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**THE UNITED STATES AND DECOLONIZATION
IN WEST AFRICA, 1950-1960**

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of History
University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

THE 1950s was a decade of momentous political change in (West) Africa which led to independence. More often than not, independence is used interchangeably with decolonization. But the working premise here is that decolonization involved not just independence, but a redefinition of center-periphery relations to allow for the integration of the African political elite into the colonial network. The redistribution of power at the global level after World War II meant that this redefinition was occurring within an American-dominated world system. On this score, America's involvement in Africa in the period beginning from 1948 was an integral part of its post-1945 striving for "a preponderance of power" in the international arena. This ensured that, as elsewhere, Washington's major objective in Africa was to be the arbiter -- or, at least, to influence the process -- of political change. This broad rubric included ensuring a pro-Western orientation by Africans, and therefore warding off countervailing influences such as "Communism" and nonalignment. Of greater importance, however, was Washington's interest in raw materials extraction. These were needed to help in the rehabilitation of Western Europe and for the United States' strategic stockpiling program. Closely related to this, was the goal of securing access to markets and investment opportunities

for American private capital. But given the expansive nature of its global responsibilities and given that Africa was peripheral to the "national security" dimension of those interests, the U.S. devoted rather slim resources in Africa. In effect, this meant that Washington opted for an essentially symbolic, augmentative role and relied on the Europeans to project its hegemonic interests in Africa.

PREFACE

IN January 1951, Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote Defense Secretary George Marshall requesting his cooperation "in a review of American interests and policies in the whole area extending from the eastern Mediterranean to India." Acheson had observed that "Over the past four years in an unplanned, undesired, and haphazard way American influence had largely succeeded French and British in that part of the world." Still, he was not envisaging the substitution of U.S. power for Europe's in the region: Acheson stressed that the "primary responsibility" for the security of the Middle East was Britain's. This episode was symptomatic of the structural redistribution of global power in the aftermath of World War II. The war had finally seen to the geopolitical shrinkage of Western Europe and the simultaneous rise of the United States to globalism. President Harry Truman was later to recall that "Most of the countries in Europe were bankrupt, millions of people were homeless and starving, and we were the only nation that could come to their help....We were witnessing the transformation of the United States into a nation of unprecedented power and growing capacity." This scenario was accentuated by the U.S.-Soviet competition for global dominance.

Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 562.

This was captured in contemporary books such as Hajo Holborn, *The Political Collapse of Europe* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1951); Eric Fischer, *The Passing of the European Age: A Study of the Transfer of Western Civilization and Its Renewal in Other Continents* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948).

Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman ii: Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1956), 2.

The U.S. involvement in Africa was thus not an isolated development; it was an integral part of America's global outreach after World War II. In practical terms, Washington's post-World War II involvement in Africa can be traced to 1948, to the activities of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA). But it was not until 1950 that the State Department took the first step towards formulating a policy for Africa. It is entirely possible to argue that these were, in reality, no dramatic developments: in 1955, the department acknowledged that the U.S. still did not have an "African policy."⁴ But there is no denying that with the steps taken in 1948 and in 1950, Africa progressively came into focus in Washington. By coincidence, 1948 and 1950 were also key signposts in the "decolonization" process in Africa. On the heels of the February 1948 riots in the Gold Coast (later, Ghana), far-reaching constitutional changes were put in place in the territory in 1950. In a general sense, the developments in the Gold Coast set the stage for the transfer of political power to Africans. The "wind of change" blew so hard and fast in the 1950s that 1960 became Africa's "independence year" -- that year seventeen countries achieved independence from European colonial rule.⁵

⁴ See the "The United States in Africa South of the Sahara," 4 August 1955, enclosure to Department of State Instruction CA-1553, 23 August 1955 in File 312 UN, Dakar consulate general, Classified General Records, 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland).

⁵ The countries were Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo (Zaire), Dahomey (Benin), Ivory Coast, Gabon, Malagasy, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Togo, and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso).

It was against this background that U.S. presence and interest (in Africa) was expanding, albeit, rather cautiously. In the circumstance, "decolonization" seems appropriate as the analytical backdrop for a discussion of America's policy in Africa in the 1950s. Central to this conceptualization is not independence (the transfer of power to Africans), but that the decolonization process involved a redefinition of center-periphery relations to allow for the integration of the African political elite into a neocolonial network. Meanwhile, the redistribution of power at the global level after World War II meant that this redefinition was occurring within an American-dominated world system. As elsewhere, Washington's major objective in Africa was to be the arbiter -- or, at least, to influence the process -- of political change. This broad rubric included ensuring that the "emerging states" were acculturated into its global hegemony, ensuring a pro-Western orientation by Africans, and therefore warding off countervailing influences such as "Communism" and nonalignment. Of greater importance, however, was Washington's interest in raw materials extraction. These were needed to help in the rehabilitation of Western Europe and for the United States' strategic stockpiling program. Closely related to this, was the goal of securing access to markets and investment opportunities for American private capital.

Beyond the extraction of raw materials, U.S. objectives were generally circumscribed by a number of factors. To begin with, World War II did not harm the European position in Africa. Thus rather than having a vacuum to fill up, the U.S. had to contend with the European colonial presence. And this presence included

France, which never missed an opportunity to demonstrate its status as *une grande puissance* (a great power) and therefore its independence from Washington. Beginning from the late 1940s, France had sought to counter the U.S.-Soviet dominance of the world stage and strengthen its claim as a world power through a union with its colonies. This strategy, which also defined its concept and pattern of decolonization, was a major complication for U.S. policy in Africa. In any case, the U.S. had rather slim resources to accomplish much in Africa. But this needs to be put in perspective. In spite of America's standing by 1945 as the world's preeminent economic power, its leaders were anxious to avoid the burden of an "imperial" overreach -- that is, their global responsibilities outstripping their resources. This ensured that there was a corresponding correlation between the level of America's involvement in a given geographical area and such area's bearing on U.S. "national security" interests. Given Africa's low rating in this strategic accounting of costs and benefits, Washington opted for an essentially symbolic, augmentative role and relied on the Europeans to project its hegemonic interests in the region. This arrangement had a number of implications. First, it meant that the American hegemony was very thinly instituted in Africa. Second, it ensured that the U.S. accepted the European position as the governing basis of its policy in Africa. And, third, it meant that the emergence of the U.S. as a superpower -- and especially, its presence in Africa -- did not provide Africans with an alternative negotiating space in the world system.

* * * *

In the 1950s, the foreign policy establishment in Washington split continental Africa into four categories: Egypt was considered as part of the Near East; there was North Africa (Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia; for all practical purposes, Algeria was regarded as an integral part of France); the white settler enclaves (South Africa and possibly, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland) constituted one category; and the rest -- West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa (including the Horn), and southern Africa were collectively referred to as "Africa South of the Sahara." The U.S. had a uniform policy for the latter. There was thus no distinct policy for West Africa, at least, not until 1960. The methodological approach here has been to extract West Africa from this general slot, and especially, to make a conscious effort to distinguish those strands of policy which had a distinctly West African flavor. In its geographic coverage, this dissertation excludes Liberia which was granted independence by the U.S. in 1847. It also excludes the Portuguese colonies (Guinea-Bissau, and the Cape Verde Islands) since Portugal was not decolonizing during the period covered here.

All through, "Africa" is used as a referent to "Africa South of the Sahara." For convenience, the "United States" (U.S.) and "Washington" will be used as interchangeable referents to the "official mind" of the United States of America, particularly that segment of the mind which was involved in the formulation and execution of government policy. "Western Europe" (or Europe) is for the purpose of this study taken to refer to the European

powers which had colonies in Africa, but especially Britain and France.

So many people and institutions have been of tremendous assistance and support to me in the past five years that it is difficult to remember all or even acknowledge them adequately. My Ph.D. program was made possible by the generosity of the University of Toronto through its Simcoe Special Fellowship. Funding for my doctoral research came from the School of Graduate Studies and the History Department, University of Toronto; and the Foundation Research Grant of the Kennedy Library Foundation, the Abilene Travel Grant of the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute, and the Research Grant of the Truman Library Institute. A two-year residential predoctoral fellowship at the Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies, University of Rochester, New York enabled me to focus exclusively on writing this dissertation. To all these institutions, I owe a deep gratitude. In the various archives and communities I did my research, I encountered a lot of good-natured men and women who went beyond the normal run of officialdom to be helpful to me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AmCongen	American consulate general
AmConsul	American consulate
ACUA	Advisory Committee on Underdeveloped Areas (ECA Dependent Areas Branch)
AmEmbassy	American embassy
ALCAN	Aluminium of Canada Limited
ALCOA	Aluminium Company of America
AWF	Ann Whitman File (Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas)
BAC	British Aluminium Company
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPP	Convention Peoples' Party (of Ghana)
DDEL	Dwight David Eisenhower Library (Abilene, Kansas)
DLF	Development Loan Fund
DOTs	Dependent Overseas Territories
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration
ERP	European Recovery Program
FOA	Foreign Operations Administration
<i>FRUS</i>	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
HSTL	Harry S Truman Library (Independence, Missouri)
ICA	International Cooperation Administration
IR	Intelligence Report (of the State Department)
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
MSA	Mutual Security Agency
NA	National Archives, Washington, DC.
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NSC	National Security Council
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PRO	Public Record Office, London
PSF	President's Secretary's File, Truman Library
RG	Record Group (of National Archives documents)
TC	United Nations Trusteeship Council
UDCs	underdeveloped countries
U.S.	United States (of America)
USIA	U.S. Information Agency
USIS	U.S. Information Service
USOM	U.S. Operations Mission
WFM	Washington Foreign Ministers' Meeting
VALCO	Volta Aluminium Company
VRP	Volta River Project

Part I

INTRODUCTORY THEMES

Introduction to Part I

THERE is now hardly any dispute with the view that independence (the transfer of power to Africans) was merely the transition to neocolonialism and, therefore, that it marked no significant divide in the history and nature of western imperialism on the continent. What is not generally realized, however, is that this "revisionist" perspective necessarily entails a fresh interpretation of the decolonization process, an interpretation which should logically account for the truncated nature of independence. In addressing this concern, chapter 1 contests the equation of decolonization with independence and ends with a definition of decolonization which allows the concept to serve as an analytical tool for the subsequent discussion of America's presence in West Africa. Chapter 2 unpacks the underpinnings of America's policy in Africa, and in the process creates a sense of an accumulating thesis by setting out the general arguments and indicating the grounds to be covered by this dissertation.

While the U.S. thus affected developments in West Africa, it is interesting to note that America's domestic racial politics was also reshaped by Africa's independence. Elliot Skinner has found that in the period 1850 to 1924, leading African Americans were occasionally able to influence the formulation of U.S. policy toward Africa.¹ I know of no comparable work which has examined the same subject for the period covered by this

¹ Elliot P. Skinner, *African Americans and U.S. Policy Toward Africa, 1850-1924: In Defense of Black Nationality* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1992).

dissertation. But in an earlier essay, Skinner himself pointed out that until 1957-60, when they were drafted by the State Department to attend independence celebrations in Africa, middle class African Americans had "often looked askance at Africa." Ghana's independence, he said, passed virtually unnoticed by African Americans; only a handful of their intellectuals and veterans of the Garvey movement celebrated the event. Skinner showed how Africa's political developments, beginning with Ghana's independence in 1957, had ramifications on America's established patterns of segregation and discrimination against African Americans: "American whites had become somewhat accustomed to the Asian diplomats at the United Nations, but Africans presented a new and different challenge. For the first time in its history, America found itself compelled by world events to deal with black men on the basis of full equality."

Like Skinner, Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson found that there was an official acknowledgement of the interplay between domestic race relations and American foreign policy by the end of World War II. This, they observed, induced both "the Truman and Eisenhower administrations...however, fitfully, to give executive leadership to the protection of a wide range of civil rights long guaranteed" to African Americans "by the Constitution but subverted by the states." They argued that this process was

Elliot P. Skinner, "African, Afro-American, White American: A Case of Pride and Prejudice," *Freedomways* (Summer 1965), 391, 387, 385-6.

helped by Africa's independence and the resulting increased contact which followed between Africans and the American public.

Racial discrimination against African dignitaries was a serious embarrassment for Washington and it had to routinely do damage control. On 28 September 1960, British Foreign Secretary Lord Home informed President Dwight Eisenhower that the first secretary of the Nigerian delegation to the UN was "finding it difficult to get a place to live in New York because of his color." Secretary of State Christian Herter described the situation as "a terribly difficult one," and Eisenhower immediately ordered that the New York mayor and police commissioner should take up the matter "at once." It appears that Washington's attempt to redress the racial discrimination directed at Africans and to accommodate the African presence at the UN had some redemptive impact on the status of the African American. Reporting after his 1957 visit to Africa, Vice President Richard Nixon showed that the advocacy for Africa's independence could not be divorced from the domestic racial crisis: "We cannot talk equality to the peoples of Africa and Asia," he asserted, "and practice inequality in the United States." More concretely, Alfred Hero observed that the

Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson, "The American Dilemma in a Changing World: The Rise of Africa and the Negro American," *Daedalus* (Fall 1965), esp. pp. 1072-3.

Memorandum of Conference with the President (and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan), 27 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL).

Department of State, "The Emergence of Africa: Report to the President by Vice President Nixon on His Trip to Africa, February 28-March 21, 1957," 7 April 1957 (S.12:Af8, NA).

emergence of independent African states from 1957 "stimulated increased interest in that aspect of world affairs and, perhaps indirectly, in foreign policy" generally among African Americans in the American South. Hero says that black leaders used the changing relations between the races in Africa and the end of colonial control by whites to arouse Southern blacks against local white supremacy: essentially, they argued that "progressive relations between the races in the South would improve" America's "public image" and the effectiveness of its policies toward Africa and other colored areas; that Africans had terminated white supremacy very quickly whereas Southern blacks had been unable to achieve their constitutional rights even a century after slavery; and that "more equalitarian race relations is part of a worldwide movement against colonialism."

Alfred O. Hero, Jr., *The Southerner and World Affairs* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 530.

MANY equate decolonization with independence and will therefore agree with Aguibou Yansane that decolonization in Africa "refers to the formal transfer of political authority and sovereignty from a colonial state to indigenous leaders who hold autonomous power to decide on political, economic, cultural and social policies affecting the lives of all the nationals." Much of the explanation of the process leading up to this transfer of power is built upon the epistemological foundation of modernization theory. The central concept in modernization is change, tremendous changes in many aspects of the society which enable the forces of transition to be channelled through a wider network of circulation. The agents of these changes are middle class elites who are themselves products of the modernization process: it is these elements who challenge and shift the pre-existing order to a transitional path. The starting-point in applying this concept to the discourse on decolonization is that the colonial presence was, by definition, the harbinger of modernization -- that is, western forces of social change such as expanded lines of physical and social communication, western education, wage labor, a money economy, urbanization, and above all, a westernized African class. By the very fact of its internalization of the values of the percolating European culture, this class was better placed to mediate social change for the rest of the African population, patterning in the

¹ Aguibo Y. Yansane, *Decolonization in West African States with French Colonial Legacy -- Comparison and Contrast: Development in Guinea, the Ivory Coast and Senegal (1945-1980)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing, 1984), xv.

process, the growth and diffusion of political, economic and social "modernization."²

The literature shows how the upper segment of the westernized class organized the anticolonial political movements and "demanded" -- or "struggled" for -- and "won" independence. For example, Anthony Hopkins held that in the post-1945 era, African anticolonial movements "assumed a more organized and a more overt political form." This development, according to him, had its antecedents in the 1930s, but "The years between 1945 and 1950 saw an upsurge of militant, anticolonial activities in the West African territories -- in the Press, in mass demonstrations and in confrontation between African leaders and colonial officials." After 1950, the character of African opposition to colonialism changed "from that of bitterness and militancy" to "a more conciliatory and cooperative mood." Hopkins primarily attributes this switch to the fact that "the colonial powers had started to make substantial concessions to African demands by

Martin Kilson, for example, asserts that "It is evident that the source of modernization in Africa was the establishment of colonial rule -- or more precisely, the colonial situation." He argues that "Africans caught up" in the modernization process "were to one degree or another, modernized, which meant that they in turn would become modernizers. It is here that the social and political aspects of change meet, and in a colonial situation this often leads to conflict" which "affects power relationships, and which is often resolved in favor of one group of modernizers or the other." See his "African Political Change and the Modernization Process," *Journal of Modern African Studies (JMAS)*, 1, 4 (December 1963). The quotations are from pp. 427, 431-32. Also see Edward Shills, "Political Development in the New States, Parts I and II," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, ii (1959-60); Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

promoting a greater degree of self-government." This scenario is derived from works such as Thomas Hodgkin's *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* and his *African Political Parties*; James Coleman's *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*; Kalu Ezero's *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria*; Gabriel Olusanya's *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria*; David Apter's *Ghana in Transition*; Dennis Austin's *Politics in Ghana*; David Kimble's *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism*; Martin Kilson's *Political Change in West Africa*, appropriately subtitled *A Study of the Modernization Process in Sierra Leone*; Ruth Morgenthau's *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa*; and Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Road to Independence*.¹ Given the stress it places on the centrality of the nationalist endeavor, I regard the perspective offered by these works as the "nationalist" interpretation of the decolonization process.

Although the citations above include works on francophone West Africa, it is worth stating that the celebration of the nationalist endeavor relates more to anglophone West Africa. According to Michael Crowder and Donal Cruise O'Brien, "French West African politicians...differed fundamentally from their English-speaking neighbors in that the French-speaking African

¹ A.G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (London: Longman, 1973) chap. 7. The quotations are from pp. 260, 271.

² Also see James S. Coleman, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," *The American Political Science Review*, xlviii, 2 (June 1954); Kilson, "African Political Change and the Modernization Process;" idem, "Nationalism and Social Classes in British West Africa," *Journal of Politics*, 20, 2 (May 1958); Immanuel Wallerstein, "Elites in French-Speaking West Africa," *JMAS*, 3, 1 (May 1965); Peter Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change: West African Societies in Transition* (New York: Praeger, 1968).

leaders formally rejected independence in favor of a greater participation in the political process of a French Union or Community of which Africa would be a constituent part." The result was that "the independence of the African territories in 1960 came more as a result of French 'goodwill' and 'magnanimity' than under the pressure of African nationalist movements."

Of late, the "nationalist" interpretation of the British decolonization process has also been contradicted by those who insist that all through, Britain retained the initiative in determining the pace and content of decolonization, and that nationalism was merely a response to political crumbs doled by London. Although there are grounds to contest this utter dismissiveness of the relevance of African nationalism, the dissent draws attention to the fact that African political activism has hitherto received more than its due in the causation of decolonization.

Michael Crowder and Donal Cruise O'Brien, "Politics of Decolonization in French West Africa, 1945-1960," in J.F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds), *History of West Africa, II* (Longman Group, 1987), 736. Also see Michael Crowder, "Independence as a Goal in French West African Politics: 1944-60," in William H. Lewis (ed), *French-Speaking Africa: The Search for Identity* (New York: Walker, 1965).

Guy Martin, "The Historical, Economic, and Political Bases of France's African Policy," *JMAS*, 23, 2 (June 1985), 191.

Especially see R.D. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938-48* (London: Frank Cass, 1982); idem, "The Colonial Office and Planned Decolonization in Africa," *African Affairs*, 83, 330 (January 1984); R. Robinson, "Sir Andrew Cohen: Proconsul of African Nationalism (1909-1968)," in L.H. Gann and P. Duignan (eds), *African Proconsuls: European Governors in Africa* (New York: Free Press, 1978); idem, "Andrew Cohen and the Transfer of Power in Tropical Africa, 1940-1951," in W.H. Morris-Jones and Georges Fischer (eds), *Decolonization and After: The British and French Experience* (London and Totowa, N.J.: Frank Cass, 1980).

Since space constraints do not permit a discussion of the "nationalist" politics in all anglophone West Africa, Ghana -- the pace-setter of African independence -- seems most appropriate as a case study. Historically, there was "little genuine enthusiasm" on the part of the British "for exporting the 'Westminster model' to countries which lacked the presence of British settlers." The turning-point for Africa in this regard was the 1950 Gold Coast constitution. With that constitution, the application of the Westminster model to Africa finally became the definite, irrevocable British policy. But of greater significance, the constitution "conferred on the Gold Coast a greater measure of responsibility for her own internal affairs than had hitherto been conceded to any non-white colonial government on the African continent." In this sense, the developments in the Gold Coast laid the foundation for self-government in Africa.¹¹ Even the settlers in Kenya saw the

¹¹ J.M. Lee, *Colonial Government and Good Government: A Study of the Ideas Expressed by the British Official Classes in Planning Decolonization 1939-1964* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), 1.

¹² J.H. Price, *Political Institutions of West Africa* (London: Hutchinson, 1966), 53.

¹³ "Self-government" in British political practice, had long meant the steady devolution of political authority through legislative institutions until parliamentary sovereignty -- i.e. with the executive becoming collectively responsible to the legislature -- was attained. This approach derives from the notion that within parliament resides the sovereignty of the citizenry and thus that representation and legislative decision-making are the means by which legitimacy is incorporated into the political process. The first stage is a LegCo consisting entirely of officials and nominated members; in the second stage, a few elected members are brought into the council, to complement the official and nominated members; the third is a council consisting of official, nominated and elected members, with the elected members in the majority: but certain subjects are still reserved.

constitution as the beginning of the end of "the white man's control throughout the continent."¹¹ White settlers in southern Africa shared this perspective and were therefore very hostile to the constitutional change in the Gold Coast. From Northern Rhodesia, Roy Welensky, leader of the unofficial members of the legislative council, stated on 27 February 1951 that the vast majority of the Europeans in the Rhodesias and in all colonial Africa regarded the advance in the Gold Coast as a further step in the liquidation of the British empire and that they would resist with the utmost vigor any attempt to apply a similar policy in Northern Rhodesia. Three days earlier, Prime Minister D.F. Malan of South Africa warned that the Commonwealth would not endure if Britain persisted in its policy of "converting colonies into independent members and thus changing the nature of the Commonwealth without consultation or approval of the other members of the organization."¹²

The fourth and final stage is a council consisting of elected members to whom ministers forming a cabinet or executive are responsible for the entire administration without reservation, the governor being reduced to a position analogous to that of the British monarch in the British metropolitan system. See A.B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, i (London: Oxford University Press, 1928); Martin Wight, *The Development of the Legislative Council, 1606-1945* (London: Faber & Faber, 1946).

¹¹ Michael Blundell, *So Rough a Wind* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1964), 83.

¹² Cited in OIR Report No. 5491, "Background and Significance of the New Gold Coast Constitution," (Division of Research for Near East and Africa, Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State, 28 March 1951), NA.

Elsewhere, I have shown that British policy in Africa continued to be shackled by the dogma of indirect rule¹¹ until 1948. In the Gold Coast, for example, the chiefs were assigned six out of the fourteen unofficial seats in the Legislative Council (LegCo) created by the 1925 constitution. The 1946 constitution which followed increased the chiefs' representation: out of the eighteen unofficial seats in the new LegCo, the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs had nine and four came from the Ashanti Confederacy Council. But these figures still do not convey the real significance of the chiefs -- the fact that by the mid-1940s, indirect rule had been enhanced to provide the structural basis of the entire colonial political process. Under the constitutions framed for Nigeria and the Gold Coast in 1946, the native authorities (the chiefs) were no longer mere local government agencies: they were fused together into regional groupings and the groupings in turn joined into something of a central "native authority council"; a direct link was thus formed between the regional and central legislatures. Members of the regional assemblies were selected from the native authorities, and the assemblies in turn served as electoral colleges for the legislative councils.¹² This meant that to be associated at all

¹¹ Indirect rule refers to the British model of colonial local government. The set-up consisted of a resident at the head of a political territorial unit (a province), assistant residents, district officers, and assistant district officers, all Europeans. Under these came the native authority consisting of a paramount chief who, in turn, had his own hierarchy of lesser officials (district heads, village heads, etc.).

¹² Ebere Nwaubani, "Getting Behind a Myth: The British Labour Party and Decolonization in Africa, 1945-1951," *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 39, 2 (1993).

with the political system, one had to relate to the chiefs.³ Utilizing the native authorities as the agencies of political recruitment, the constitutions gave a pretence of unofficial majorities in the LegCos by increasing African representation. Beyond this, the territories were in no way set on the path of self-government. The governors remained, as before, the instruments of policy, responsible for initiating bills and with powers to veto any legislation which did not receive their approval. It was the February 1948 Gold Coast "riots" that finally forced the issue and made the transfer of power to Africans a matter of serious politics in London.

On 28 February 1948, ex-servicemen demonstrating in Accra against nonpayment of discharge benefits and unemployment were fired upon by the police: two were killed, five wounded. Three days of rioting engulfed not only Accra, but most other towns as well. In the end, twenty-nine people were killed, 237 injured.

