McGraw-Hill, 1997), p. 169.

⁷⁰ C.D. Jackson to Walt W. Rostow, March 22, 1962, Box 92, C.D. Jackson Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁷¹ Léo Hamon, “Non-engagement et neutralisme des nouveaux Etats,” in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle and Jean Meyrial, eds., *Les nouveaux Etats dans les relations internationales* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962), p. 370.

⁷² See Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 122-123; Leo Silberman, “Change and Conflict in the Horn of Africa,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 4 (July 1959), pp. 658-659.

2.2 U.S. Expansion and European Sensibilities: The Case of Guinea

On September 28, 1958, France and all its overseas territories, including its African colonies, simultaneously held a referendum on the draft constitution for the Fifth Republic. President Charles De Gaulle had clearly defined the stakes at the outset of the balloting: a vote by any territory against the constitution would be automatically considered a vote for independence. Of France's twelve African territories, all but one voted in favour of the constitution. To the great displeasure of Paris, 98 percent of Guineans, led by the charismatic nationalist leader Sékou Touré, had voted "no" to a renewed partnership with the mother country. France's resentment was understandable; as Vernon McKay has argued, "the vote of Sékou Touré's Guinea for independence set a precedent too strong for the others to resist for any appreciable length of time."⁷³ By the fall of 1960, all the remaining sub-Saharan French countries except French Somaliland had attained independence.

In the United States, Guinea's independence, which was proclaimed on October 1, left most seasoned observers uneasy. Many worried, like the *New York Times*, that Guinea's "initial economic weakness offer[s] the Soviets new opportunities and confront[s] the West with new tests of its policy."⁷⁴ These apprehensions took a turn for the worse after Americans realised the extent of France's resentment toward Guinea. The French withdrawal from the West African nation, as one scholar has described it, "was that of an army in retreat." Immediately, France ceased to buy Guinean bananas, which it had done at subsidised prices; most standard administrative equipment – including files, maps, telephone sets and lines, medical supplies and even plates in the Government palace – were either withdrawn or destroyed. The police and army left only after levelling their barracks to the ground. Guinean students in Paris and Dakar suddenly lost their French scholarships, and French officials who stayed back lost their seniority in the French public service.⁷⁵

⁷³ Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, p. 113.

⁷⁴ *New York Times*, editorial, October 1, 1958, p. 36.

⁷⁵ Chidiebere A. Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1995), pp. 266-267.

Barely two weeks after Guinea's independence, the *New York Times*, in an editorial entitled "Second Thoughts in Guinea," voiced the concerns shared by many Americans about the haphazard way by which this new country was entering the family of nations:

Ostensibly a new "Republic" was set up in West Africa. But there was some lack of basis for it. There was an effective political leader, leftist-oriented, who had persuaded the large majority of the people to vote as they did. But there was no machinery for government, no system of administration independent of the French, nothing that could be grasped except a slogan. . . The bootstraps of enthusiastic nationalism are not a sufficient substitute for skill and large investment if Guinea is to be lifted into the modern world.⁷⁶

As many scholars have commented elsewhere, the United States unduly delayed awarding diplomatic recognition to the new nation for one month, despite Touré's many friendly gestures toward Washington; this policy was, of course, followed mainly out of deference to France.⁷⁷ However, the Eisenhower Administration favoured recognising the new nation from the start. Only because of persistent pressure emanating from Paris, pressure that sometimes bordered on threats to the integrity of NATO, did the U.S. withhold opening direct channels of communication to Conakry. Even when Washington finally normalised its relations with Guinea, it was still in the face of French opposition.

The fact that Guinea would vote negatively was widely expected in diplomatic circles, although no one predicted such a lopsided result. On the eve of the French referendum, Christian Herter sent a telegram to the American ambassador in Paris in which he signified some of his concerns about the outcome of the vote. Herter wrote that "[i]t would obviously be desirable for France [to] take [the] lead in recognizing [Guinea] following [the] results of [the] referendum. We may not be able [to] delay long pending [a] French decision should others as [the] U[nited] A[rab] R[epublic] and [the] USSR recognize in [the] meantime." Herter concluded by stating that "on balance, [we] believe early US recognition [to be] inevitable."⁷⁸

Following the result of the referendum, U.S. and French officials first discussed Guinea's diplomatic recognition on October 4. Deputy Under Secretary Robert Murphy

⁷⁶ *New York Times*, October 13, 1958, p. 28.

⁷⁷ Rupert Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 4; Chidiebere A. Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa*, pp. 268-275.

informed French ambassador Hervé Alphand that “this was a delicate matter, particularly in view of the possibility of recognition of Guinea in the near future by the Soviet and other governments.” Alphand replied that “an agreement would first be negotiated between France and Guinea before the latter could be considered independent.” He reassured Murphy that “this would not take long.”⁷⁹ This justification was, of course, pure fallacy. U.S. officials well knew that the French wanted to avoid “tak[ing] action which would give members of [the] future [French] community ground for feeling they might have done better by voting ‘no.’”⁸⁰ Conversely, Washington did not want to be forced into a situation where Moscow was the first to recognise Guinea and where the United States was left to look like a supporter of colonialism in the eyes of the other African nations.

Meanwhile, Conakry persisted in its efforts to secure recognition from Washington, sending two official requests to establish diplomatic relations on October 2 and October 13. In his reply to the second letter, Secretary Dulles blandly informed the Guineans that the U.S. government was giving “due consideration” to the question of recognition.⁸¹ Unfortunately, the letter was mistranslated in Conakry and the Guineans misconstrued the meaning of the Secretary of State’s message, believing it announced the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.⁸² This embarrassing episode induced Dulles to renew his efforts to convince the French. On October 25, he met with Ambassador Alphand, who reiterated the French government’s will that the West not “rush diplomatic representation nor UN membership.” Alphand also gave notice that France would veto Guinea’s membership application to the UN if it was submitted during the current assembly. Dulles expressed his “basic sympathy for the French position” but advised that “the precedents for delaying UN memberships were not good.” Alphand then warned Dulles that by adopting an overtly pro-Guinean position, the U.S. would encourage “the Balkanisation of Black Africa, a development which would be against the interests of the West as a whole.”⁸³

⁷⁸ Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in France, September 25, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 670-671.

⁷⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, October 4, 1958, in *Ibid.*, pp. 671-672.

⁸⁰ Telegram From the Embassy in France to the Department of State, in *Ibid.*, p. 673.

⁸¹ Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate General in Dakar, October 17, 1958, in *Ibid.*, p. 674.

⁸² Telegram From the Consulate General at Dakar to the Department of State, October 23, 1958, in *Ibid.*, p. 675.

By uttering the wish that the U.S. not “rush diplomatic *representation*” and by not explicitly opposing diplomatic *recognition*, Alphand was quietly – and reluctantly – leaving the door open for Washington to normalise its relations with Conakry. After consultation with the British, who had decided to grant recognition to the Republic of Guinea on November 1, Dulles decided to move ahead.⁸⁴ He advised Eisenhower to officially recognise the Guinean government, but counselled that “the question of establishment of diplomatic relations be held in abeyance for the time being.”⁸⁵ The President’s message of formal recognition was released on November 2, one day after the British normalised its relations with Conakry.⁸⁶

While the Eisenhower Administration had succeeded in securing the recognition of Guinea without causing an open rift with France, it soon discovered that the question of Guinea’s admission to the United Nations would raise even thornier issues. Along with the British, U.S. officials tried to temper French intransigence over Guinea’s admission to the UN, proposing a compromise in which Guinea would only apply during the last week of the United Nations General Assembly session.⁸⁷ Both parties, already embittered by the recognition debate, refused to tone down their demands: Guinea insisted on applying for UN membership before the end of 1958, while France threatened to use its veto power if Guinea went forward. Washington’s precarious position was described by John Foster Dulles in a missive to the U.S. ambassador in France:

We are most concerned by [the] likely prospect Guinea will press for UN membership this session[,] in conflict with [the] present French position. . . . While we have not decided what our position will be in such [an] eventuality, we frankly see serious difficulties for [the] US [to] abstain. In this connection[, the] French have so far failed to give us [a] memorandum setting forth legal basis [for] their views as promised by Alphand . . . At [the] same time we look with grave concern at [the] possibility [of the] US voting differently from France in [the] S[ecurity] C[ouncil] on [an] issue of importance to France. . . . If [the] Western powers should abstain or even if

⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation, October 25, 1958, in *Ibid.*, pp. 678-679.

⁸⁴ Telephone Call to Mr. Elbrick, October 31, 1958, Box 9, Telephone Conversation Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁸⁵ Memorandum From Secretary of State Dulles to President Eisenhower, October 31, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 679-680.

⁸⁶ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1958* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1959), p. 826. Although the message announcing the recognition of Guinea was released on November 2, it was dated November 1.

⁸⁷ Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in France, November 20, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II: *United Nations and General International Matters* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1991), p. 75.

friendly SC members fail to sponsor Guinea's request this will be exploited by elements unfriendly [to the] US and France, and Guinea's admission will appear to be obtained solely through Soviet and Afro-Asian efforts. . . . It is accordingly our strong hope that [the] French may yet find it possible or at least agree to sponsor Guinea's admission [to the] UN next week.⁸⁸

On the floor of the United Nations, the U.S. delegation was well aware that if it was to abstain or vote against Guinean membership, Washington would find itself in a difficult bind, isolated with a handful of colonial powers. UN Representative Henry Cabot Lodge urged Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter to support Guinea's request for admission.⁸⁹ Herter could find no sensible reason to do otherwise; he authorised Lodge to "vote affirmatively but not [to] sponsor or solicit support for [the] resolution recommending Guinea['s] admission."⁹⁰ On the same day, Herter called French ambassador Alphand to inform him that "if the matter came to a vote tomorrow afternoon we would have to vote for Guinea."⁹¹ The question of Guinea's membership did, in fact, arise during the next day's proceedings. The United States voted in favour of the new republic's admission to the UN on December 9 in the Security Council and on December 12 in the UNGA, a decision that made Guinea's ambassador "extremely grateful" but, as could be expected, profoundly irked French officials, who backed down from their threat to veto Guinean membership.⁹² President De Gaulle personally expressed France's disappointment at Washington's support of Guinea during a subsequent NATO ministerial meeting. Calling for cooperation between the Western powers, the French leader intimidatingly added that "the functioning of our alliance ('le jeu de notre alliance') was involved," a statement that surely must have startled Secretary of State Dulles.⁹³

Washington's support of Guinea in the UN did not imply, however, a complete reversal of U.S. policy regarding the question of France's relations with its African territories. The UN episode, like the Guinean recognition crisis before it, were each treated individually

⁸⁸ Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in France, November 28, 1958, in *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

⁸⁹ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with Ambassador Lodge, December 8, 1958, Box 6, Chronological Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁹⁰ Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission at the United Nations, December 8, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, p. 87.

⁹¹ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with Ambassador Alphand, December 8, 1958, Box 6, Chronological Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁹² Memorandum of Conversation, December 18, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 682.

⁹³ Memorandum of Conversation, December 15, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. VII, part 2: *Western Europe* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1993), p. 149.

according to their merits, and U.S. officials only acted after considerable deliberation. These events demonstrate that far from taking a blanket stand in support of Western colonial interests, the Eisenhower Administration painfully considered its policy choices when walking the tightrope between the Western powers and the emerging nations of Africa. The case of France was a particularly delicate question, given its decisive role in NATO, the strength of the French Communist Party and the inherent instability of the French political system.⁹⁴ U.S. policymakers had consistently supported French colonial policy since World War II in order to keep France as a reliable ally in Western Europe. The Guinean episode clearly demonstrates that Washington, by the dawn of the fifties, was reacting to Third World developments and had begun to reassess the logic underlying its Europe-first policy.

This is not to say that U.S. policy necessarily became warmly supportive of Guinea. In fact, Washington delayed sending diplomatic representation until February 13, 1959, and even then, only a chargé d'affaires was assigned to Conakry. America's first ambassador to Guinea would only arrive in the summer of 1959.⁹⁵ Yet, American reticence toward strengthening ties with Guinea cannot be solely attributed to concern for French sensibilities. U.S. officials also had qualms about Sékou Touré's brand of neutralism, which many Americans perceived as being detrimental to the West's interests. While pro-Western African leaders like Ethiopia's Selassie and Ghana's Nkrumah used a tamer version of the "pendulum tactic," occasionally playing the "Soviet card" to get the West to pay attention, Touré's diplomacy considered East and West on equal terms: Guinea would establish political and economic ties with any nation, as long as no "strings" were attached.⁹⁶ This became evident in early April 1959, when a shipload of small arms and military vehicles from Czechoslovakia arrived in Guinea, followed by an eighteen-man Czech trade mission. This was front-page news in the *New York Times*, which headlined: "Rising Red Influences in Guinea Stir U.S. Concern About Africa."⁹⁷ When diplomat Robert Murphy called on Guinean ambassador Telli Diallo to explain the reason for

⁹⁴ Cary Fraser, "Understanding American Policy Toward the Decolonization of European Empires, 1945-1964," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1992), p. 115.

⁹⁵ John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968), pp. 33-52. The U.S. ambassador arrived in Conakry on July 23, 1959.

⁹⁶ Department of State Intelligence Report on "The Political Position of Sékou Touré," October 1, 1959, Guinea (1), Box 7, International Series, Office of the Staff Secretary Records, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library.

⁹⁷ *New York Times*, April 4, 1959, p. 1.

the arms shipment, the African diplomat plainly reminded him that Conakry had been requesting U.S. arms for months and that since none were forthcoming, it had been obliged to turn elsewhere.⁹⁸

Washington's perception of Guinea was not helped by French officials' persistent condemnation of Sékou Touré. During a series of tripartite talks held in Washington in April 1959, only a few weeks after the Czech arms shipment to Guinea, French President De Gaulle cautioned Christian Herter, who had since replaced Dulles as Secretary of State, that Guinea was developing "into a Communist cancer."⁹⁹ One month later, in a letter to President Eisenhower, De Gaulle called for unity and urged America to support France's African policy: "bearing in mind the facilities which the Communist undertakings find in primitive, anarchic or poverty stricken areas, it is essential that the nations which enjoy modern civilization and true democracy remain united to act and to defend themselves."¹⁰⁰

But De Gaulle's most bitter criticism was reserved for the Guinean leader himself. During Eisenhower's September 1959 visit to France, the French general warned his American counterpart that communism was rapidly gaining ground in Black Africa, particularly in Guinea: "The Soviet Bloc countries," according to De Gaulle, "had rushed into the breach and Mr. Sekou [*sic*] Touré had worked with them all the more easily as he was himself a Communist." Eisenhower interrupted the De Gaulle to inquire if the Guinean leader was really a Communist. The French leader replied affirmatively. When Eisenhower informed his interlocutor that Touré was to make an official visit to Washington in October, "General De Gaulle shrugged and made no comment."¹⁰¹

If U.S. policymakers were concerned with Touré's leftist leanings, they did not suspect that he was a self-avowed Communist. In a memo to Eisenhower, Herter briefed the President on Touré's political views:

⁹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, April 24, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 685-687.

⁹⁹ Memorandum From Secretary of State Herter to the President, April 24, 1959, Box 11, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁰⁰ Letter From President De Gaulle to President Eisenhower, May 25, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. VII, part 2, p. 229.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum of Conversation, September 2, 1959, in *Ibid.*, pp. 255-259.