The riots were a spontaneous mass revolt which occurred against the background of widespread discontent and tension arising largely from economic causes.⁴ Politics intruded into this discontent in the sense that the difficulties were -- or believed to have been -- caused by a colonial administration

³ Under the 1946 Gold Coast constitution, only five of the eighteen unofficial seats in the LegCo were to be elected directly. Since the opportunities were thus very narrow for non-chiefs, many western educated elites had to lobby the chiefs to enter the LegCo on the ticket of the Joint Provincial Council. In 1946, only J.B. Danquah and C. Baeta were successful in winning that ticket. See Kofi Frimpong, "The Joint Provincial Council of Paramount Chiefs and the Politics of Independence, 1946-58," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 1, xiv (June 1973).

⁴ See Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (Oxford University Press, 1964), 58-73.

which did not seem to be doing anything to alleviate the situation. By 1947, the major concern in the Gold Coast arose from the "swollen shoot" which attacked cocoa trees. The only known remedy at the time was to cut down infected trees. But the farmers, resentful over an approach which threatened their livelihood, were not enthusiastic to cut their trees down. As a consequence, the Agriculture Department became more directly involved in the process -- from January 1947, it sent its own men to destroy infected trees. By the end of the year, two and a half million trees had been destroyed, and it was calculated that fifty million trees, a quarter of the total crop, were still infected.¹ Since the late 1920s, when it constituted seventy-eight percent of Ghana's total exports,² cocoa has been the mainstay of the country's economy and society. Swollen shoot was thus a national disaster. But it was particularly so for the farmers, especially the Akan. Commenting on the atmosphere prevailing in the affected areas, one official assessment observed that "It is a widespread economic depression which has affected the social and moral life of the community....It has created a sensation. The disaster is felt appallingly....The farmers realize the danger behind the bewailing catastrophe."³

¹ Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948, Colonial No. 231, s. 263. (Dated 9 June 1948, the report was published on 4 August 1948.) Also, David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), 34-35.

² Rhoda Howard, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in Ghana* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1978), 75.

³ Cited in Polly Hill, *The Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer: A Preliminary Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 67, n. 1.

More widespread and problematic than swollen shoot was inflation. In the years following the end of World War II, the prices of local staples in the Gold Coast were "probably about two and a half times the pre-war level" and many imported foodstuffs were hard to come by.¹ Worse, wages lagged behind inflation: the real wage index (for unskilled labor in Accra) fell from 100 in 1939 to 66 by November 1941; and even after the wage increases of December 1941, the index still stood at 81. A second wage increase in July 1947 raised the index to 91, but the impact was erased by rising inflation. Thus the purchasing power of the laborer's wage dropped to 86 by November 1947.²

These difficulties synthesized into a groundswell of mass discontent which was canalized by Nii Kwabena Bonne, a Ga chief and highly successful Accra-based businessman. In December 1947, he issued an ultimatum that unless the European and Syrian stores reduced their prices, he would call for a mass boycott of imported goods from 24 January 1948.³ It took the Gold Coast government up till 20 February 1948 to convene a meeting which brought Nii Bonne together with the council of chiefs, the chamber of commerce, as well as the umbrella platform of the European trading companies known as Association of West African

¹ Colonial No. 231, s. 192.

² See Dennis Austin, *Ghana Observed: Essays on the Politics of a West African Republic* (Manchester University Press, 1976), 15; W.B. Birmingham, "An Index of Real Wages of the Unskilled Labourer in Accra," *Economic Bulletin of Ghana*, iv, 3 (1960), 2-6.

³ Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 15; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 35.

Merchants (AWAM).⁴ Meanwhile, the boycott had started as Bonne proposed and held on well. At the meeting, the companies agreed to reduce their gross overall profit margin (of non-controlled commodities) from seventy-five to fifty percent for a three-month trial period. In return, Nii Bonne agreed to call the boycott off on Saturday, 28 February.⁵

Incidentally, the boycott was ending on the day ex-servicemen had planned a procession to present a petition to the governor. By Nkrumah's account, "These two events were entirely disconnected and it was mere coincidence that they should have happened on the same day."⁶ No sooner had the ex-servicemen started their procession than they abandoned their approved route in the direction of the government secretariat and made for the Christiansborg Castle (the governor's residence). Almost immediately, they ran into a police barricade; and with little hesitancy, the police fired at them. Elsewhere in the town, another major crisis was fast gathering steam: the undertaking by the foreign trading companies to cut prices had been widely misinterpreted as implying an across-the-board fifty percent

⁴ Much of the hardships -- the scarcity of imported goods and inflation was widely attributed to AWAM. Just before World War II, the United African Company (UAC), in concert with a number of other leading European trading firms, formed a merchandise agreement group -- i.e. a group of firms which agreed on prices and shares of the market for a number of imports into the Gold Coast. This cartel, which later transformed itself into AWAM, survived until April 1948. See Howard, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in Ghana*, 106.

⁵ Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 18; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 35.

⁶ Kwame Nkrumah, *Autobiography* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1957), 76.

reduction in prices." Following the police confrontation, the rump of the ex-servicemen turned back and merged with crowds already infuriated because prices had not been reduced as much as had been generally expected. The news of the police shooting was thus the fire on a gunpowder trail: violence erupted immediately. European and Syrian stores and offices were looted; cars were burnt; the prison at Ussher Fort was burst open and prisoners were released.

A three man commission headed by Aiken Watson, recorder of Bury, St. Edmunds, was promptly constituted by the British government to "inquire into and report" on the incident "and their underlying causes, and to make recommendations on any matter arising from their inquiry." The commission gave the broadest interpretation to its brief and peeped inquisitively into every cupboard -- Africanization of the public service, native administration and the chiefs, tardiness in constitutional reform, trading discrimination against Africans, immigration, housing, land tenure, agriculture, industrial development, law reform, education. In each case, it uncovered and commented on a skeleton. The commission identified "deeper-lying political, economic and social grievances" as the background cause of the riots. On the political grievances, it mentioned the discontent of the ex-servicemen who "by the reason of their contact with

* Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 18.

* Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 38.

The other members were Keith Murray of Lincoln College, Oxford University; Andrew Dalglish, a trade unionist; and E.G. Hanrott of the Colonial Office, who acted as secretary. They arrived in the Gold Coast in April 1948.

other peoples" had developed a "political and national consciousness" and now felt disappointed with conditions at home; "a universal feeling" that Africanization was "merely a promise and not a driving force" in government policy; the frustration of the westernized Africans who saw "no prospect of ever exercising political power under existing conditions"; and a failure to realize that the "star of rule through the chiefs was on the wane." Finding the 1946 constitution "outmoded at birth." the commission went ahead, not just to recommend but to write a new constitution. The main features of the constitution prescribed were an enlarged executive council (ExCo) -- or a "Board of Ministers," as the commission called it -- and an enlarged LegCo (to be known as a House of Assembly), both with an African majority. The ExCo was to consist of nine full time, salaried ministers, five of whom were to be African members of the Assembly. The governor was to retain his reserve powers and chairmanship of the ExCo. But the ExCo was to become "a Board of Ministers" with powers to initiate policy and with collective responsibility to the legislature. The governor was excised from the LegCo proposed to consist of forty-five elected, five nominated, "as well as ex officio members, chosen for four years (unless dissolved earlier on the advice of the "Board of Ministers")." This was a revolutionary political agenda as it meant a total shift away from indirect rule and pointed at the Westminster model as the formula for Africa.

¹ Colonial No. 231.

² *Ibid.*

Reacting to the commission's report which was turned in August 1948, the British government rejected the criticisms of the 1946 constitution which, it said, was "framed in consultation with the representatives of the people of the Gold Coast"; and was "accepted with enthusiasm by the press and public." The government further recalled that in the two years the constitution had been operational, no demands had been received from the Gold Coast for further constitutional reform. Nonetheless, London committed itself to the Watson proposals, provided they were "acceptable to local opinion."¹ To gauge that opinion, the government -- in January 1949 -- appointed an all-Gold Coast committee of forty men, under the chairmanship of Mr Justice J. Henley Coussey, specifically to examine the Watson constitutional proposals.

The Coussey committee commenced sitting on 20 January 1949 and reported to the Gold Coast governor on 17 August of the same year. By twenty votes to nineteen, the committee favored a bicameral legislature which was to include a House of Assembly consisting of seventy-eight elected members. The House was to elect its speaker from among its members. Besides, it provided for a leader of the House "elected as such by the Assembly and appointed by the Governor." Legislation was to be enacted by the governor "with the advice and consent" of the legislature. In place of the existing ExCo with its merely advisory powers and predominantly official membership, it proposed one which was to

¹ *Statement by His Majesty's Government on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Gold Coast 1948, Colonial No. 232.*

be collectively responsible to the legislature and with full executive functions and the power of originating policy. The governor who was to preside over all meetings of the ExCo was vested with reserve powers to veto or enforce legislation as he deemed fit. In addition, the executive was to consist of not more than three ex-officio members and eight members of the House of Assembly; all the eight would have the status of ministers in the ExCo although only six were to have portfolios. The leader of the House who was to be among the latter category was also to lead the elected side of the ExCo in the House, and so be the equivalent of a prime minister.

In October 1949, Secretary of State Arthur Creech Jones published the report of the Coussey committee together with his comments on it. He gave a general welcome to the committee's recommendations as the groundwork on which further constitutional progress in the territory could be based. He endorsed the proposal for an ExCo with a majority of Africans in executive responsibility for departments, and suggested that the council should be the principal instrument of policy; that it should not meet only when summoned by the governor, as under the 1946 constitution, but also on the request of two-thirds of its members; that the council should take its decisions by a simple majority vote, the governor having only a casting vote. In addition, Jones suggested that the governor should also have the right to act against the majority of the council on matters within the scope of his reserve powers. However, he added that it

Gold Coast: Report to His Excellency The Governor by the Committee on Constitutional Reform 1949, Colonial No. 248.

would be necessary for the exercise of this right (except in emergencies) to be subject to the prior approval of the secretary of state. On the provision for a leader of the House, Jones felt that in the absence of a party system, the leader would not be sure of retaining the support of a majority in the legislature and that without such a majority, continuity in the conduct of public business could not be maintained. He suggested instead that the ExCo should elect one of its own members to perform the function of the leader of the government side in the legislature. On the proposal for collective executive responsibility to the legislature, the secretary observed that while the committee opposed the ExCo being responsible to the governor, it did not recommend the granting of full responsibility to the ministers. The committee had recommended that the governor should remain as the council's chairman and with reserve powers, and that the council itself was to include official members. Jones explained that since the governor had such reserve powers, he -- rather than the legislature -- must retain ultimate responsibility. Although the Coussey committee had opted for a bicameral legislature, it also presented alternative proposals for a unicameral body. The British government chose the latter."

The 1950 Gold Coast constitution which followed embodied the recommendations of the Coussey committee as amended by the views of the secretary of state. Given that the governor and the Colonial Office still retained ultimate responsibility for the

Statement by His Majesty's Government on the Report of the Committee on Constitutional Reform 1949, Colonial No. 250 (14 October 1949).

administration of the territory through overriding reserve powers, the constitution granted an advanced form of colony government rather than a semi-responsible one. Nevertheless, it represented a remarkable development in the territory's constitutional history. The representative element preponderated in the House of Assembly, which had three officials, six nominees representing mining and commercial interests, and seventy-five elected Africans of whom only one-third were chiefs. The governor lost his place in the Assembly. The ExCo, now the major instrument of policy, had a total membership of eleven which included eight African members of the Assembly; six of the Africans held portfolios.

By ending the preeminence of rule through the chiefs, the 1950 constitution definitely set the Gold Coast on the path to independence. The question which arises has to do with the role of the "nationalist" elements in this achievement. To begin with, the 1946 constitution was warmly received by the nationalist elements; and from 23 July 1946 when the constitution was

F.M. Bourret, *Ghana: The Road to Independence, 1919-1957* (Stanford University Press, 1960), 164. Kwame Nkrumah noted that J.B. Danquah, who later became a leading UGCC member, "supported the Burns (1946) Constitution so strongly that he allowed himself to be nominated by the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs as their representative in the Burns Legislative Council." See his *Autobiography*, 69. "Nationalist" newspapers reflected the general enthusiasm which greeted the inauguration of the 1946 constitution. *The Gold Coast Observer* (9 August 1946), for example, remarked that "The seed is well planted. The democratic seed. Soon it will sprout and fructify in our Gold Coast soil. For that soil is adaptable to seeds of good nature, whether foreign or Native. The new Constitution, said the Governor, represents 'a very considerable political advance.' So considerable it is possible that even some of our own people, even some of our own leaders, may not quite fully realize its august and portentous proportions. It were not as if a father had told his growing son: 'Now you know how to wash your hands, come and sit at the table with me, and if you prove

inaugurated until the shortlived 'positive action' of 1950 -- when the details of the 1950 constitution had already been worked out -- there were no political protests and pressure for a constitutional revision.

At the time of the February 1948 riots, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) which had come into existence in August 1947 was virtually the only nationalist movement in the Gold Coast. The Watson commission held the UGCC Working Committee responsible for the riots. There is, however, abundant evidence that the "nationalist" politicians neither organized nor inspired these events -- that is, Nii Bonne's boycott, the demonstration by the ex-servicemen, and the riots. "Nii Bonne and his supporters in this boycott," Kwame Nkrumah attests, "had never been members of the United Gold Coast Convention and I was therefore quite certain that the campaign had nothing whatever to do with the UGCC." Nkrumah -- who had just returned from Britain and was staying with his mother at Tarkwa at the material moment -- readily confesses that he "had no time to take part in the boycott" being organized by Nii Bonne. He did not even attend a rally held at Tarkwa at which Nii Bonne spoke, canvassing support." At the time of the riots in Accra, Nkrumah

that you really know how to eat at high table, you will sit by me.' Far from it. It were as if a father had told his son: 'My dear son: here is the key to my estate, or the family estate. Take and manage it. I only reserve to myself power to correct and check you if I suspect you are going wrong.' The old Constitution is as different from the new as water is from fire, one element from another."

* In 1947, the UGCC invited Nkrumah to become its secretary. He accepted the invitation and left England on 14 November 1947. See Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 61-63.

* *Ibid.*, 74-75.

and the UGCC Working Committee were in Saltpond, sixty miles away. He readily admits that he neither had a part in the riots nor any influence on the participants. On the ex-servicemen, he says that he was "certainly aware of their general dissatisfaction" and that "it had been my intention to organize them in due course as an arm of our movement."

By holding the UGCC leadership liable for the riots, the Watson report inadvertently but instantly turned the UGCC into "the leading nationalist organization." (Between March and May 1948, its membership increased by about twenty-five percent.)¹⁷ But Nkrumah was the major beneficiary. As John Hargreaves has put it: "Nkrumah had not made the Accra riots; but the government's response helped to make Nkrumah."¹⁸ In the aftermath of the riots, the police had found a (British) Communist Party card on Nkrumah. He explained "in all honesty that the card was of no consequence," that when he was in England, he "had associated myself with all parties ranging from the extreme right to the extreme left in order to gain as much knowledge as I could to help me in organizing my own nationalist party on the best possible lines when I eventually returned to my country."¹⁹ Yet, the Watson report dwelt at length with Nkrumah's "communist affiliations"; his "avowed aim for a Union of West African Soviet

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁸ Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, *Ghana: End of an Illusion* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1966), 17.

¹⁹ John D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa* (London & New York: Longman, 1988), 115.

²⁰ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 79-80.

Socialist Republics"; and held that he "boldly proposes a programme which is all too familiar to those which have fallen the victims of Communist enslavement"; and that the UGCC "Working Committee, fired by Mr Nkrumah's enthusiasm and drive, were eager to seize political power and for the time being were indifferent to the means adopted to attain it."¹² Perhaps, of greater significance was that all the leading Gold Coast politicians, except Nkrumah, were appointed to the Coussey commission. By thus isolating him, the colonial regime built up Nkrumah's stature as the leading British antagonist.

The UGCC leadership, meeting at Saltpond, learnt of the riots at about 5.30 p.m., via a telephone call, and left immediately, arriving in Accra around 8.30 p.m. After assessing the situation, they met again, after which J.B. Danquah despatched an 8000-word cablegram alerting the secretary of state that "Civil Government Gold Coast broken down" and that "the Working Committee United Gold Coast Convention declare they are prepared and ready to take over interim government." Nkrumah sent out a more condensed version demanding the recall of the Governor and the institution of a commission to supervise the establishment of a constituent assembly.¹³ The latter was inflammatory, not so much because of its contents, as to the outlets Nkrumah chose -- the UN, *The New York Times*, as well as the *Moscow New Times*. In retrospect, those two cablegrams served as a signal of the differences between Nkrumah and the rest of

¹² See Colonial No. 231; Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 85-87.

¹³ Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 19; Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 77; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 39.

the UGCC leadership. By August 1948, the differences had become so serious that Nkrumah was demoted from his post as the party's secretary to its treasurer. From then, he virtually went his own way, even as he remained in the UGCC fold. By September, he and Komla Gbedemah had established a nation-wide movement called the Committee on Youth Organization (CYO); this was quickly built up as the basis of a new political party. On 12 June 1949, the breach became final: Nkrumah announced the formation of the CPP. The new party immediately committed itself "To fight relentlessly by all constitutional means for the achievement of 'Self-Government NOW' for the Chiefs and people of the Gold Coast."⁴¹ For Nkrumah, this was the dividing line with the UGCC: "The actual conflict, if one existed at all," he later recollected, "was between the CYO and the Working Committee of the UGCC owing to the demand of the former for 'full Self-Government now as opposed to the latter's -- 'full Self-Government within the shortest possible time.'"⁴² It is easy to read much into this distinction. Certainly, the CPP did not intend to subvert the colonial status quo; and more narrowly, Nkrumah, no more than the UGCC leadership, did not intend to confront Britain on the issue of self-government. Like the UGCC, the CPP's approach was constitutional "nationalism" (anticolonial journalism as well as petitions and deputations to London to protest specific grievances against the colonial administration). From the onset,

⁴¹ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, 81-85; idem, *Ghana Observed*, 20-26; Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, chaps. 8, 9; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 42-45.

⁴² Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 103.

Nkrumah worked on the assumption that the achievement of self-government would require the close cooperation of the authorities in London. He had persuaded the CPP to adopt "Self-Government Now," he says, "as the Labour Government were then in power in the United Kingdom it would be more favorably disposed towards our demand. If the Conservatives were returned to power the following year our struggle for independence might be suppressed."¹

The Coussey report was published at the end of October 1949. The UGCC members who had served on the committee had, in their minority report, opposed the continuance of the "reserve powers" and the presence of ex-officio members on the executive.² In spite of these reservations, the party accepted the report and undertook "to try and work it despite its shortcomings."³

Nkrumah's response came on 20 November 1949 when he convened the Ghana People's Representative Assembly. He intended the assembly as a forum "to coalesce public opinion against the Coussey Report and to urge the people into effective action." Representatives from "over fifty" organizations attended -- the UGCC was a notable exception -- and resolved "that the Coussey report and His Majesty's Government's statement thereto are unacceptable to the country as a whole" and declared "that the people of the Gold Coast be granted immediate self-government, that is, full Dominion status with the Commonwealth of Nations based on the

¹ *Ibid.*

² See Colonial 248, sections 443-64.

³ See Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 23.

Statute of Westminster." On 15 December, Nkrumah communicated these resolutions to the governor, and threatened 'positive action' if they were ignored. The same day, he published a front page article titled "The Era of Positive Action Draws Nigh" in *The Evening News*; and addressed a rally in Accra, where he issued an ultimatum: "If nothing was done by the British Government concerning our request for a constituent assembly within two weeks from that date...Positive Action would take place any time thereafter."¹¹

The ultimatum prompted Gold Coast Colonial Secretary Reginald Saloway to meet with Nkrumah. The latter recollects that he was unyielding: "All we are asking for," Nkrumah remembers telling Saloway, "is a constituent assembly which necessitates dividing the country into constituencies, calling a general election and letting the people decide for themselves whether they will adopt the Coussey or not." By Nkrumah's account, the secretary was not willing to accommodate the demand, and so the meeting did not head off the imminence of 'positive action.'¹² But Saloway recalls telling Nkrumah "that if he put his plan for 'Positive Action' into operation he would do great harm to the

¹¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 113-114. 'Positive action,' according to Nkrumah, was the "adoption of all legitimate and constitutional means by which we could attack the forces of imperialism in the country. The weapons were legitimate political agitation, newspaper and educational campaigns and, as a last resort, the constitutional application of strikes, boycotts and non-cooperation based on the principle of absolute non-violence as used by Gandhi." See *ibid.*, 111-112. But Fitch and Oppenheimer have pointed out that "Nkrumah's is a conservative interpretation of Gandhi, who never stipulated that non-violence must be 'constitutional.'" See their *Ghana*, 28 n. 23.

¹² Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 116; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 53-54.

country and would impede constitutional reform....The people did not want violence and would welcome its suppression by the government." Nkrumah was therefore advised that "if he followed the constitutional road which would be opened by the forthcoming reforms (the 1950 constitution) he would win at the elections." Pressing along this line, Saloway recalls talking Nkrumah out of 'positive action': "After some hours of discussion the CPP [executive] Committee agreed to follow constitutional methods. Nkrumah publicly called off 'Positive Action.'" It seems that Nkrumah did actually back down: *The Evening News*, the CPP newspaper, twice announced the postponement of 'positive action.'

Meanwhile, the CPP threat was occurring against the background of a simmering tension between labor and government. On 13 November, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) threatened a general strike as a response to the dismissal of sixty Meteorological Department workers charged with staging an illegal strike in October 1949. Nkrumah shows that although it was happening independently of him, the TUC strike threat "at this particular time increased the popularity of Positive Action." Playing the role of mediators, the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs met with the labor leaders on 6 January 1950. However, labor was in no mood to soften its stand; instead, they expanded their demands at the meeting to include "(a) the withdrawal of

Reginald Saloway, "The New Gold Coast," *International Affairs*, xxxi, 4 (October 1955), 470-71.

Fitch and Oppenheimer, *Ghana*, 29.

Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 115.

the government circular concerning the political activities of civil servants," and "(b) the immediate granting of Dominion status." That same day, the TUC announced a general strike to start at midnight.¹¹

The question as to whether or not the CPP wanted 'positive action' became academic once labor went on strike. Richard Jeffries learnt that Nkrumah would have "backed down" from the 1950 'positive action' strike had the leadership of the railway workers -- especially Pobe Biney -- not "forced his hand."¹² Nkrumah himself corroborates Jeffries: he says that what finally decided the matter for the CPP was that "The TUC had already declared a strike which had been in action since midnight on 6th January, two days earlier." But even with the TUC strike well under way, Nkrumah remained very undecided: in his own words, "The whole morning went by and part of the afternoon."¹³ According to Saloway, Nkrumah had "tried hard to get the Trades Union Congress to call off the general strike but the TUC no longer had any control over the wild men." And besides, "Danquah taunted Nkrumah with having sold himself to the Colonial Secretary and thus infuriated the rank and file of the CPP who forced Nkrumah to retract."¹⁴

The strike -- and 'positive action' -- affected the railroads, electricity, communications, and other key public

¹¹ Richard Jeffries, *Class, Power and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi* (Cambridge University Press, 1978), 54-55.

¹² *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 115-117.

¹⁴ Saloway, "The New Gold Coast," 470-71.

services; in addition, there were demonstrations and rallies. As these unfolded, *West Africa* (14 January 1950) found Nkrumah "the most worried man in the Gold Coast," and that he "has been sincere in not wanting violence or a 'show-down.'" Since it merely merged with and was indeed driven by a strike which had its own distinct dynamic, it is difficult to assess the achievement of 'positive action.' The most it did would seem to have been to give the strike a political coloration.

On 10 January, the colonial regime imposed a state of emergency on the entire Gold Coast; the CPP and labor leaders were arrested, later arraigned and convicted on charges ranging from sedition to coercing the government and promoting an illegal strike. At the trials, "The spirit of courageous defiance was clearly absent." CPP leaders either denied knowing what "positive action" meant, or maintained that they did not like it; the treasurer even denied being a member of the party. "Only Nkrumah admitted having anything to do with the 'positive action' campaign." But he "denied having called on anybody to strike: he maintained that he even tried to stop the strike when he heard of it. Furthermore, Nkrumah said that he did not know of any section of the people which had struck because of the CPP."

With most of the CPP leadership in prison, it fell to Gbedemah to hold the party together and prepare it for the general elections which was soon to follow. In the event, he did a superb job in setting up a formidable party network all over the Gold Coast. But he also had an important asset: the

imprisonment of its leaders strengthened the nationalist credentials of the CPP and therefore helped its cause." In the elections which took place on 8 February 1951, the CPP won thirty-four of the thirty-eight seats in the LegCo. Four days later, Governor Arden-Clarke released Nkrumah from prison and immediately invited him to form a government." Nkrumah accepted the offer and became the leader of government business. At his first press conference after leaving prison, he substituted 'tactical action' for 'positive action': like the UGCC, he was now prepared to give the Coussey constitution a chance. With that, Nkrumah jettisoned his own dictum -- announced at the birth of the CPP -- that "A policy of collaboration and appeasement would get us nowhere in our struggle for immediate self-government."

Of great significance here is Basil Davidson's observation that from the moment he was coopted into the colonial regime, Nkrumah made a "Swing to the Right." The result, Davidson explains, was that Nkrumah "worked for [the] fruits" of his compromise with Arden-Clarke "with the 'tactical action' which, he joked a little defensively, might also be called 'tactful action.'" He was tremendously tactful. He was moderate. He was flexible. He was willing to listen to the most orthodox

" Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, 88-90, 114; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 54-55.

" Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, 138-151.

" Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 103.

advice."¹ The overall result was that Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke "worked closely together to achieve the goal of independence, but few outside a very small circle of colleagues realized how complete was their co-operation."² Arden-Clarke does indeed provide a splendid example of the role of the colonial governors as agents in the transfer of power to Africans. On Sunday, 16 September 1956, he wrote his wife: "The Secretary of State was doing a wobble and wanting to defer announcing a firm date for independence, while I was insisting that the announcement must be made before the Assembly rises on Tuesday next [18th]. Yesterday the S[ecretary] of S[tate] surrendered with the words 'I feel you have left me no alternative' -- he was right, I hadn't!" Later that same day (16 September), London sent a despatch to Accra announcing its intention that independence should come on or about 6 March 1957.³ The following day, Arden-Clarke informed Nkrumah of the despatch and congratulated him: "This is a great day for you. It is the end of what you have struggled for." But Nkrumah, recognizing that the governor had also been part of the "struggle," corrected Arden-Clarke: "It is the end of what we have been struggling for, Sir Charles. You have contributed a great deal towards this; in fact, I might not have succeeded without your help and cooperation."⁴

¹ Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 126.

² Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 123.

³ *Ibid.*, 123-124.

⁴ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, 282. (Emphasis in original.)

With little effort, the chronology of events in Ghana shows that the 1950 constitution which was the watershed in Ghana's political evolution came about in spite of the "nationalist" elements. And as Austin has pointed out, the 1951 election which brought Nkrumah and his Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) to power would have been held whether Nkrumah and the CPP existed or not. Besides, the 1954 constitution -- introduced following Nkrumah's July 1953 "motion of destiny" -- which replaced that of 1950 "was much like the minority report drawn up by the UGCC [United Gold Coast Convention] leaders on the Coussey Committee." It is also worth recalling that from the time he went into government, Nkrumah's major struggle was not against the British, his partners in power, but the domestic ethnic chauvinists who formulated their manifesto in pro-federalist semantics.

The Ghanaian case raises serious questions about the causal significance of African anticolonialism. But such questions apply with even greater force to other case studies. For example, it is now common knowledge that like francophone African politicians, the Sierra Leonean "nationalists" were taciturn in advocating independence. As John Hargreaves has pointed out, the transfer of political power occurred in Sierra Leone "despite a notable lack of urgency on the part of Prime Minister Sir Milton Margai." In the case of Nigeria, the "nationalist" literature itself clearly shows that what passed for Nigerian "nationalism" or "anticolonial" movement was essentially the fragmented politics

¹⁰ Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 28.

¹¹ Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa*, 162.

of debilitating intra-elite hostility which was projected in primeval terms. For example, Coleman noted that between 1948 and 1950, less was heard of "British autocracy" and "rapacious colonial exploitation," as against Fulani threats to either continue their "interrupted" march to the sea or withdraw to the Western Sudan, as well as Yoruba allegations of threatened Igbo domination.¹ This feuding ensured that Nigeria's independence was delayed, not by Britain, but by the Nigerian political elite. In his memoir, Dennis Osadeby -- one of Nigeria's "nationalist" politicians -- confessed that the bickering within the Nigerian "nationalist" camp was not "conducive to winning independence."²

For those who evaluate the significance of an anticolonial movement by the magnitude of its ferocity and physical confrontation with the colonial authority, the nationalism of anglophone and francophone West Africa would prove very disappointing indeed. At the best of times, the anticolonial effort consisted of writings in newspapers, petitions and delegations to the metropolitan capitals, as well as the attendance at constitutional conferences. There was nothing in the form of the protest marches which characterized the black civil rights struggle in America. Nor was there much of a civic education program aimed at the construction of a popular-democratic social order. One is therefore perfectly entitled to argue that the conflation of this "pen and paper" nationalism

¹ J.S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (1958; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 312.

² Dennis Osadebay, *Building a Nation* (Ibadan: Macmillan, 1978), 76.

into a heroic anticolonial struggle which ousted the colonial powers presumes an astonishing degree of cause and effect which has not and cannot be convincingly demonstrated. Yet as very circumscribed as it was, there is no denying that this "pen and paper" nationalism represented pressure of a kind on the colonial authorities. But it is still nearer the truth to argue that -- even in the late 1940s -- this was still an incipient anticolonial movement with the potential of spiralling towards a full-blown counter-hegemonic challenge to imperialism. The Zikist Movement of Nigeria formed in 1946 was a signal of this possibility. The movement drew its membership from angry young men -- without higher education and thus less wedded to western ways -- who were itching to seize the initiative and force the pace of Nigeria's political development through "positive action," consisting of outright defiance of colonial authority, militant demonstrations and strikes, as well as boycott of European goods. An essential element of what Gary Wasserman calls "consensual decolonization" is the integration by the metropolitan power of "a potentially disruptive nationalist movement into the structures and requisites of the colonial political-economic system." Confronted with the Zikist challenge, the British effected this integration by (1)

Gabriel O. Olusanya, "The Zikist Movement: A Study in Political Radicalism, 1946-50," *JMAS*, 4, 3 (November 1966); idem, *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria, 1939-1953* (University of Lagos and Evans, 1973), 113-117; Coleman, *Nigeria*, 296-302; Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Princeton University Press, 1970). 72-83.

Gary Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue, 1960-1965* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), 5.

dislocating the militant mass consciousness of the Zikists, and (2) co-opting the more pliant segment of the Nigerian political elite -- the Nnamdi Azikiwes, Obafemi Awolowos, and the Ahmadu Bellos -- into a collaborative endeavor. The first objective was achieved in 1950 when the Zikist Movement was decapitated. The second was actualized by the 1951 constitution. Obafemi Awolowo, a major beneficiary of the power reallocation, was later to concede that the extremism of the younger elements "must have brought home vividly to the British government that if the apostles of constructive nationalism were discredited by undue delay on Britain's part to accede to the wishes of the people of Nigeria, political extremism would be enthroned and the friendship of Nigeria would be forfeited for good."

The cooption of Nkrumah was the test-run of this strategy of "buying off" or "integrating" incipient African nationalism before it gathered momentum. In his discussion of the transition process in Ghana, Austin says that in 1950/51, Britain suddenly found itself "caught in the difficulty of trying to maintain the balance at the middle of a see-saw which was beginning to tilt quite unexpectedly and sharply downwards on the populist side" of Nkrumah and his CPP. Austin added that the British effort to grapple with the situation "produced policies of collaboration, notionally defined as 'diarchy,' which enabled the colonial government to retain control until the final ceremony of independence." Austin will readily concede that metropolitan

¹ Obafemi Awolowo, *AWO: The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (Cambridge University Press, 1960), 299.

² Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 2.

control survived independence. The result was an independence which was strong in form and vacuous in content. "The process of decolonization," in Ghana, Judith Marshall explains, "was designed to protect the institutions of colonial domination, the state and foreign companies, from any radical challenge, and to bring the commercial and bureaucratic bourgeoisies into alliance with imperialism." Thus after the 1948 riots and the brief general strike of 1950, the nationalist movement was

skillfully channelled, via the conciliatory posture of the colonial administration, into narrow political solutions. The right to determination was affirmed, leading to a gradual transfer of power. This kept the levers of power in British hands as effective bargaining tools against nationalist demands. Everything in the shared power arrangement of 1951-57 militated against any radicalization of the national movement and the genuine decolonization of the state. Imperialism could accede the "political kingdom" in order to maintain the substance of economic domination."

In general, the British strategy in (West) Africa was analogous to its approach in the Middle East: Wm. Roger Louis talks of a British "grand strategy" in the Middle East, the "attempt to transform the system of domination...into a relationship of equal partners...to prevent the initiative from passing to 'anti-British extremists,' and to sustain British influence by economic and social reform, in order to maintain Britain's influence as a 'world power' with a predominant place in the Middle East."

Judith Marshall, "The State of Ambivalence: Right and Left Options in Ghana," *Review of African Political Economy*, 5 (1976, 50-51. This theme is pursued at length in Fitch and Oppenheimer, *Ghana*.

Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), viii.

France reached the same goal as Britain, but from a different route which stretches back to the French Revolution. The revolution espoused a republican creed which promised to integrate all humanity into a supranational French community. This tradition was carried over to colonial administration, in the form of "assimilation." In a fundamental sense, assimilation assumed that the colonials were potential French men, women, and children, who would all be integrated into the supranational French nation; there was to be no self-government for the colonies, just as there was none for the departments. Thus "assimilation defined decolonization as total integration and equality of status." Another tradition inspired by the Revolution was the concept of "the one and indivisible Republic." In the 1920s, this concept was commonplace as a referent for the relationship between France and its colonies. Both concepts provided the basis for the French Community put forward in 1958. Unlike the British Commonwealth, the Community was not a loose, informal partnership; it was, instead, an expression of the organic, indissoluble unity of Greater France, a France which included both the metropolis and the colonies as its constituent units. Self-government within the Community meant "freedom," not for a sociopolitical aggregate but for the individual.

Rudolf von Albertini, *Decolonization: The Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919-1960*, trans. by Francisca Garvie (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 284, 266. Michael Crowder writes that French colonial policy for Africa, from the 1944 Brazzaville conference to the creation of the French Community in 1958, was intended "to assimilate Africa into Greater France, which was why France at no point envisaged independence for its African colonies. See Crowder, "Independence as a Goal in French West African Politics."

Independence to African territories in 1960 was not intended as a departure from the underlying ideology of integration into Greater France. This continuity found formal expression in the "cooperation agreements" which heralded the transfer of power to Africans: France and the African states "agreed" to work in tandem before taking major decisions on foreign policy; there was a provision for common defense arrangements; the creation of individual currencies was permitted, but the states were to adhere to the franc zone; the pre-existing principle of reciprocal preferential trade arrangements was retained; France was to continue providing economic and financial assistance, and also to help the states to maintain their administrative services. In return, the states undertook to turn to France first for their personnel needs, and French firms were to be treated at par with domestic ones. For France, the two notions of independence and "cooperation" may have been genetically linked, but "Through the linkages established between the accession to international sovereignty and the signing of the cooperation agreements, France managed to institutionalize her political, economic, monetary, and cultural pre-eminence over a number of African states, which thereby remained almost totally dependent on her."

In fairness, it is worth emphasizing that the African political elite actively supported France in the realization of

See Edouard Bustin, "The Limits of French Intervention in Africa: A Study in Applied Neo-Colonialism," Working Papers No. 54, African Studies Center, Boston University (1982).

Martin, "The Historical, Economic, and Political Bases of France's African Policy," 191.

its neocolonial designs. In the referendum of 29 September 1958 on the French Community, the proportion of Yes votes was well over ninety percent in all territories except Niger and Guinea where it was seventy-five and less than five percent respectively.

One recurring theme in the literature is that there was no pressure for independence by francophone African politicians. Even by early 1958, such a demand seemed heretical to them. Thus the *Parti Africain d'Indépendance* (PAI) was promptly expelled from a conference of all French West African political parties which convened in Paris in February 1958. The party offended the sensibilities of the more elderly politicians for intransigently demanding that the conferees embrace the principle of immediate and unconditional independence. It is instructive that Sekou Toure -- who led Guinea to vote No -- was among those who tried to limit the demands put forth by the PAI: while asking that Africa be given the right to determine its form of association with France, he upheld the necessity of maintaining close links with the metropole. By May 1958, Toure had not moved much from this concern: he still desired some partnership with France rather than independence for Guinea. On 18 May 1958, the *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* (PDG) met in Conakry, and demanded a new constitution which should provide for (a) autonomous African states, each with a legislative assembly and an executive; (b) a

For the results, see *West Africa*, 11 October 1958, 971.

William J. Foltz, *From French West Africa to the Mali Federation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), 83-84, 89.

federal state which all the constituent units of the French Union would join on a contractual basis. This federation would have a common parliament and an executive with responsibility for foreign affairs, defense, justice, general economy and currency, and higher education; (c) the transformation of the federal *Grand Conseil* into a real legislative assembly; (d) responsible federal executives in West and Equatorial Africa to take over the functions of the high commissioner and the French Overseas ministry (which would be abolished); and (e) that overseas France would no longer be represented in the French National Assembly or metropolitan government, but merely in the federal organs.¹⁷ At the time, the PDG position was the most radical in West Africa, but it still envisaged that the changes had to take place within the framework of the French Republic. "The motive for the creation of Federal Executives" according to *West Africa* (2 August 1958), "was to give Africa greater strength *vis-à-vis* France in any Franco-African Community."

It was not until July 1958 that Toure finally embraced independence as distinct from defining Africa's place within the Franco-African Community. On 28 July 1958, he told a PDG assembly that his government had informed Paris that any constitution which did not provide for the right of independence of the colonies would be unacceptable to Guinea.¹⁸ This demand did not mean that Toure wished to burn his bridges with Paris. Even on that fateful 25 August 1958, when he addressed de Gaulle in

¹⁷ *West Africa*, 28 June 1958, 606.

¹⁸ Sekou Toure, *Expérience guinée et africaine* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1959), 71.

Conakry, and declared, "We prefer poverty to freedom to wealth in slavery," Toure took pains to explain: "Our heart, our reason, as well as our most obvious interests, make us choose...interdependence and liberty in this union, rather than defining ourselves without France and against France."

In the end, the surprise was not with Guinea's No vote; by September 1958, that was a settled issue. The surprise was the massive support for the French Community, given that at least far more 'Noes' were expected from Senegal, Niger, and Dahomey. Several factors worked for de Gaulle. Elliot Berg has discussed the economic considerations, showing that in the post-1945 period, economic activity in the French territories derived overwhelmingly from French capital infusion. He estimates that French public investment in West Africa in 1947-56 was close to \$1 billion. The extent of the dependence on France was greater than this figure suggests. France also underwrote much of the administrative costs. Besides, primary exports were supported by French subsidies. Thus Senegal depended on France to maintain the artificially high price of its groundnuts. In the light of this degree of dependence on France, many must have calculated that any sudden rupture would have been calamitous.

Cited in Teresa Hayter, "French Aid to Africa: Its Scope and Achievements," *International Affairs*, 41, 2 (April 1965), 240-1

Elliot, "The Economic Basis of Political Choice;" Boubacar Barry, "Neocolonialism and Dependence in Senegal, 1960-1980," in Gifford and Louis (eds), *Decolonization and African Independence*, 277. The close integration of the West African economy with the French is treated in detail and contrasted with the British approach in David K. Fieldhouse, "The Economic Exploitation of Africa: Some British and French Comparisons," in Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis (eds), *France and Britain in*

Economics alone does not, however, offer a sufficient explanation. Ivory Coast, for example, could well have stood on its own. In October 1957, Felix Houphouet-Boigny of Guinea pointed out that "If we had been colonized by the Anglo-Saxons, there is no doubt that we would have chosen independence even at the cost of economic disadvantages. But in France we think we catch a note of human fraternity."⁴ A month earlier, Senegal's Leopold Senghor told the French National Assembly that "In Africa, when children have grown up, they leave the parents' hut, and build a hut of their own by its side and in the same compound. Believe me, we don't want to leave the French compound. We have grown up in it and it is good to be alive in it. We want simply to build our own huts."⁵ This explicit expression of a deep sentimental attachment to France -- and the implied negation of independence -- was shared by most French African politicians. According to Crowder, part of the explanation for this disinclination for independence among the francophone African politicians was that "The concept of a French Union, of a Greater France, of a Franco-African community" in which peoples of "different races and color, were drawn together by French culture...had a very great appeal for the African leaders."⁶ The

Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971).

⁴ *West Africa*, 12 October 1957, 968. Also see Felix Houphouet-Boigny, "Black Africa and the French Union," *Foreign Affairs*, 35, 34 (July 1957).

⁵ Quoted in Kenneth Robinson, "West Africa: A French View," *West Africa*, 7 September 1957, 851.

⁶ Crowder, "Independence as a Goal in French West African Politics," 40.

fundamental explanation for this bent lies with the nature of the French colonial socialization process of "assimilation." Way back in 1942, the United States State Department Intelligence Unit reported that

The French have consciously cultivated a native elite for use as auxiliaries in the administration of the French colonial domain. This select native group, well educated, and employed in the service of the government, is composed of the French assimilés -- natives who are given French citizenship and who approach the status of equality with metropolitan Frenchmen. The special privilege and prestige given such French natives has induced them to orientate their thinking and loyalties within the French rather than the native orbit.

It is true that assimilation was never applied systematically in Africa, but it remained a real possibility for the elite. It is therefore not surprising that from Blaise Diagne in the 1920s to Senghor and Houphouët-Boigny in the 1940s and 1950s, one sees a genuine desire -- among the African elite -- to be assimilated into Greater France. Thus "assimilation" ensured that France meant so much to the African political and middle class elites and that at the critical moment, there was a solid captive audience quite willing to defend the system.

In comparison with the French, Britain was subtle in creating an institutional framework for Africa's postcolonial dependency; but in either case, independence turned out to be a transition to neocolonialism. This reality was already perceptible by January 1960: at the All African Peoples'

Coordinator of Information, British Empire Section, Special Memorandum No. 27, "Native Manpower and Morale," 10 January 1942, in OSS/State Department Intelligence and Research Reports Part xiii: Africa, 1941-61. A microfilm project of the Union of America Publications Inc., Washington, DC. 1980, Reel I. (This is available at the University of Toronto Library.)

conference held in Tunis that month, Kojo Botsio of Ghana drew attention to how the European powers were willing to "concede political independence so long as they are sure that they will dominate the African countries afterwards through economic and other controls." Kojo characterized this phenomenon as "neocolonialism," and many at the conference were agreeable to his observation.¹¹ Neocolonialism was a bigger irritation at the 1961 All African Peoples' conference held in Cairo. The conference defined it as "the survival of the colonial system in spite of the formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which become victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means."¹² Independent African states were warned to be on guard against this phenomenon, which was associated with Britain, the United States, France, West Germany, Israel, Belgium, the Netherlands, and South Africa. It advised that America's Peace Corps program should be "mercilessly opposed" since its aim was to "reconquer and economically dominate Africa."¹³

The pervasive nature of the imperialistic continuities in postcolonial Africa has spawned a revisionist perspective of the decolonization sequence. The basic proposition is that "the national movements headed mainly by the petty bourgeoisie were given control of the superstructure, while imperialism controlled

¹¹ *West Africa*, 13 February 1960.

¹² Cited in Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (London: Pall Mall, 1962), 254.

¹³ *West Africa*, 8 April 1961.

the economic base, namely the key sectors of the economy. Imperialism granted political independence, therefore, confident that the superstructure would serve its interests and that the change would be only one of personnel and not of structure."¹⁰ The emerging pattern has been to develop this general line and explore the underlying dynamics which ensured that what glittered at independence turned out to be far less than gold.

In his causal reinterpretation, Wasserman argues that decolonization was predicated on three strategies operated at one and the same time by the colonial power. The first was the *adaptation* of the metropolitan elites to the disinvestment of colonial authority. The second was the *cooptation* of the nationalist elite "into the leadership or policy-determining structure of the system as a means of averting threats" to the "stability or existence" of the colonial system; and finally, there was the *preemption* of the "formation and mobilization of a mass nationalist movement." Of the three, cooptation is germane to the discussion here. Wasserman considers cooptation in terms of the political socialization of the nationalist elements into the colonial apparatus, and he shows that this socialization took various forms. One is their induction into the processes directly related with "the recruitment into, and performance of, specialized political roles in the bureaucracy and leadership positions." It also involved "the ostensibly non-political learning which nevertheless ultimately affects political behavior. This would include the learning of politically relevant

¹⁰ Panaf Great Lives, *Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Panaf, 1974), 72.

social attitudes and personality characteristics." Another segment of the socialization process was "constitutional participation" which not only sucked the nationalists into "the colonial political norms but also deflected nationalist agitation into governmental cooperation and, indeed, created a counter interest to mass rebellion." Wasserman points out that these varieties of cooptation had an "essentially conservative character with regard to exiting political arrangements." This leads him to stress that "The result of the decolonization process, then, was the integration of an indigenous leadership into colonial political, social and economic patterns." The objective of the acculturation process, he says, was to alter

political authority (while perhaps changing the methods of social control), in order to preserve the essential features of the colonial political economy....Independence for the new state marked not so much a moving out of the colonial relationship as an enlarging and enhancing of that dependent relationship, with the colonial patterns emerging relatively unscathed."

Operating from the same tangent as Wasserman, Colin Leys demonstrates that the essence of imperialism, "with or without direct rule." is the excavation of resources from the periphery to the metropolis. He accepts the "nationalist" interpretation that colonial rule saw to the emergence of a new indigenous African social class. But for Leys, this class was only too willing to sustain rather than challenge or subvert the status quo. He adds that as the African elite acquired more political relevance and, more particularly, as "primitive accumulation gave way to capitalist accumulation (in which the apparently 'natural'

Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization*, 6, 14-15.

forces of the market for labor are sufficient to ensure that the surplus is appropriated by the capitalist)," the need for continued direct control became unnecessary. This, Leys insists, "facilitated the replacement of direct colonial administration by 'independent' governments representing the local strata and classes with an interest in sustaining the colonial economic relationships."

It will be readily observed that the pedigree of this revisionism is dependency theory (*dependencia*). The application of this theory in the explanation of decolonization has been necessitated by the search for the historical basis of Africa's worsening destitution and enduring dependence on the West.⁴⁴ In this sense, *dependencia* derives its relevance from its postulation of a theory of peripheral state formation, and particularly from its basic thesis that once established, economic domination by the West is self-reinforcing, and therefore that while imperialism may change its form, its basic nature remains constant. By the logic of this postulation, independence appears not as Africa's liberation but as the new bottle for the old wine of imperialism. According to *dependencia*, the translation of external into internal effects is mediated by internal agents. In this matrix, the "nationalists" appear not as *anti-colonialists*, but as compradors, willing collaborators, in the transmutation of Africa's march to redemption: for them, the

⁴⁴ Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism 1964-1971* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 9.

⁴⁵ The clearest statement in this regard is *ibid.*

prospect of office and its prerequisites -- power, privilege, patronage, as well as the fascination with the rituals surrounding a new flag and an anthem -- were sufficiently alluring.

It remains to be said that the view that decolonization essentially meant a maximizing process for the colonial powers is not entirely new and is therefore not unique to dependency theorists (*dependencistas*). In an essay published in 1953, John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson subverted the equation of imperialism with direct, political control, and insisted on the underlying unity between "formal" and "informal" empire in British policy formulation. According to them, Britain had habitually followed the principle of extending control informally if possible and formally if necessary; the establishment of formal control arising only where the informal approach failed to provide sufficient security for British interests. What mattered to Britain in any given case, they held, is "the combination of commercial penetration and political influence...to command those economies which could be made to fit best into her own." From

In March 1952, Nkrumah assumed the title of prime minister. But this was simply a change in nomenclature; it did not enhance his position in the allocation of power. In his discussion of the transition process in Ghana, Arden-Clarke pointed out: "We learnt a good many lessons during that period. We learnt, for example, how effective the device of changing names could be. It is, I suppose, true that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," but we learnt that if we changed the name of Leader of Government Business to Prime Minister and Executive Council to Cabinet, without in any way altering their functions and powers, or the name of Chief Commissioner to Regional Officer, or District Commissioner to Government Agent, they all seemed to smell much sweeter in the public nose. That device certainly helped to get us over some difficult periods." See Charles Arden-Clarke, "Eight Years of Transition in Ghana," *African Affairs*, 56, 226 (January 1958), 35.

this, Gallagher and Robinson charted a cyclical pattern in British imperial policy: informal imperialism yields formal control which in turn reverses to informal control. "The difference between formal and informal empire," they explained,

has not been one of fundamental nature but of degree. The ease with which a region has slipped from one status to the other helps to confirm this. Within the last two hundred years, for example, India has passed from informal to formal association with the United Kingdom and, since World War II, back to an informal connection. Similarly, British West Africa has passed through the first two stages and seems today likely to follow India into the third.