You will recall that General de Gaulle [*sic*] maintained that Sekou Toure was a Communist and had spent two years studying in the Soviet Union. While it has not been possible to pin down the first allegation, it is certain that Toure's outlook on life has a definite Marxist bias; nevertheless, the consensus of Westerners who have had most contact with him since independence . . . is that he is not a Communist. . . . The second part of de Gaulle's [*sic*] allegation – that Toure spent two years in the USSR – is not borne out by the facts. . . . From all our sources of information, Toure emerges as a fervent African nationalist first and a Marxist second."¹⁰²

American officials understood quite well that De Gaulle, by depicting Touré as a Soviet puppet, was using the old red herring technique to foster American sympathy for the French situation in Africa. "Il faut d'ailleurs reconnaître," writes French Africanist Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, "que les puissances coloniales, désireuses de se ménager l'appui des États-Unis dans la lutte contre les nationalismes, contribuèrent à favoriser ce type d'assimilation hâtive et pas toujours fondée."¹⁰³ A similar policy was followed by Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the Prime Minister of the Ivory Coast, Guinea's pro-Western neighbour. Supported by French colonial authorities, Houphouët-Boigny used every occasion to claim that Russia was trying "to make Guinea a showcase of communism in Africa," and urged the U.S. to cut its economic aid to Guinea; he even went to the length of depicting Touré, one of his rivals on the African political scene, as a "Communist tool."¹⁰⁴

While U.S. officials doubted that Touré was a "card-carrying member of the Communist party," to rehash the old 1950s idiom, they were growing increasingly distressed at the sudden rise of Eastern Bloc activities in Guinea. A December 1958 CIA intelligence analysis had reported that "[in] general Communist activity in [sub-Saharan Africa] is steadily increasing and is being energetically pursued." It further added that "Moscow apparently looks to Guinea as the opening wedge leading to bloc missions in Ghana and Liberia."¹⁰⁵ The events

¹⁰² Memorandum for the President, October 22, 1959, Republic of Guinea (4), Box 27, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁰³ Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis*, p. 190. Also see Lord Hailey, "The Differing Faces of Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 36, no. 1 (October 1957), pp. 143-153. Likewise, historian Diane B. Kunz has asserted that in the postwar years, French politicians often evoked "the Communist menace to loosen American purse strings." See Diane B. Kunz, *Butter and Guns*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, November 12, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 69-70; *New York Times*, November 19, 1959, p. 19; November 20, 1959, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ CIA Intelligence Annex, in OCB Report on NSC 5818, December 29, 1958, Africa South of the Sahara (3), Box 44, Disaster File, NSC Staff Papers, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library.

of 1959 confirmed much of Washington's worst fears. In addition to the April 1959 Czech arms shipment, Conakry signed an extensive economic and technical cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union in August and, in what was probably considered the cardinal sin for U.S. diplomatic observers, Guinea established diplomatic relations with Beijing in early October.¹⁰⁶

By the time the State Department opened its embassy in Conakry in the summer of 1959, it had already been beaten to the punch by the Soviets, Czechs, and Bulgarians. In addition to these embassies, Czechoslovakia and East Germany had established permanent trade missions and the Poles and Hungarians were in the midst of settling their own delegations.¹⁰⁷ On his arrival at his post, John Morrow, the new U.S. ambassador, could not help but notice that Guineans "had not completely forgiven the United States for having delayed recognition, and for having followed initially the example of France in sending a chargé d'affaires to Conakry instead of an ambassador."¹⁰⁸

Worried about the course of events, and unable to grasp the essence of Touré's philosophy of non-alignment, the Eisenhower Administration decided that its best bet would be to try to lure the young Guinean leader back in the Western camp. In spite of French apprehensions, Washington began offering economic aid to Guinea. The first concrete American gesture was the sending, through P.L. 480 and ICA auspices, of 5,000 tons of rice and 3,000 tons of wheat flour to Guinea in mid-June 1959.¹⁰⁹ Other programs undertaken by the Administration were a joint ICA-USIA English teaching project, a beefing up of the USIA program in Guinea and various educational exchange programs.¹¹⁰ This sudden outburst of American solicitude toward Guinea infuriated pro-Western African leaders like Houphouët-Boigny, who complained that Touré was being rewarded for his misbehaviour. As historians Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann have observed, the foreign aid was awarded to Guinea "not as a

¹⁰⁶ *New York Times*, August 25, 1959, p. 3; October 5, 1959, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph C. Satterthwaite, "The United States and West Africa: A Survey of Relations," *State Department Bulletin*, May 25, 1959, p. 748.

¹⁰⁸ John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, pp. 67-68. John Morrow was Presidential Adviser E. Frederic Morrow's brother.

¹⁰⁹ *State Department Bulletin*, July 6, 1959, p. 22.

¹¹⁰ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (Satterthwaite) to the Under Secretary of State (Dillon), October 6, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 695-697.

reward for good democratic conduct, but as a bribe designed to wean it away from its initial pro-Soviet policy.”¹¹¹

The invitation to Sékou Touré for an October 1959 state visit to the United States was motivated by similar concerns. Although Washington officially invited Touré on June 4, 1959, the Guinean leader had previously expressed, through diplomatic channels, his desire to visit Washington back in February. Herter had then advised Eisenhower that, despite “the impromptu character of his request,” Touré should be invited to visit Washington *unofficially* and “that you should receive him for a brief discussion if your schedule permits.”¹¹² Two months later, the Czech arms deal and the increasing Eastern Bloc presence in Guinea instilled Herter with a new sense of urgency: “I believe that the extension of an invitation from you to President Toure for an *official* visit to the United States . . . would be most effective in counteracting the rapidly developing communist influence in Guinea.”¹¹³ One week before Touré’s arrival, Herter again briefed the President, reminding him that “[o]ur primary objectives in this trip are to show Toure and his party that the Marxist picture of the United States is distorted, that we genuinely support the well-being and aspirations of Africans, and that it is in their interest to maintain close ties to the United States and the West.”¹¹⁴

A State Department intelligence report, prepared in early October for Sékou Touré’s visit, described him as a devoted nationalist and a progressive leader who “almost certainly wishes to pursue a neutral policy in foreign affairs.” Touré’s non-alignment diplomacy was described as being “characterized by rapid and agile movement back and forth between the various powers from which he seeks aid and support.” The report further predicted that “his visit to this country will very likely be followed by a gesture toward the Bloc.”¹¹⁵ The report was only partly accurate: the gesture came before, not after, the Guinean president’s American visit. Only three days after the report was issued, and barely three weeks before Touré set foot

¹¹¹ Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, *The United States and Africa: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 318.

¹¹² Memorandum For the President, February 18, 1959, Box 6, Chronological Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis added.

¹¹³ Memorandum for the President, April 24, 1959, Guinea (1), Box 7, International Series, Office of the Staff Secretary Records, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁴ Memorandum for the President, October 22, 1959, Republic of Guinea (4), Box 27, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

in Washington, Guinea recognised the People's Republic of China. Still, despite this conspicuous affront, U.S. officials felt Touré Guinea could still be "saved." On eve of Touré's arrival, the *New York Times* deplored that "[t]he Soviet world seized the opportunity that had been left wide open to it. . . . If Guinea now has more Soviet influence than we like, we must face the fact that the fault is partly ours."¹¹⁶ Third World neutralism was a difficult concept to grasp for many Americans; to them, Touré's relationship with the Soviet Bloc had grown out of the West's belated recognition of Guinea, not because of his sincere belief in neutralism. This basic misunderstanding foreshadowed difficult times ahead.

The 37-year old Guinean leader visited the U.S. from October 25 to November 9, 1959. His first stop was in Washington, where he met with President Eisenhower and the State Department's top brass for a series of mostly perfunctory meetings and ceremonies. Nevertheless, U.S. officials, led by Eisenhower himself, made a considerable effort to be amenable, stressing positive themes and staying away from the Chinese recognition issue.¹¹⁷ Essentially, the Administration was attempting what can basically be described as a "soft sell" approach to Guinea. Before leaving Washington, Touré had signed a series of cultural and technical cooperation agreement with the U.S. and had been given the ear of officials at the Export-Import Bank and the Development Loan Fund.¹¹⁸

After three days in Washington, Touré and his party visited Durham, North Carolina (the carefully-selected Southern stopover), Chicago, Los Angeles, and finally New York, where the Guinean president addressed the UNGA.¹¹⁹ The trip went rather smoothly, with the worst *faux pas* probably happening when, as Touré was being welcomed by a crowd of 200,000 in New York, the Ghanaian flag was displayed instead of Guinea's, by mistake.¹²⁰ The American press gave considerable attention to the Guinean delegation's visit, and mostly

¹¹⁵ Intelligence Report, October 1, 1959, in *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *New York Times*, editorial, October 27, 1959, p. 36.

¹¹⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, October 27, 1959, Republic of Guinea (4), Box 27, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library; Memorandum of Conversation, October 27, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 702-706.

¹¹⁸ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1958*, p. 758.

¹¹⁹ See Editorial Note in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 698.

¹²⁰ *New York Times*, November 5, 1959, p. 8. In all fairness to the Americans organising the event, the two flags bear a remarkable resemblance. Touré's stay in the U.S. was not marred by any controversy despite the fact that,

questioned Touré about his neutralist policy, to which he responded that Africa “was concerned with the problems of developed and developing nations rather than with a struggle between the West and the East.” Calling for a better understanding of the African plight, not charity, he also remarked that “a poor man could not be asked to chose between diamonds and gold from New York, Paris, or Moscow, for he would take these things where he found them.”¹²¹

Yet, the charm operation did not give results U.S. officials had hoped. As 1959 came to an end, Washington increasingly looked askance at Guinea’s widening ties with the Eastern Bloc. By 1960, the Sino-Soviet Bloc was purchasing almost a quarter of Guinea’s exports and provided close to half of its imports.¹²² Already in late 1959, Touré was being described in U.S. diplomatic circles as “an unknown quantity”¹²³ and, during a NSC meeting held in early 1960, CIA Director Allen Dulles expressed alarm at Guinea’s “drift . . . toward closer relations with the Sino-Soviet Bloc.”¹²⁴ In his memoirs, Ambassador John Morrow related that as time went by, he found it more and more difficult to convince his superiors that Touré was not a Communist, but a devoted nationalist.¹²⁵ Evidently, Touré’s brand of non-alignment was too radical for U.S. policymakers, in main part because of the undeniable fact that every Soviet gain in sub-Saharan Africa, be it even a minor one, implied a loss for the West.

Furthermore, while Washington’s softer policy toward Guinea was achieving few concrete results, it was causing a great deal of grumbling in the West European capitals. In December 1959, the State Department’s head of African Affairs, Joseph Satterthwaite, reported to his superior that France’s denunciations, both in the press and in official circles, were becoming louder and louder: “the principal French complaint,” explained Satterthwaite, “has been that we have been too friendly towards President Sekou [*sic*] Touré of Guinea who,

according to U.S. ambassador John Morrow, French diplomats had tried to sabotage the visit. See John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, p. 251.

¹²¹ John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, p. 103.

¹²² Alexander Erlich and Christian R. Sonne, “The Soviet Union: Economic Activity,” in Zbigniew Brzezinski, ed., *Africa and the Communist World*, p. 60.

¹²³ Telegram From the Mission at the United Nations to the Department of State, December 2, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, p. 907.

¹²⁴ Memorandum of Discussion at the 436th Meeting of the NSC, March 10, 1960, Box 12, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹²⁵ John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, p. 83.

they maintain, is a Communist.”¹²⁶ But France was not the only European nation complaining. Portuguese dictator Salazar was becoming increasingly critical of Washington’s pro-African policy, while the Italians and Spaniards quietly urged Eisenhower to act in unison with his NATO allies.¹²⁷

The case of Guinea illustrates the inherent complexities U.S. policymakers had to overcome while devising policies for Africa. Even after an African nation had achieved self-government, this did not automatically dissolve the perplexing colonial dilemma. Contiguous interests with the metropolitan powers of Western Europe and global strategic considerations contributed to keeping U.S.-African relations within the realm of the triangular relationship that had circumscribed American policy since World War II. Although the case of Guinea arose in the context of Franco-American relations, the same issue created complications with the other major colonial powers of Africa. The clash occurred earlier in the case of Britain, and later with Portugal.¹²⁸

More importantly, Americans discovered in Guinea that the “potential threat” of communism had become a real one. Would Touré become an “African Castro”?¹²⁹ Up to 1958, Moscow’s incursions in sub-Saharan Africa had been relatively cautious. Guinea offered the Kremlin a first diplomatic and strategic triumph in sub-Saharan Africa; this success encouraged Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to adopt a bold African policy, the results of which would be seen later when turmoil erupted in the Congo during the summer of 1960.¹³⁰

The dawning of the Cold War on the African continent would dramatically change the way Washington viewed the process of African decolonisation and the emergence of Third

¹²⁶ Memorandum From Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (Satterthwaite) to Secretary of State Herter, December 4, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 71. Satterthwaite, a cautious and unassuming career diplomat, had been appointed to head the African Bureau in 1958.

¹²⁷ *New York Times*, May 24, 1959, p. 19; Memorandum of Conversation, October 2, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. VII, part 2, pp. 565-566; Memorandum of Conversation, December 22, 1959, in *Ibid.*, pp. 742-745.

¹²⁸ James Mayall, *Africa: The Cold War and After* (London: Elek Books, 1971), pp. 70-75.

¹²⁹ Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *American Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 250.

¹³⁰ Zaki Laïdi, *Les contraintes d'une rivalité: les superpuissances et l'Afrique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1986), pp. 25-26.

World neutralism. Yet, as the above discussion has demonstrated, U.S. officials did not blatantly mistake nationalism for communism. They understood the motivations of the new African leaders and, although they often did not sympathise with these views, American policymakers had perceived the need to devote more attention to the Third World and took steps accordingly. The growing importance of the Afro-Asian Bloc in world affairs was most obvious in the United Nations, where the “white” nations were gradually being outnumbered by the emerging nations of the developing world. But, as U.S. diplomats discovered, formulating U.S. policy in New York was often a more complicated than it was in Washington.

2.3: Holding the Fort: The U.S. and Africa in the United Nations

When the UN was founded in October 1945, 51 states were admitted as members; among these nations, three were Asian (India, China, and the Philippines), two were African (Ethiopia and Liberia) and seven were from the Middle East. The others were European, American and white Commonwealth nations. However, the rapid wave of decolonisation of the 1950s would dramatically alter the composition of the international organisation. By 1961, UN membership boasted 104 states, 51 of which were “white” nations; the 53 remaining states were Afro-Asian.¹³¹

If the early fifties predominantly witnessed the rise of nationalism in Asia, decolonisation in sub-Saharan Africa dominated the international scene in the latter part of the decade. The growing prominence of African questions in the work of the General Assembly prompted Dr. Charles Malik, the President of the Thirteenth Regular Session, to suggest in his closing statement of December 13, 1958, that “if . . . any name is to be applied to this session I believe it could fairly be called the ‘African session’.”¹³² History would later prove that Dr. Malik’s christening of the “African session” was perhaps a bit premature: observers have since applied that label to the Fifteenth Session of the UNGA, held in 1960, in which sixteen

¹³¹ Hugh Tinker, *Race, Conflict and the International Order: From Empire to United Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 61, 109.

¹³² Quoted in Richard Stebbins, *The United States in World Affairs, 1958* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1959), p. 269.

African states were admitted to the UN. Nonetheless, Malik's remark clearly demonstrates that issues pertaining to Africa were drawing a great deal of the UN's attention in the late 1950s.

The UN was more than a witness to the rise of Third World aspirations. Indeed, by providing a forum in which the emerging nations could voice their grievances and shift global priorities, the international organisation acted, in an important way, as one of the main catalysts for the emergence of a political consciousness on the African continent.¹³³ As the colonial question gradually came to polarise the debate in the late 1950s, some Americans were openly wondering, as one foreign correspondent put it, "Whose U.N. is it? . . . [T]he governments and diplomats continue to come over this Bali Ha'i with their grievances, their problems, their hatreds, their nationalistic ambitions and grand objectives. The U.N. has been handed, in its young life, the most impossible batch of problems and special interests that ever befell an institution."¹³⁴ Likewise, in his memoirs, U.S. Representative at the United Nations Henry Cabot Lodge, who occupied his post from January 1953 to September 1960, quizzically observed that many non-aligned countries viewed the UN's "chief value [as] a forum for anticolonialism."¹³⁵

Despite this caustic remark, Lodge was probably the highest-ranking official of the Eisenhower Administration to sympathise deeply with Third World aspirations. One of the foremost representatives of the declining moderate Eastern establishment wing of the Republican Party, Lodge had been sent to the world body by Eisenhower because of the latter's concern over the American public's lack of enthusiasm for the UN.¹³⁶ The distinguished, urbane Massachusetts patrician had played a major role in Eisenhower's nomination to the G.O.P. ticket in 1953 and, accordingly, he held a great deal of influence at the White House. One diplomat later revealed that the President "listened as a rule to Lodge's

¹³³ Vernon McKay, "Too Slow or Too Fast? Political Change in African Trust Territories," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 35, no. 2 (January 1957), pp. 304-305.

¹³⁴ Foreign correspondent Chet Huntley is quoted, in *Congressional Record*, January 27, 1958, p. 1019.

¹³⁵ Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Storm Has Many Eyes: A Personal Narrative* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), p. 149.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

view with respect to United Nations matters.”¹³⁷ Moreover, Lodge, a member of the Cabinet, didn’t always choose to follow the State Department’s lead, to the point of occasionally undertaking actions within the Security Council without consulting Foggy Bottom.¹³⁸ This, of course, greatly irritated Secretary of State Dulles, who resented these intrusions into his bailiwick.¹³⁹

From his vantage point in New York, Lodge was at the forefront of the rise of the Third World on the international scene. He quickly came to understand that, in the long run, the United States would have to pay heed to the calls of the emerging nations. Concerning Lodge, historian H.W. Brands has commented that he “became something of a lobbyist for the [T]hird [W]orld in administration councils, as he opened channels to newly independent nations that might otherwise have remained closed.”¹⁴⁰ From the mid-fifties on, Lodge persistently pressured the State Department and the White House into adopting a more flexible outlook toward the nations of Asia and Africa. On one occasion, Lodge suggested to the President that high-ranking U.S. officials be sent on good will trips to Third World nations, in order to foster better understanding between Washington and the new governments. “But the main point,” Lodge argued, “would be simply to be agreeable and to make them feel that *we* think *they* are attractive.”¹⁴¹ Dulles, in a letter to Eisenhower, welcomed the idea: “I believe that Africa is the area above all where visits are welcome and can bring results. It would be good if more Americans, and particularly some of high stature, visited this continent which is now in a state of rapid evolution.”¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Loy W. Henderson Oral History Transcript [OH 191], Columbia University Oral History Project, p. 48, Eisenhower Library

¹³⁸ Francis O. Wilcox Oral History Transcript [OH 498], Senate Historical Office, pp. 183-184. Also see Kent G. Sieg, “Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.,” in Cathal J. Nolan, ed., *Notable U.S. Ambassadors Since 1775: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), p. 234.

¹³⁹ Memorandum From John Foster Dulles to Murphy, Wilcox and Rountree, February 10, 1957, Box 14, Chronological File, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁴⁰ H.W. Brands, Jr. *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower's Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. ix; also see, in the same book, Chapter 8: “The Discovery of the Third World: Henry Cabot Lodge at the United Nations,” pp. 163-184.

¹⁴¹ “Short good-will trips to Afro-Asian Countries by High-Ranking American Officials (and wives),” March 28, 1956, Box 4, White House Memoranda Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis in original; also see Henry Cabot Lodge, *As It Was*, p. 82.

In the same vein, Lodge applauded Eisenhower's policy during the Suez crisis of 1956, in which Washington took a stand against its NATO allies in favour of Nasser's Egypt. In an enthusiastic letter to the President, the UN Representative reported: "[A]s a result of your policy here in November, our essential position in the United Nations is not determined merely by measuring voting strength. You have given us a position of moral *authority* which in turn has created a degree of *respect* which transcends the mere counting of noses."¹⁴³

The Suez episode was one of the rare occasions in which the United States received warm praise from the Afro-Asian nations. However, much of the sympathy that had been gained in the Third World was lost a few weeks later when, in the wake of the Suez crisis, the Administration announced the Middle East resolution. The "Eisenhower doctrine," as it soon became known, committed the United States to intervene if a Middle Eastern country was threatened by "overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism."¹⁴⁴ The Afro-Asian nations, mindful of their sovereignty and suspicious of U.S. interventionism, widely condemned the Eisenhower doctrine as a scheme to impose American hegemony over the Middle East. Its first major application, which occurred when the U.S. Marines landed in Lebanon in 1958 to buttress the dwindling pro-Western regime of Camille Chamoun, confirmed many of the fears shared by Third World leaders.¹⁴⁵

As the Afro-Asian membership in the UN grew during the 1950s and, with it, neutralist approaches to East-West relations, U.S. officials found it more and more difficult to gather support for their positions. While Washington could generally count on the support of its traditional allies in the UN, the rapid pace of decolonisation jeopardised its hitherto unchallenged influence in the UNGA. In January 1953, there were 56 members in the UN; the U.S. could usually muster a two-thirds vote by depending on the 14 votes from the North

¹⁴² Memorandum for the President, April 12, 1956, Box 13, Chronological Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library; Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, April 27, 1956, Box 7, Cabinet Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁴³ Henry Cabot Lodge to President Eisenhower, December 21, 1956, Box 5, General Correspondence and Memoranda Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁴ Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 91; H.W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 134; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 180.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, pp. 97-104; Richard J. Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution: The United States in the Third World* (New York: World Publishing, 1968), pp. 139-149.

Atlantic and British Commonwealth countries, and the 19 votes from Latin America. By 1959, however, the membership had grown to 82 and it had become impossible to get the required 55 votes simply by adding together the Latin American and Western countries, Liberia, and America's East Asian allies of Nationalist China, the Philippines, and Thailand.¹⁴⁶

This new trend carried alarming implications, especially within the Cold War context of the late 1950s. One State Department report stated that "our ability in competition with the USSR to attract the votes of the 'uncommitted' to our proposals will become increasingly important." In fact, according to the paper, "[t]he substantial and growing number of 'uncommitted' members has strengthened the USSR's position in the UN." Yet, despite the difficulties occasioned by the massive influx of new countries to the UN, U.S. officials reasoned that it would not be in America's best interest to attempt to stem the tide: "it would seriously prejudice our relations with the states directly concerned; and in the eyes of the 'anti-colonial' majority, it would place the US on the side of the colonial powers – all to the advantage of the USSR."¹⁴⁷

Lodge did not share the State Department's pessimism regarding the rising number of newly independent states admitted to the UN. After studying a preliminary draft of the aforementioned report, he argued to his State Department liaison: "I do not think that the admission of new members is necessarily a bad thing for us. In fact we can make it into an advantage. . . . To be sure, the United States cannot afford to look stuffy or stick-in-the-mud." To Lodge, this meant that the U.S. should cease to blindly support its NATO allies and increasingly steer in the direction of "a line that is more evolutionary and consequently less pro-Europe than it was." The UN Ambassador, hardened by over six years of debates and intrigue in the United Nations, fostered no illusions as to the difficulties and complications inherent in following such a policy; although it would probably please the Afro-Asian nations, he understood that the Western nations would not cooperate. Commenting on the outlook for

¹⁴⁶ Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Storm Has Many Eyes*, p. 135.

¹⁴⁷ Paper Prepared in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State, March 4, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, pp. 110-111, 113. The report is entitled "Admission of New Members to the United Nations."

the colonial question in the coming years, Lodge wryly remarked: “it will be just as painful as always – no more, no less.”¹⁴⁸

Indeed, as the case of Guinea has demonstrated, the United States’ colonial dilemma was hardly solved once the nations had attained independence. In NSC 5818, the Administration’s second paper dedicated to sub-Saharan Africa, the question of “nationalism vs. colonialism” was still presented as “the great issue in Africa today,” an “enormously complicated” problem that offered “no pat answers.” Basically, U.S. policy was to encourage orderly evolution toward self-determination, incite the metropolitan powers to adopt more flexible policies (particularly Portugal, whose African colonial administration was widely considered to be backward), and avoid US identification with “stagnant and repressive” colonial measures. To NSC 5818 was added the Administration’s new colonial strategy, which aimed to “emphasize through all appropriate media the colonial policies of the Soviet Union and particularly the fact that the Soviet colonial empire has continued to expand throughout the period when Western colonialism has been contracting.”¹⁴⁹

The United States’ UN strategy in the late 1950s with regard to the colonial question consisted in trying to depict the USSR as the colonial oppressor for its occupation of the Baltic and East European states, and showing that Western colonialism was much more progressive and, a fact not to be overlooked, on the way out. Although this policy achieved some limited results – it was during a discussion of the “Soviet brand” of colonialism that a frustrated Nikita Khrushchev, attending the UNGA on the occasion of his 1959 visit to the U.S, notoriously banged his shoe on the table in anger¹⁵⁰– the Afro-Asian nations largely remained unmoved and unconvinced. Their struggle against colonialism was not only political, social and economic. It was, more importantly, a struggle for pride and racial equality. To these peoples, “Soviet colonialism” seemed more like a subterfuge to deflect attention away from Western colonialism than a legitimate issue.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Letter From the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs (Wilcox), February 26, 1959, in *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

¹⁴⁹ National Security Council Report (NSC 5818), August 26, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 28.

¹⁵⁰ Francis O. Wilcox Oral History Transcript, pp. 191-194.

¹⁵¹ Léo Hamon, “Non-engagement et neutralisme des nouveaux Etats,” p. 362.

Another prominent colonial issue erupted in 1959 when Ghana led a motion, with nineteen other Afro-Asian powers, condemning French nuclear tests in the Sahara.¹⁵² Again, Washington's silence on the matter relegated it to the ranks of supporters of colonialism. The problem was compounded by the fact that cracks were starting to show in the Atlantic Alliance; by the end of 1958, De Gaulle was publicly voicing his dissatisfaction with the U.S. voting record in the UN while some voices were being raised in the U.S. questioning the propriety of backing Afro-Asian nations to the detriment of America's Western allies.¹⁵³

The emergence of an Afro-Asian voting bloc in the UN hostile to American Cold War priorities also constituted a threat to the continuation of Washington's policy of diplomatically isolating the People's Republic of China. In 1956, India, one of the leaders of the non-aligned movement, introduced a resolution urging the admission of Communist China to the UN (in past years, the resolution had been sponsored by Moscow).¹⁵⁴ This marked the beginnings of an Afro-Asian group of nations which repudiated Washington's nonrecognition of Beijing as a sterile policy that threatened world peace. The basis for the U.S. position rested on two central tenets, namely that (1) the Communist Chinese did not meet the standards for international behaviour set forth by UN Charter, especially in light of its invasion of Tibet, and (2) the People's Republic of China was a "condemned and persistent aggressor" against the UN in Korea.¹⁵⁵ Most Afro-Asian countries dismissed this as pure rhetoric, and it was to the American delegation's great embarrassment that the Soviet Representative at the UN, referring to Washington's persistent refusal to admit Beijing, declared that "[i]f the way citizens in a country are treated is a basis for membership in the U.N., then the United States should be voted out, because of the treatment of Negroes."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Scott W. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 98-99.

¹⁵³ *New York Times*, December 16, 1958, p. 1. The French President was referring to recent U.S. voting on Guinean and Algerian issues.

¹⁵⁴ Chung Su Choi, *Chinese Representation: A Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations, 1949-1971* (M.A. Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1972, Canadian Theses on Microfilm, no. 13117), pp. 40-44.

¹⁵⁵ Circular Instruction From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, August 4, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, pp. 281-282. Eisenhower himself felt strongly about the issue of Chinese representation, to the extent that when the Kennedy Administration considered granting Beijing a seat at the UN in 1961, the ageing Cold Warrior threatened to come out of retirement to oppose the measure. See Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 189.

¹⁵⁶ Hugh Tinker, *Race, Conflict and the International Order*, p. 117.

In 1958, the U.S. was still managing to keep the Communist Chinese out of the UN by a relatively comfortable margin: the vote count was 44 in favour of not considering Beijing's membership, 28 against, and 9 abstentions. Yet, by summer of 1959, the State Department reported to the President that a few "weak spots" were appearing in the U.S. position, notably Ethiopia, whose Emperor was just returning from a trip to Moscow.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the vote remained more or less the same in 1959 (see ANNEX III). Meanwhile, the state of U.S.-Communist Chinese relations was deteriorating, with tensions flaring up in 1955 and 1958 during the Quemoy-Matsu crises; the bellicose situation, adding teeth to the Administration's and Capitol Hill's hostility to the Beijing regime, precluded any change in the U.S. position.¹⁵⁸

In 1960, before the impending wave of African decolonisation, American officials began to worry about the potential future erosion of the U.S. nonrecognition position. The State Department urged France to use her influence to convince the newly independent African states to support Nationalist China instead of the People's Republic.¹⁵⁹ These efforts were partly successful, as the Government of Republican China was invited to attend the Cameroun and Togo independence ceremonies. But U.S. officials were far from optimistic about the direction further developments would take. Predicting the results of the 1960 vote, Secretary of State Herter remarked that "[w]e thus see [the] likelihood [of the] maintenance [of a] majority close to [the] proportions of [the] previous years. [I] agree however [that the] situation at [the] next G[eneral] A[ssembly] will be more difficult and will require continuous attention."¹⁶⁰

The changing power balance in the United Nations thus gave the emancipated African nations added value in the eyes of U.S. policymakers. If the UN was to remain a useful

¹⁵⁷ Memorandum From the Acting Secretary of State to the President, July 28, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, pp. 145-146. These fears turned out to be well founded. Ethiopia, a country that had previously supported the U.S. position concerning Chinese representation in the UN, abstained during the 1959 vote.

¹⁵⁸ Quemoy and Matsu were Nationalist Chinese-controlled islands located off the coast of mainland China. When Beijing threatened to invade the islands, Eisenhower warned that he would intervene by sending the Seventh Fleet and even implying that he would sanction the use nuclear weapons. See Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, pp. 55-70.

¹⁵⁹ Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in France, March 17, 1960, in *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

¹⁶⁰ Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission at the United Nations, April 22, 1960, in *Ibid.*, p. 238. When the People's Republic of China was finally admitted to the United Nations in December 1971, the world body boasted 132 member-states, seventy percent of which were Third World countries. See Hugh Tinker, *Race, Conflict and the International Order*, p. 61.

instrument of American policy, the new countries of Africa had to be kept within the Western orbit; the alternate scenario could, in the long run, mean devastating consequences. In a 1959 letter to Christian Herter, Lodge reflected that “[s]carcely a day goes by without my contacts at [the] UN vividly impressing me with [the] rapidly evolving situation in Africa. . . . Under these circumstances it behooves the US to think of its own interests in the African continent. . . . We should try to . . . be in a position so that we will be regarded as the friends of those who are coming to power in the future.” Lodge further argued that the days of “quiet” pressure on colonial powers had to end and that the U.S. was at a juncture where it should offer visible gestures of support toward African nationalism.¹⁶¹ Later in 1959, Lodge detailed the new reality of the UN in a Cabinet paper submitted to Eisenhower:

At the [UNGA] you see the world as a place in which a large majority of the human race is non-white, and inclines to feel itself emotionally involved on the Soviet side of the US-Soviet conflict, perhaps in part because we appear to be lined up with the colonial powers on so many issues in the UN and are allied with them militarily. The non-white membership is growing every year, as more Africans gain their independence.¹⁶²

By 1959, Lodge’s calls for a U.S. policy more favourable to Third World aspirations had encountered a receptive audience, both in the White House and in the State Department. But in attempting to use the UN as a springboard for cultivating ties with the nations of Africa, U.S. officials found themselves before a difficult paradox. On one hand, the U.S. was rapidly losing power and influence in the UN and, despite the fact that Washington still held a commanding position from the Security Council, it could not freely yield its veto power without risking a negative backlash from an increasingly assertive Afro-Asian bloc in the UNGA. On the other hand, the importance of the UN to the newly emerging nations made it imperative that American policymakers take heed and respect the sanctity of the international organisation. The U.S. would have to play by the rules in the UN if it hoped to court African sympathy. As Secretary Herter explained to his cohorts:

The small and newly-independent states place a premium on membership in the United Nations. Many of them regard it as their shield and defender, their hope for the future. It is, therefore, obvious that any apparent denigration of the United Nations by the United States would lessen their

¹⁶¹ Telegram From the Mission at the United Nations to the Department of State, March 17, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 43.

¹⁶² Cabinet Paper H.C. Lodge, November 6, 1959, Box 14, Cabinet Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

confidence in the United States as an honest champion of democracy and of the integrity of the smaller and newer states. . . . In a world where the powerful ferment of the new nationalism of Africa and Asia grows almost daily and may well, in the long run, provide the fulcrum of power to either “East” and “West”, this consideration is not to be taken lightly.¹⁶³

Herter opened the way for the Administration’s new “African strategy” in the UN on the occasion of his opening address to the Fourteenth Session of the UNGA, in which he considerably softened the State Department’s official rhetoric toward self-determination. In his speech before the tension-filled assembly – Khrushchev was in attendance, which gave the event a distinct Cold War flavour – Herter affirmed that “all peoples should have independence who desire it and [are] able to undertake its responsibilities.”¹⁶⁴ Actually, the stale rhetoric of “premature independence” was in the process of being gradually abandoned since 1958 and was being substituted by State Department statements which instead favoured “an orderly development of African nationalism.”¹⁶⁵ A certain degree of restraint, however, was still discernible in Joseph Satterthwaite’s first address as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, in which he warned that independence “should be determined by the capacity of the African populations concerned to assume and discharge the responsibilities of self-government.”¹⁶⁶

Undoubtedly, domestic pressures also accounted for the Administration’s shift in strategy. In most U.S. political circles, the middle ground was pointing to a more sympathetic attitude toward African nationalism. *New York Times* columnist C.L. Sulzberger warned that “[i]t is indeed high time for all the allies – not just the big three [the U.S., France and Britain] – to pay serious heed to Africa,”¹⁶⁷ while leading congressional Democrats became increasingly critical of Washington’s tacit approval of Western colonialism in Africa. Presidential hopeful Hubert Humphrey widely condemned the White House’s support of the French and Portuguese in Africa, while G. Mennen Williams, who would later serve as

¹⁶³ Circular Airgram From the Department of State to All Diplomatic and Consular Posts, August 25, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, p. 174.

¹⁶⁴ *New York Times*, September 18, 1959, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ Joseph Palmer 2nd, “Nationalism in Africa,” *State Department Bulletin*, May 19, 1958, pp. 824, 825.

¹⁶⁶ Joseph C. Satterthwaite, “The United States and Africa: Challenge and Opportunity,” *State Department Bulletin*, October 27, 1958, p. 641.

¹⁶⁷ *New York Times*, December 22, 1958, p. 2.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Kennedy Administration, declared that “you don’t have to be an African expert, which I am not, to see that things are getting ready to pop in Africa and that the [U.S.] has [no] workable comprehensive all-African policy”¹⁶⁸

Internal political pressures also contributed in an important way to influence U.S. policy concerning what was certainly the most conspicuous African problem that befell the United Nations in the late fifties, the South African question. The Republic of South Africa, whose apartheid policies were widely condemned throughout the world, had been a steadfast Cold War ally of the United States. Furthermore, U.S. investment in South Africa was important, rising by nearly \$140 million between 1953 and 1960.¹⁶⁹ The *New York Times* plainly portrayed the U.S. dilemma over South Africa in a 1959 editorial:

There is every reason for the United States and the Western Alliance to keep the friendship of South Africa. It is a member of the British Commonwealth, it is staunchly anti-Communist, it is the seat of hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign investments. . . . At the same time, there is every reason to hold up apartheid for what it is: contrary to the spirit both of the Charter of the U.N. and, certainly, of the United States.¹⁷⁰

From 1953 to 1957, the Eisenhower Administration had abstained from openly criticising Pretoria’s discriminatory racial policies, tacitly accepting the regime’s contention that apartheid was a domestic matter, and had opposed or abstained from all resolutions critical of South Africa. In the late 1950s, however, attacking apartheid had become a rallying issue for U.S. liberals and increasing political pressure from within the United States induced the Administration to revise its policy.¹⁷¹ In 1958, following the introduction of more severe segregation laws by Pretoria, the U.S. abandoned its policy of abstention and joined 69 other nations in voting for a weakened resolution which expressed “regret and concern” at the South African government’s apartheid policies.¹⁷² But this important precedent cannot be attributed

¹⁶⁸ *Congressional Record*, January 27, 1958, p. 1121; *Congressional Record*, August 16, 1958, p. A7409.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Borstelmann, “South Africa,” in Bruce W. Jentleson and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations*, vol. 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 97; Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985), pp. 34-60; “Truman, Eisenhower, and South Africa: The ‘Middle of the Road’ and Apartheid,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1983), pp. 86-99; Paul Rich, “United States Containment Policy, South Africa and the Apartheid Dilemma,” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3 (1988), pp. 179-181.