Against this background, they offered an explanation of the real essence and implication of the transfer of power to the colonized. The affinity of their explanation with the *dependencia* proposition is quite striking. As Gallagher and Robinson put it,

In other words, responsible government [independence], far from being a separatist device, was simply a change from direct to indirect methods of maintaining British interests. By slackening the formal political bond at the appropriate time, it was possible to rely on economic dependence and mutual good-feeling to keep the colonies bound to Britain while still using them as agents for further British expansion.

Like the *dependencistas*, Gallagher and Robinson acknowledged the critical role of local comprador regimes in sustaining the resuscitation of informal imperialism: "once their economies had become sufficiently dependent on foreign trade the classes whose prosperity was drawn from that trade normally worked themselves in local politics to preserve the local political conditions needed for it."

"John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review*, 6, 1 (1953).

Redefining Decolonization

Early in this chapter, it was shown that decolonization is usually conceptualized as synonymous with independence, and is therefore as the transfer of political power from the colonial power to the indigenous political elite within the framework of state sovereignty. Against this, however, was demonstrated the growing realization that in spite of the personnel substitution - that is, the transfer of power from the Europeans to Africans - the remarkable about independence was its superficiality, the fact that it did not subvert the substance of the colonial relationship. It was also demonstrated that this reality has led to a fresh perspective of what independence was all about. Frantz Fanon, for example, characterized independence as "false decolonization" and the successor African governments as "Western business agents." In a similar vein, Bade Onimode sneers at the end-result of the decolonization process as "flag independence."

The realization that European interests remained paramount behind the facade of African rule has also induced a rethink of the definition of decolonization. Essentially, decolonization is now being distinguished from independence to allow the former to accommodate the subsistence of colonial continuities in the postcolonial state. *In this sense, decolonization is seen as a process embracing but also going beyond independence (the*

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 77.

Bade Onimode, *Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: Dialectics of Mass Poverty* (London: Macmillan and Zed, 1983), 130.

transfer of political power). For example, Wasserman has pointed out that the equation of decolonization with the transfer of political power to the ex-colonials "deals only with the formal transfer of 'authority,' referring to the capacity to legitimate political decisions, and not with political 'power,' which may be taken to mean the ability to influence those decisions....Decolonization or the 'attainment of independence' as such do not necessarily say anything about what is an empirical question of influence."'' While conceding that the more prevalent usage has "the merit of precision," John Darwin's quarrel is that it is very narrow, and so not only robs decolonization of "much of its value as an organizing concept" but also conceals "deep-rooted continuities." To remedy these lapses, he proposes that decolonization be defined as "a partial retraction, redeployment and redistribution of European influences in the regions of the extra-European world whose economic, political and cultural life had previously seemed destined to flow into Western moulds."''' The strength of this definition is that it enables one to use decolonization as an analytical tool in the study of power politics, and especially, Africa's location in contemporary international relations. To be sure, it is not being suggested that decolonization had no disjunctive effects; it certainly ruptured some linkages. The point is that it concealed much: as Wasserman has explained,

'' Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization*, 4.

''' John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat from Empire in the Postwar World* (Macmillan, 1988), 7. Also see J.G. Darwin, "In Search of Decolonization," *History*, 73, 237 (February 1988), 55-56.

decolonization "reaffirmed and enhanced" substantial linkages between the "independent states" and the metropolitan powers "in the form of economic dependency, development assistance, foreign investment, and the political, social and economic compatibility of objectives among the involved elites." The construction of these linkages was an essential part of the cooptation process, and the overall objective, he says, was "to constrain the new states to remain in the appointed orbit."¹³

A broadening of the spatial analogy will reveal a constellation consisting of the Western European colonial and ex-colonial powers, but pivoted by the U.S. As Harry Magdoff has argued, World War II occasioned a transformation of the world capitalist system. This transformation involved the disruption of the other imperialist centers and the emergence of the U.S. "to reestablish the stability of the imperialist system" and "to make inroads for its own advantage."¹⁴ In a broad outline, the next chapter explores how and why Africa fitted into this scheme.

¹³ Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization*, 174, 13.

¹⁴ Harry Magdoff, "Imperialism without Colonies," in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972); idem, "Militarism and Imperialism," *The American Economic Review*, lx, 2 (May 1970).

THE literature locates U.S. post-1945 involvement in Africa within the wider context of America's global strategic calculations.¹ What is not clear, however, is how Africa fitted into Washington's foreign policy perspective. In this context, "perspective" implies the set of premises in terms of which Washington defined Africa's place in its geopolitical calculations and evaluated the courses of action to be taken on the basis of that definition. An explanation along this line necessarily involves a discussion of the subtleties which shaped U.S. global expansionism after World War II.

The administration of Harry Truman (and its successors) posited its activist, internationalist foreign policy in terms of "containing" Soviet power and, therefore defending "free institutions everywhere."² Down to the early 1960s, historians embraced this official explanation of U.S. global outreach. As Lloyd Gardner was later to observe, "Early books of the Cold War" were "little more than annotated collective memoirs of Americans who participated in that transition period." The corollary was

¹ For example, see Vernon MacKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 273.

² This policy was best encapsulated in National Security Council (NSC) 68, Note by the executive secretary to the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, 14 April 1950, *FRUS, 1950, i* (1977), 234-292.

³ Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971), 301. For examples of the early Cold War interpretation, see Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Origins of the Cold War," *Foreign Affairs*, 46, 1 (October 1967); Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The United States as a World Power: A Diplomatic History 1900-1950* (1936; New York: Henry Holt, 1950), chap. 21.

that U.S. post-1945 internationalism was interpreted in Cold War terms. There was thus hardly any quarrel with the notion that the Soviet threat had compelled the U.S. to take on the defense of the postwar normative system, essentially defined by liberal values such as the rule of law in international relations and its derivatives (respect for national independence, opposition to the use of force as an instrument of change, and a laissez-faire international economic regime).⁴ The Vietnam War punctured this consensus. In trying to understand and explain the undercurrents of that conflict, the "American Left" raised new questions about the sources and nature of America's post-1945 diplomatic history.

Against the notion of an America which had sought to restrain Soviet aggressive designs, Gar Alperovitz's revisionism argued that from the onset of his presidency, Truman was resolved on constructing an American-dominated world order and that his subsequent imperial foreign policy must be situated in this context. He explained that the use of the atomic bomb against a Japan which had already been defeated was thus intended to send a diplomatic message to Moscow.⁵ Sidney Lens was later to argue that the imperial agenda was already on the table during the

⁴ For a representation of this perspective, see Schlesinger, Jr., "Origins of the Cold War;" Bemis, *The United States as a World Power*, chap. 21.

⁵ Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Postdam -- The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power* (1965; Penguin Books, 1985). Alperovitz has been criticized by Robert Maddox for carelessness in the use of evidence. See Robert James Maddox, "Atomic Diplomacy: A Study in Creative Writing," *The Journal of American History*, lix, 4 (March 1973). But the view that the bomb was intended to intimidate the Soviets is supported by Herbert Feis, *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* (Princeton University Press, 1966), 36.

Roosevelt presidency, and that what Truman changed was the method not the objective. Had Roosevelt remained alive, Lens says, "Washington would still have tried to organize the world around its own needs. The result might have been less rancorous, but the goals would have been much the same."

In a throwback to realism, Robert Gilpin sees the U.S.-Soviet confrontation and its imperialistic implications in geopolitical terms. He argues that the collapse of German power in Europe and the Japanese in Asia created a power vacuum which both the U.S. and the Soviet Union sought to fill to their advantage. Neither of the two powers could, because of their perception of security concerns, permit the other to fill this vacuum, "and the efforts of each to prevent this only increased the insecurity of the other, causing it to redouble its own efforts. Each in response to the other organized its own bloc, freezing the lines of division established by the victorious armies and wartime conferences." This struggle -- especially, once it attained a full-blown shape in the form of the Cold War -- necessitated the consolidation and expansion of the "security lines." The nature of those lines was defined by the differing asymmetric situations of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The former was a massive land "directly abutting" Western Europe and the northwestern Pacific (primarily Korea and Japan); by contrast, the U.S. was geographically separated from the zones of contention by two vast oceans. This meant that unlike the Soviet Union, the U.S. "had to organize a global system of bases and

Sidney Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1971), 341-2, 349.

alliances." In a similar vein, Robert Tucker argues that post-1945 U.S. expansion is ultimately traceable to America's "inordinate power" and its "determination to use this power" to ensure its own "particular version of a congenial international order." For Tucker, this determination was already evident during the World War II period and thus antedates the conflict with the Soviet Union. But "once the conflict arose the security interest could no longer be separated from the [U.S.] general interest" of employing its power "to sustain a world favorable to American institutions and interests." The dialectic of the conflict was such that to contain the perceived Soviet expansion, it became necessary for the U.S. itself to expand. Thus "In the period that followed the initial years of the cold war, it is the expansionist interest that has become increasingly dominant."

The most widely articulated revisionism is the Open Door thesis which was resurrected by William Appleman Williams' *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, first published in 1959. In his study of imperialism published in 1902, John Hobson observed that the distinctive feature of U.S. imperialism was its nonterritorial character: unlike the Europeans, the U.S. disavowed formal political control as it expanded outside the continental U.S. This feature was formalized by the "Open Door"

Robert Gilpin, "The Political Economy of Transnational Economic Relations," *International Organization*, xxv, 3 (1971).

Robert W. Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 106-09.

John Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), 74-79. The Open Door interpretation also parallels ideas earlier canvassed in works

Notes -- the first of which was issued in 1899 demanding that American goods and investments be allowed "equality of opportunity" with competing interests in China, and another, issued the following year for the purpose of expressing America's direct interest in China's territorial and administrative integrity. Williams argued that this policy, originally devised with regard to China, was later globalized because American policymakers and the business elite were of "the firm conviction, or even dogmatic belief, that America's *domestic* wellbeing depends upon such sustained, ever-increasing overseas economic expansion." Thus through the Open Door, the U.S. was able to "enter and dominate all underdeveloped areas of the world." As a consequence, "the history of the Open Door Notes became the history of American foreign policy from 1900 to 1958."¹¹ It will readily be observed that Williams intended to reveal the underlying forces and structures, usually the inherent need for expansion by a capitalist economy, which drove U.S. foreign policy. It is this thrust that Open Door revisionism has tended to reflect despite the diversity of themes and forms employed.¹²

such as Frederic C. Howe, "Dollar Diplomacy and Financial Imperialism under the Woodrow Wilson Administration," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science and Social Science*, lxxviii (November 1916).

¹¹ William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959; New York: World Publishing Company, 1962) 11, 47, 45, 204-206. (Emphasis in original).

¹² For example, see Lloyd C. Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1964); *idem*, *Architects of Illusion*; Michael Hudson, *Super Imperialism: The Economic Strategy of American Empire* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972); Harry Magdoff, "Militarism and Imperialism;" *idem*, *The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York and London: Modern Reader, 1969); *idem*,

Thus in explaining Washington's post-1945 hegemonic policies, Open Door revisionists shifted the causal focus away from the Cold War to America's economic objectives.

There is, by no means, a unanimity that the U.S. assumed world-wide responsibilities after World War II to promote an American free trade imperialism. Robert Pollard agrees that way ahead of the end of World War II, the U.S. was committed to an interventionist, globalist foreign policy. But the underlying impulse, he emphasizes was "neither anti-Communism nor a need to sustain world capitalism. Instead, American officials backed the Open Door largely because they were determined to prevent a revival of the autarkic systems that had contributed to world depression and split the world into competing blocs before the war." Thus Pollard stresses American economic concerns, but essentially sees them as tools in the pursuit of national security. The Truman administration, he believes, "subordinated foreign economic policy to the preservation of democracy in Europe, the support of friendly governments in the Far East, the containment of Soviet power, and other political and strategic aims. The American quest for prosperity went hand-in-hand with

"Imperialism without Colonies," in Owen and Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*; Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge University Press, 1987); Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945* (New York: Random House, 1968); *The Roots of American Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Power and Purpose* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

efforts toward a sounder world political and economic structure."

Postrevisionism proposes that the forces at work were far too complex to be accommodated within the overarching bipolar scheme of the Cold War orthodoxy and Cold War revisionism. Building on this strand, Melvyn Leffler has attempted to offer a synthesis. He finds that driven by an acute responsibility for America's "national security," Washington was clearly committed to achieving a "preponderance of power" in the international system by the end of World War II. In an implicit refutation of the Open Door analysis, Leffler denies that U.S. policies were driven by a concern for the health of the American economy or by the need to secure America's global economic dominance. "Economic interests often reinforced geostrategic imperatives and ideological predilections," but these were still subordinate to concerns about the correlations of power as "There was the belief that national security ultimately depended on expanding international power." Thus the "key factors shaping American policies toward the Kremlin," he says, were deep apprehensions about the postwar global system and "correlations of power." In

Robert A. Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). The quotations are from pp. 224, 4. Also see Robert Zevin, "An Interpretation of American Imperialism," *The Journal of Economic History*, xxxii, 1 (March 1972) agrees with the notion of a U.S. global imperialism, but denies that it can be explained in economic terms. Alfred E. Eckes, Jr., "Open Door Expansionism Reconsidered: The World War II Experience," *The Journal of American History*, lix, 4 (March 1973) contends that America's striving for a laissez-faire international economy was not self-serving, but "a courageous, far-sighted initiative to reverse interwar economic nationalism and to restore an efficient productive international economy benefitting all countries."

this context, the "correlations of power" embrace not just military superiority, but also superiority in industrial capacity and in technological strength as well as control of the access to raw materials and denying the materials to prospective enemies.¹³

Leffler shows that the dangers Truman and his party sensed were not immediate in both space and time. Instead, there was the fatalistic belief in a long chain of causation which could translate whatever might happen anywhere and any time into direct threats to America's "national security." He argues that Washington's basic operational premise was that the Soviet Union would be in a position to directly threaten the U.S. itself if it secured control of the core industrialized areas of the world (Western Europe and Japan). To head off this outcome, those areas had to be economically strong and linked to the U.S. And in turn, these strategic goals required that the peripheries be tied to Western Europe and Japan, and thus denied to the Soviets. This way, the practical implications of "national security" ensured that the U.S. had to hegemonize its interests -- notably, by establishing alliance-networks in the Atlantic and in the Pacific, and by endorsing French plans for a European coal and steel community and a European defense community. It is of significance that in all this, Washington was not oblivious of

¹³ Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford University Press, 1992). Also see idem, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-48," *The American Historical Review*, 89, 2 (April 1984). Quotations and Leffler's arguments are taken from *A Preponderance*, 14-15, 160, 314-17, 14-15, 10, 51, x, 13-14, 21, 162-3, 191.

its limitations: America's policymakers, Leffler insists, "wanted to share the burden and divide the costs of containing communism, fostering stability, and promoting production and trade." It is thus hardly surprising that in America's drive for a "preponderance of power" in the global system, the European powers appear as both rivals and partners, but more as the latter. This explains why, according to him, Washington sought to reform rather than terminate European colonialism and, more particularly, why the U.S. was not interested in supplanting British and French power in their former colonies.¹⁴

Towards a Fresh Synthesis

In spite of paradigmatic differences in interpretation, there is a consensus that post-World War II U.S. diplomacy was dominated by a fairly fixed conceptualization: the core idea being internationalism.¹⁵ The essence of this internationalism, it is also agreed, sprang from the tragedy of World War II and its entire chain of causation, especially the devastating impact of the Great Depression and the rise of fascism during the 1930s. From those events, most Americans, and especially their leaders, learned of the interconnectedness of the global system, and thus that the discontent which produced political extremism and aggression was highly contagious and bound to touch on all parts of the world, irrespective of where it emanated; and that

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 346; also 16, 160, 238; 14, 17.

¹⁵ This is clearly manifested in the Notter Papers dating from 1941: there was elaborate planning for any imaginable item which impinged, even in the least possible manner, on the international system; and every geographical space on earth was fully covered. See RG 59, Lot File 122, Inter and Intra-Departmental Committee, H.A. Notter Records (NA).

America's domestic security and prosperity were derivative of, and therefore congruent with world stability. In this sequence, the Japanese blitzkrieg on Pearl Harbour was the final turning-point. The fact that Japan could strike Pearl Harbour 3500 miles from Tokyo destroyed traditional American assumptions of invulnerability: it taught Americans that their source of danger was no longer solely eastward, Europe; they were now vulnerable from all sides. As a consequence, "national security" came to be defined in terms which went beyond tangible and indisputable dangers to the U.S.¹⁰ This governing principle yielded what Daniel Yergin calls the "national security state." The ideology of a "national security state," Yergin says, postulates "the interrelatedness of so many different political, economic, and military factors that developments halfway around the globe are seen to have automatic and direct impact on America's core interests."¹¹ The logical corollary was an expansive, open-ended internationalist definition of vital U.S. foreign policy interests.

¹⁰ Thus by 1943 -- that is, well before the Soviet threat was perceived and without any real or clearly anticipated danger -- Washington planned to establish U.S. military bases in Dakar, the Azores and the Canary Islands, all in the Atlantic; and in the Aleutians, the Philippines, Okinawa, and the former Japanese mandates, all in the Pacific. See Ernst B. Hass, "The Attempt to Terminate Colonialism: Acceptance of the United Nations Trusteeship System," *International Organization*, vii (1953); Ganeshwar Chad, "The United States and the Origins of the Trusteeship System," *Review*, xvi, 2 (Spring 1991); Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), esp. chap. 4.

¹¹ Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 195-196.

As a core principle, internationalism can be disaggregated into its constituent elements. The overriding consideration was to ensure an international environment conducive to America's domestic wellbeing. In turn, this committed Washington to a set of international norms: for example, the belief that no corner of the world was so remote or insignificant that it could be ignored; and that there should be a prompt, appropriate, and often, preemptory response wherever and whenever U.S. "national security" was seriously threatened. Thus internationalism meant that it was a fundamental U.S. foreign policy objective to manipulate and shape the global environment as a whole; in short to assume global leadership. This trait was already quite evident in the Washington of Franklin Roosevelt. Charles de Gaulle talks of "the ambition of Roosevelt to make law and dictate rights throughout the world," adding

Franklin Roosevelt was governed by the loftiest ambitions...the powerful state of which he was the leader afforded him the means, and the war offered him the occasion to realize them...a new kind of messianic impulse now swelled the American spirit and oriented it toward vast undertakings. The United States, delighting in her resources, feeling that she no longer had within herself sufficient scope for her energies...yielded in turn to that taste for intervention in which the instinct for domination cloaked itself. It was precisely this tendency that President Roosevelt espoused.

It is thus clear that even as World War II raged, Washington was working to achieve a "preponderance of power" in the international system. But at the same time, American leaders convinced themselves that the Soviets were a potential threat to this objective. A paper issued by the Office of Strategic

¹ Charles de Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 392.

Services ten days before Roosevelt's death recalled that the U.S. had joined World War II to prevent Germany and Japan from dominating Europe and Asia respectively. But it observed that at the cessation of hostilities, the U.S. "will be confronted with a situation potentially more dangerous than any preceding one" for in the long run, the Soviet Union alone -- given its human and natural resources -- was in a position "to dominate Europe and at the same time to establish her hegemony over Asia." Such an outcome, it was felt, would greatly upset the global balance of power to Washington's disadvantage. The paper therefore recommended that the U.S. should not "wait until Russia's policy is fully revealed" before taking security measures. It recommended "a clear, firm, and thoroughly nonprovocative policy" in restraining the Soviets. In addition, the paper suggested that the U.S. should construct an anti-Soviet alliance, with Britain and France as the cornerstones, and that this involved doing "everything possible to restore France to the rank of a great power." Further, the U.S.

should realize its interest in the maintenance of the British, French, and Dutch colonial empires...We have at present no interest in weakening or liquidating these empires or in championing schemes of international trusteeship which may provoke unrest and result in colonial disintegration, and may at the same time alienate from us the European states whose help we need to balance the Soviet power.

From the inception of his presidency, Truman embraced this geostrategic conception. First, he regarded the preservation of a favorable balance of power in Europe and Asia as the primary

Office of Strategic Services, "Problems and Objectives of United States Policy," 2 April 1945, Rose Conway File, Box 15 (HSTL).

condition for America's "national security." Second, the Soviet "threat" became the organizing rationale of his diplomacy; and as Leffler says, this impelled appraisals and reappraisals, and even deliberate exaggerations of Soviet intentions and capabilities.⁴⁷ When de Gaulle visited Washington in August 1945, he found that Truman had "abandoned the plan of a world harmony and admitted that the rivalry between the free world and the Soviet bloc now dominated every other international consideration." In the circumstance, Truman proposed to his guest that "the free world could do nothing better and nothing else, than adopt the 'leadership' of Washington." He was, according to de Gaulle, "convinced that the mission of serving as guide fell to the American people."⁴⁸ Thus, as de Gaulle understood it, "containment" meant that other countries were to be provided refuge from the Soviet onslaught under an American umbrella.

To be sure, the world Americans and their leaders faced in 1945 or even 1947 was not a Hobbesian one. Internationalism, the philosophy Washington had adopted for its conduct in the post-1945 world order, implied an activist, interventionist, global foreign policy. There was, however, the problem of winning domestic endorsement for this expansive objective -- a problem complicated by the residue of "isolationism" -- not to mention the problem of a Democratic administration winning the support of

⁴⁷ Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, *passim*.

⁴⁸ De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs*, 906.

a parsimonious Republican-dominated Congress.²² In the circumstance, the notion of an aggressive and anti-American Soviet Union was invented and subsumed under the ideology of "national security" to serve three vital purposes: to concretize and legitimize the "national security" formulation,²³ to frighten the isolationists, and to win domestic and Western European endorsement for internationalism.²⁴

The invocation of this scare tactic was so convenient and effective because there was an ingrained American aversion of the Soviet Union which dates back to 1917, when the Bolshevik revolution excised one sixth of the world's land mass from the hold of Western capitalism. Not only was the revolution a triumph of the proletariat (the exploited working class) over the bourgeois (the privileged owners of the means of production), it also professed an evangelical mission committed to universalizing the Bolshevik outcome. "For such liberal internationalists as

²² Howard Jones, *"A New Kind of War": America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 43; Kuniholm, "Loy Henderson, Dean Acheson, and the Origins of the Truman Doctrine," in Douglas Brinkley (ed), *Dean Acheson and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy* (The Macmillan Press, 1993); David S. McLellan, *Dean Acheson: The State Department Years* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1976), chap. 7; Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1992), chap. 4; Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, chaps. ix-x; Smith, *Acheson*, 46-48.

²³ Some scholars and policymakers such as Arnold Wolfers and George Kennan understood the ambiguity of an open-ended conceptualization of "national security" as a policy guidepost. See Arnold Wolfers, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol," in *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 147-66; Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, 471-76.

²⁴ Especially, see Frank Kofsky, *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

Woodrow Wilson and frank colonialists such as Winston Churchill, as well as for the remnants of Europe's toppled monarchies, such a state was untenable, unacceptable, unimaginable." Western (including the U.S.) hostility was such that they not only supported Russia's counterrevolutionary forces, "In 1919, Allied troops from Great Britain, North America, France, and Japan invaded Russia to overthrow the new regime. It was an ambitious scheme involving French troops in Odessa and Georgia, British activity in Transcaucasia. and U.S., Czech, and Japanese troops in Siberia." But this huge armed intervention failed and the regime in Moscow survived. In the 1920s, European countries gradually came to accommodate the Soviet regime. But not so the U.S. It was only under Roosevelt, in 1933, that America finally accorded diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union -- and that was in the face of strong opposition by his cabinet, the State Department and Congress. In the context, the World War II U.S.-Soviet alliance was an interregnum in the history of their diplomacy. The alliance was held together by the opposition to Hitler and once this bond was removed, it was easy for Americans to relapse into the legacy of their pathological aversion, distrust and suspicion of Bolshevism."

⁴³ Blanche Wiesen Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy* (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1981), 4. Also see Arno J. Mayer, *Wilson vs. Lenin: Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-1918* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1964).

⁴⁴ See Walter LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina: 1942-45," *The American Historical Review*, 80, 5 (December 1975), 1289, 1293; Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower*, 2-10; Robert Paul Browder, *The Origins of Soviet-American Diplomacy* (Princeton University Press, 1953); John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia

As theorists insist, states achieve consensus and therefore legitimacy for policy options through the manipulation of symbols such as the "national interest."⁴ In this sense and given the foregoing background, "national security," as propagated by Washington, was "ideology" in the Marxist sense of mystification, with its attendant "false consciousness" of reality. Of course, the Cold War did ultimately acquire a life of its own in policy formulation, for by a perverse law of human relations, hardliners on opposing sides reinforce each other's stubbornness in times of tension. The point, however, is that as Lens has put it, "The quarrel with the Soviet Union...was not the cause of America's imperial policy, but an effect of it. Washington was determined to organize the world to its ends. Moscow simply refused to be molded and manipulated like Britain or France."