¹⁷⁰ *New York Times*, November 9, 1959, p. 30.

¹⁷¹ Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, p. 41.

¹⁷² Circular Instruction From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, August 7, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, p. 160.

to domestic pressure alone. Indeed, the decision to abandon such a stalwart ally can also be explained by the Administration's concern for gathering support from the Afro-Asian nations in the UN. U.S. officials, moreover, wanted at all costs to avoid an embarrassing parallel being drawn between South African apartheid and segregation in the American South. Historian Thomas Noer sees in the U.S. shift in its South African policy the first evidence of the Eisenhower Administration's "new approach" to African issues in the UN.¹⁷³

By 1960, the Eisenhower Administration had begun the slow process of reassessing its outlook toward African nationalism. This new policy, however, evolved in a haphazard fashion and did not always show solid results. To be sure, Washington hardly became an unabashed supporter of African aspirations after 1958; a cursory look at the U.S. voting record in the UN after that date clearly shows that Washington persisted in pursuing a policy that could still be described as "pro-colonialist."¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, by the end of 1959, the first concrete steps had been taken in order to adapt Washington's position to the new international realities. The Administration's African policy would be sorely tried during 1960, "the Year of Africa," which witnessed a rapid upsurge in the African decolonisation process and the bitter and divisive crisis in the Congo.

¹⁷³ Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, p. 52.

¹⁷⁴ Camille A. Bratton, "A Matter of Record: The History of the U.S. Voting Pattern in the United Nations Regarding Racism, Colonialism and Apartheid, 1946-1976," *Freedomways*, vol. 17, no. 3 (1977), pp. 155-163.

CHAPTER THREE

The Eisenhower Administration and the Year of Africa

Whether the contest between communism and democracy continues as 'cold war' or as competitive coexistence, its principal battlefield is likely to be African.¹

“The cartographers have been having a time with Africa,” remarked the *New York Times* in early 1960, “and their job will become no easier during 1960.”² To most observers, it had become manifestly clear that Africa’s colonial days were numbered. On February 3, 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan delivered his “Winds of Change” speech in Cape Town, South Africa, paving the way for the withdrawal of European colonial rule from the African continent.³ Even the usually cautious U.S. Department of State was openly acknowledging that “[i]n most countries there is no longer any question as to whether independence will come; the only question is how soon.”⁴ By the end of the year, the United Nations had welcomed sixteen new African states within its ranks; it would have been seventeen if the USSR had not vetoed the entry of Mauritania. UN membership rose from eighty-two to ninety-nine (Cyprus was also admitted in 1960). If one was to include South Africa and the North African countries, total African membership amounted to twenty-six member-states, over one fourth of the total in the UNGA.⁵

In addition to these momentous events on the international scene, 1960 also witnessed a sharp recrudescence in world tensions. In May 1960, the Paris Conference collapsed as a result of the U-2 affair; in June, anti-American riots forced Eisenhower to cancel an official visit to Japan, the “most humiliating setback of his entire presidency” according to historian

¹ C.L. Sulzberger, in the *New York Times*, January 6, 1960, p. 34.

² *New York Times*, editorial, January 4, 1960, p. 28.

³ Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1988), p. 217.

⁴ Francis O. Wilcox, “The New Africa and the United Nations,” *State Department Bulletin*, April 18, 1960, p. 589.

Robert Divine⁶; in July, the USSR shot down a U.S. reconnaissance plane near the Soviet border (the RB-47 affair), and in U.S.-Cuban relations, the situation reached a fateful denouement with the slashing of the sugar quota. It was in the midst of this surcharged Cold War atmosphere that the Congo crisis erupted in July, putting Cold War imperatives to the forefront of the U.S. response to African decolonisation.⁷

This chapter will argue that the Eisenhower Administration reacted to the stupendous changes in Africa by adopting a more sympathetic policy toward African nationalism. This policy course, which first emerged around 1958, was pursued with renewed vigour in 1960 following the large number of African nations admitted to statehood and, more importantly, the eruption of the Congo crisis. The American initiative, however, was met with mixed results, as the newly emancipated nations quickly grew wary of Washington's Cold War priorities. Part one of this chapter will examine the Eisenhower Administration's UN policy following the March 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa. Part two will briefly outline the impact of the Congo quagmire on U.S.-African policy, while the last section will explore the subsequent Fifteenth Session of the UNGA. Emphasis will be placed on how the Sharpeville Massacre and the Congo crisis affected American attitudes with regard to African decolonisation.

3.1: Like Pulling Teeth: The U.S. Response to the Sharpeville Massacre

A series of important policy papers devoted to Africa was produced by the Eisenhower Administration in 1960. NSC 6001, released in January, outlined policy guidance for the East, Central and Southern African regions.⁸ An independent paper, NSC 6005/01, was devoted to West Africa, the region which was experiencing the most rapid political developments.⁹ Yet, as the year advanced and the independence movement gained ground, U.S. policymakers were

⁵ Richard P. Stebbins, *The United States in World Affairs 1960* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 193.

⁶ Robert Divine, *Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Recent American History* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 102.

⁷ Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 27.

⁸ National Security Council Report (NSC 6001), January 19, 1960, in *FRUS*, vol. XIV: *Africa* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1992), pp. 79-93.

⁹ National Security Council Report (NSC 6005/1), April 9, 1960, in *Ibid.*, pp. 117-126.

realising that rapid African emancipation “pose[d] serious problems for American foreign policy”: political instability, lack of trained personnel for public administration, and the danger of conflict between some of the emerging states, notably Ethiopia and Somalia; all created conditions for Sino-Soviet advances or, at least, losses for the Western nations.¹⁰ Furthermore, the swiftness of political developments in Africa was proving to be an intricate problem for the State Department bureaucracy. Only a few months into 1960, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Joseph Satterthwaite admitted to his superior that “events in Africa have moved so rapidly as to have overtaken our ability to cope with them.”¹¹

Despite these difficulties, U.S. officials remained mindful of political developments in Africa. In the wake of a Cuban Revolution that had turned sour for the West, U.S. policymakers were left wondering if the whole developing world was about the blow up under their noses. The rapidly shifting balance in the UN coupled with the growing assertiveness of the Third World nations had already convinced Washington that Asia and Africa had to be placated. The situation was not helped by the persistence of the colonial question. In February, French nuclear tests in the Sahara desert outraged most Afro-Asian nations and placed the United States once more in the unenviable position of defending its NATO ally.¹²

It is within this context that 1960 must be considered as a watershed in U.S. relations with Africa. Although most historians have singled out the Congo crisis as the defining event that came to draw the attention of U.S. officials on the African continent, the evidence suggests that even before the threat of a Soviet-American confrontation over the Congo, the Eisenhower Administration had begun reassessing its attitude toward Africa.¹³ The Third World was not to be lost to the West. And, most importantly, certainly not on the Eisenhower’s watch.

¹⁰ Memorandum for the National Security Council, August 10, 1960, in Africa – General (2), Box 44, Disaster File, NSC Staff Papers, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library.

¹¹ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (Satterthwaite) to the Under Secretary of State (Dillon), March 30, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 99, 101.

¹² *New York Times*, editorial, February 14, 1960, IV, p. 8.

¹³ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 273.

The “soft sell” approach to sway the African nations, the roots of which have been outlined in the preceding chapter, reached new prominence in U.S. policy during early 1960. Indeed, to gain the favour of the Afro-Asian nations, Washington demonstrated its readiness to sacrifice its good relations with a stalwart Cold War ally. When, on March 21, 1960, South African police killed, apparently without provocation, sixty-nine unarmed antiapartheid protesters, the United States recalled its ambassador and joined a unanimous vote in the UN Security Council that “deplored the policies and actions of the South African government.”¹⁴

The “Sharpeville Massacre,” as the incident quickly became labelled, was a decisive event in U.S.-South Africa relations. Contrary to earlier U.S. position, followed since 1958, which was to abstain from voting on UN resolutions condemning Pretoria’s apartheid regime, the U.S. publicly condemned a Western ally. The Administration’s decision to renounce its policy of “non-interference in the domestic affairs of South Africa” was surely influenced by the outpouring of public outrage in the U.S. The Sharpeville Massacre received massive coverage in the American media and the South African government was widely criticised by the press and Congress.¹⁵ Yet domestic pressure does not offer a satisfactory explanation for this abrupt change of policy. In fact, a careful examination of the Eisenhower Administration’s reaction to the Sharpeville Massacre shows that this course was chosen to deflect potential criticism from the Afro-Asian states and the USSR. Reluctant to abandon a traditional approach, Eisenhower took the decision to condemn South Africa unenthusiastically, almost by accident. To abandon such a loyal Cold War ally in order to curry the favour of the newly emancipated countries seemed to be as painful as pulling teeth.

On March 22, the day after the Sharpeville incident, a statement critical of South Africa was issued by Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Andrew Berding (see ANNEX IV for a full version of the statement). Interestingly, the pronouncement had not been cleared by the top echelons at Foggy Bottom prior to its release; Berding, having no time to

¹⁴ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 198-199.

¹⁵ Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985), pp. 54-55. Also see *Congressional Record*, March 22, 1960, pp. 6214-6215; March 24, 1960, pp. 6443-6445; April 6, 1960, pp. 7480-7481. Among the members of Congress

consult his superiors, had wanted to act quickly. The public declaration, which immediately drew a protest from Pretoria, reportedly left Eisenhower uneasy.¹⁶ Secretary of State Herter, who personally disowned the statement, proceeded to reprimand Berding, to whom he wrote: “The issuance of a statement of this nature outspokenly critical of a Government with which we maintain friendly relations, and on a subject which not only has world-wide interest, but also involves domestic political factors – is, it seems to me, a decision to be taken only at the highest levels of the Department of State.”¹⁷

As Herter’s reprimand indicates, the apartheid question was an especially touchy one because of the United States’ very own spotty record with regard to race relations. Indeed, domestic racial problems had been, since the end of the Second World War, “America’s Achilles Heel” in its contest with the Soviet Union to gain the allegiance of the Third World.¹⁸ Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal had warned back in 1944 that “America, for its international prestige, power, and future security, needs to demonstrate to the world that American Negroes can be satisfactorily integrated into its democracy. In a sense, the [Second World] War marks the end of American isolation.”¹⁹ As Africa was rapidly gaining political

who were most conspicuous in their criticism of Pretoria were Representative Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (D-NY) and Senator Jacob Javits (R-NY).

¹⁶ Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 299-300.

¹⁷ Memorandum for P - Mr. Berding, March 24, 1960, Box 8, Chronological Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library; also see, in same box, Christian Herter to Andrew Goodpaster, March 24, 1960.

¹⁸ Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 126-128. An impressive amount of literature has been published in recent years on the topic of civil rights and U.S. foreign policy during the Eisenhower years. See Cary Fraser, “Crossing the Color Line in Little Rock: The Eisenhower Administration and the Dilemma of Race for U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 24, no. 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 233-264; Azza Salama Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and, from the same author, “International Pressure and the U.S. Government’s Response to Little Rock,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1997), pp. 257-272; Michael Krenn, *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Garland, 1998); Mary L. Dudziak, “The Little Rock Crisis and Foreign Affairs: Race, Resistance, and the Image of American Democracy,” *Southern California Law Review*, vol. 70, no. 6 (September 1997), pp. 1641-1716; Gerald Horne, “Race from Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and the General Crisis of ‘White Supremacy,’” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 23, no. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 437-461; Brenda Gayle Plummer, “‘Below the Level of Men’: African Americans, Race, and the History of U.S. Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Fall 1996), pp. 639-650; Penny M. Von Eschen, “Challenging Cold War Habits: African Americans, Race, and Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Fall 1996), pp. 627-638.

¹⁹ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. Twentieth Anniversary Edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1962 (1944)), p. 1016. Also see Adolf Berle, Jr., “Racial Discrimination and America’s Position in the World,” in Arnold M. Rose, ed., *Race Prejudice and Discrimination: Readings in Intergroup Relations in the United States* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 9-17.

influence and world prominence, U.S. policymakers realised that the segregation issue was becoming a serious embarrassment on the diplomatic front.

The Little Rock crisis of September 1957 propelled U.S. segregation to the forefront of the world headlines. As Administration official Emmet John Hughes eloquently recounted, “[t]he tale carried faster than drum signals across black Africa. It summoned cold gleams of recognition to the eyes of Asians, quick to see the signs, in the heartland of America, of the racial enmities that had helped to make colonialism, through the generations, so odious to them.”²⁰ American diplomats around the world reported that U.S. segregation had hurt Washington’s world standing while accounts from the field confirmed that America’s prestige in Europe in the Third World had suffered an important setback.²¹ The U.S. quickly found itself labelled “a hypocrite in international affairs” for demanding free democratic elections in Eastern Europe while at the same time tolerating laws and practices that denied thousand of black Americans their basic human rights at home.²² Furthermore, U.S. racial problems were adroitly exploited by Soviet propaganda in Asia and Africa. In a letter to Christian Herter, C.D. Jackson complained that “[o]ur color prejudice in [the] USA is the Red’s best weapon – better than their economic and empire stuff.”²³ Secretary of State Dulles agreed with Jackson’s analysis, once fretting that America’s racist image “was ruining our foreign policy.”²⁴

The problem grew more acute with the admission of the new African states to the UN, bringing scores of black diplomats to New York and Washington. African dignitaries, to the great discomfort of the Eisenhower Administration, were often victims of racial discrimination in housing and public facilities. These incidents received widespread attention in the press and

²⁰ Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years* (New York: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), p. 245; Harold Isaacs, “World Affairs and U.S. Race Relations: A Note on Little Rock,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1958), pp. 364-370.

²¹ Staff Notes No. 193, September 13, 1957, Box 27, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library; in same box, Letter From the President to William Thomas Mason, October 31, 1957; Program and Media Studies Report No. 23: Post-Little Rock Opinion on the Treatment of Negroes in the U.S., January [?] 1958, Box 99, Confidential File, White House Central Files, Eisenhower Library.

²² Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, p. 188.

²³ Letter From C.D. Jackson to Christian Herter, August 8, 1958, Box 59, C.D. Jackson Papers, Eisenhower Library.

²⁴ Telephone Call to Attorney General Brownell, September 24, 1957, Box 7, Telephone Calls Series, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

left U.S. officials scrambling to repair incipient diplomatic ties.²⁵ As some scholars have aptly demonstrated, the arrival of these new diplomats accelerated the process of desegregation in the United States, particularly in the New York and Washington areas.²⁶

Thus, because of the United States' own racial problems, the Administration felt that criticising South African apartheid policy could create a potentially embarrassing situation and, even worse still, eventually lead to UN intervention in America's own domestic racial policies; of course, South African officials persistently reminded Washington of this inherent danger.²⁷ Yet, despite their initial misgivings about admonishing Pretoria, Eisenhower and Herter received encouraging reports from Henry Cabot Lodge at the UN. By bypassing the leaden, slow-paced channels of the State Department bureaucracy, Berding's declaration had been released surprisingly fast, well before the British or Soviet announcements. This was in contrast to the customary U.S. practice of waiting for London and Moscow's reaction before issuing a cautious statement. An enthusiastic Lodge reported that the Afro-Asians "are very, very grateful for our statement and how quickly it came . . . [Y]ou get so many gripes and complaints," added the UN Representative, "[that] you should be pleased by the tremendous credit and good which has come out of this in all these countries."²⁸

The situation was not easier for the Administration when, the following week, the U.S. had to position itself with regard to the resolution condemning South Africa for the Sharpeville Massacre, which had been jointly introduced by the Ecuadoran and Ceylonese

²⁵ Memorandum for the President, November 11, 1960, Central African Republic, Box 6, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library; *New York Times*, September 27, 1960, p. 19; October 10, 1960, p. 10; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), pp. 585-586. Also see Annick Cizel, "The Eisenhower Administration and Africa: Racial Integration and the United States Foreign Service," *Annales du monde anglophone*, vol. 1, no. 1 (April 1995), pp. 21-38; Calvin B. Holder, "Racism Toward Black African Diplomats during the Kennedy Administration," *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (September 1983), pp. 31-48; Timothy P. Maga, "Battling the 'Ugly American' at Home: The Special Protocol Service and the New Frontier, 1961-63," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1992), pp. 126-142.

²⁶ Éric Marquis, *Foreign Policy Considerations and the Eisenhower Administration's Civil Rights Policies: The Case of Africa* (M.A. thesis, Concordia University, 1992), pp. 121-158; Michael S. Mayer, "The Eisenhower Administration and the Desegregation of Washington, D.C.," *Journal of Policy History*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1991), pp. 24-41; Mary L. Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 41, no. 1 (November 1988), pp. 61-120.

²⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, October 25, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 758-759.