One may wonder how the Open Door fitted into the overall scheme being sketched here. After World War II, the U.S. -- through the Marshall Plan⁵ in particular -- acted as the Santa

University Press, 1972), esp. pp. 3-4; idem, *Russia, The Soviet Union and the United States: An Interpretative History* (McGraw-Hill, 1990); George C. Herring, Jr., *Aid to Russia, 1941-1946: Strategy, Diplomacy, the Origins of the Cold War* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1973), esp. pp. 5, 7, 22, 38, chap. 2; Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 71, 21-22, 73-79, 83-85, chap. 1.

Charles Beard, *The Idea of National Interest* (New York: Macmillan, 1934); Alan Ollman, *The Limits of Legitimacy: The Political Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1977).

⁴ Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire*, 349. (Emphasis in original.)

⁵ From April 1948 to June 1952, the U.S. assumed responsibility, through the Marshall Plan, for the economic reconstruction of Western Europe. Officially known as the European Recovery Program, the aid involved about \$47 billion in

Claus of Western Europe. To capture the real essence of this munificence, one must start from an understanding of the state of international capitalism by 1945. At the time, the American economy had "grown in power to such an extent that economic conditions in the rest of the world, outside agrarian countries living on a subsistence basis and the closed societies of the Communist bloc, moved in accordance with American life."

Translated into figures, this meant that by 1945, the U.S. -- with a population scarcely six percent that of the world and with about seven percent of the total global geographical area -- produced sixty percent of the total manufactures by the industrialized West and forty percent of the total goods and services. Even in 1947, the U.S. was supplying one-third of total world exports while consuming only one-tenth of all imports.

This meant that it had a huge excess of exports over imports. Students of economics are taught that if a country produces more goods and services than it consumes (i.e., if it has a current-account surplus), it must lend the proceeds to the rest of the world (i.e., it will have an equal and offsetting balance on its capital account). Simply put, just as countries cannot long buy

1981 dollars. See World Bank, *IDA in Retrospect: The First Two Decades of the International Development Association* (Oxford University Press, 1982), 1.

F.S. Northedge, *Descent from Power: British Foreign Policy, 1945-1973* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), 179.

Bank for International Settlements, *Eighteenth Annual Reports, 1947-48*, 15; William Ashworth, *A Short History of the International Economy* (London: Longmans, 1952), 227-28; Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy: Toward a Transformation of American Society* (Penguin Books, 1983), 100; Leland Yeager, *International Monetary Relations* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 335.

more than they sell without a balance-of-payments disequilibrium, they cannot also -- beyond definite limits -- sell more than they buy abroad, unless they are prepared to lend their customers the wherewithal. This is related to the received wisdom that in a liberal multilateral network, economies with a balance-of-payments deficit have to deflate; aggregate equilibrium is maintained through domestic reflation, foreign investment and reduction of tariffs by surplus-generating economies.

The foregoing analysis implies that the transfer of resources from dollar surplus countries (actually, the U.S. alone) to deficit countries was part of the transaction cost for maintaining the institutional infrastructure of the liberal international economic order which the U.S. had pressed for since the early 1940s. This reasoning figured quite prominently in U.S. policymaking. It is well-known that World War II devastated European economies while America's boomed. As a result, Europe relied on American supplies for most of the 1940s. With Europe financially strapped, a major dimension of American worry at the time was how to maintain a level of export demand (in Europe and Asia) which could sustain full domestic employment. In 1946, Randall Hinshaw examined the problem and demonstrated that the maintenance of a sizeable export surplus over a considerable period of time requires a constantly growing rate of lending, since interest and amortization payments on the earlier loans tend to offset the original export surplus created by the flow of loans. As he put it, "If *employment* is the primary objective in encouraging foreign investment, then it is clear that loans at very low rates of interest and with very long maturities will

serve the purpose best." The use of loans to maintain export surplus, he said, requires "a rapidly rising level of gross lending; otherwise, the foreign contribution to domestic employment soon disappears."¹ The problem persisted into 1950, and the same solution was being proffered: that American domestic prosperity and security would benefit from Washington's capital exports. Before the U.S. Senate and House foreign affairs committees, Acheson confessed on 21 February 1950 that

The problem which confronts us can be stated very simply: to maintain the volume of American exports....[But the] the free world must obtain the dollars to pay for these exports. They can be obtained in only three ways: By our imports of goods and services from them, by our public and private loans and investment abroad, and by continued gifts. In the long run, the only reliable and desirable way is to increase our imports, but that is a big job and until it has been done we have to continue assistance to countries which need it....²

Down to the late 1950s, this argument retained its relevance as a justification for U.S. aid programs. In November 1958, L.W. Douglas, a former U.S. ambassador to London, wrote to President Dwight Eisenhower pointing out that "Few people realize how sensitive our internal economic estate is to fluctuations, particularly depreciations of world currencies against the dollar." Douglas, who claimed to have been in charge of "persuading the Congress to pass the Marshall Plan," observed that all along, "fear and apprehension and the need to save some particular area from the threat of Communism" had been used to

¹ Randall Hinshaw, "International Investment, Foreign Investment and American Employment," *The American Economic Review*, xxxvi, 2 (May 1946). (Emphasis in original.)

² Dean Acheson, *The Pattern of Responsibility* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 58.

justify U.S. economic assistance programs. He stressed that the purely economic argument was even more cogent and worth playing up, so as to "lift the whole question of economic foreign aid out of the interminable, controversial and bitter debates each year in the Congress and in the hope that there should would be laid a solid, factual foundation for the export of dollars on public account."⁴

However, the Open Door interpretation does not merely imply that American policymakers created overseas conditions conducive for the expansion of American trade and investment; all countries have historically striven for this end. The interpretation derives its thematic cogency by depicting the entire history of American diplomacy as a consistent pattern of systematic expansion involving the substitution of commercial for political influence and control. Framed this way, U.S. Open Door diplomacy was alive and well after World War II. It certainly was at play when in 1954, former British Prime Minister Clement Attlee observed that "there have been instances in which `strings' have been attached to aid which seemed to have been conceived in the interests of America. Hence the talk in some quarters of what they call `dollar' imperialism, meaning thereby the use of the economic power of America to enforce policies on other nations."⁵ A major statement in this regard has emerged from

⁴ Letter from L.W. Douglas to the president (Eisenhower), 25 August, 1958, AWF, Administration Series (File of Robert B. Anderson, Secretary of Treasury), Box 2 (DDEL).

⁵ Clement R. Attlee, "Britain and America: Common Aims, Different Opinions," *Foreign Affairs*, 32, 2 (January 1954), 194-5.

Thomas Paterson's identification of the "ideology of 'peace and prosperity'" -- the general belief that "peace, political stability, and the containment of Communism depended upon a healthy international economy, free-flowing world trade, American exports and investments, and general American prosperity" -- as the mainspring of post-1945 U.S. diplomacy."

From the synthesis being formulated here, the conclusion can be drawn that before the end of World War II, and therefore before the Cold War acquired its autonomy in international relations, the U.S. had a well-articulated vision of the world order it desired in place of the one shattered by World War II. Essentially, the U.S. intended to build an international political economy which conformed with, protected and promoted American prosperity and security. The Cold War harmed this objective only to the extent that two world systems rather than one emerged -- one led by the U.S. and the other by the Soviet Union.

The American World System

The American "world system" which followed was arrayed in a concentric circle with the U.S. itself at the core, and Britain and France -- the senior partners -- in the innermost circle. Others were located in orbits of descending importance to Washington's security concerns, beginning with the rest of Western Europe (including West Germany), Japan, and Canada; then countries such as Greece, Turkey, and Argentina; and down to the

Thomas G. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1973).

outermost periphery which was occupied by the European colonies and ex-colonies in Africa. This arrangement ensured a near global projection of U.S. power and influence. Geir Lundestad favors the use of "empire" as the descriptive label for this American global outreach "where empire simply means a hierarchical system of political relationships with one power clearly being much stronger than any other": "empire" in this sense refers to "an informal hierarchical structure....The states within this empire were generally independent...but they were still tied to America through important military, political, and economic arrangements." Lundestad's insistence on the use of the term "empire," with quotation marks, reflects a solidifying view that there was "less exercise of coercion than is commonly assumed," given that the U.S. was "willing to tolerate a surprising amount of diversity within the anti-Soviet coalition."

If America's superintendency over Western Europe was "Empire by Invitation" as Lundestad has suggested, it was an invitation

Geir Lundestad, *The American "Empire" and Other Studies of U.S. Foreign Policy in a Comparative Perspective* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 18, 37, 39.

G. John Ikenberry, "Rethinking the Origins of American Hegemony," *Political Science Quarterly*, 104, 3 (Fall 1989), 376.

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 59. Also see William C. Cronwell, *The United States and the European Pillar: The Strained Alliance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

Lundestad emphasizes that America's superintendency over Western Europe after World War II was unique in being "invitational": at the time, virtually every country was in dire need of "distress goods," especially financial and military, and these could only be supplied by the U.S.; thus they invited and welcomed Washington's intervention in their domestic political

which was accepted with speed and enthusiasm. Perhaps more striking is that to some, it was a marked departure from past U.S. conduct. In offering a causal explanation for the Great Depression of the 1930s, Charles Kindleberger held that the relative stability of the pre-1914 international economy derived from Britain's willingness to provide "public or collective goods," mainly by lending abroad and maintaining open markets. But the depression of the 1930s "was so wide, so deep and so long," he contended, because of Britain's inability and America's unwillingness to stabilize the international economic system "in three particulars: (a) maintaining a relatively open market for distress goods; (b) providing counter-cyclical long-term lending; (c) discounting in crisis."¹¹ Kindleberger therefore concluded that "for the world economy to be stabilized, there has to be a stabilizer, one stabilizer."¹² From this evolved the theory that dominance by a hegemonic leader is a prerequisite for creating and maintaining an open and stable world economy. Hegemons, it is believed, use their power to build the framework of rules, institutions, and customary usages which ensure order and stability in a multilateral economy. This way, they influence

economy. See Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952," *Journal of Peace Research*, 23, 3 (September 1986); idem, *The American "Empire" and Other Studies*, 32, 55. Also see Ikenberry, "Rethinking the Origins of American Hegemony." John Lewis Gaddis has similarly argued that American policymakers were drawn into Europe after 1945 as much by anxious Europeans scared of Soviet intentions as by any desire to enthrone Americanism on a global scale. See John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*.

¹¹ Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929-1939* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 291-292.

¹² *Ibid.*, 305.

others to be more liberal than would otherwise have been the case. More broadly, Kindleberger's proposition is the basis for the notion that international stability, in all its ramifications, is a public good which can only be supplied by a hegemon. A state's ability to serve as a hegemonic leader derives from its possession of capabilities that are extraordinary, "both in their diversity and degree of systematic concentration." The state is thus able to invest in the production of international public goods which are in short supply. The hegemon's self-interest "in the stability and prosperity of the overall system provides the incentives for bearing the costs of supplying these scarce goods."¹¹

In its later elaboration,¹² as in its original formulation, the public goods model is fixated on the implications of the international economy for inter-state relations. As a consequence, the model is severely handicapped in explaining geopolitical behavior in the international arena. This is more so when it is applied to the U.S. which was certainly no open market for "distress goods" in the post-1945 era.¹³ The prevalent trend

¹¹ See David P. Rapkin, "The Contested Concept of Hegemonic Leadership," in David P. Rapkin (ed), *World Leadership and Hegemony* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990), 5-6.

¹² Especially see Robert Gilpin, *U.S. Power and Multinational Corporations: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton University Press, 1984); Stephen D. Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," *World Politics*, xxviii, 3 (April, 1976).

¹³ In 1949, World Bank President Eugene Black pointed out the inconsistency between American import barriers and its position as the world's greatest creditor nation. In 1953, he

is to draw on Antonio Gramsci in order to overcome this conceptual lapse, and in particular to provide a robust framework for explaining U.S. global ascendancy after World War II.⁴

One theme which had a special attraction for Gramsci was the establishment and perpetuation of class rule by the bourgeois over the working class in a stable capitalist society. For him, "hegemony" is a culturally integrative political structure which bridges the historical antagonisms in the society through the co-optation of oppositional groups (such as the working class). Although dominated by the bourgeois, hegemony in this sense is a construct obtained and stabilized by a broad consensus (rather than force). Gramsci believed that legitimacy -- securing the ratification of its ascendancy by the rest of the society -- is a major preoccupation for the bourgeois. This led him to address the political production of relations of dominance by which class rule becomes normalized and accepted as legitimate. Gramsci showed that "the supremacy of a social group" manifests itself in

renewed his attack on U.S. commercial policy, stressing that liberalization of imports by the U.S. was an essential condition for the elimination of the dollar shortage and the expansion of international investment. See International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Fourth Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors, *Proceedings* (1949), 11; idem, *Summary Proceedings* (1953), 10. In 1954, former British Prime Minister Attlee complained of the contradiction of the U.S. maintaining high tariffs and other protectionist devices while demanding that Britain give up its Imperial Preference. See Attlee, "Britain and America: Common Aims, Different Opinions."

⁴ For example, see Alan W. Cafruny, "A Gramscian Concept of Declining Hegemony: Stages of U.S. Power and the Evolution of International Economic Relations," in Rapkin (ed), *World Leadership and Hegemony*; Stephen Bill (ed), *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Bradley S. Klein, "Hegemony and Strategic Culture: American Power Projection and Alliance Defense Politics," *Review of International Studies*, 14, 2 (April 1988).

two coexisting forms: coercion and "intellectual and moral leadership." But he ruled out coercion as an enduring means of incorporation: "Force can be employed against enemies, but not against a part of one's own side which one wants to assimilate rapidly, and whose `goodwill' and enthusiasm one needs." Hegemony is established, Gramsci says, through the imposition of "intellectual and moral leadership": "Previously germinated ideologies...come into conflict and confrontation, until only one of them, or at least a single combination, tends to prevail, gaining the upper hand and propagating itself throughout society. It thereby achieves not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all questions over which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a universal plane. It thus creates the hegemony of fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups." By pairing force and cultural ascendancy, Gramsci showed that social control takes two basic forms: one is the external regulation of the individual (influencing behavior and choice externally, through rewards and punishments); the other is normative (ideological or cultural) controls which act as internal regulators of behavior with the aim of producing a set of norms and patterning individual consciousness to fit a desired social model. Put this way, the latter corresponds "to ways of seeing and interpreting the world which are so pervasive that they effectively prevent the emergence of alternative `ways of seeing' and, implicitly, of

¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 57, 168, 181-2.

organizing the world." Thus in the Gramscian framework, the defining moment in ruling class legitimization is attained when the class is able to establish its cultural ascendancy -- that is, impose a normative structure which mediates reality for the rest of the society.

One ought to emphasize that Gramsci did not entirely discount coercion as a means of social control. His concept of hegemony distinguishes between "two major superstructural levels": one is the "civil society," the ensemble of organisms commonly called private" -- educational institutions and less formal mechanisms of socialization, including "deceptive" morals, ideologies, and religions; the other is the "political society," which corresponds with the state. "These two levels," Gramsci explained, "correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other to that of 'direct domination' of command exercised through the State and 'juridical' government." In other words, while "domination" is the goal of the "political society" and is realized through the repressive apparatus of the state, hegemony is "attained through the myriad ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly and indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures whereby men perceive and evaluate problematic social reality." In this

¹ Stephen Gill, "Hegemony, Consensus and Trilateralism," *Review of International Studies*, 12, 3 (July 1986), 206.

² Gramsci, *Selections from the Notebooks*, 12.

³ Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 24.

setting, the entire socialization process is an induction into "false consciousness" since the individuals are betrayed by their own "education" so that they end up revering the very institutions which exploit them.

It should be clear that the Gramsci's intellectual debt was to Marx and Friedrich Engels, and especially those sections of *The German Ideology* which stress the power of the ideas of the ruling class in maintaining the subordination of the lower classes. But far more than Marx and Engels, Gramsci played up the efficacy of normative controls, and thus led the way in demonstrating that class domination is not based on material power alone, but that the dominant class must simultaneously establish its political, cultural, and moral values as the governing norms of behavior.

Robert Cox has done most to translate Gramsci's formulation as an explanatory model in international relations, and especially, in U.S. diplomatic history.³ Hegemony, he says, means "more than the dominance of a single world power." It is, instead, "dominance of a particular kind where the dominant state creates an order based ideologically on a broad measure of consent, functioning according to general principles that in fact ensure the continuing supremacy of the leading state or states

³ Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States, and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 10, 2 (Summer 1981); idem, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method," *ibid.*, 12, 2 (1982); idem, *Production, Power and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

and leading social classes but at the same time offers some measure or prospect of satisfaction to the less powerful."

Cox employs his theoretical formulation to show how the U.S. constructed a "world political economy" in which Western Europe, Japan, and their peripheries were all incorporated. He holds that the hegemonic order "was brought about through a change in power relations among the major states, reflecting a decisive shift in their relative economic-productive powers." In this regard, the Marshall Plan was the "principal instrumentality through which the United States shaped the postwar world economic order." It embodied the concept of multilateralism and "led Western Europe progressively toward trade liberalization and exchange convertibility," basic conditions for the establishment of the international open economy which the U.S. desired. In addition, the Marshall Plan reconstructed Western European state institutions along lines which strengthened liberal capitalist regimes: "The Marshall Plan extended beyond influencing state policies right into the conscious shaping of the balance among social forces within the states and the emerging configuration of historic blocs." In West Germany, trade unions were reorganized by the U.S.; in France and Italy, the communist parties and labor unions unsympathetic to U.S. power were excluded from the internal coalition-building process. In this way, "The Marshall Plan was able to bring about a center-right orientation in the domestic politics of Western Europe during the 1950s and 1960s." Overall, "A combination of rewards and penalties -- access to

¹⁴ Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order*, 7.

credit for compatible and political destabilization of incompatible national regimes -- enforced conformity."¹¹

One may add that Cox is not alone in essentially arguing that the U.S. legitimized its hegemony in Western Europe and Japan through a purposive capitalist intervention targeted at reconstructing the sociopolitical bases of a society. Charles Maier believes that the U.S. established a "consensual hegemony" over Western Europe in the post-1945 years as European leaders "accepted Washington's leadership in view of their needs for economic and security assistance." He explains how Washington achieved this outcome: by externalizing its vision of social harmony through higher productivity and prosperity. By focusing on the "politics of productivity," the U.S. was able to define a common political and economic agenda for the different countries under its umbrella, thus widening the area of collaboration and shrinking the area of competition.¹²

As formulated by Cox, a hegemonic order is quite similar to Immanuel Wallerstein's neo-Marxist "world-system" construct. The latter's operational premise is that the system which has existed since the sixteenth century is a capitalist "world-economy" -- as distinct from a "world economy"¹³ -- of different polities, in

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 212, 215-217, 266.

¹² Charles S. Maier, "The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II," *International Organization*, 31, 4 (Autumn 1977).

¹³ For Wallerstein, the concept of a "world economy" presumes that there are a series of separate "economies" which are "national" in scope, and that under certain circumstances these "national economies" trade with each other, the sum of these (limited) contacts being called the international economy. By contrast, the concept of "world-economy" assumes that there

which elites in core states manage economic and political relations between states in such a way as to maintain their position relative to semi-peripheral and peripheral areas of the system." Thus he treats capitalism as an international phenomenon, and investigates how the structures of the world-system -- a states system, a single long-distance division of labor, and the capitalist mode of production -- shape, among other things, the behavior of core, peripheral, and semi-peripheral states and areas." Like Wallerstein, Cox regards hegemony as a spin-off of a mode of production which has attained global prominence. But while Wallerstein's world-system is based on domination, coercion, exploitation, and inequality, Cox and others influenced by Gramsci emphasize that hegemony is based upon structural as opposed to active dominance." In addition, they emphasize the role of persuasion and the manipulation of

exists an "economy" wherever (and if) there is an ongoing extensive and relatively complete social division of labor with an integrated set of production processes which relate to each other through a "market." See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World-Economy: The States, the Movements, and the Civilizations* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 13.

Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

In addition to the works already cited, also see Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xvi, 4 (1974).

Wallerstein, *The Modern World System, II* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), chap. 2; idem, *The Politics of the World Economy* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), chap. 4.

Kindleberger, for example, contrasts "latent" with "actual economic or political domination." See Charles Kindleberger, *Power and Money* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 71.

consent in the exercise of hegemonic power, and therefore stress that the ruling class governs primarily by eliciting consensus from the subordinate groups; and that dominance is sustained by material incentives and normative controls. They also show that opposition is generally allowed within the hegemonic system, provided its fabric is not threatened. In terms of applicability, the world-system framework suffers from the limitation that much of the empirical scholarship seems to be more on the side of the Gramscian formulation.

The U.S. in Africa

So far, the discussion of the underlying impetus as well as the nature of America's globalism has been at the macro analytical level. Gabriel Kolko has identified how the UDCs fitted into the general picture. As defined by 1944, the U.S. vision of the ideal North-South relationship was, according to him, predicated on the notion of "an integrated world based on free trade....a paternalist attitude that further subordinated anticolonialism to American needs." The impetus for this, he says, derived from Washington's conviction that raw material supplies must be available to all nations without discrimination after the war, and this in turn required complete access for U.S. capital "to enter any nation to accelerate the sound development of latent natural resources and productive capacity in relatively undeveloped areas."

¹⁰ Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 11, 13-14.

Raw Materials and the Open Door

Thus Kolko holds -- and Pollard agrees -- that the location of the UDCs as exporters of raw materials in the international division of labor "generally defined their structural relationship to the United States. According to Kolko, "imported raw materials were increasingly essential to the survival of the U.S. economy as it had developed after 1920 and to its dominant role in the world from 1945 onward." But he sees the Korean War which erupted in June 1950 as the turning-point in this regard. The war, he emphasizes, "produced imperative new requirements that altered basically the relationship of the United States and the Third World. The war's demands on U.S. industrial capacity and its huge impetus to European and Japanese recovery, which together compounded the need for raw materials, brought the question of raw materials supplies to the fore in a manner that had not occurred since World War Two." In the circumstance, there was a dramatic accretion in the "qualitative significance" of the UDCs since they were the source of most of the critical U.S. raw materials imports. This "raw material fever" subsided only in 1957. "But a greater awareness of its importance than earlier remained." Kolko insists that this is an important backdrop "to any serious explanation of the sources of its [U.S.] conduct throughout the Third World."

The next chapter shows that the raw materials factor was indeed very central in shaping U.S. definitions of "national security" interests in Africa. Some of the raw materials,

¹ *Ibid.*, x, 55, 54, 55, 57. Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War*, 220, 201, 202, 220-221.

especially the minerals, were of crucial value for the U.S. stockpile: in 1950, British West Africa, for example, furnished over ninety percent of the U.S. supply of columbine and some eighty percent of its supply of battery grade manganese. The overall implication was that all through the 1950s, Africa's importance to the U.S. was primarily set in the context of the raw materials the area furnished.

Distinct from the interest in raw materials extraction, was also a concerted effort to secure expanded investment opportunities for U.S. private capital in Africa. This is amply demonstrated in the next chapter which discusses U.S. policy in Africa during the Truman administration. But the Eisenhower administration was equally committed to securing an Open Door in Africa (and other parts of the world). In 1953, the latter sponsored official trips to Western Europe, Oceania, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia to explore the possibilities for U.S. private investment. In March 1953, the State Department specifically requested its consular missions in Africa to report on the opportunities for U.S. private

CIA, "The Current Situation in British West Africa," ORE 46-50, 29 September 1950, PSF, Intelligence File, Box 257 (HSTL).

On Asia (Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya, Malta, Ceylon, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos), see Box 4393 thru. docs. 811.05143/9-2854-811.05151W/5-1953; on Europe (Luxembourg, France, Britain, Italy, West Germany), see Box 4396 thru. docs. 811.05162A/7-3051 - 811.05173/7-753; on New Zealand, see Incoming Telegram from Wellington to the secretary of state, 10 September 1953, 811.05144/9-1053. Also see 811.05170/7-2954, Memorandum of Conversation, "Investment Opportunities Developed by the Trip of Mr Roy T. Wise Through Certain African Territories," 29 July 1954. (All are at NA.)

investment."

Geopolitical Considerations

No doubt, the quest for raw materials and an Open Door were important components of post-1945 U.S. foreign relations. But it is also possible to argue that at a very basic level, Washington's diplomacy was particularly concerned with manoeuvring for power in the international system. This meant that the strategic value of any country or region to the U.S. was calculated in terms of the degree to which it expanded the overall correlations of global power. Top on the list of a 1947 ranking by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of areas important to U.S. security was Western Europe, followed by the Near and Middle East, the Far East, South Asia, and finally, North Africa. Africa was not mentioned in that ranking nor in that of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) which listed Western Europe (including Britain), North America (including Greenland and Alaska), the Middle East, Northwest Africa, Latin America, and the Far East -- in this order -- as the regions of "importance to the national security (of) of the United

I did see not the State Department Instruction, but it was cited in the responses from Nigeria and French West Africa, namely, 811.05145H/6-2553, Desp. from AmCongen to the Department of State, Participation of Private U.S. Capital in Nigerian Economic Development," 25 June 1953; and 811.0515T/7-353, Desp. from the AmCongen to the Department of State, "Possible Field for the Investment of American Capital in the Economic Development of French West Africa," 3 July 1953 (both at NA).

CIA, "Review of the World Situation as it Relates to the Security of the United States," 12 September 1947, President's Secretary's File (PSF), Intelligence File, Box 257 (HSTL).

States." It is instructive that northwest Africa's importance derived from its constituting "an important buttress to Western defense positions in Europe and the Middle East, a major element in Western control of the Mediterranean, and potentially a vital base for assembly of troops and supplies and a staging area for counterattack in the event of Soviet invasion of Europe or the Middle East." The index which counted most was what the CIA called "industrial-military power" which consisted of military power and installations, an advanced industrial base, and a skilled workforce. Africa was of the least consequence precisely because it lacked these prerequisites so essential to U.S. national security imperatives.

The fact that Africa possessed so little intrinsic value for the strategists in Washington raises questions regarding U.S. involvement in the region. The extraction of raw materials, as important as it was, does not exhaust the explanation. Chapter 1 ended with the proposition that the transfer of power to Africans involved a reformulation of power relationships between the West and the ex-colonials in a manner which did not upset the established global distribution of power. For a number of

Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, "Policies, Procedures and Costs of Assistance by the United States to Foreign Countries," 12 May 1947, *FRUS, 1947, i* (1973), 737.

"Objectives and Character of ECA Program in the French Overseas Territories," enclosure in letter from Paul R. Porter, ECA assistant administrator to Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee, 11 July 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland).

CIA, "Relative U.S. Security Interest in the European-Mediterranean Area and the Far East," ORE-69-49, 12 September 1949, PSF, Intelligence File, Box 257 (HSTL).

reasons, the U.S. could not have wished to be a by-stander in that power redefinition. To be sure, the political transfiguration of West Africa coincided with the emergence of the U.S. as a superpower with implicit far-flung global interests. Those interests, however defined, acquired added significance as the U.S. and the Soviet Union confronted each other for the dominance of the world. By definition, the resulting imperial bifurcation made anything happening in every far-off corner of the globe strategically and urgently relevant in American, as in Soviet, calculations. In turn, this meant that Washington was well aware that with "the gradual disintegration of the colonial systems and the emergence of young, nationalistic states," a new power configuration was emerging in the periphery and that "unless the Western European nations, and with them the U.S., can secure the goodwill of these newly liberated and as yet dependent areas, they may become aligned with the USSR." What clearly stands out was Washington's intention to chaperon the emerging states into its hegemonic system. America's presence in Africa can thus be situated within the wider context of its striving for a global setting conducive to its national security interest.

Influencing Africa's Orientation

One obvious implication of Washington's post-World War II global agenda was the desire to be the arbiter -- or at the least, to influence the process -- of change everywhere. This

CIA, "The Break-up of the Colonial Empires and its Implications for U.S. Security," 3 September 1948, PSF, Intelligence File, Box 225 (HSTL).

desire had especial relevance to Africa, which was considered to be highly susceptible to external direction and manipulation. For example, NSC 5719 held that U.S.

policy must be guided by the fact that in the long run the orientation of Africa South of the Sahara will depend on where the leaders and the peoples feel their best interest lie. To a considerable extent, the African is still immature and unsophisticated with respect to his attitudes towards the issues that divide the world today. The African's mind is not made up and he is being subjected to a number of contradictory forces. This pressure will increase in the future. The African is a target for the advocacy of Communism, old-fashioned colonialism, xenophobic nationalism, and Egyptian "Islamic" propaganda, as well as for the proponents of an orderly development of the various political entities in the area in question, closely tied to the West.

The belief that the U.S. could influence political developments in Africa, and especially the region's international orientation, was an ever present theme in policymaking. A briefing paper prepared for Eisenhower when Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah paid an official visit to the U.S. in July 1958 remarked that "Ghana's policies and institutions are still in a formative state, and their future character can be affected substantially by the

National Security Council (NSC) 5719, "U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," 31 July 1957 (RG 273, NA).

For example, see Conference Document No. 13, "United States Policy Toward Africa," enclosure in Memorandum from Mr Hare to Mrs Hope, "Summary of Africa Panel," 7 March 1950, Lot 53 D468, Office Files of Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee, 1945-1953, Box 9 (NA). (The conference must have been that of Lourenco Marques.) Also see *Mutual Security Program: Fiscal Year 1958 Estimates -- Near East, South Asia and Africa*, No. 175 (Author and date of publication not indicated), 164; NSC 5719, "U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," 31 July 1957 (RG 273, NA).

attitude and actions of the United States." With this perception, the U.S. positioned itself to win the battle to pattern the nature and direction of Africa's acculturation in the international system. In 1955, the U.S. Operations Mission (USOM) in London held that "most Africans" had not "decided on cooperation with the Soviets, or the Egyptians, or even on an 'Africa for the Africans,'" and so "They can be influenced"; and the circumstances were auspicious enough since "They still look first to Western democracies for help and guidance in the problems of their development." In the context, Washington's role was clearly cut out: "In the part of this process which concerns money, materials and technological skills, an adequate United States contribution can be a significant influence." A year earlier, the State Department recommended that the U.S. should "make the most practicable use" of economic, technical and, where necessary, military assistance, to "influence the process of political change to effect the best compromise of Western interests and to offer the maximum promise of stable non-Communist regimes."

Briefing memorandum for the official visit of the prime minister of Ghana, 23-26 July 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

Airgram from USOM/London, "DOT Program -- British African Territories," 31 October 1956, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

Draft Policy Statement prepared by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, "Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Policies with respect to Tropical Africa," *FRUS*, 1952-1954, x (1983), 98-101. (The paper was undated, but it must have been written before March 1954, see *ibid.*, 98, n. 1.)

Checking Countervailing Influences

America's belief that it could affect the process of change in Africa and, of course, the wider goal of incorporating Africa into its hegemony necessarily predisposed it to work towards limiting the range of alternative "ideological thinking" in Africa, or as stated by a Mutual Security Program paper, "to counter the growth of Communist or other influence inimical to political stability and free world orientation." The importance of this objective is indicated by its recurrence in a number of the policy papers. A paper prepared in early 1956 recommended that the U.S. "should do everything possible to assure the evolution of Africa in a manner that is compatible with our national interest." This specifically involved the prevention of "a growth of inimical foreign influences in Africa, especially those favoring the Soviet Union." The official documents also mention Nasser's Egypt, as well as India and the related issue of nonalignment as secondary "inimical foreign influences." A 1956 National Intelligence Estimate held that "the Communists and the Arab-Asian states will be competing with the West for power and influence" in Africa. "Egypt will continue to encourage and support native nationalism and the spread of Islam as part of its

Mutual Security Program. Fiscal Year 1958 Estimates -- Near East, South Asia and Africa, No. 175 (Author and date of publication not indicated), 164.

611.70/2-1756, Department of State Instruction CA-6309, "Paper on United States Problems in Africa," 17 February 1956 (NA). Also see Draft Policy Statement prepared by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, "Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Policies with respect to Tropical Africa," *FRUS, 1952-1954, x (1983), 98-101.*

effort to become a leader in Africa, particularly at the expense of the colonial powers. India will also continue to give support to African and other movements for independence in a bid for leadership of the Afro-Asian countries." In the same year, the State Department observed that "The anti-white and anti-Western sentiment in Africa may be intensified as it is stimulated by other external pressures. For example, the spread of Islam in Africa South of the Sahara may be merely an obstacle to the Westernization of these peoples, but if it ever becomes effectively controlled by outside Arab states this religious development may have serious political consequences." India's efforts to influence African states, and "Communism" were respectively mentioned as the second and third "external pressures."

All through the 1950s, Washington remained haunted by the specter of Egyptian influence in Africa, especially with the added fear that it might serve as a funnel for Soviet penetration. In July 1960 -- against the background of the Congo crisis -- Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles told the NSC that "The USSR is apparently attempting to use Egypt as a spearhead in the Congo and in Africa generally." Washington's

National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), No. 72-56 (NIE 72-56), "Conditions and Trends in Tropical Africa," 14 August 1956, 335th NSC Meeting, Tab D (RG 273, NA).

611.70/2-1756, Department of State Instruction CA-6309, "Paper on United States Problems in Africa," 17 February 1956 (NA).

Memorandum of Discussion at the 452d Meeting of the National Security Council, 21 July 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 339.

intolerance of Egyptian influence in Africa has to be put into perspective. Eisenhower recalled that in the early days of the Gamal Abdel Nasser presidency of Egypt, the West "tended to look hopefully toward him" in the hope that he would follow "a pro-Western alignment." This expectation evaporated in 1955: the U.S. saw the first deliveries of Czech arms to Egypt in late 1955, like Cairo's recognition of the People's Republic of China in May 1956, as proof that Nasser had fallen into the Soviet orbit. Thus Eisenhower became convinced that "A fundamental factor in the problem is the growing ambition of Nasser, the sense of power he has gained out of his association with the Soviets, his belief that he can emerge as a true leader of the entire Arab world -- and because of these beliefs, his rejection of every proposition advanced as a measure of conciliation between the Arabs and Israel." He immediately proposed to undercut Nasser by building up "some other individual as a prospective leader of the Arab world." Eisenhower's choice was King Saud, even though he confessed, "I do not know the man, and therefore do not know whether he could be built up into the position I visualize." But he was not deterred: "Nevertheless Arabia is a country that contains the holy places of the Moslem world....Consequently, the King could be built up...." In 1958,

Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), 23.

Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles: The Diplomacy of the Eisenhower Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), chaps. 21-22.

Eisenhower's diary entry for 28 March 1956. See Robert H. Ferrell (ed), *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York; W.W. Norton, 1981), 323; also in AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 13 (DDEL). And of

Washington still considered that it faced "the fact that certain aspects of the drive toward Arab unity, particularly as led by Nasser, are strongly inimical to our interests."

As explained by an internal State Department memorandum, the problem with India arose because it was "making a desperate bid to assert its influence, and even its leadership, throughout Africa." Benjamin Gerig -- the director of the Office of Dependent Area Affairs -- who raised the issue, traced the origin of this alleged conduct on the part of India partially to the 1955 Bandung Conference, but particularly to the 1956 UN General Assembly and Trusteeship Council sessions. It was pointed out that it was an "accepted Departmental policy" that India's growing influence in Africa was not "in the interest of the United States or of the Western World." After emphasizing that it was "to the interest of the Western World to keep African orientation westward rather than eastward," he added "If for historical reasons it should be difficult to continue the close ties which have associated much of Africa with Europe and with the United States, it should certainly be to Western interests to

course, Washington promptly adjusted its policy towards Egypt to reflect the divergence. Among other things, it was decided that the U.S. and Britain would deny Egypt export licenses for arms shipments; that both countries would continue to delay conclusion of the negotiations on the Aswan Dam; and that the U.S. would continue to delay action on Egypt's requests for grains and oil under PL 480. The White House, Memorandum for the president, "Near Eastern Policies," 28 March 1956, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 13 (DDEL).

NSC 5820/1, "U.S. Policy Toward the Near East," 4 November 1958 (RG 273, NA).

have African peoples and nations develop on an independent basis rather than to be oriented eastward toward Asia."¹⁴

Without doubt, the basis of India's "evil influence," as far as Washington was concerned, derived from its adherence to nonalignment. In July 1954, the State Department sent an alert to U.S. diplomatic missions in Africa. It claimed that "Sufficient information has accumulated on the activities of the Government of India in Africa to indicate beyond a reasonable doubt that India is launched on a propaganda program to attract developing African governments to neutralism and the Asian-African bloc." Worried because a successful Indian effort "would swing these politically-developing areas away from cooperation with the United States," the department felt the need to have "the activities of India throughout the continent be fully known." The missions were therefore instructed to monitor the political and cultural activities of Indian government representatives, and of Indian citizens resident in Africa, as well as "those assigned to India by one or another of the technical agencies of the United Nations" in order "to determine the pattern, and the techniques employed, together with an estimate of the effectiveness of the program."¹⁵

¹⁴ Memorandum from the director of the Office of Dependent Area Affairs (Gerig) to the assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs (Wilcox), "Afro-Asian or Asian-African Concept and its Use by U.S. Officials," 9 May 1957, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, xviii (1989) 66-67.

¹⁵ Department of State Instruction, USIA CA-55, 23 July 1954, "Activities of the Government of India," File 312.2, Dakar Consulate General, Classified General Records 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland).

Beginning with the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, nonalignment and neutralism (with its variant, "positive neutralism") gained wide currency as a descriptive label for the foreign policy orientation of UDCs which had opted not to be affiliated with either the American-led Western or the Soviet-led Eastern camps. India's adherence to nonalignment antedated Bandung. In December 1947, about five months after independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru told India's Parliament, "We have sought to avoid foreign entanglements by not joining one bloc or the other. We propose to keep on the closest terms of friendship with all countries unless they themselves create difficulties. We shall be friends with Americans and intend cooperating with them. We intend also to cooperate fully with the Soviet Union." From the onset, it was Washington's goal to wean India away from nonalignment. At their August 1951 meeting, the foreign ministers of the U.S. and Britain agreed that "Mr Nehru's foreign policy of 'neutralism' militates against the achievement of collective security and therefore, in final the analysis, is favorable to the Soviet Union." The conferees resolved to "seek to convince India that neutralism is a danger to India's existence as an independent country, and hinders progress toward a free world order based on law and the peaceful settlement of international disputes; and that collective security and closer association with the non-Soviet countries, far from increasing the possibility of India's becoming involved in war, are the best

Attar Chand, *Nonaligned Nations: Challenge of the Eighties* (New Delhi: Selectbook Service Syndicate, 1983), 79.

assurances that it will not." But to Washington's certain chagrin, India remained a leading light in the nonaligned movement. Early in 1951, *The Economist* had explained that "The neutrality upon which his [Nehru's foreign] policy is based springs from a genuine inability, at this stage, to see world politics in terms of pure black and pure white; and this leads to the decision to attempt to avoid alignments and the taking of sides. That outlook appears unrealistic to many statesmen in the West. In the United States, where the division of the world is often seen in rigid terms of good and evil, there is the added tendency to dismiss it as immoral."

There might have been moments of flexibility, but Washington, and Dulles in particular, considered nonalignment or neutralism immoral because it was seen as a transitional phase to communism. At a press conference on 6 June 1956, Eisenhower

Washington Foreign Ministers Meeting, "Means to Combat India's Policy of Neutrality," WFM B-2/4, 30 August 1951, Records of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Washington Foreign Ministers Meeting, September 1951, WFM British Talks 1-56, Box 64 (NA).

"India's Neutrality," *The Economist*, 24 January 1951, 186-7.

H.W. Brands argues that both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were flexible, indeed accommodative, of neutralism and that they made a scrupulous distinction between "communism" and neutralism: "At a certain level of abstraction," he says, "they *thought* ideologically. With some exceptions, however, they tended to *act* in a remarkably non-ideological fashion." Nonalignment, he says, was opposed by Washington only when it harmed its interests. See his *The Specter of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989). The quotation is from p. 9. (Emphasis in original). However, it should be obvious enough that the primary evidence on which the position here has been developed is out of harmony with Brands' argument.

Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, 316.

attempted to soften Washington's hostility to nonalignment. Recalling that the U.S. itself had followed a similar policy, especially in connection with European affairs, in its "first hundred years or more," he held that contemporary neutrality "doesn't necessarily mean what it is so often interpreted to mean, neutral as between right and wrong or decency or indecency." He understood that the concept was being used "with respect to military alliances," adding "I cannot see that it is always to the disadvantage of such a country as ours." Eisenhower rounded off by indicating that Dulles was shortly going to make a policy pronouncement clarifying the administration's position on nonalignment.¹⁰ In the event, the Dulles speech which followed barely two days later was anticlimactic. He reaffirmed America's standing resentment against nonalignment, and declared that U.S. mutual assistance treaties with forty-two countries of America, Europe and Asia "abolish, as between the parties, the principle of neutrality, which pretends that a nation can best gain safety for itself by being indifferent to the fate of others. This has increasingly become an obsolete conception and, except under very exceptional circumstances, it is an immoral and shortsighted conception."¹¹

The State Department embraced Dulles' position as its policy landscape. In a major policy statement issued in June 1957, it held that "the major threat to world peace and security is international communism" because it "still has as its objective

¹⁰ *The New York Times*, 7 June 1956.

¹¹ Address by Secretary Dulles, "The Cost of Peace," *Department of State Bulletin*, 18 June 1956, 999-1000.

world domination." The U.S., it went on, "is reinforced in its belief that the most effective method of combatting international communism, within the framework of the major objective -- building enduring world peace with justice -- is for the community of free nations to cooperate to safeguard their independence by creating a collective defense system." On this account, it was considered "unwise for any non-communist nation to fail to avail itself of the benefits of free association with other independent nations for this purpose." For the department, the matter was further complicated because "In some instances, 'positive neutrality' has expressed itself in propaganda attacks upon other independent states which have rejected the neutralist position for themselves, and which have joined in collective defense against communism. Such propaganda attacks have benefitted international communism and constitute unneutral conduct." There is hardly any indication of a real change in attitude, even as late as 1960. At an NSC meeting in August that year, the question was raised whether neutralism in Africa was "necessarily undesirable from the point of view of U.S. interests." The view was expressed that the only neutralism the U.S. could accommodate was a pro-Western alignment. Acting Secretary of State Douglas Dillon told the meeting that "neutralism was not undesirable if the countries were genuinely

511.00/6-2757, Department of State Instruction CA-11094, Policy Information Statement (NEA-191), "Talking Point on 'Positive Neutrality' and Nationalism," 27 June 1957 (NA).

neutral -- that is, friendly to the West and to free enterprise." Otherwise, "neutralism could be undesirable."¹¹

Far more than the possibilities of both Egyptian and Indian influence in Africa, the containment of "Communist" expansionism as a policy objective looms large in Washington's rhetoric. The standard staple was the acknowledgement that "Communism" had not made any real gains in Africa, but that was no reason for complacency; instead, the U.S. had to intervene to maintain the status quo by keeping "Communism" at bay. This vocabulary was well represented in the report turned in by Vice President Richard Nixon after his tour of Africa in early 1957. *The Times* of London (8 April 1957) was quick to point out at the time that Nixon seemed "obsessed with the threat of Communism in this area." While conceding that "His fears are not wholly without basis," the paper suggested that "a very clear distinction needs to be made between Communism as a domestic political movement and the Soviet Union as an international political force. Communism has never been a serious subversive threat in Africa...." But Nixon was not alone in his assessment.¹² A State Department

¹¹ NSC Memorandum, 25 August 1950, "Discussion at the 456th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, August 18, 1960" (DDEL).

¹² See Department of State, "The Emergence of Africa: Report to the President by Vice President Nixon on his trip to Africa, February 28-March 21, 1957," 7 April 1957 (S.12:Af8, NA).

¹³ For example, see NSC 5719, "U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," 31 July 1957; and its later revisions, the last being NSC 5818 of August 1958; *Briefing on Africa (Testimony of J.C. Satterthwaite): Hearings before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Eighty-sixth Congress, 1st sess., March 5 and July 21 1959* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), 9; Hubert Humphrey, "Emergent

position paper prepared in early 1956 held that U.S. interest in Africa had "assumed a new dimension," on two accounts. One was that Africa's large land mass "gives a present and potential importance in the conflict with the Communist nations." The other was that Africa was "the last great area in which the issues of colonialism are being resolved." Both factors were said to be conditioned by the "world-wide sweep of events which has propelled the United States into a position of leadership in the struggle between the West and the Soviet Union." Given this fixation, anti-Sovietism appears -- and is widely taken -- as *the policy*, rather than as *part of the policy*. In his book published as late as 1992, Michael Clough began with the assertion that "For nearly four decades, U.S. policy toward Africa was shackled by the Cold War. From the end of World War II until late 1984, Washington's interests in the continent fluctuated with changing estimates of the threat posed by real or imagined Soviet gains."

As this thesis unfolds, it will become apparent that actual policy did not reflect the urgency evident in the official

Africa: Challenge and Response," *Congressional Record -- Senate* (2 September 1959); NSC 6005, "U.S. Policy Toward West Africa," 29 February 1960. Its amended and final version, NSC 6005/1, was adopted by the NSC and received presidential approval as a statement of policy on 9 April 1960. See NSC 6005/1, "Statement of U.S. Policy Toward West Africa," 9 April 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 117-126.

611.70/2-1756, Department of State Instruction CA-6309, "Paper on United States Problems in Africa," 17 February 1956 (NA).

Michael Clough, *Free at Last? U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992), 1.

pronouncements. Indeed, by 1960, Washington had resigned itself to the fact that it would have to contend with some appreciable degree of "Communist" presence in Africa. Thus although it believed that the end of European rule "opens the door to Sino-Soviet Bloc penetration," the State Department also felt that it was futile, even unnecessary, to attempt to stem such penetration. It conceded that "The African countries cannot be prevented from accepting some economic aid, technical assistance, and cultural exchanges from the Bloc." In the circumstance, U.S. objective "should be to meet (together with the Metropoles and the multilateral agencies) the legitimate needs of the African countries wherever possible, to encourage them to accept only a minimum of Bloc aid, to limit Bloc activities to less sensitive fields, and to place those activities under strict controls." With European control or influence still very much in place and with the region's geographic remove from the "danger areas" such as southeast Asia, Africa was generally considered to be in secure Western hands and therefore free of Cold War complications. This consideration was frequently expressed along the line of a 1951 State Department memorandum which remarked that "Africa is fundamentally identified economically and politically with the Free World Democracies -- countries aligned

Memorandum for the NSC, "National Security Implications of Future Developments Regarding Africa," 12 July 1960, National Security Council Meeting Minutes, 456th Meeting, Tab A (RG 273, NA). Also in White House Office, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box 28 (DDEL).

against Communism."¹⁰⁰ As late as May 1957, the department reiterated that "the association of the northern and western half of Africa have been northward toward Europe and westward towards the United States."¹⁰¹ With this mind-set, Washington felt no need to be alarmed about developments in Africa. An NSC paper prepared in 1957 conceded that Africa had enjoyed far less priority in U.S. calculations than Western Europe, the Middle and Far East, "where the weight of Communist military and political strength was more powerfully and intensively applied."¹⁰² These considerations resulted in some palpable complacency or a lack of alarm on the part of the U.S. as regards "Communist" threat in places such as (West) Africa.

There is certainly no denying that the U.S. actively sought to keep Soviet influence out of African in the 1950s. The first NSC position paper on Africa, NSC 5719 which was issued in July 1957, was explicit that a major U.S. objective in Africa was "to deny the area to Communist control." This was considered important, for according to the paper, "Communist" control would ensure "both economic dislocations to Western Europe and

¹⁰⁰ 745H.00/4-2351, Letter of 23 April 1951 on "Preparedness for War" from E.H. Bourgerie, director, State Department Office of African Affairs to A.W. Childs, American consul general in Lagos (NA). This was a circular letter also sent to other U.S. missions in Africa.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum from the director of the Office of Dependent Area Affairs (Gerig) to the assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs (Wilcox), "Afro-Asian or Asian-African Concept and its Use by U.S. Officials," 9 May 1957, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, xviii (1989), 67.

¹⁰² "Project Proposal for a Study of Africa in Transition," 22 July 1957, NSC 335th Meeting, Tab D (RG 273, NA).

Communist access to strategic materials."¹¹¹ The point being stressed, however, is that contrary to Clough, containing "Communism" was not the defining peg of U.S. policy in Africa, certainly not in the 1950s.

Hegemonic Socialization

In seeking to shape the process of political change in Africa, Washington understood that it was not enough to focus on the negative strategy of restraining the penetration of "Communism," nonalignment or Egyptian. As elsewhere, the U.S. also sought to insert itself into the "nation-building" process, with the objective of replicating what Emily Rosenberg calls "liberal developmentalism." This jargon implies a normative preference for a particular culture -- the economic and political essences, and inseparably, the social form of the "American way" -- which the U.S. deemed appropriate for the rest of the world.¹¹² The literature suggests that the U.S. relied almost exclusively on its economic assistance programs to achieve this objective.¹¹³

¹¹¹ National Security Council, (NSC) 5719, "U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," 31 July 1957 (RG 273, NA). This objective was retained in later revisions of NSC 5719, the last being NSC 5818 of August 1958.

¹¹² Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 7-13.