²⁸ Henry Cabot Lodge to Christian Herter (as dictated by "marian"), March 24, 1960, Box 8, Chronological Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library.

delegations. Eisenhower was worried about the outcome and urged the UN delegation to keep the resolution “mild.” The President further argued that “if we get too tough there could be a resolution that would make us look awfully red faced.”²⁹ This again referred to the embarrassing parallel that could be drawn between the South African apartheid problem and U.S. racial segregation. Upon consultation with the British, Eisenhower was told that they too were unsure of how to react. Macmillan reported to his American counterpart that his Cabinet was equally divided over the issue of supporting Pretoria or losing the favour of new African states.³⁰

After consulting the proposed draft of the Ceylonese-Ecuadoran resolution, Eisenhower commented to his advisers that “while it might be considered mild by some he still thought it was mighty tough” and proposed some suggestions to tone it down³¹ (see ANNEX V for the first draft of the resolution as submitted to Eisenhower). Still, despite the President’s apprehensions, the State Department believed that it had little choice but to vote with the Afro-Asian nations. To vote against or to abstain would only confirm the Soviet accusations of colonialism and expose Washington to a severe backlash from the Third World countries. Moreover, as Herter remarked to Eisenhower’s Staff Secretary, General Andrew Goodpaster, the present resolution was the mildest that could be hoped for; if they did not proceed with haste, Tunisian delegate Mongi Slim could be expected to introduce “a much stiffer one.” This argument finally convinced Eisenhower to support the Ceylonese-Ecuadoran motion.³² There is little doubt, however, that this decision was taken diffidently, for when Herter called Macmillan to explain the U.S. choice to support the resolution, he justified it on the grounds that “there was no chance of getting out of it.”³³

²⁹ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the President and Secretary Herter, March 30, 1960, Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library; Telephone Calls, March 30, 1960, Box 48, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

³⁰ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Secretary Herter and James Hagerty, March 30, 1960, Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library; Memorandum of Conversation, March 28, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 745.

³¹ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Andrew Goodpaster and Max Krebs, March 31, 1960, Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library.

³² Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Andrew Goodpaster and Christian Herter, March 31, 1960, Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library; also, in same box, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the President and Henry Cabot Lodge, March 31, 1960.

³³ Telegram From the Secretary of State to the British Ambassador, April 1, 1960, Africa (General) (2), Box 1, International Series, Office of the Staff Secretary Records, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library.

The next day, on April 1, the motion was voted on in the UN and was approved by an impressive margin. The United States supported the resolution while the British abstained. On the same evening, Lodge, in a message to Herter, delineated the favourable reaction the U.S. position drew from the African delegates:

It gave us [a] chance to get away from our trials and tribulations concerning Algeria and [the] Sahara bomb tests and show our true colors without regard to British and French colonial policies and considerations which in those other issues plague us. . . . Those people do not doubt our wealth, our military strength, or our efficiency. But our conduct in this South African matter makes them think that our heart is in the right place and that we have generous impulses.³⁴

By voting, albeit reluctantly, against a faithful Cold War ally in the UN, the Eisenhower Administration demonstrated that it was giving new importance to its ties with the Third World in general, and the emerging nations of Africa in particular. The fact that the U.S. was willing to go out on a limb on such a hazardous subject as South Africa – with its possible implications for America’s own domestic racial problems – is a witness to the Administration’s recognition of the potency and potential of African nationalism. Of course, the Eisenhower Administration’s condemnation of South African apartheid came belatedly, a factor that can be partly explained by domestic political considerations.³⁵ Nevertheless, Sharpeville constituted a defining policy shift for the Eisenhower Administration’s African policy.

Although the seeds were being planted for the betterment of US-Africa relations, a rich diplomatic harvest was not forthcoming. The principles of African nationalism and non-alignment eluded U.S. officials, who were still shackled by domestic pressures and Cold War concerns, as well as their own paternalistic racial beliefs. During a June 30 NSC meeting, a crestfallen Eisenhower, pondering America’s poor standing in Asia and Africa despite his administration’s best efforts, wondered “whether we were stupidly pushing ahead, carrying out programs without taking into account the effects these programs might be having. Perhaps

³⁴ Telegram From Henry Cabot Lodge to the Secretary of State, April 1, 1960, in *Ibid.*

³⁵ For instance, following the Sharpeville crisis, some Southern Senators publicly demanded that the State Department be censured for interfering in the affairs of another nation. See *Congressional Record*, March 22, 1960, pp. 6263-6264. On a more distressing note, the Mississippi legislature officially congratulated the South African government on its handling of the Sharpeville Massacre. See Edward Chester, *Clash of Titans: Africa and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 233.

the difficulty was this however; perhaps we could only stand by and watch a wave of revolution sweeping around the world.”³⁶ Unfortunately for Eisenhower, the United States’ African woes were just about to begin. The Congo crisis was to erupt five days later.

3.2: A Pyrrhic Victory? The Impact of the Congo Crisis on U.S.-African Policy

On June 30, 1960, Belgium, unable to stem the powerful tide of nationalism that was sweeping the native population, granted independence to its Central African colony of the Congo after several months of violent rioting and political unrest. From the outset, U.S. officials considered these developments ill-fated and politically undesirable. The Eisenhower Administration, like most conservative Americans, doubted that the Congo was ready for self-rule and viewed Belgian colonial rule as a progressive, and indispensable, presence in Central Africa. These feelings were frankly expressed by Director of the Bureau of the Budget Maurice Stans, who argued in 1959 that “the best thing for the area would be a plan which did not grant independence [to the Congo] for twenty-five years.”³⁷

At a May 5 NSC meeting, CIA Director Allen Dulles starkly outlined his predictions regarding Congolese independence, which had been announced hastily by Brussels a few weeks before and was being planned for June 30, 1960. He warned of an unstable political climate in which, his advisers reported, over eighty political parties struggled for influence; upon hearing this, Eisenhower commented that “he did not know that many people in the Congo could read.”³⁸ Dulles described Patrice Lumumba, the mercurial nationalist figure, as the most probable leader to emerge out of the fray. Although Lumumba was not yet, at that

³⁶ Memorandum of Discussion at the 449th Meeting of the National Security Council, June 30, 1960, Box 12, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

³⁷ Memorandum of Discussion at the 423rd Meeting of the National Security Council, November 5, 1959, Box 11, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

³⁸ Memorandum of Discussion at the 443rd Meeting of the National Security Council, May 5, 1960, Box 12, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library. Although Eisenhower’s remark may seem insensitive, the lack of educated administrators in the Congo was a cause for widespread concern among Western observers. Belgian colonial administration had emphasised primary education for the natives; by 1959, roughly seventy percent of the Congolese population had received some form of primary education, one of the highest levels in Africa. But Belgium had neglected the realm of higher education. When the Congo attained statehood, it was reported that its population counted only sixteen university graduates. See Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa from Eisenhower to Kennedy* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), p. xxi; David N. Gibbs, *The Political*

early date, perceived as a menace, the CIA Director expressed concern over reports of alleged corruption and the young leader's ties with the Belgian Communists.³⁹

Even the most optimistic observers warned of the "tremendous difficulties" facing the new state.⁴⁰ Hence, it was no great surprise when, only five days after independence, the 25,000-man Congolese Army (called the Force Publique) mutinied against its Belgian commanders. The mutiny, and subsequent episodes of violence against the white population, triggered a massive exodus of Europeans from the former colony. Within days, Belgian troops had unilaterally intervened under the pretext of protecting European lives. On July 11, the province of Katanga seceded from the Congo with the tacit support of the Belgians, and on July 14, the Congolese government broke relations with Brussels and threatened to request unilateral Soviet intervention to expell the Belgian troops. The next day, a UN force arrived in Leopoldville in an attempt to defuse the crisis. The Congo quandary had erupted and would, within months, command a high level of international attention.⁴¹

It is not the purpose of this study to delve into the details of the Congo crisis; the question has already been addressed elsewhere by excellent scholarship. Most authors have stressed – rightly – that the Eisenhower Administration adopted a resolutely pro-Belgian stand in its policy toward the Congo.⁴² Instead, we will try to measure the impact of the crisis on Washington's African policy as a whole; how did the Congo crisis, which eventually led to the first Soviet-American confrontation in sub-Saharan Africa, affect the Eisenhower Administration's perception of African decolonisation?

An obvious consequence resulting from the tumultuous situation in the Congo was that Africa, for the first time, commanded the attention of the highest level of American

Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 55.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, editorial, June 30, 1960, p. 28.

⁴¹ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa*, pp. 53-54.

⁴² David Gibbs has described Eisenhower's policy in the Congo crisis as "staunchly procolonialist," while Stephen Weissman has commented that as "responsible conservatives, [the Eisenhower Administration's] view of the world implied sympathy for the Belgian position." See David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 103; Stephen R. Weissman, *American Policy in the Congo*, p. 46.

leadership.⁴³ Peter Schraeder has demonstrated that during routine and low-key diplomatic activity, the policy-making process tends to be handled by the bureaucracies while critical junctures attract the attention of the White House.⁴⁴ The Congo crisis, which threatened Soviet intervention on the African continent, was no exception to this theory. Administration officials very quickly concluded that the troubled situation warranted U.S. attention. The fact that the Congo was one of the world's leading suppliers of cobalt, a mineral of vital strategic importance, undoubtedly contributed to raising the administration's concern.⁴⁵ "It seems reasonably clear," wrote Satterthwaite to Herter the day Lumumba threatened to call in the Soviets, "that the Congolese are not prepared in any way, shape or form for self-government and outside assistance on a relatively massive scale will be required."⁴⁶ Within a few weeks, the Administration had submitted a request to Congress for a \$100 million emergency fund destined for the Congo.

On the diplomatic level, Washington believed that Lumumba, despite his frequent outbursts against the colonial powers, could still be induced to adopt a more pro-Western position. The young nationalist leader was invited to the United States for an official state visit, arriving in Washington on July 24. Lumumba, who had threatened to appeal to Soviets for armed intervention just a few days before, was now expressing his "sympathy and friendship" for the American government.⁴⁷ This unusually daring use of the pendulum tactic did nothing to improve his standing within the Eisenhower Administration. The President, pleading health problems, remained at the "Summer White House" in Newport and was not in the capital to welcome the Congolese Prime Minister, instead sending Secretary of State Herter. But, diplomatic rhetoric aside, the Chief Executive's absence was not without meaning. In his memoirs, Eisenhower leaves no question as to his feelings toward Lumumba,

⁴³ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, p. 279.

⁴⁴ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa*, pp. 12-36.

⁴⁵ Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis: mécanismes et conduite* (Paris: Economica, 1984), p. 182.

⁴⁶ Letter From Joseph Satterthwaite to the Secretary of State, July 14, 1960, Box 1, Briefing Notes Subseries, NSC Series, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs Records, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁷ Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, pp. 33-34.

who he considered “a Soviet tool” and “a Communist sympathizer if not a member of the Party.”⁴⁸

The snub, followed by a series of unfruitful talks with the State Department, left Lumumba bitterly disappointed. He departed from the United States with little hope of American support in the Congo crisis. As historian Richard Mahoney has argued, the failed meeting with Lumumba was a missed opportunity for the Eisenhower Administration; the fact that he had travelled to Washington instead of Moscow significantly demonstrated that Lumumba was still hoping to reconcile his differences with the West.⁴⁹

At the end of July, Administration officials felt that there was little hope of finding a solution under the auspices of Lumumba. Undersecretary of State Dillon later reminisced about the Lumumba visit: “The impression that was left was . . . very bad, that this was an individual whom it was impossible to deal with. And the feelings of the Government as a result of this sharpened very considerably at that time.”⁵⁰ By end of August, Soviet technicians had arrived in the Congo at Lumumba’s request, and more were on their way, raising considerable distress in Washington.⁵¹ The alarmist reports sent by Ambassador Clare Timberlake further raised U.S. fears: “If Lumumba and his wired-in Communist advisers are not stopped by a policy of strength we think this country is headed toward another China by way of technicians instead of bayonets.”⁵² U.S. attitudes regarding the Congolese government were certainly not helped by the incident of August 27, in which nine unarmed U.S. airmen, in Stanleyville to deliver UN supplies, were badly beaten by soldiers of the Congolese National Army.⁵³

⁴⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, pp. 574-575; David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, pp. 92-94.

⁴⁹ Richard D. Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 36-44.

⁵⁰ Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, p. 37. Furthermore, a virulent anti-Lumumba sentiment had emerged in Congress as well as in the conservative American press. See Bernard Lemelin, “De l’indifférence à l’effroi: le Congrès américain et Patrice Lumumba (1959-1961),” in Pierre Halen and János Riesz, eds., *Patrice Lumumba entre dieu et diable: un héros africain dans ses images* (Paris and Montreal: L’Harmattan, 1997), p. 225-232.

⁵¹ Memorandum of Discussion at the 457th Meeting of the National Security Council, August 29, 1960, Box 13, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

⁵² Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, p. 61. The telegram is dated August 24, 1960.

⁵³ The incident drew an official protest from the U.S. Government. *State Department Bulletin*, September 19, 1960, p. 440.

By end of the summer, the Eisenhower Administration was convinced that the only way to solve the crisis was “to find some way to bring the Belgians back in,”⁵⁴ although this was never acknowledged publicly; indeed, the U.S. upheld its policy of unfaltering support for the UN operation. Moreover, it was agreed Lumumba had become an embarrassing liability; scholars are still debating the extent of the CIA’s role in Lumumba’s downfall. There is no question, however, that the CIA sponsored the military *coup d’État* of September 14, in which Colonel Joseph Mobutu assumed control of the Congolese government.⁵⁵ To Administration officials, the U.S. had seemingly averted a Soviet takeover of the Congo. As they would soon discover, this success came at the rather steep price of wounding America’s standing among the African states.

Western observers had been warning throughout the 1950s that Africa was a “potential target” for communist designs. With the eruption of the Congo crisis, the Cold War had unquestionably reached the African continent. To the *New York Times*’ C.L. Sulzberger, the events in the Congo had left little doubt that the Kremlin’s true goal was the “ultimate control of Africa.”⁵⁶ Yet, in spite of the Cold War atmosphere that pervaded the American perception of the Congo crisis, the hysteria was not enough to shore up unconditional support for the Administration’s African programs, particularly within the ranks of Southern conservatives. “For American conservatives,” writes scholar Martin Staniland, “the course of postindependence politics was to be a mournful vindication of their warnings about premature decolonization.”⁵⁷

The backlash was most evident in Congress, where Southerners rallied to attack the \$100 million emergency fund for the Congo proposed in August. Senator Herman E. Talmadge (D-GA), for example, complained that U.S. taxpayers were “tired of subsidizing

⁵⁴ Memorandum of Discussion at the 457th Meeting of the National Security Council, August 18, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 152. Undersecretary of State Douglas Dillon is quoted.

⁵⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa*, pp. 56-59. For a good investigative account of the CIA’s role in the downfall and assassination of Patrice Lumumba, see Madeleine Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, pp. 128-196.

⁵⁶ *New York Times*, October 12, 1960, p. 38.

⁵⁷ Martin Staniland, *American Intellectuals and African Nationalists, 1955-1970* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 247, 224.

governments which are incapable to [sic] govern themselves.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, the Congo crisis did nothing to alleviate racist attitudes toward Africa – if anything, racism was heightened by reports of Congolese assaults on settler women, missionaries and nuns.⁵⁹ Conservative Congressmen openly questioned U.S. aid to “illiterate” “cannibals,” “who do not understand right from wrong.”⁶⁰ These views were echoed by conservative columnist David Lawrence, who sharply entitled one of his columns: “Why Should the United States Subsidize Congo Savagery?”⁶¹

Even among liberal circles, the Congo raised the question of the “readiness” of African states for self-government.⁶² This was compounded by the fact that African democracy, as it was practised by the new states, was not always up to Americans’ standards. While more indulgent observers described this as “an expected phase of temporary tyranny,”⁶³ the American press became increasingly critical of leaders such as Nkrumah, whose concept of “guided democracy” soon came to be described as “Ghanaian McCarthyism.”⁶⁴ The fact that Ghana, like Guinea, was increasingly expanding its ties with the Soviet bloc, establishing embassies in Moscow, Beijing and Havana in 1960, further soured the American image of this country, once considered the showcase of African democracy.⁶⁵

By 1960, U.S. policymakers had ceased fostering the idea that liberal democracy would take root immediately in Africa and instead turned their focus on encouraging political and economic stability. Vice-President Nixon, displaying the cold political realism that would later characterise foreign policy during his presidency, confided to the NSC that “[w]e must

⁵⁸ *Congressional Record*, August 16, 1960, p. 16496.

⁵⁹ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 165.

⁶⁰ *Congressional Record*, August 24, 1960, pp. 17427-17428. These questionable statements originated from a spirited exchange by Senators Ernest Gruening (D-AK) and Ernest A. Ellender (D-LA). For similar outbursts, see August 17, 1960, pp. 16640-16641; August 24, 1960, pp. 17449-17451, 17454. The most disgraceful addition to this debate was probably offered by Representative John B. Williams (D-MS), who fustigated congressional “liberals” for “disregarding the civil rights of the white minority of the Congo.” August 31, 1960, p. 18716.

⁶¹ *Congressional Record*, August 26, 1960, p. A6424.

⁶² John B. Oakes, “Africa’s ‘Ordeal of Independence’,” *New York Times*, July 31, 1960, VI, p. 7

⁶³ *New York Times*, April 25, 1960, p. 1.

⁶⁴ *New York Times*, “Democracy in Africa as Nkrumah Sees It,” *April 19, 1959*, IV, p. 4; Sir Charles Arden Clarke, “Eight Years of Transition in Ghana,” *African Affairs*, vol. 57, no. 226 (January 1958), p. 37.