¹¹³ For example, see Gary R. Hess, "Accommodation and Discord: The United States, India, and the Third World," *Diplomatic History*, 16, 1 (Winter 1992), 4; Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy, 1953-1961* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); idem, "The United States Response to the Soviet Economic Offensive of the 1950s," *Diplomatic History*, 2, 2 (Spring 1978), 154; Max Millikan and W.W. Rostow, *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 109-113; Myron Weiner, "Assessing the Political Impact of Foreign Assistance," in John W. Mellor (ed), *India: A Rising Middle Power* (Boulder: Westview Press,

There is, however, ample evidence that like Gramsci who died in 1937, American leaders fully understood that hegemons acquire, sustain, and exercise power in the international system not only by manipulating material incentives, but especially by altering the substantive beliefs of the leaders of other nations. In November 1950, the State Department emphasized that "The position of the United States today makes it incumbent upon us to seek all practical means of integrating the peoples of the underdeveloped areas of the world into the free world." To achieve this end, the department envisioned "influencing non-official groups and individuals in underdeveloped areas" and therefore advocated that "Our contacts must not be confined to the transaction of day to day official business or to the simple exchange of information. They must be used to influence the thinking and actions of the people along the lines we consider most likely to produce the desired result."¹⁰⁰ Similarly, a 1955 National Intelligence Estimate explained that containing Soviet expansion into the "Third World" entailed a "battle of ideas" for influencing the attitudes and allegiance of potential leadership groups.¹⁰¹ To win this "battle," Washington put in place a number of mechanisms designed to ensure that the elites of the subordinate states in its world system internalized America's value orientations and

1979).

¹⁰⁰ Under secretary meeting, "The Grass Roots Approach," 28 November 1950, Lot 53 D468, Office Files of Assistant Secretary of State George McGhee, 1945-1953, Box 10 (NA).

¹⁰¹ National Intelligence Estimate, NIE 100-7-55, "World Situation and Trends," 1 November 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, xix (1990), 143.

claims about the nature of the international system. One such mechanism was the Foreign Leader Program which was inaugurated by the State Department in 1947.¹⁰⁰

The grantees -- as the participants in the Foreign Leader Program were known -- were nominated to the State Department by the U.S. diplomatic posts in their respective home countries.¹⁰¹ Their first stop was Washington; after they had been attached to program visitors who helped to plan their individual study tours, the grantees moved on to the American Council on Education -- which had a contract with the State Department -- to offer a one-week program of lectures, discussions, films, and tours in Washington. This segment was intended to provide them with a general introduction to the U.S., its history, economy, geography, government, institutions and customs. From the American Council, the grantees moved on to their more specialized interests. The Governmental Affairs Institute, a private organization in Washington affiliated with the American Political Association, catered for those who were interested in observing the U.S. political system, the civil service, local government and administration, the judiciary and law enforcement; as well as

¹⁰⁰ Robert E. Elder, *The Foreign Leader Program: Operations in the United States* (Wesport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishers, 1961), 2.

¹⁰¹ Beginning with the fiscal year 1953 program, the standard length of all foreign leader grants was ninety days. Also from that fiscal year, the maximum rate of per diem for each grantee was raised from \$10 to \$12. It was from this that they paid for their living expenses -- hotel accommodation and meals -- while in the U.S. See State Department, Foreign Service Information and Circular No. 86, "Educational Exchange Service -- Foreign Leader Program," 28 May 1953, File 321.2, Dakar consulate general, Classified General Records, 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland)

the teaching of political science, public administration and international relations at the university level. The National Social Welfare Assembly, a New York-based private organization, worked with grantees concerned with youth organizations, social group work, community recreation programs, and the operations of voluntary agencies in the social welfare field. The Office of International Labor Affairs of the Department of Labor saw to those interested in labor issues, while the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor took care of women leaders. Leaders who wished to study matters relating to the educational system depended on the Office of Education of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Educational Exchange Service of the State Department took care of those who were interested in information media, cultural affairs, economic affairs (except agricultural and labor affairs), and foreign affairs (except the teaching of international relations in the universities).¹⁰⁷

Under the second phase of the program, the grantees -- moving individually -- toured a number of cities and one or two small towns. (Those not proficient in English were accompanied by "escort-interpreters.") In each city, the grantee consulted with professional colleagues, visited local tourist attractions, attended cultural and civic events; and spent some time with an American family. In addition to the stops in the cities, each grantee had to visit at least one small community with a population of 50,000 or less. After the "study tour," the

¹⁰⁷ State Department, Foreign Service Information and Circular No. 86, "Educational Exchange Service -- Foreign Leader Program," 28 May 1953, File 321.2, Dakar consulate general, Classified General Records, 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland)

grantees returned to Washington "for final interviews" with their respective program and area officers in the Department of State. In addition, they participated in a three-day terminal seminar on "the American scene." Back home, the American diplomatic post there followed through, both formally and informally, "to maintain a relationship with the grantee and to evaluate the results of the visit."¹⁰⁰

The Foreign Leader Program must not be confused with the Foreign Specialists Program which was also administered by the State Department. As provided by Public Law 402 of the Eightieth Congress, both programs were intended to promote "better understanding of the United States in other countries and to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people in other countries" through the latter's travels, observations, and consultations with their American colleagues. But while Specialists Program participants received specialized or technical exposure and training,¹⁰¹ that was not the case with the Foreign Leader Program.¹⁰² And while participants in the former tended to be somewhat younger, stayed in the U.S. for longer periods, participants in the Leader Program were established persons -- journalists and publishers; members of national, state, or local legislatures; officials of government agencies on the national, state or local levels;

¹⁰⁰ Elder, *The Foreign Leader Program*, 7-8.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰² State Department, Foreign Service Information and Circular No. 86, "Educational Exchange Service -- Foreign Leader Program," 28 May 1953, File 321.2, Dakar consulate general, Classified General Records, 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland)

political party leaders; university teachers and administrators; educational administrators; labor leaders; leaders of women organizations; and youth leaders. In short, the grantees were, according to Robert Elder, "the sort of people anyone would select if he were looking about the United States for leaders and persons of genuine influence whose words will always not only be heard, but heeded."¹⁰⁰ It was required that each prospective Foreign Leader grantee should "be a person who now exercises, or may be expected to exercise in the relatively near future, unquestionable influence over a substantial segment of public opinion in his home country."¹⁰¹ Students were therefore excluded from the program on the ground that they "are something of a gamble in that in most cases it is impossible to accurately ascertain their leadership potential."¹⁰²

The thrust of Gramsci's exposition, as demonstrated earlier, is that in order to neutralize popular challenges and thus bridge the historical antagonisms within civil society, the dominant class has to establish its leadership at the ideological and

¹⁰⁰ Elder, *The Foreign Leader Program*, 4.

¹⁰¹ State Department, Foreign Service Information and Circular No. 86, "Educational Exchange Service -- Foreign Leader Program," 28 May 1953, File 321.2, Dakar consulate general, Classified General Records, 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland).

¹⁰² 511.45H3/2-455, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "Educational Exchange: Program Planning for Nigeria," 4 February 1955 (NA). Also excluded were those who held cabinet or ministerial ranks in their home governments "since facilities for administration of this program are not adequate to meet the demands of protocol in such cases." See State Department, Foreign Service Information and Circular No. 86, "Educational Exchange Service -- Foreign Leader Program," 28 May 1953, File 321.2, Dakar consulate general, Classified General Records, 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland).

cultural levels. It is a basic requirement of this process that the dominant class creates its own intellectual cadre which will direct and organize its worldview. The result, Gramsci said, was "the formation of an ever more extensive ruling class."¹⁰⁰ As he put it:

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields....The intellectuals are the dominant group's 'deputies' exercising the subaltern function of social hegemony and political government.¹⁰¹

From the roll call of the Foreign Leader grantees, it is evident that Washington was clearly seeking to create "deputies" who would help ensure "the predominance of political society over civil society in such a way that the subaltern classes are held in a passive position because their potential leadership is co-opted."¹⁰² From Nigeria came those who were in positions of power and influence such as Richard Doherty, speaker of the Western Region House of Assembly;¹⁰³ Ernest Nwanolue Egbuna, speaker of the Eastern Region House of Assembly;¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Adekogbe;¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 58.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5, 12.

¹⁰² Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political, Hegemony and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 175.

¹⁰³ 511.45H3/2-1257, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "Leader Grant Proposal FY 1956 Thompson Oshin Replaced by Richard A. Doherty," 12 February 1957 (NA).

¹⁰⁴ 511.45H3/8-2457, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "IES: Nomination of Hon. Ernest N. Egbuna, Speaker, Eastern House of Assembly, FY 58, For Leader Grant," 24 August 1957 (NA).

T.O. Ejiwuno, secretary for the Amateur Athletic Association of Western Nigeria; B.R. Pam, development secretary, Jos native authority and member of the Northern Nigeria House of Assembly; H.M. Katsina, education councillor, Katsina native authority; Ishaya Andrew, chief of Jaba; Muhammadu Aminu, district head, Sabon Gari, Zaria; Ayo Bello, assistant publicity officer, Northern Nigeria Information Service; Talabi A. Braithwaite, manager of Law Union and Rock Insurance Company Limited; Jonathan Adeniyi, principal, Abeokuta Grammar School; E.N. Akpom, women welfare officer, Nigerian Coal Corporation, Enugu; and Amos Okulaja, superintendent, Poultry Development Center, Fashola. There were also those who later occupied key public positions in Nigeria such as Festus Sam Okotie-Eboh; Yusuf Maitama Sule;

She was at the time president, the Women Movement of Nigeria; chairman, Judiciary Committee, Ijebu Divisional Council; member, board of management of the Cooperative Bank of Western Nigeria Limited; executive member, Cooperative Union of Western Nigeria Limited. See 511.45H3/12-856, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "Submission of Nigerian Woman Candidate for Women Leader Program FY 1957," 8 December 1956 (NA).

511.45H3/3-1257, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "IES: Proposed Leader Grant, PL 402, FY 1957," 12 August 1957 (NA).

511.45H3/8-2257, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "Five Leader Grants, Northern Region of Nigeria, FY 58," 22 August 1957 (NA).

511.45H3/9-2857, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "IES: Forwarding of Data on Five Proposed Individual Specialist FY 58," 28 September 1957 (NA).

511.45H3/8-1755, Department of State Instruction A-8, "Educational Exchange: Public Law 402 Foreign Leader Program," 17 August 1955 (NA).

511.45H3/8-2257, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "Five Leader Grants, Northern Region of Nigeria, FY 58," 22 August 1957 (NA).

Eyo Esua;¹²² Godfrey Kio Jaja Amachree; Stephen Oluwole Awokoya;¹²³ and Theophilus Aribisala.¹²⁴ Participants from other parts of West African were no less impressive. For example, the grantees from French West Africa included Gabriel d'Arboussier, president of the Grand Council of French West Africa;¹²⁵ Ernest Boka, minister of public functions, Ivory Coast;¹²⁶ Seydou B. Kouyate, minister of rural economy and planning of the Republic of Soudan;¹²⁷ and Paul Amegee, Togo's minister of public works.¹²⁸

The Foreign Leader Program does indeed provide a very attractive exploratory field for hegemony theorists. Gramscian theorists believe that socialization -- the process through which the leaders of the "secondary states" embrace the normative ideals projected by the hegemon -- plays an important role both

¹²² 511.45H3/10-1455, Department of State Instruction A-23, "Educational Exchange: Public Law 402 Foreign Leader Program," 14 October 1955 (NA).

¹²³ 511.45H3/7-3155, Department of State Instruction A-12, "Educational Exchange: PL 402 Foreign Leader Program," 31 July 1956 (NA).

¹²⁴ 511.45H3/11-3057, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the State Department, "IES: Forwarding of Data on Proposed Leader Grantee for FY 58," 30 May 1957 (NA).

¹²⁵ 511.51T3/9-1158, Desp. from AmConGen, Dakar to the State Department, "Candidate for Foreign Leader Grant under Public Law 402: Mr Gabriel Marie d'Arboussier," 11 September 1958 (NA).

¹²⁶ 511.51T3/5-2759, Desp. from AmConGen Dakar, Senegal to the State Department, "Leader Grant for Mr Ernest Boka, Minister of Public Functions, Ivory Coast," 27 May 1959 (NA).

¹²⁷ 511.51T3/5-2859, Desp. from AmConGen, Dakar to the State Department, "Educational Exchange: Candidate for FY 1959 Foreign Leader Grant under Public Law 402: Mr Seydou B. Kouyate," 26 May 1959 (NA).

¹²⁸ 511.51T3/6-1259, Telegram from Lome to the secretary of state, 12 June 1959 (NA).

in establishing an international hegemonic order and in facilitating the functioning of that order. G. John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan have thus explained that

Acquiescence is the result of the socialization of leaders in secondary nations. Elites in secondary states buy into and internalize norms that are articulated by the hegemon and therefore pursue policies consistent with the hegemon's notion of international order. The exercise of power -- and hence the mechanism through which compliance is achieved -- involves the projection by the hegemon of a set of norms and their embrace by leaders.¹⁰⁰

The Foreign Leader Program involved participants from Europe, Latin America, the Far East, Near East and South Asia, and Africa.¹⁰¹ The program was thus part of the process of the universalization of America's power and interests. There was the hope by Washington that the program would -- by socializing the grantees into America's hegemonic vision of the world order -- ensure that the participants identified with and defended American interests and aspirations. But by definition, this role also entailed that, as opinion molders in their various countries, the grantees would transmit American norms and thus influence the subaltern groups to bring about, as Gramsci put it, "not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity."¹⁰²

In the event, it does not seem that efforts such as the Foreign Leader Program achieved much. As chapter 1 showed, the

¹⁰⁰ See G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization*, 44, 3 (Summer 1990), 283.

¹⁰¹ See Elder, *The Foreign Leader Program*, Appendix A, p. 113.

¹⁰² Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, 181-182.

colonial system and the entire process leading up to the transfer of power ensured an instinctive pro-Western orientation among West African political leaders. By contrast, the younger elements were more radical in their outlook, and even resentful of the West. These contrasts were reflected in the attitudes towards the U.S. For example, a month before Nigeria's independence, John Emmerson, the U.S. consul in Lagos, reported that Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa "was unequivocal in his determination to stick to democratic institutions and firm relations with west. He does not like the terms non alignment or neutrality as he considers himself committed to western ideals." In particular, Balewa cherished "close British ties" and wished to develop "close relations" with the U.S.¹⁰⁰ But almost a year earlier, -- in August 1959 -- Emmerson gave a talk on "American Foreign Policy toward Nigeria" to the Lagos Contemporary Society, which drew its membership from young professionals and civil servants. The questions which followed the talk were generally critical of American foreign policy, ranging from its attitude on apartheid in South Africa, to its hostility to nonalignment, to its support of dictatorships, as well as "feudal and fascist states," and even its policy in Latin America. Reporting to Washington, Emmerson observed that "While not attaching too much significance to the trend of thought exemplified in this meeting, one must remind oneself that official declarations of solidarity with the West by government and political leaders may not always reflect accurately opinions held by many of the younger generation, not

¹⁰⁰ Telegram from the consulate general, Lagos to the Department of State, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 223-224.

now in positions of influence but potential leaders of the future."¹³³ Far more critical, however, were the University College, Ibadan students interviewed in early 1961 by Paul Conklin of the *New Republic*. In part, they told him: "You Americans are the most obstinate people. You above all others should realize that Africa is not to be wooed like a child with no mind of its own. There is so much talk in the United States about winning Africa for the free world. Has it ever occurred to you that perhaps we don't want to be won, perhaps we don't regard your freedom as being particularly desirable."¹³⁴ Among the students, the U.S. had a serious image problem. Indeed, many of them would have agreed with Melvin Gurton that "Antinationalism and intervention have been conspicuous in American foreign policy ever since the emergence of the United States in this century as a global military and economic power." Gurton defines intervention as "the calculated and partisan use of national power -- military, economic, political -- to influence the domestic politics of another state." Antinationalism, he says, is "an attitude of indifference and sometimes disdain on the part of American policy-makers toward Third World societies and peoples."¹³⁵

¹³³ 611.45H/8-1059, Desp. from AmCongen to the Department of State, "Speech by Consul General to 'The Contemporary Society' on 'American Foreign Policy toward Nigeria,'" 10 August 1959 (NA).

¹³⁴ Paul Conklin, "Nigeria's Youth Speaks Its Mind," *Africa Report*, March 1961.

¹³⁵ Melvin Gurton, *The United States Against the Third World: Antinationalism and Intervention* (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 1-2.

The Limits of Power

The preceding section identified two specific interests -- raw materials extraction and securing an Open Door -- as underlying factors in U.S. intervention in Africa. It also argued that there was much confidence on Washington's part that it had a central role to play in shaping the nature of Africa's acculturation into the international system. This latter objective predisposed the U.S. to oppose countervailing forces, especially "Communism," which multiplied the options available (to African states) within the overall global system. Nonetheless, Washington was at the same time only too aware that it had a narrow latitude in the pursuit of these objectives. In 1956, the State Department conceded that in a number of ways, Europe's long-standing presence in Africa restricted the furtherance of U.S. national interests in the region: first, the European influence far outweighed that of the U.S. in Africa; second, the European presence imposed "a triangular pattern" on U.S. relationship with Africa, as "the personality of the European power" was interposed between the American and the African. Nor did the U.S. "have an infinite capacity to influence" the European governments to take actions which accorded with its own policies. This limitation went beyond the Europeans being merely unable to agree with the U.S. "because of their [European] internal political situation. It is also a question of their being unwilling to jeopardize arrangements which we [the U.S.] consider of utmost significance if pressed too far. This fact has a particular significance for Africa, since much of what we would like to see done in the continent

must be accomplished through the European administering countries."¹⁴

European Colonial Presence

The issue of how and why the European presence posed a major obstacle for the U.S. in Africa can be considered from several angles. Of relevance is Walter Adamson's explanation that hegemony is "a process of continuous creation which, given its massive scale, is bound to be uneven in the degree of legitimacy it commands and to leave some room for antagonistic cultural expressions to develop."¹⁵ This was especially so since America's new found status and role as a global hegemon clashed with those of the old Great Powers seeking to negotiate their transition to the status of lesser powers with as much dignity as the occasion could afford them. For the Europeans who had long been accustomed to presiding over world affairs, the pain of this transition was certainly a reason for resentment. This was particularly true of Africa, which was of crucial importance in this kind of calculation for Britain, Belgium, France, and Portugal. This was certainly appreciated in Washington: in 1951, Elmer Bourgerie, director, State Department Office of African Affairs, acknowledged that "The European Colonial Governments...regard their African territories as essential to their military security, economic wellbeing and political position in the world community. Since these Governments have lost most of their

¹⁴ 611.70/2-1756, Department of State Instruction CA-6309, "Paper on United States Problems in Africa," 17 February 1956 (NA).

¹⁵ Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, 174.

Asiatic possessions, Africa is more important to them than ever before."¹³³ Second, by the very nature of the colonial relationship, the Europeans reaped benefits from the colonies over and above what was obtainable in normal market relations. For example, by 1953, British African colonies were making available substantial credits (\$2 billion annually) to the metropole in the form of sterling balances which would normally have been drawn down through trade were it not for Britain's virtual control of colonial trade policy.¹³⁴ With this kind of bounty, it was therefore natural for the Europeans to resist U.S. penetration into their colonies.

Of the two colonial powers being studied here, France raised more difficulties than Britain.¹³⁵ A former U.S. ambassador to Gabon reported that "in several African countries de Gaulle's government has been discovered, sometimes in little scheming ways and sometimes in ways not so little, to be working against the United States, to frustrate [U.S.] policies and diminish [U.S.] influence."¹³⁶ John Chipman also found that "It is often the impending prospect of being replaced, especially by the Americans

¹³³ 745H.00/4-2351, Letter of 23 April 1951 on "Preparedness for War" from E.H. Bourgerie, director, State Department Office of African Affairs to A.W. Childs, American consul general in Lagos (NA). This was a circular letter also sent to other U.S. missions in Africa.

¹³⁴ IR No. 6390, "Conditions and Trends in Tropical Africa," (Office of Intelligence Research), Department of State, 24 August 1953.

¹³⁵ See George McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World: Adventures in Diplomacy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 221.

¹³⁶ Charles and Alice Darlington, *African Betrayal* (New York: David MacKay, 1968), 169.

that forces France, from time to time, to readjust her policy so as to more completely conform to the declared requirements of African states."¹⁴¹ On the other hand, Britain was quite willing to allow external elements, especially the U.S., into its colonial development policy. Indeed, the 1950s saw what J.M. Lee calls "a strong element of Anglo-American co-operation" in the relationships between Britain and its colonies and former colonies, especially those in Africa."¹⁴² One explanation suggests itself for Britain's relative willingness to accommodate U.S. presence in Africa. In the 1950s, Britain still had a huge empire relative to France's which had virtually narrowed to Algeria and sub-Saharan Africa. Thus more than France, Britain lacked the wherewithal to single-handedly shoulder its colonial responsibilities.¹⁴³

Beyond the generalities raised above, French resentment can be explained in terms of the nature of French colonial economic practice. It was customary for the colonial powers to align the economies of their colonies to the metropole. The result was the overwhelming predominance of the particular metropole in the economic life of its colonies, via the roles of principal customer and supplier. But relative to Britain, France pressed

¹⁴¹ John Chipman, *French Power in Africa* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 32.

¹⁴² Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, 246-9.

¹⁴³ For example, it was British policy to end all financial assistance to any of its colonies which became independent. See *African Affairs*, 57, 227 (April 1958), 144-145.

this alignment to its extreme.¹³³ The intricate web of the relationship between France and its African colonial economies was such that they were virtually isolated from the rest of the world. The depth of the French presence can be gauged from the fact that by 1958, the U.S. accounted for just seven percent of French tropical Africa's external trade -- enough to place it second to France in importance. At the time, France still accounted for over sixty-five percent of French tropical Africa's imports and exports. French goods, even those selling above world prices, remained dominant in the African trade because foreign exchange was generally made available only for foreign goods which the franc zone countries could not supply. In turn, African (commodity) exports enjoyed a sheltered market in France through a combination of quantitative restrictions and preferential import duties.¹³⁴ Like Britain, France was responsible for the economic planning of its colonies. But in this sphere too, the French practice was at the extreme of the spectrum. Thus in a manner quite atypical of Britain, France provided its colonies with the funds for the key sectors of the public sector: it contributed direct budgetary supports to its colonies, absorbed the administrative costs of many important services, and

¹³³ See Fieldhouse, "The Economic Exploitation of Africa: Some British and French Comparisons," in Gifford and Louis (eds), *France and Britain in Africa*.

¹³⁴ But according to a State Department report, this apparently "mutually preferential" trade actually represented a net loss to the territories (\$12,000,000 in 1954) if one calculated the "additional charges to each party." See Office of Intelligence and Research Analysis, Department of State, Intelligence Report No. 7737, "Conditions and Trends in French Tropical Africa," 27 June 1958 (RG 273, NA).

cushioned commodity exports with price supports. This all-pervasive French presence in its African colonial economies -- the fact that Paris in effect regarded its colonies as a *chasse gardée* (reserved territory) -- placed a definite limit on the infusion of external capital into its colonies.

However, French behavior was not simply a reflection of its colonial policy. The French were well aware that their claim to world power status after 1945 derived from their imperial heritage. This reality spawned what Tony Smith calls a "colonial consensus," the conviction that France had to retain its dependencies at all costs.¹³³ And World War II had seen to it that Africa was unquestionably the nerve center of that empire. France had fallen to Germany on 16 June 1940, and with that the cabinet of Paul Reynaud too. General Petain who took over as the prime minister immediately arranged for an armistice and set up a new government at Vichy. Meanwhile, de Gaulle fled to London, to organize the liberation of France. Speaking in London on 18 June 1940, he counted on the empire as the fulcrum for the resurgence of France. He was not disappointed. On 26 August 1940, Governor Felix Eboue of Chad became the first to declare for de Gaulle. Other colonies soon followed suit. The French administration in West Africa rallied to de Gaulle in November 1942.¹³⁴ Africa was thus the springboard for de Gaulle's political and military rebound, the platform for the reinvention of metropolitan France

¹³³ Tony Smith, *The French Stake in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

¹³⁴ Dorothy S. White, *Black Africa and de Gaulle: From the French Empire to Independence* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979), 61-65.

itself. It is instructive that after the abortive British/Gaullist attempt to seize Dakar in September 1940, de Gaulle did not return to London; he shifted his base to Fort Lamy, Equatorial Africa.¹³³

After 1954 -- with the loss of empire elsewhere, especially Indochina -- the French empire was virtually synonymous with Africa. The continent thus became France's last trump card on the world stage. Paris certainly sees the matter in this light even to this day. At the height of the Rwandan civil war in June 1994, France despatched its troops to the central African country. In Paris, French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur explained the rationale for the intervention: "France sees itself as a world power. This is its ambition and its honor and I wish for it to preserve this ambition. And its main field of action is Africa, where it has an important role to play because of longstanding tradition -- especially in French-speaking Africa."¹³⁴ In essence then, France regarded (and still regards) its standing in Africa as an essential component of its global status. This explains the disinclination towards African independence, whether in the 1950s or today. That is also why "France has been keen to ensure that it remains the only *interlocuteur valable* of African states, since influence shared may be influence lost."¹³⁵

¹³³ See William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), 66.