⁶⁵ Michael Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana’s Foreign Relations, 1957-1965: A Personal Memoir* (London: Athlone Press, 1975), p. 79; Scott W. Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 102.

recognize, although we cannot say it publicly, that we need the strong men of Africa on our side. It is important to understand that most of Africa will soon be independent and that it would be naive for the U.S. to hope that Africa will be democratic.”⁶⁶ The Congo crisis further convinced the Eisenhower Administration that stability was a prerequisite to democratic rule.

Another significant imponderable in the Administration’s response to African events was the fact that 1960 was an election year. Although the key issues in the presidential campaign were mainly domestic, namely the economy and civil rights, the tumultuous events of the past years had insured that foreign policy considerations would play an important role in the outcome of the election: the “widening missile gap,” the disastrous Paris summit, Cuba and the loss of U.S. prestige around the world were but some of the main reasons Democrats believed “1960 was their year.” In addition to these salient foreign policy issues, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s boisterous twenty-five day visit to the United States in September in order to attend the United Nations opening session in New York had succeeded, according to historian Robert Divine, “in arousing the American people to the seriousness of the world crisis and underlining the importance of foreign policy in the presidential campaign.”⁶⁷ The fact that advisers from the campaign teams of both Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy, respectively the standard-bearers for the Republican and Democratic parties, reportedly approached Khrushchev to ask him to adopt a neutral stance between the two office-seekers underlined the Soviet Chairman’s potential influence on the electoral process.⁶⁸

The rapid surge of decolonisation on the African continent, coupled with the distressing events in the Congo, had propelled Africa in the headlines for most of the past year and, consequently, U.S.-African policy gained prominence as a campaign issue. A few days before the November election, the *New York Times* identified Africa as an important foreign

⁶⁶ Memorandum of Discussion at the 432nd Meeting of the National Security Council, January 14, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV: *Africa*, p. 75.

⁶⁷ Robert Divine, *Foreign Policy and U.S. Presidential Elections* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1974), pp. 188, 257. Likewise, historian Gary Reichard has described the 1960 presidential election as the “the quintessential Cold War campaign.” Gary W. Reichard, *Politics as Usual: The Age of Truman and Eisenhower* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1988), p. 162; also see Melvin Small, *Democracy & Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 102-104.

⁶⁸ Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, pp. 126-127.

policy campaign issue, alongside Cuba and the foreign aid debate.⁶⁹ Campaign statements often exaggerated the importance of Africa to U.S. policy; for instance, contender Richard Nixon was most certainly guilty of hyperbole when he ominously warned that “in the struggle with the Russians, Africa is the most critical area of the world.”⁷⁰ Yet, for the candidates, discussing African policy seemed a relatively politically safe way to reap points among the electorate.

As the Congo crisis worsened, the Democrats soon discovered that they had found an issue with which to put the Eisenhower Administration on the defensive. Democratic leaders began a concerted effort to discredit the White House’s handling of political developments in Africa. In Congress, Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) persistently belaboured the Administration for its “neglect” of Africa, warning that “[f]ive years from today, unless there is a dramatic change in American policy [toward Africa,] that continent will be the private hunting grounds of the Communists.”⁷¹ Meanwhile, other prominent congressmen such as Senator Stuart Symington (D-MO) flew to Africa to see the situation for themselves.⁷²

But it was presidential candidate John F. Kennedy who most conspicuously heralded the Democratic assault on the Administration’s African policies. According to court historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Kennedy delivered thirteen major speeches on Africa during 1960, and made a total of 479 references to Africa during the campaign.⁷³ The Democratic candidate persistently hammered the theme that Eisenhower had failed “to grasp the immensity of the African challenge,”⁷⁴ and, upon securing his Party’s nomination, sent Democratic elder statesman Averell Harriman on a West African tour. Harriman returned from his trip and, having heard the grievances of African leaders embittered by U.S. policy in the Congo,

⁶⁹ *New York Times*, November 1, 1960, p. 30.

⁷⁰ *New York Times*, April 12, 1960, p. 3.

⁷¹ *Congressional Record*, July 2, 1960, p. 15867.

⁷² John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968), pp. 208-210. Symington, who was notorious for his attacks on the Eisenhower Administration’s defence policy, had entered the race for the Democratic presidential nomination a year earlier. See Eleanora Schoenebaum, ed., *Political Profiles: The Eisenhower Years* (New York: Facts on File, 1977), pp. 592-594.

⁷³ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 554.

⁷⁴ *New York Times*, September 22, 1960, p. 13; also see John F. Kennedy; Allan Nevins, ed., *The Strategy for Peace* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 124-132.

unsurprisingly declared that the Eisenhower Administration's "neglect of Africa" was to become a major campaign issue.⁷⁵

Kennedy's sympathy for the African plight was rooted in the strongly felt anticolonial views which he had expressed back in 1957 with his Algeria speech, delivered at a time when upbraiding French policy in Algeria had not yet become a rallying issue for U.S. liberals. He further cemented this statesmanlike image by serving as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1959-1960.⁷⁶ Kennedy's good faith can hardly be questioned in pressing for a more dynamic African policy; nonetheless he did employ the situation to good political advantage. For example, in August 1960, when the State Department eliminated a fund of \$100,000 which was to provide for the transportation of 250 East African students to the U.S., the Kennedy Foundation immediately offered to cover the costs. Although the Massachusetts Senator and his supporters insisted that the foundation's grant was a *bona fide* humanitarian gesture which was in no way politically motivated, one cannot help but notice that in the heat of the presidential campaign, this was a particularly adroit move: it discredited the incumbent administration while bolstering Kennedy's prestige.⁷⁷ Likewise, historian Richard Mahoney has convincingly argued that Kennedy African gestures were a clever political ploy to lure black voters to the Democratic banner and confirm his credentials as a liberal Democrat without alienating traditional Dixiecrat support in the South: "Kennedy's handling of the Africa issue in the 1960 campaign – his pitch to the liberal and black vote – was a minor classic in political exploitation of foreign policy."⁷⁸

Whatever the motivations for Kennedy's "African offensive" during the 1960 campaign, the Eisenhower Administration gradually came to feel the heat of the Democratic attacks. In fact, one of the reasons for the sharp increase in the State Department's public policy speeches devoted to Africa in the later part of 1960 was precisely to counter Kennedy's

⁷⁵ *New York Times*, September 21, 1960, p. 15; September 26, 1960, p. 4.; October 9, 1960, VI, pp. 22, 116-120.

⁷⁶ Although, as Vernon McKay has pointed out, the Committee was not very active during Kennedy's tenure, a victim of presidential politicking. It only met three times during 1959 and not at all in 1960. Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, p. 348.

⁷⁷ *Congressional Record*, August 23, 1960, pp. 17150-17153; August 25, pp. 17567-17568. Our efforts have not allowed us to determine the reasons for the State Department's forfeiting of the travel grant; one could realistically expect purely bureaucratic administrative criteria to have been applied.

⁷⁸ Richard D. Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, p. 30.

accusations. For instance, when Kennedy denounced the Eisenhower Administration's African policy during the October 21 televised debate with Richard Nixon, the State Department responded by publicly defending its record and by announcing that veteran diplomat Loy Henderson was leaving on a fact-finding tour of sub-Saharan Africa.⁷⁹ Moreover, as the electoral campaign threaded on, Vice-President Nixon and his advisers, seeking to deflect adverse Democratic criticism, increasingly pressured the Administration into adopting a more dynamic African policy.⁸⁰

On November 4, 1960, when the Republicans lost the White House by a narrow margin, Africa was by no means a determining factor in the outcome of the election. Nevertheless, the Democratic Party's steadfast criticism of the Administration's African policies had contributed to putting the White House and the Department of State on the defensive. Eisenhower's handling of the Congo crisis, which had alienated support for U.S. policy within the Afro-Asian countries, had equally attracted a good deal of opposition on the domestic front, both within liberal and conservative circles. But for Eisenhower, the threat of Soviet intervention overrode any other concern for the new African states; if this stark policy judgement can be attributed to the President's fierce anticommunism,⁸¹ one must also consider that the "loss of the Congo" a few months before the election would surely have spawned even worse political consequences on the home front.

When the UNGA assembly convened in September 1960, the Eisenhower Administration quickly discovered that its Congo policy had severely damaged Washington's standing among the African states and had seemingly driven an insuperable chasm between the West and the nascent countries. By seeking to "save" Africa from communism in the Congo, had the United States achieved a Pyrrhic victory, in the process driving the African nations away from the West?

⁷⁹ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, p. 276; *New York Times*, October 17, 1960, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Memorandum of Discussion at the 441st Meeting of the National Security Council, April 14, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 126-127; Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, p. 59.

⁸¹ Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, pp. 52-55.

3.3. “Keeping the Cold War Out of Africa”: U.S. policy in the 15th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

When the Congo crisis erupted in July 1960, both Moscow and Washington were glad to see the thorny problem deposited in the lap of the Secretary-General of the UN, Dag Hammarskjöld. As one student of the Congo crisis has observed, “[i]ronically, both the Russians and the Americans were counting on the United Nations to deal with the Congo issue – although the two great powers were expecting somewhat different results from the UN operation, and one or the other was bound to be disappointed.”⁸² As we have already seen, although U.S. policy prevailed in the Congo crisis, it was at the cost of alienating its support from the Afro-Asian bloc in the UN. The Congolese quagmire had demonstrated that the U.S., despite its veto power and its immense resources, could not act with moral impunity in the UN. Predictably, as American power and influence was progressively curtailed, U.S. relations with the UN became increasingly sour.⁸³

Despite the degeneration of the U.S.-UN relationship, U.S. officials well knew that they were left with few alternatives. The UNGA had given a voice and influence to the Afro-Asian nations, and these new states were mindful of any attempts by the Great Powers to curtail its authority. As for unilateral intervention, it had become almost unthinkable. Washington’s faith in the United Nations was proven when, on the occasion of a tripartite meeting, British Foreign Minister Lord Home asked Secretary of State Herter what was to happen if the UN failed in the Congo. Herter dryly replied that “the UN can’t be allowed to fail.”⁸⁴ Thus, it was through the aegis of the UN that the Eisenhower Administration attempted to repair its relations with the African countries.

The Congo crisis and the bitter criticism it had incurred against the Eisenhower Administration, both in domestic in international circles, led U.S. officials to a drastic overhaul of their foreign policy priorities. Administration insider Waldemar Nielsen, commenting on U.S.-African policy after the Congo crisis, likened it to a “deathbed

⁸² Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, p. 16.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 141; Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, p. 110.

⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, September 23, 1960, Box 4, Office of the Staff Secretary Records, State Department Subseries, Subject Series, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library.

conversion,” noting that “[t]he administration at that point scuttled its reserve” and embarked on an all-out effort to court the African countries.⁸⁵ As we shall see, Eisenhower himself was at the forefront of this new effort to win “the hearts and minds” of the newly emancipated African peoples. However, the acute Cold War context and the United States’ tarnished record with regard to African aspirations indicated that it was going to be a tough sell.

The Fifteenth Session of the United Nations opened on September 20, 1960, amid a flurry of political activity. On the same day, UN membership was granted to sixteen new African nations.⁸⁶ The political climate was particularly agitated, not only as a result of the tense international situation but also because of the presence, as mentioned earlier, of Nikita Khrushchev. In spite of arriving in New York on the heels of an important setback in his African policy – a few days earlier, Patrice Lumumba had been overthrown and replaced by Mobutu with the help of the CIA – the Soviet leader had travelled to the UN to take advantage of the prevailing anti-Western sentiment and to shore up Afro-Asian sympathy. For weeks, Khrushchev scurried across Manhattan, actively courting the Third World countries and “produc[ing] an extraordinary concentration of summit-level diplomacy in a limited time and space.”⁸⁷

To counter Soviet diplomatic activity in Africa, Eisenhower had already been planning bold new steps in its African policy. Back in April, Billy Graham, the influential preacher whose influence transcended the spiritual sphere, upon returning from a ten-week mission to Africa, publicly urged the President to visit Africa and be present at Nigeria’s independence ceremonies in order that America identify itself with African nationalism. Responding to reporters, Eisenhower claimed that he would give the suggestion “very serious thought.”⁸⁸ In fact, he did. His Secretary of State supported the idea, stating that “a one-day visit would have a wonderful effect if the President could do it.” Eisenhower also felt the idea was highly meritorious, in light of his highly successful goodwill tour of Europe, Asia and North Africa in

⁸⁵ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, p. 279.

⁸⁶ See Editorial Note in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II: *United Nations and General International Matters* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1991), pp. 341-342; Thomas Hovet, Jr., *Africa in the United Nations* ([Evanston]: Northeastern University Press, 1963), p. 43. See ANNEX I.

⁸⁷ Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, p. 114; Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Storm Has Many Eyes: A Personal Narrative* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), p. 146.

December 1959. However, after some discussion, the President worried that other states, such as Ghana and Liberia, would feel slighted if he did not stop by for a courtesy call. Since a long voyage was out of the question, Eisenhower decided to let the proposal “sit for a while,” which basically meant that the idea was being shelved.⁸⁹

Even though personal diplomacy was out of the question, the Eisenhower Administration had been preparing a more flexible African policy since the opening months of 1960. This new strategy was hinged on sub-Saharan Africa’s glaring need for education and technical assistance. In his annual budget message to the Congress for the fiscal year 1961, Eisenhower requested an additional appropriation of \$23 million for additional programs destined for Africa, “to help improve conditions in Africa, largely for education, public health, and administration.”⁹⁰ This demand was reiterated in February on the occasion of his address to Congress on the Mutual Security Program; again, Eisenhower stressed the importance of education and training for the emerging states of sub-Saharan Africa.⁹¹

U.S. officials had been concerned about the seemingly insurmountable social and economic problems facing the new nations, such as the nearly complete lack of public health measures, medical services, and education, as well as the embryonic state of communications and transportation facilities. The problem was clearly put into perspective by George B. Kistiakowsky, Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology:

Against these multiple desperate needs, indigenous efforts, our aid, and the aid of others, appear so utterly inadequate that one becomes fearful lest decades will pass before the level of education and the standard of living will rise enough to make democracy viable. The question then comes to mind: Will the awakening of latent desires permit democracy the time . . . or will [sub-Saharan Africa] fall prey to the legerdemain appeal of revolutionary authoritarianism, especially Communist ideology! [*sic*]⁹²

⁸⁸ *New York Times*, April 1, 1960, p. 5. Nigeria’s independence ceremonies were held on October 1, 1960.

⁸⁹ Concern was also expressed as to whether an airstrip could be found that was capable of handling the President’s jet airplane. Memorandum of Conference with the President, April 5, 1960, Box 4, Office of the Staff Secretary Records, State Department Subseries, Subject Series, White House Office Files, Eisenhower Library; on Eisenhower’s 1959 goodwill tour, see Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, pp. 485-513.

⁹⁰ Annual Budget Message to the Congress for the Fiscal Year 1961, January 18, 1960, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960-1961* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1961), pp. 62-63.

⁹¹ Special Message to the Congress on the Mutual Security Program, February 16, 1960, in *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185; *New York Times*, March 30, 1960, p. 17.

⁹² George B. Kistiakowsky, “Science and Foreign Affairs,” *State Department Bulletin*, February 22, 1960, p. 281.

Many of these issues were addressed by the Sprague Committee, which produced a detailed report on U.S. activities in Africa in July 1960. Headed by former counsel for the Secretary of Defence Mansfield Sprague, the President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad (Sprague Committee) operated from February to December 1960. Its membership included a number of influential figures of the Eisenhower Administration, such as CIA Director Allen Dulles, C.D. Jackson, George V. Allen, Gordon Gray and Livingston Merchant.⁹³

The Sprague Committee's recommendations with regard to Africa South of the Sahara were twofold. First, it stressed the necessity of stepping up information activities and bolstering the U.S.'s official presence on the African continent.⁹⁴ The second main recommendation urged "an early presidential statement," which would encompass "[a]n expression of U.S. understanding and interest in the many problems confronting the newly independent African states and U.S. readiness to help Africans find constructive solutions." "We believe," insisted Sprague, "this statement should not refer to U.S. interests in Africa in Cold War terms."⁹⁵

By overstressing the Cold War angle when promoting its programs, U.S. foreign assistance programs had often attracted the resentment of Africans, who felt that they were being treated like pawns in Washington's global designs. Khrushchev exploited these feelings cleverly, often telling Afro-Asians: "You should thank us for U.S. aid – if it was not for communism, they would give you nothing."⁹⁶ By 1960, however, the Eisenhower Administration was finally grasping the intricate complexities of Third World non-alignment and beginning to mitigate the importance of the Cold War in its public statements concerning Africa. This new-found flexibility was echoed by the *New York Times*, which remarked: "Our basic interest is not the negative one of beating out the Russians and reacting to Communist

⁹³ Waldemar A. Nielsen acted as Executive Director of the Committee. See "Scope and Content Note," [undated], Sprague Committee Records, Eisenhower Library.

⁹⁴ "Africa," July 11, 1960, PCIAA #31, Box 23, Sprague Committee Records, Eisenhower Library; Donald R. Culverson, *Propaganda and National Interests: United States Information Agency Policy Toward West and Central Africa, 1957-1973* (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1987), pp. 168-181; Thomas C. Sorensen, *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 166.

⁹⁵ Letter From Mansfield D. Sprague to President Eisenhower (and attachment), [undated], Africa #31, Box 9, Sprague Committee Records, Eisenhower Library.

penetration. It is the much more positive and fruitful one of helping the peoples of Africa stand on their own feet, build working governments and free societies, and maintain their own political independence from everybody, ourselves included.”⁹⁷

The Sprague Committee’s suggestion that Eisenhower dedicate a major address to African affairs did not fall on deaf ears.⁹⁸ The State Department’s Bureau of African Affairs had also been clamouring for an important high-level gesture toward Africa since March.⁹⁹ On August 9, the President mused to UN Representative Lodge about delivering an important speech on African affairs. Eisenhower confided to Lodge that he was “somewhat worried” at the prospect of delivering such a statement, especially in light of the “current world situation.” Lodge reassured the President that such a gesture was needed and prompted him to deliver “a constructive and bold speech on the Congo.”¹⁰⁰

Arrangements were made and Eisenhower appeared before the UNGA on September 22, 1960. His speech touched a variety of foreign policy issues, such as nuclear weapons and world peace. More importantly, a significant part of his address was devoted to Africa. Urging firm support for the UN during the trying times brought forth by the Congo crisis, he warned that “[i]f the [UN] is successfully subverted in Africa, the world will be on its way back to the traditional exercise of power politics, in which small countries will be used as small pawns by aggressive major powers.” The crux of Eisenhower’s statement on Africa was his proposal for a five-point plan for Africa, in which he pleaded that the powers refrain from intervening in affairs of other nations and support the UN in the Congo; he also announced an increase in foreign aid to Africa (see ANNEX VI for a brief description of his five-point plan).¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Chester Bowles, *Ideas, People and Peace* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 135.

⁹⁷ *New York Times*, editorial, May 8, 1960, IV, p. 8.

⁹⁸ Memorandum for the President, September 14, 1960, Box 81, Subject Series, Confidential File, White House Central Files, Eisenhower Library.

⁹⁹ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (Satterthwaite) to the Under Secretary of State (Dillon), March 30, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, pp. 99, 101. Satterthwaite reiterated his demand for a major policy speech on Africa at a subsequent State Department meeting. See Memorandum of Conversation, April 7, 1960, in *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with Ambassador Cabot Lodge, August 9, 1960, Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁰¹ Address Before the 15th General Assembly of the United Nations, September 22, 1960, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960-1961*; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, pp. 579-580.

What was certainly the most outstanding characteristic of Eisenhower's September 22 address was its emphasis on non-intervention in African affairs by any of the powers (Western or Eastern) and its repudiation of the Cold War in Africa. Eisenhower later described the speech to an Ethiopian official as "a conciliatory speech" delivered "in the hope that the cold war might be kept out of Africa."¹⁰² "Keeping the Cold War out of Africa" became the Administration's new pitch phrase to African nationalists. *New York Times* columnist C.L. Sulzberger, commenting on the Administration's new-found latitudinarianism, observed that "[a]nti-neutralism has vanished with isolationism and the dinosaur. The President, in effect, now wants virtually to neutralize the entire African continent by removing it from outside pressures."¹⁰³ Upon close observation, this did not constitute a drastic departure from traditional U.S. policy toward Africa. The United States had limited economic and strategic interests in Africa; as we have already argued, Washington's ultimate geopolitical goal on the "Dark Continent" was less the expansion of its presence than the denial of Soviet gains in the area. The policy of "keeping the Cold War out of Africa" thus fulfilled this foremost strategic objective.

Secretary of State Herter also contributed to the Administration's softened rhetoric concerning African affairs. In a November address to the UN, he rejected the designation of non-aligned Third World countries as "neutralist":

These nations are not neutralist when it comes to choosing between supporting and suppressing the human freedoms and the dignity of the individual. It would be better to call these nations politically unaligned. . . . The United States is not afraid of varying attitudes. We have seen them in the United States itself; we have them with our closest allies. This diversity of view is an element of freedom and, therefore, of strength.¹⁰⁴

If this was a sign of reinvigorated flexibility and understanding, the change of heart was also due to cold geopolitical thinking; as Undersecretary of State Douglas Dillon

¹⁰² Memorandum of Conference with the President, September 27, 1960, Box 9, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁰³ *New York Times*, September 24, 1960, p. 22.

¹⁰⁴ Christian Herter, "Fifteenth Anniversary of the United Nations," *State Department Bulletin*, November 14, 1960, p. 740.

observed, “neutralism was better than Communism.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, rather than upbraiding Third World non-alignment, the Eisenhower Administration came to officially embrace it, completely reversing its earlier policy of 1956 which condemned neutralism as an “immoral, shortsighted conception,” even though this process, as we have seen in previous chapters, evolved gradually. The Administration was also intent on adopting a resolutely more anticolonial policy. An October 1960 UN position paper stated:

Nineteenth-century colonialism has no future. The United States would have done well to reach this conclusion fifteen years ago and proceed to act on it. Our NATO allies would have disliked intensely such a decision, but would have had no alternative to accepting this as United States policy. The United States would, moreover, have done the allies a service by withdrawing completely our support of their illusions about colonial empire.¹⁰⁶

Yet, despite the bold new rhetoric, Washington’s soft sell policy in the UN was not met by unbridled enthusiasm. U.S. policy in the Congo had raised hostility and suspicion among the African nations; consequently, Eisenhower’s speech fell on relatively unsympathetic ears. Here was the leader of a nation which, a few days before, had sponsored a *coup d’État* in the Congo, now preaching nonintervention on the African continent and the support of “true democracy” for the emerging nations. While the irony of the situation was not lost on the more cynical African delegates, the gap between Washington’s words and actions raised bitter resentment among many of the Afro-Asian representatives.

The first indication that America’s policy of goodwill had met staunch African opposition was Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah’s address of September 23. Talking immediately after Nikita Khrushchev, who had delivered a particularly fiery tirade against Western as well as UN policy in the Congo, the Ghanaian leader affirmed that it was “quite clear that a desperate attempt [was] being made to create confusion in the Congo, [extend] the Cold War to Africa, and involve Africa in the suicidal quarrels of foreign powers,”¹⁰⁷ an obvious reference to Eisenhower’s new policy. Nkrumah then went on to criticise Western

¹⁰⁵ Memorandum of Discussion at the 456th Meeting of the National Security Council, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV, p. 149.

¹⁰⁶ Paper Prepared by the Assistant Legal Adviser for United Nations Affairs (Meeker), October 4, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, p. 389.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Norman J. Padelford and Rupert Emerson, eds., *Africa and the World Order* (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 49.

policy in the Congo, which he described as “imperialist intrigue stark and naked” that concealed the intention of setting up “clientele-sovereignty, or fake independence.”¹⁰⁸

The vehement speech surprised Eisenhower and Herter, who had met with Nkrumah the day before at the Waldorf-Astoria and had found him to be quite sympathetic to the Western position.¹⁰⁹ Immediately following the proceedings, Herter characterised Khrushchev’s speech as “a declaration of war” on the UN and commented that Nkrumah “has marked himself as very definitely leaning toward the Soviet bloc.” When he was notified of Secretary of State’s remarks, the Ghanaian President professed to be “surprised,” adding that Herter “was, in fact, the last person from whom I would expect such a remark,” further arguing that “he had been saying much the same thing for the last ten years.”¹¹⁰

In fact, Nkrumah was probably right in saying that the tone of his speech was consistent with his declarations concerning Western colonialism for the past two years. But, for U.S. officials, the Cold War context had sharply raised the stakes; despite its new policy rhetoric, the Administration apparently could not reconcile non-alignment, particularly the brand that was critical of Western policy, to the rigid exigencies of bipolar international politics. Herter seems to have been genuinely irked by Nkrumah’s oratory and was hardly remorseful for his biting comments, despite their bad reception in the press.¹¹¹ The U.S. reaction to his speech distressed Nkrumah, who subsequently tried to arrange a meeting with the Secretary of State through industrialist Edgar Kaiser. In spite of the fact that Herter’s Waldorf-Astoria suite was located on the 35th floor, only eleven floors from Nkrumah’s, Herter refused to receive him, instead sending Satterthwaite. The snub left Nkrumah incensed, leading the Ghanaian to accept Khrushchev’s invitation to spend the weekend at the Soviet villa in Long Island.¹¹² The Administration’s inexorable response to Nkrumah forebode a

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, p. 345.

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, September 22, 1960, Box 16, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹¹⁰ *New York Times*, September 24, 1960, p. 10.

¹¹¹ Claude A. Barnett to Christian Herter, September 27, 1960, Box 9, Chronological Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library. Eisenhower was in agreement with Herter’s take on Nkrumah’s speech; he confided to an Ethiopian official a few days later that Nkrumah’s speech seemingly “followed the Soviet position.” Memorandum of Conference with the President, September 27, 1960, Box 9, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹¹² Richard D. Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, p. 51.

period of coolness in U.S.-Ghana relations. A few months later, in February 1961, Soviet Chairman Leonid Brejnev arrived in Accra for an official visit, where he was received warmly. As historian Scott Thompson has observed, “[i]f Herter's remark was prophetic, it also had the effect of a self-fulfilling prophecy.”¹¹³

A second important setback was suffered by the Administration when, on September 29, the leaders of five major non-aligned powers, among them Nkrumah and Nehru of India, sent a letter to President Eisenhower, which was made public, that expressed grave concern with the state of Soviet-American relations and called on the two powers to hold a summit. The five heads of state also indicated their intention to submit this proposal as a resolution to the UNGA (see ANNEX VII for the complete letter and draft resolution).¹¹⁴ Eisenhower, weary of summitry after the debacle in Paris following the U-2 affair, reacted disapprovingly to the proposal. He expressed his views with unusual boldness in his memoirs: “Their purpose was far from clear. At best it seemed totally illogical; at worst it seemed an act of effrontery.”¹¹⁵ “There is nothing in the words or actions of the Government of the Soviet Union,” explained Eisenhower in his reply to Nkrumah, “which gives me any reason to believe that the meeting you suggest would hold [the promise of a reduction of tension.] I would not wish to participate in a mere gesture which in present circumstances might convey a thoroughly misleading and unfortunate impression to the peoples of the world.”¹¹⁶

The Administration mobilised all diplomatic resources in order to block or defeat the draft resolution. When it was finally submitted, the “Five Neutrals Proposal” was defeated, the U.S. voting against and the USSR abstaining.¹¹⁷ U.S. pressure tactics in the UN had managed to gather enough support to defeat the resolution, although this triumph was not secured without further damaging U.S. prestige and pretensions of desire for world peace. Nonetheless, this unsatisfactory outcome represented what was probably considered the lesser of two evils. Domestic political considerations – the presidential election was to be held in

¹¹³ Scott W. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, pp. 166-167.

¹¹⁴ Letter From Certain Heads of State to President Eisenhower, September 29, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, pp. 370-371.

¹¹⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 586.

¹¹⁶ Letter From President Eisenhower to Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, October 2, 1960, Box 16, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

November – precluded the possibility of holding an important summit meeting; Eisenhower was relieved at having averted the possibility of refusing to comply with a UN resolution.¹¹⁸

These setbacks notwithstanding, the Eisenhower Administration pursued its policy of wooing the new African states. On October 14, he received delegates from several African republics. The meeting had been organised to shore up African support for the Administration's programs and had been urged upon the White House by the State Department and Nixon's campaign advisers.¹¹⁹ Much of the impetus for this new initiative had also been encouraged by the American press, which had not missed the fact that while Eisenhower had not received any of the representatives from the new African nations, Nikita Khrushchev had duly courted them during his stay in New York.¹²⁰

Eisenhower found it hard to convince the African leaders that the U.S. truly wanted to “keep the Cold War out of Africa.” Yet the President's comments were coloured by a very perceptible Cold War bias. Responding to the remarks of a Niger Republic official, who had resented the fact that Africa was trapped between “two hostile blocs,” Eisenhower argued:

But, Sir, we are not a bloc. We are not hostile. But we are determined that those forces which want to destroy liberty, the dignity of man and human freedom shall not prevail in the world. . . . [T]he United States does not want either militarily, politically, or economically, to dominate, control or subvert the peoples of your nations. The only thing we ask is that through your own love of freedom and the determination of your people to live their own lives as they choose, you will resist others who have military, economic, or political intent to dominate you. These people should not – cannot – penetrate your people and use them for their own evil purposes.¹²¹

Despite the Eisenhower Administration's last ditch efforts to woo the new nations of Africa, U.S. policy in the Congo and the crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations had prevented any significant progress with African states. Furthermore, the domestic political context, namely the November election, significantly constrained Washington's range of action. Eisenhower's lame-duck presidency further stifled the leeway for bold initiatives, while the Republicans had

¹¹⁷ Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, pp. 123-124.

¹¹⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 588.

¹¹⁹ Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, October 7, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, pp. 401-404; Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, p. 59.

¹²⁰ *New York Times*, October 1, 1960, p. 18.

to show that they could be “tough with the Communists” in the hope of being re-elected. The circumstances were hardly conducive for efforts at “keeping the Cold War out of Africa.”

More importantly, the Eisenhower Administration’s efforts at strengthening U.S.-African ties ended on a sour note. In December 1960, forty-three Afro-Asian nations submitted an unusually significant resolution calling for immediate steps to end colonialism. The final vote count was eighty-nine in favour to zero against, with nine abstentions. The U.S. was among the abstainees, thanks to a last-minute intervention by Eisenhower, who had received a personal letter from British Prime Minister Macmillan urging him not to support the resolution.¹²² When Herter, who advocated supporting the motion even though he considered it was a “miserable decision,” pointed out to the President that the resolution would carry regardless of the U.S. vote, Eisenhower obstinately replied “a question arises when our strongest ally feels this way.”¹²³

The decision was far from unanimous within the rank and file of the Administration – UN Representative James Wadsworth, upon hearing about the U.S. change of position, wrote to Herter that he was left “shocked and disheartened” by the White House’s sudden reversal. He reported a severe backlash following the U.S. abstention, which had attracted the wrath of most Afro-Asian nations. The Nigerian Representative allegedly asked the U.S. delegation: “Are you trying to commit political suicide?” while one African observer sarcastically commented: “Felicitations on your vote. Understand Khrushchev is sending medal.”¹²⁴ As Africanist Waldemar Nielsen has observed, “this final action threw into question in the minds

¹²¹ Press Release, October 14, 1960, Box 41, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

¹²² In his plea to Eisenhower, the British leader confided that he was “shocked” upon hearing that the United States intended to support the resolution. “Do let us stand together,” urged Macmillan, “at least on a decision to abstain, and thus dissociate ourselves from a resolution which has no connection with reality.” Letter From Prime Minister Macmillan to President Eisenhower, December 9, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. VII, part 2 (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1993), pp. 875-876.

¹²³ Telephone Calls, December 9, 1960 and December 8, 1960, Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹²⁴ See Telegram From the Mission at the United Nations to the Department of State, December 14, 1960, and December 15, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II, pp. 458, 460. Wadsworth, a former Republican Congressman from New York, had since replaced Lodge in the UN, as a result of the fact that the latter had left his post to campaign as the Vice-President for the Republican ticket.

of many the genuineness of the policy shifts which had been observed during the preceding year.”¹²⁵

The passing year had been a trying one for U.S. policy in the United Nations. By the end of his term, a disillusioned Eisenhower confided to his advisers that he believed the UN had made “a major error” in admitting to membership any nation claiming independence. “Ultimately,” the President pessimistically predicted, “the UN may have to leave U.S. territory.”¹²⁶ The Administration had taken the UN gamble and had lost both the respect of the new African countries and, as a result, a considerable amount of faith in the United Nations.

Moreover, the December 1960 vote on colonialism illustrated that despite the new policy rhetoric, the Eisenhower Administration was still not ready at the end of 1960 to risk alienating such an important ally as Britain for the sake of gaining sympathy in the Third World. Although this can certainly be explained by global geopolitical considerations, one must also consider the contiguous political and cultural interests that bound Britain and America and which influenced Washington into adopting an Eurocentric policy. Overall, concerns for healthy economic, political and social ties with Western Europe overrode American sympathy for emergent Africa. However, this policy was not exclusive to the Eisenhower Administration; it has been the mainstay of U.S.-African policy throughout the postwar years.

¹²⁵ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, p. 277.

¹²⁶ Memorandum of Discussion at the 474th Meeting of the National Security Council, January 12, 1961, Box 13, NSC Series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

CONCLUSION

In the closing weeks of the Eisenhower Administration, one State Department official deplored, in a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Joseph Satterthwaite, that there still was not a “fully agreed” basic policy “providing authoritative guidance for African affairs.” This scrupulous bureaucrat expressed his concern about “the impression this would create in the minds of the incoming administration.”¹ Similarly, Guinean ambassador John Morrow, in his memoirs, reported that during his tenure, the State Department Bureau of African Affairs “was not yet fully organized” and “was beset with many problems.”² As we have demonstrated in these pages, the momentous political upheavals that shook the African continent during the latter part of the fifties often caught U.S. policymakers unprepared. Accordingly, U.S. policy toward Africa during these turbulent years evolved in an uneven and often haphazard fashion. Moreover, in these early stages of the African decolonisation process, most U.S.-African diplomatic contacts were still channelled through European colonial and diplomatic authorities.

The Cold War was the ubiquitous motivation behind postwar U.S. foreign policy, and U.S.-African relations were no exception to this rule. Most of the scholarship devoted to U.S. relations with sub-Saharan Africa has considered Washington’s containment ideology as the cornerstone of its international outlook. Anticommunism, however, does not solely account for the diverse, albeit limited, range of U.S. interests on the African continent. The fact that Administration officials persistently raised the spectre of communism in their public statements, most likely in an effort to gather domestic support for their programs, concealed the essentially pragmatic geopolitical aims pursued by their foreign policies.

¹ Memorandum From Deputy Operations Coordinator (Rogers) to the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (Satterthwaite), December 7, 1960, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV: *Africa* (Washington, D.C.: U.S.G.P.O., 1992), p. 171.

This questions the basic assumptions underlying the historiographical consensus regarding the Eisenhower Administration's response to decolonisation, namely that containment-driven policymakers sponsored a monochromatic anticommunist policy and, in the process, confused Third World nationalism for Communism. By attempting to go beyond the public rhetoric of 1950s politics, this study has shown that U.S. policymakers had recognised the potency of Third World nationalism and, as early as the mid-fifties, had begun to reassess their rigid bipolar worldview. Most assuredly, U.S. policy was essentially reactive. Few Europeans had expected the force of those coming "winds of change"; how could one expect that less knowledgeable Americans would be prepared for them?³

In trying to forge new bonds with the emerging nations of Africa, Washington quickly realised that the path would not be an easy one to follow. Up to the late 1950s, the colonial debate placed the United States in the unenviable position of having to buttress its colonialist allies while at the same time professing to support African emancipation. Although the Eisenhower Administration, on most occasions, adopted a policy favouring the metropolitan powers, it must be stressed that Administration officials, particularly President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, held sincere, if somewhat restrained, anti-colonial beliefs, and often supported their colonialist allies with deep misgivings. Yet, like most of their contemporaries, they perceived Western European security as being essential to U.S. interest. As historian Scott Bills had argued, "Americans did sympathize with the underdog, as was often said; but foreign affairs was no baseball game. The struggle which began in the colonial rimlands was for hearts and minds, not points or medals. And from the beginning, the conflict was marked by fierce ambiguity."⁴

By 1958, the Eisenhower Administration had begun a significant shift in its foreign policies in an effort to improve its standing in the eyes of newly independent Africa. Most certainly, Moscow's growing interest in Middle Eastern and African developments definitely

² John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968), p. 24.

³ Jean Herskovitz, "Subsaharan Africa: The Lowest Priority," in Richard C. Hottelet and Jean Herskovitz, eds., *The Dynamics of World Power: A Documentary History of United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1973*, Volume 5: *The United Nations; Subsaharan Africa* (New York: Chelsea House, 1973), p. 541.

contributed to re-focusing U.S. attention on the decolonisation process. Among the most discernible new directions taken by U.S. foreign policy was an increasingly flexible view of Third World non-alignment and the emergence of a more enlightened attitude regarding foreign assistance to the developing world. Foreign aid, however, was a contentious political issue and the White House met staunch opposition to its "Mutual Security Program," not only in Congress, but also within its own ranks.

The Administration's African policies were further hindered by the fact that the colonial debate persisted even when most African nations had achieved self-government. As we have delineated in the case of Guinea, Washington's strong ties to the metropolitan powers, in this case France, continued to impose a triangular relationship on U.S.-African relations, most often to the detriment of the expansion of healthy new diplomatic ties. Furthermore, the emergence of an anti-colonialist Afro-Asian consciousness, which was also very suspicious of Cold War motives, compelled the Eisenhower Administration to adapt its policies in the hope of harnessing the powerful new forces that were changing the strategic balance in the UN.

If the Administration's implementation of its new African policies initially appeared timid and perfunctory, 1960 marked an important watershed. As the hitherto "Dark Continent" was ablaze with furious political activity, the Cold War reached the African theatre with the eruption of the Congo crisis, bringing a dramatic shift in American policy toward Africa. Consequently, the paramountcy of containment became a determining factor in Washington's perception of decolonisation and African non-alignment, leading to a sharp deterioration of U.S. relations with the new African states. Because U.S. officials had so little faith in the ability of African nationalism to sustain itself, they reacted in a radical way to the political turmoil in Central Africa, in the process forsaking the very principles of sovereignty and self-reliance they had wished to preserve.⁵

⁴ Scott L. Bills, *Empire and Cold War: The Roots of US-Third-World Antagonism, 1945-1947* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 151.

⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 182.

In retrospect, it seems clear that the Eisenhower Administration overreacted to the Congo crisis. Certainly, the rise of Lumumba implied a loss for the Western position, especially in light of the Katanga region's strategic and economic importance for Belgium and the West; however, this did not automatically guarantee Soviet gains. In pursuing its aims in Africa, Moscow had attempted, in the words of one contemporary political scientist, "much that is safe and little that is risky," and in no way fostered plans for the complete domination of the continent. Rather than pursuing aims of world domination in the Third World, Soviet policy was closer to a "cynical realpolitik" which sought to take advantage of weaknesses in the Western position.⁶

On the other hand, the rapid surge of decolonisation prompted the Administration to pay greater attention to the concerns of Third World countries. By the time the Fifteenth Session of the UNGA had convened in September 1960, U.S. attitudes toward non-alignment, African nationalism and South African apartheid had come a long way from the much more conservative policies pursued at the outset of the Eisenhower Administration. As Africanist Vernon McKay has pointed out, "it is clear that significant shifts in American policy which are sometimes attributed to the Kennedy Administration were actually under way before Eisenhower left office."⁷ Initial steps had already been taken in the direction of increasing diplomatic representation and foreign aid programs destined for Africa; more importantly, political developments on the African continent had begun to erode the "Europe first" reflex that had previously dominated U.S.-African policymaking. The events of 1960 also contributed to discredit the belief that "politics always stop at the water's edge." Indeed, the foregoing analysis has advanced the argument that U.S. domestic racial problems as well as the politics of the 1960 presidential election commanded significant influence over the Administration's African policy.

Nevertheless, a solid case can be argued that the policy changes that occurred during Eisenhower's tenure came belatedly, hesitantly and, on many occasions, with great reluctance.

⁶ Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 282; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Africa and the Communist World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), p. 20.

⁷ Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 347.

One reason explaining this is that although the U.S. policies were slowly evolving, “the oratory seemed stuck in the same groove,” as one author colourfully put it.⁸ Eisenhower Administration officials obdurately persisted in preaching the “benefits of colonialism” and the dangers of “premature independence” well into the late 1950s, in spite of the obvious fact that the new African leaders found these bromidic and paternalistic statements offensive. “In many ways,” argues Thomas Noer, “the rhetoric, style, and personalities of [the Eisenhower Administration] seem[ed] more conservative, more hostile to African aspirations, and more supportive of white rule than [they] actually [were].”⁹ Authors have often stated that John F. Kennedy’s subsequent drastic overhaul of America’s African policy marked a change in tone, but not in content. Maybe so. But the Eisenhower Administration’s hardships in developing positive ties with emerging Africa demonstrates that, at least in this particular case, sometimes the rhetoric is just as important as the policy.

Looking back on U.S.-Third World relations during the 1950s, much truth can be found in Emmet John Hughes’ criticism of Eisenhower’s presidency, which described it as “an Administration committed to conserving rather than creating, guarding rather than building.”¹⁰ Even Eisenhower’s highly sympathetic biographer, Stephen Ambrose, acknowledges that the thirty-fourth President “put off the problems of postcolonial Africa,” adding that “in foreign affairs . . . the Eisenhower era was a time of the great postponement.”¹¹ Eisenhower, like many of his conservative-minded colleagues, had difficulty coming to terms with the new global reality spawned by the quick pace of decolonisation.

Still, in criticising Washington’s response to African nationalism, one must be mindful of overestimating the United States’ influence over the powerful historical forces, both in Europe and Africa, which were guiding the decolonisation process. Throughout its history, the U.S. had been, at best, a distant third partner in Africa, contentedly leaving the playing field to Western Europe. Could it be expected that this two century-old policy would be overturned in

⁸ Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 272.

⁹ Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985), p. 34.

¹⁰ Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years* (New York: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), p. 58.

¹¹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), p. 545.

the space of a few years? The Eisenhower years marked an important transition period in U.S.-African relations, witnessing an adaptation process that unfolded quickly, perhaps too quickly for it to have occurred harmoniously.

U.S. interest in Africa, in both public and official circles, had risen sharply during the 1950s. By 1961, the State Department reported that 600 private organisations in the United States were dedicated to African affairs.¹² Yet, already by the mid-1960s, American observers were having “second thoughts” about Africa.¹³ The “African honeymoon,” which had begun in 1957 with the independence of Ghana and had since gone through, as we have seen, a series of ups and downs, ended on a sour note when a joint U.S.-Belgian force landed in Stanleyville in 1964. The rise of the one-party state on the African continent as the most common form of government, its political instability, as well as America’s growing involvement in Vietnam gradually turned U.S. interest away from African realities and, by the late 1960s, sub-Saharan Africa came to be perceived within U.S. circles as merely a heap of poor, authoritarian states with little consequence for international politics.¹⁴

Today, in a time when “Africans killing Africans has become a tired story of little interest” (unless, like in Rwanda, it assumes horrifying proportions)¹⁵, the crucial days of African decolonisation offer a rare perspective for the student of U.S.-African policy. For once, all the eyes of the world were turned on sub-Saharan Africa. Renewed concerns over Washington’s neglect of Africa have resurfaced in the past decade with the end of the Cold War, as U.S. policymakers have lost the Soviet menace which once bolstered congressional backing for African programs.¹⁶ The United States’ post-Cold War policy has already suffered two important African setbacks in the 1990s, Somalia and Rwanda. Despite America’s unparalleled material wealth on the one hand, and Africa’s tremendous economic and social

¹² Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La politique africaine des États-Unis: Mécanismes et conduites* (Paris: Economica, 1984), p. 63.

¹³ Arnold Rivkin, “Lost Goals in Africa,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 44, no. 1 (October 1965), pp. 112-115.

¹⁴ Jennifer S. Whitaker, ed., *Africa and the United States: Vital Interests* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), p. 1; Martin Staniland, *American Intellectuals and African Nationalists, 1955-1970* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 100.

¹⁵ Aaron Segal, “Africa and the United States Media,” *Issue*, vol. 6, no. 2/3 (Summer/Fall 1976), p. 50.

¹⁶ David D. Newsome, “After the Cold War: Interest in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Winter 1990), pp. 104, 112-113; Peter Schraeder, “Speaking with Many Voices: Continuity and Change in U.S. Africa Policies,” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3 (1991), p. 408.

needs on the other, hopes for a “Second African Honeymoon” in the coming years seem quite faint. Will some new global crisis be needed in order to beckon the United States into assuming the African burdens that come with the responsibility of being a world power?

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ANNEX I

NATIONS ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, 1957-1960 (in chronological order)

Ghana (Federation of)	March 5, 1957
Guinea (Republic of)	October 2, 1958
Cameroun (Republic of)	January 1, 1960
Togo (Republic of)	April 27, 1960
Mali (Federation of)	June 20, 1960*
Malagasy Republic	June 26, 1960
Congo (Republic of the) (Léopoldville)	June 30, 1960
Somali Republic	July 1, 1960
Dahomey (Republic of)	August 1, 1960
Niger (Republic of)	August 3, 1960
Upper Volta (Republic of)	August 5, 1960
Ivory Coast (Republic of the)	August 7, 1960
Chad (Republic of)	August 11, 1960
Central African Republic	August 13, 1960
Congo (Republic of) (Brazzaville)	August 15, 1960
Gabon (Republic of)	August 17, 1960
Nigeria (Federation of)	October 1, 1960
Mauritania (Islamic Republic of)	November 28, 1960

All were granted United Nations membership on September 20, 1960, except for Ghana and Guinea (who had already been admitted) as well as Nigeria and Mauritania (both were admitted later).

*The Republic of Senegal seceded from the Federation of Mali on August 20, 1960.

ANNEX II

African Percentages of World Production of Major Minerals (1959)

Mineral	Percentage (%)
Diamonds, industrial	98,6
Lithium minerals	97,5
Columbium-tantalum	74,8
Cobalt	74,0
Gold	51,4
Beryl	47,7
Corundum	44,3
Platinum group metals	38,1
Chromite	30,9
Antimony	29,1
Phosphate rock	28,8
Copper, mine	25,6
Copper, smelter	23,4
Uranium oxide	20,4
Vermiculite	20,4
Manganese ore	20,3
Asbestos	14,8
Tin, mine	11,3

Source: Vernon McKay, *Africa and World Politics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 276.

ANNEX III

Breakdown of the Vote on the U.S.-Sponsored Resolution Not to Consider Chinese Representation at the 14th General Assembly, September 22, 1959
(sub-Saharan African nations are underlined)

44 states in favour: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China (Republic of), Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, *Liberia*, Luxembourg, Malaya, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.

29 states against: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussia, Cambodia, Ceylon, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Morocco, Nepal, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Sudan, Sweden, Ukraine, United Arab Republic, USSR, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

9 states abstaining: Austria, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iceland, Israel, Libya, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia.

Source: Circular Instruction From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, August 4, 1959, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. II: *United Nations and General International Matters* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1991), pp. 281-282.

ANNEX IV

Department of State Press Briefing,
*delivered on March 22, 1960, at a press conference following the
Sharpeville Massacre of March 21 in South Africa.*

“The United States deploras violence in all its forms and hopes that the African people of South Africa will be able to obtain redress for legitimate grievances by peaceful means. While the United States, as a matter of practice, does not ordinarily comment on the internal affairs of governments with which it enjoys normal relations, it cannot help but regret the tragic loss of life resulting from the measures taken against the demonstrators in South Africa.”

Source: Editorial Note, in *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XIV: *Africa* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1992), p. 741.

ANNEX V

Draft of the Ecuadoran-Ceylonese Resolution Condemning the South African Government*

“The Security Council,

Having considered the complaint of twenty-nine member states contained in document S/4297 concerning “the situation arising out of the large-scale killing of unarmed and peaceful demonstrators against racial discrimination and segregation in the Union of South Africa,”

Recognizing that such a situation has been brought about by the racial policies of the Government of the Union of South Africa and the continued disregard by the Government of the resolutions of the General Assembly calling upon it to revise its policies and bring them into conformity with its obligations and responsibilities under the Charter,

Taking into account the strong feelings and grave concern aroused among governments and peoples of the world, more particularly on the continent of Africa, by the happenings in the Union of South Africa,

1. *Expresses* its profound regret that the recent disturbances in the Union of South Africa should have led to the loss of life of so many Africans and extends to the families of the victims its deepest sympathies;

2. *Recognizes* that the situation in the Union of South Africa is one that has led to international friction and is likely to endanger international peace and security;

3. [*Deplores*] the policies and actions of the Government of the Union of South Africa which have given rise to the present situation;

4. *Calls upon* the Government of the Union of South Africa to abandon its policies of *apartheid* and racial discrimination and initiate measures aimed at bringing about racial harmony based on equality in order to ensure that the present situation does not continue or recur;

5. [*Requests*] the Secretary General, in consultation with the Government of the Union of South Africa, to make such practical arrangements as would adequately help in upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter and to inform the Members of the Security Council whenever necessary and appropriate.”

Source: Box 10, Telephone Calls Series, Christian Herter Papers, Eisenhower Library.

* This is the draft version of the Ecuadoran-Ceylonese resolution that was submitted to the White House and the Department of State on March 31, 1960, by the U.S. delegation to the UN. A slightly modified version of the resolution was passed the next day at the UNGA.

ANNEX VI

Excerpt From President Eisenhower's Address Before the 15th General Assembly of the United Nations, September 22, 1960

“These then are the five ingredients of the Program I propose for Africa:

- [1.] Non-interference in the African countries' internal affairs;
- [2.] Help in assuring their security without wasteful and dangerous competition in armaments;
- [3.] Emergency aid to the Congo;
- [4.] Internal assistance in shaping long term African development programs;
- [5.] United Nations aid for education.”

Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960-1961* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1961), p. 712.

ANNEX VII

**Letter From Certain Heads of State to President Eisenhower
September 29, 1960**

“MR. PRESIDENT: We have to honour to bring to your attention that, in view of the present tension in international relations and confident that Your Excellency, your Government and the people of your great country are keenly desirous to reduce this tension and pave the way for the consolidation of peace, it is our intention to submit for the immediate consideration of the present session of the General Assembly a draft resolution of which the text is enclosed.

We trust that this endeavour on our part will receive your early and sympathetic consideration.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew to Your excellency the assurances of our high esteem.

Kwame Nkrumah
President of Ghana

Jawaharal Nehru
Prime Minister of India

A. Sukarno
President of Indonesia

Gamel Abdel Nasser
President of the United Arab Republic

JB Tito
President of Yugoslavia

[Attachment]

Draft U.N. General Assembly Resolution

The General Assembly,

Deeply Concerned with the recent deterioration in international relations which threatens the world with grave consequences,

Aware of the great expectancy of the world that this Assembly will assist in helping to prepare the way for the easing of world tension,

Conscious of the grave and urgent responsibility that rests on the United Nations to initiate helpful efforts,

Requests, as a first urgent step, the President of the United States of America and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the [USSR] to renew their contacts interrupted recently so that their declared willingness to find solutions of the outstanding problems by negotiation may be progressively implemented.”