¹³⁴ Marlise Simons, "The French Connection in Rwanda," *The New York Times*, 3 July 1994.

¹³⁵ This is the theme of Chipman, *French Power in Africa*. The quotation comes from p. 8.

The wider context for an explanation of America's difficulties with France in Africa has to do with the conscious striving for independence as the bedrock of Gaullist foreign policy. As Frank Costigliola has put it, in its post-1945 diplomacy, the U.S. sought "loyal followers while France insisted on taking an independent track."¹⁰⁰ Much of French diplomacy in the 1950s bore the unmistakable imprint of de Gaulle, a man who cherished French and European independence, a strong state, the search for *la grandeur*, and underpinning all of these, an unparalleled grasp of the enduring importance of the nation in the context of history and geopolitics.¹⁰¹ As *The Economist* remarked, de Gaulle was a "proud and nationally-minded" French leader. In the post-1945 period, he was attracted to the idea of a European Community "for the strictly national purpose of calling in the old world to redress the balance of the new." Politely rebuffed by the Anglo-Saxons, he saw "in the leadership of the Six an opportunity to carry more weight within the Atlantic alliance." Apart from the EC, the French-African community was, according to *The Economist*, de Gaulle's other "road to grandeur."¹⁰²

To a considerable extent, de Gaulle's diplomatic *Weltanschauung* was shaped by World War II; more specifically, his

¹⁰⁰ Frank Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance Since World War II* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 233.

¹⁰¹ This is certainly the feel one easily gets from his memoirs. See, for example, Charles de Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs*.

¹⁰² "Gaullist Foreign Policy," *The Economist*, 13, December 1958, 998.

experiences with Franklin Roosevelt, the U.S. president. All through the Nazi occupation of France, Roosevelt carried on as if there was no French authority of any sort to run French affairs. In January 1943, Roosevelt told a Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting that French sovereignty resided with the French people, and that since there was no government in France at the time, the people could not exercise their sovereignty. Following this premise, he stressed that no French authority existed in North Africa, and that "what must be made clear is that in North Africa we have military occupation." General Dwight Eisenhower, the commander in chief of the Allied Forces, he added, "has the right to say to anyone, 'Can you run this Government? Okeh; I'll give you a try at it, but I can recall you at any time.'" De Gaulle himself had a first hand knowledge of the president's inclinations. On 22 January 1943, when the two met, Roosevelt pointed out that since the French people were then in no position to assert their sovereignty, the Allied Nations should "hold the political situation in 'trusteeship' for the French people."

In addition, Roosevelt saw de Gaulle as a pretender to French sovereignty. As a consequence, the president and other Americans tried very hard to have General Henri Giraud, rather than de Gaulle, as the head of the Free French Movement. It was only at the end of 1943 that they relented as it became quite

¹⁰⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff Minutes of a Meeting at the White House, 7 January 1943, *FRUS: The Conferences at Washington, 1941-1942, and Casablanca, 1943* (1968), 513.

¹⁰¹ Roosevelt-De Gaulle Conversation, 22 January 1943, *ibid.*, 695-696.

obvious that Giraud lacked much support within the Movement.³³ For his part, de Gaulle intensely detested Roosevelt's design "that French affairs should fall within his own sphere, that the leading strings of our divisions should end up in his hands, and that the public powers eventually emerging from this disorder should derive from his arbitration."³⁴ He generally resented America's claims to global leadership, and was resolved that it had to be checked, at least as far as Europe was concerned. In this regard, he was convinced that -- with Churchill's subservience to Roosevelt³⁵ -- France had to be in the vanguard of European anti-Americanism: "the supplying of lend-lease," de Gaulle charged, had "overwhelmingly repressed all independent [British] impulses. Mr Churchill himself, whether by craft or conviction, affected to be no more than 'Roosevelt's lieutenant.'" Should France be unable to play her traditional leading role on the Continent, this obliteration of England...was a distinctly

³³ See Anthony L. Funk, *Charles de Gaulle: The Crucial Years, 1943-1944* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 191-195; Charles de Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs*, 209-217, 382-418, 419-470.

³⁴ De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs*, 385.

³⁵ "The Prime Minister," de Gaulle faulted Churchill, "had made for himself a rule to do nothing important except in agreement with Roosevelt. Though he felt, more than any other Englishman, the awkwardness of Washington's methods, though he found it hard to bear the condition of subordination in which United States aid placed the British Empire, and though he bitterly resented the tone of supremacy which the President adopted towards him, Mr Churchill had decided, once for all, to bow to the imperious necessity of the American alliance." See *ibid.*, 232-3.

evil omen of the ways in which the affairs of Europe were ultimately to be settled."⁴⁹⁶

To be sure, de Gaulle was not alone in manifesting French assertiveness. Irwin Wall has demonstrated that in the period 1945 to 1954, Washington's influence over Paris was actually both pervasive and ineffective at one and the same time. This ambiguity is shown in case after case -- from the Marshall Plan to NATO, and to American pressure for German rearmament. Pierre Mendes-France who came to power in 1954 not only withdrew France from Vietnam, abandoning the problem to the U.S., but also rejected the American scheme for a European Defense Community, designed to join France and Germany in an integrated common defense system under America's leadership.⁴⁹⁷ NSC 5721/1 indicated that France's "independent track" included anti-American conduct in the colonies. According to the paper, "Relations between France and the United States are not easy and will probably become more difficult, given the emergence of U.S. influence in former and present areas of French influence. U.S. ability to bring effective pressure on French attitudes and policies is limited."⁴⁹⁸

The African Dimension

In addition to the French intransigence, U.S. objectives were also partly inhibited by what one may call the "African

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁴⁹⁷ Irwin M. Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴⁹⁸ NSC 5721/1, "U.S. Policy on France," 19 October 1957 (RG 273, NA).

dimension." In September 1960, Eisenhower met with a number of African leaders who were in New York for the UN General Assembly, and in case after case, he elaborated his vision on how Africa should be shaped. Eisenhower was particularly anxious that the Cold War be kept out of Africa and that the building up of large armaments by African countries be discouraged. For these, he wanted African countries grouped into what he variously called a "consortium" of nations or "some sort of confederation," a construct which he believed would serve a number of purposes. First, a regional grouping would not only "permit a lightening of the arms burden on all its member nations and develop a sense of solidarity among those nations," and it would also "permit reduction of armaments and allow resources to be put into social progress." He told British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that such a grouping and limitation of arms would also enhance neutrality among African countries, and between them and the major world powers. When Eisenhower met with Sylvanus Olympio of Togo, he talked of a slightly different purpose of a regional grouping of African states: that it would stabilize the region. His concern this time was not the Cold War; as an example of what might happen if African states failed to have a regional grouping, he cited the wars which engulfed the countries of South America after their independence.¹⁰⁰ On another occasion, he was

¹⁰⁰ See Memorandum of Conference with the president (and President Sylvanus Olympio), 23 September 1960, and Memorandum of Conversation, "President Olympio's Call on President Eisenhower," 23 September 1960; Memorandum of Conference with the president (and President Olympio), 23 September 1960; Memorandum of Conversation, "Conversation with President Nasser," 26 September 1960; Memorandum of Conference with the president (and President Nasser of Egypt, etc), 28 September 1960; Memorandum of

worried that there were too many excessively small states in Africa and "wondered whether several of these could combine."¹⁰⁰ It is common knowledge that Africa is replete with fragmented economies which cannot achieve the economies of scale or specialization, and that some form of state coordination will be highly appropriate. Eisenhower's concerns were thus well placed; but he failed to take into account that this ideal could be obviated by national identity, national pride, distinct national emblems (the anthem and flag), and all the trappings which flowed from membership of the international community, not to mention individual political ambitions.

It was not just in one direction that Washington misread the African political dynamics. In 1954, it was declared that a principal U.S. objective in Africa was "to try and influence their governments towards the building of sound democratic and integrated societies."¹⁰¹ With particular reference to Africa, Eisenhower assured Crown Prince Moulay Hassan of Morocco in September 1960 that the U.S. "wants to help any country which wants to work along democratic lines." He explained that he meant

Conference with the president (and Crown Prince Hassan of Morocco, etc), 27 September 1960; Memorandum of Conference with the president (and Deputy Prime Minister Akilou of Ethiopia), 27 September 1960; Memorandum of Conference with the president (and Prime Minister Macmillan), 28 September 1960. All are in AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL). Also, Memorandum of Conference with the president (and Prime Minister Balewa), 8 October 1960, White House Office, International Series, Box 1 (DDEL).

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum of Conference with the president, 1 November 1960, White House Office, International Series, Box 1 (DDEL).

¹⁰¹ "Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to Tropical Africa," (n.d), *FRUS*, 1952-1954, x (1983), 100-101.

countries "which are not autocratic, respect the rights of the individual, are responsive to the will of the people and educate their people," and emphasized that "We would like to see governments of this type develop all over Africa as this would bring stability to that continent."¹¹² However, a National Intelligence Estimate published in June 1959 showed that Western democracy had little prospects in West Africa. According to the report, an essential character of West African political parties was "personal loyalty to a leader; the trend is toward the domination of particular states by a single party." The result, it was noted, was "a highly personal and authoritarian style of government, which is regarded by the leaders as necessary to achieve unity and development in the face of ethnic diversity and economic backwardness." The estimate saw "little chance of a trend away from authoritarian methods"; on the contrary, it held that "in fact, as their problems become more complex many leaders will probably become more vigorous in their use of these methods."¹¹³ By 1960, Eisenhower and his top aides had come to accept this reality and decided on building up the "strong men." At an NSC meeting on 14 January 1960, Vice President Nixon claimed that the British anticipated that in many African countries, a South American-type of dictatorship would emerge. He therefore urged, "We must recognize, although we cannot say it publicly, that we need the strong men of Africa on our side...it

¹¹² Memorandum of Conversation, "U.S.-Moroccan Relations," 27 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL).

¹¹³ NIE 70-59, "The Outlook in West Africa through 1960," 16 June 1959, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, xiv (1992), 55.

would be naive of the U.S. to hope that Africa will be democratic." Nixon's overriding premise was that the problems confronting the African political leadership were overwhelming, especially because "Some of the peoples of Africa have been out of the trees for only about fifty years." Eisenhower agreed that it was desirable "for us to try to 'reach' the strong men in Africa."¹⁷⁴ The objective, it seems, was no longer the institution of democratic client states, but client states which were pro-West, and especially pro-American.

Roadblocks in Washington

The paradox of U.S. policy in Africa was that it was considerably undermined by measures also adopted by Washington itself. By 1960, there was a widespread belief even in Washington that overall policy preferences were depleting America's fund of goodwill among Africans and thus undermining its position in the region. Of particular importance was the Western European factor in U.S. dealings with Africa. Senators Frank Church, Gale W. McGhee, and Frank E. Moss visited a number of African countries in late 1960, and found that the U.S. faced "an uphill struggle to persuade Africans" that it "actively sympathizes with their aspirations for independence," that it does not "seek their involvement in the "cold war," that it wants "their friendship -- and no more." In accounting for this crisis of confidence, the senators observed that "American policies toward African causes, particularly as manifested at the United Nations, have tended to draw down our reservoir of good will and understanding in Africa.

¹⁷⁴ Memorandum of Discussion at the 432d Meeting of the National Security Council, 14 January 1960, *ibid.*, 75.

This is especially true with respect to our policy positions on Algeria, and as to a number of our votes on `colonial questions.'" One other factor which the senators identified as a negation of U.S. interests and influence in Africa was that "the bulk of American private investment is located in the Union of South Africa and other territories with substantial white populations." Closely related to this was the fact that "an average of roughly two-thirds" of U.S. mutual security program expenditures in Africa "over the past few years have gone to North African countries where U.S. defense installations are situated."

There were sufficient justifications for these observations. In November 1952 -- that was even before assuming office as secretary of state -- John Foster Dulles advised Anthony Eden, Britain's foreign affairs secretary, that "when Western nations had to face such non-Western problems as those of Colonial Africa...it was of the utmost importance" that Britain, France and U.S. "should first...create a united position." Given this predisposition to consort with the colonial powers, Washington was unwilling to diverge from, and alienate, them. In 1953, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru urged that the U.S. should use its influence to get the colonial powers to adopt more

¹⁰⁰ Study Mission to Africa, November-December 1960, Report of Senators Frank Church, Gale W. McGhee, and Frank E. Moss to the Committee on Foreign Relations, Committee on Appropriations, and Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, United States Senate, February 12, 1961, 87th Congress, 1st sess. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 2-4.

¹⁰¹ Letter by John F. Dulles to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 14 November 1952, AWF, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 1 (DDEL).

liberal policies in Africa. Dulles told him that although the U.S. would prefer to work for political liberty, "we did not (repeat not) feel we could afford open break with the British and French in this matter."¹⁰⁰ Three years later, Henry Lodge, U.S. representative at the UN, wrote to Eisenhower reporting that the U.S. "was not appealing to young people world-wide because of its sympathy with colonial powers." Lodge suggested that "we go much harder on the anticolonial side than we are now going," especially by setting a timetable for an end to colonial rule, including in U.S. dependencies. Dulles simply replied, "The President and I have frequently discussed a change in our public attitude on this subject. My feeling has been that conditions are not yet ripe for such a change."¹⁰¹ In April 1956, Assistant Secretary George Allen explained this unwillingness to disarticulate relations with the colonial powers. He duly reminded the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences of the "traditional" U.S. anticolonial attitude in April 1956. But the dilemma, as he put it, was that the application of the principle "to present-day problems of foreign policy all over the world requires patient understanding and a high sense of responsibility, including regard for the ultimate and basic security interest of the United States." The qualifications were of special weight with respect to Africa, for as he pointed out,

¹⁰⁰ Telegram No. 1772 from Karachi to the secretary of state, 22 May 1953, Dulles Papers, Box 6 (DDEL).

¹⁰¹ Lodge's letter was dated 26 June 1956, and the subject title was "New Anticolonial Statement by You." Dulles' reply was dated 29 June 1956. Both are in Dulles-Herter Series, Box 7 (DDEL).

"the so-called colonial powers" there "are our friends and allies in the world-wide contest" with the Soviet bloc."

It is thus easy to understand why Douglas Dillon (the U.S. ambassador to France) made a long speech in Paris in March 1956, to clear the "increasing misunderstanding in France of United States policy toward North Africa." After pointing that the U.S recognized France's achievements in North Africa, he recalled how Washington had

loyally supported the French Government in its search for solutions to North African problems, solutions that will make possible longterm close cooperation between France and the Moslem communities of Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. The United States has consistently supported France when North African subjects have been discussed in the United Nations. The most recent instance was our strong support last fall of the position that Algeria is an internal French problem and therefore not appropriate for discussion by the UN."

To further reassure Charles de Gaulle, especially on Algeria, Director of the U.S. Information Agency George Allen journeyed to Paris in June 1959. By then, the Muslims had engaged France in a bloody four-and-half-year-old War of Independence. "In Algeria," Allen assured his hosts, "we recognize that France faces a problem of greater difficulty and complexity than that which burdens any other free world nation." He then approved de Gaulle's "Constantine plan" to raise the standard of living in Algeria, his recognition of Algeria's "special personality" and his offer of a "peace of the brave," all of which the Muslims had

George V. Allen (assistant secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs), "United States Foreign Policy in Africa," State Department Press Release No. 206, 20 April 1956 (NA); also in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 306 (July 1956).

Telegram No. 4325, from Paris to the secretary of state, 20 March 1956, AWF, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 6 (DDEL).

rejected. "We sincerely hope, as do the friends of France everywhere," Allen continued, "that an equitable and liberal solution -- one that will maintain French ties to Algeria -- will be found." He assured de Gaulle that he had "the wholehearted support of the United States Government" in his efforts to find such a solution.¹³³ As a New York newspaper observed, Algeria was at the time the most emotionally charged political issue in France, "and it was obvious that it was a policy decision for Mr Allen to speak so favorably on France's actions and intentions" there. The paper noted that the speech "would be interpreted and welcomed by the French government as moral support from Washington for its Algerian policy."¹³⁴

In 1954, the State Department enumerated a number of policies required to counter the "the aggressive strategy and techniques of Soviet Communism." One of them was "Vitalizing liberty and freedom within the free world so that it becomes a dynamic force countering the revolutionary spirit with which Communism imbues its followers." But the department regretted that this objective had been "stifled by U.S. identification with the 'colonialism' of UK, France and Belgium....By defending our allies at the UN and at international conferences and failing to play our historic role as an apostle of political liberty, we have enabled Communist propaganda plausibly to brand us as today's leading 'imperialist.'¹³⁵ In spite of this diplomatic

¹³³ *New York Herald Tribune*, 30 June 1959.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ "United States Foreign Policy," 16 May 1954, AWF, Dulles Papers, Box 8 (DDEL).

liability, there was no change in Washington's voting behavior at the UN. In 1960, the U.S. abstained from a UN General Assembly resolution that Portuguese territories -- such as Angola and Mozambique -- were not self-governing as Portugal claimed, but non-self-governing territories which imposed a responsibility on Portugal under Article 73e of the UN Charter. In this particular instance, Washington's inaction was influenced by its Pentagon's interests: the NATO alliance, and the U.S. air and sea military bases on Teheira and Santa Maria Islands in the Azores, which were on lease from Portugal.¹¹⁴ In the same 1960, Washington voted in the UN Political Committee against a resolution calling for independence for Algeria and a UN-administered referendum.¹¹⁵

In this sequence, the Eisenhower administration ended on a melodramatic note: along with Australia, Belgium, Britain, the Dominican Republic, France, Portugal, Spain, and South Africa, the U.S. abstained from the UN General Assembly "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples." The declaration, adopted in December 1960 -- by a vote of eighty-nine to zero (with nine abstentions) -- held that the subjection of peoples to alien domination constituted a denial of fundamental human rights and was contrary to the charter and an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation. The Assembly asserted that all peoples had the right to self-determination and that inadequacy of political, economic, social

¹¹⁴ *The New York Times*, 16 December 1960.

¹¹⁵ Thomas J. Hamilton, "Colonialism at UN: United States is Again Accused of Lining up with 'Imperialists,'" *The New York Times*, 18 December 1960, E9.

or educational preparedness should never be a pretext for delaying their independence. It therefore urged that immediate steps be taken in all territories which had not yet attained independence to "transfer all powers to peoples of those Territories, without any conditions or reservations."¹⁰⁰ The U.S. explained that it abstained because "there are difficulties in the language and thought of this resolution...which made it impossible for us to support it, because they seem to negate certain provisions of the Charter." Four "difficulties" were specified: (1) the silence of the resolution on the contribution of the colonial powers towards the advancement of colonial peoples to "self-government or independence"; (2) "the interpretation that the question of preparation for independence is wholly irrelevant"; (3) the preclusion of "even legitimate measures for the maintenance of law and order"; and (4) the "very strong statement that only complete independence and freedom is the acceptable goal for dependent peoples."¹⁰¹ But in a statement which castigated the administration's attitude on the colonial question, U.S. delegation member Senator Wayne Morse showed that the declaration accommodated all the reservations. He therefore dismissed the objections as "very unsubstantial."¹⁰² The U.S.

¹⁰⁰ See *General Assembly Records* (15th session), 947th Plenary Meeting, 14 December 1960, 1273-74.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1283; *Department of State Bulletin*, 2 January 1961, 26-27.

¹⁰² Wayne Morse, "The United States in the United Nations, 1960 -- A Turning Point," *Supplementary Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 87th Cong. 1st session* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 8-10, 12-13, 16-24.

delegation had the prior approval of the State Department to vote for the declaration. But Eisenhower personally ordered the U.S. abstention following a request by Harold Macmillan. When the instruction arrived from the White House, James Wadsworth, the U.S. representative at the UN, "tried to reach Eisenhower to argue the case. Eisenhower declined to accept his call."¹⁰⁰

It is worth noting that the U.S. was not only siding with the colonial powers; it was also lining up Latin American votes in the UN General Assembly for them. In 1956, *The New York Times* reported that "One area of world policy where South Americans are growing particularly restless is the question of colonialism. Though their natural sympathy lies mainly with the colonial powers, they often vote in the United Nations with the so-called colonial Powers because of United States pressure."¹⁰¹

At issue, however, is not just the evident American accommodation of colonialism, but that Washington clearly regarded Africa as a Western European sphere of influence. A practical example of this disposition was vividly provided by Guinea's experience in the aftermath of its independence from France. A State Department memorandum acknowledged that

Since September 1958 when French Guinea voted to secede from the French Union as it was transformed into the new French Community, United States policy has been hesitant. In the earlier period of Guinean independence the Department of

¹⁰⁰ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston; Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 510-511; *The New York Times*, 16 December 1960. Eisenhower sent a message on 10 December 1960 informing Macmillan that the U.S. had decided to abstain on the declaration. See Telegram to AmEmbassy London, 10 December 1960, Christian A. Herter Papers, 1957-61, Chronological File, Box 9 (DDEL).

¹⁰¹ *The New York Times*, 13 April 1956.

State deferred to French sensibilities. The United States did not formally recognize Guinean independence until November 1, 1958....From February 1959 until the recent arrival of Ambassador Morrow we have been represented in Conakry by a Charge d'Affairs.

Since the U.S. regarded the European position and influence in Africa as the governing basis of its policy, it is not surprising that it assigned to the Europeans the primary responsibility for Africa. In July 1959, Washington instructed its consul in Freetown that he should be "guided by the following policy considerations: (1) It is the general policy of the United States that the metropoles be encouraged to continue their close relationships, with, and support of, their former territories; (2) Although the United States does not wish to assume any part of what it conceives to be the role and responsibilities of the metropoles, it does desire to show its interests in the emerging territories by appropriately assisting them in a manner that will tend to supplement rather than to replace continuing activities of the metropoles." The instruction was not an isolated case; its essence recurs so often in the "high policy" papers that it is safe to regard "the continuance of close ties" between the European metropole and the African periphery as a fundamental objective of U.S. policy. The running theme of NSC 5719, for example, was the wish that African states achieve their independence "in cooperation with the European powers," so that

611.70B/8-2159, Office Memorandum from G.R. Kenny and W.H. Price to Mr Stephen Brown, "Guinea," 21 August 1959 (NA). Also see "United States Relations with Guinea," enclosure to 611.70B/7-259, Memorandum for the President, "Call of Ambassador John H. Morrow," 2 July 1959 (NA).

845M.00-TA/7-1059, Outgoing Airgram from the Department of State to AmConsul, Freetown, 10 July 1959 (NA).

"the essential ties which bind Europe and Africa" would be preserved.¹³³

As senators Church, McGhee, and Moss noted, Africans were quite disgusted with this Eurocentric bent of American policy. In April 1959, Tom Mboya, member of the Kenyan Legislative Council, told a New York audience that Africans "have great expectations" of the U.S. because of its background and history (as a former colony), and consequently "are sometimes depressed and disappointed" to see Washington "take steps which betray these expectations and hopes." He specifically charged that the U.S. was "giving priority to the interests of its allies rather than the human struggle taking place in Africa."¹³⁴ George Padmore, the Liberian ambassador to the U.S., put the matter even more pointedly: in June 1959, he told State Department officials that "the general feeling at Monrovia is that the United States is unwilling to take any position on Africa which is unfavorable to either France or Great Britain."¹³⁵ A month later, Guinea's Sekou Toure stressed that the U.S. must revise its attitude on the question of the termination of European colonial rule if it wanted to make friends in Africa. "There can be no middle way," he insisted, "no compromise policy between colonial interest and African interest, which are contradictory by nature and

¹³³ NSC 5719, "U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," 31 July 1957 (RG 273, NA). This theme was retained in later revisions of NSC 5719, the last being NSC 5818 of August 1958.

¹³⁴ *Africa Special Report*, April 1959, 2.

¹³⁵ 611.70/6-859, Memorandum of Conversation, "Liberian Concern about the United States, France, and British Positions on Africa," 8 June 1959 (NA).

definition. The United States cannot rightly hope that relations with Africa will be erected on a foundation of contradictions brought about by [zones of] influence and colonial interests."¹⁵⁷ When he paid an official visit to Washington later in the year, Toure told Secretary of State Christian Herter that what was required was "a dynamic American policy," one adapted to "the new realities in Africa." He explained that he did not imply that the U.S. should declare war on the colonial powers, but that the "consideration of African problems not be subordinated to the views of colonial powers since colonialism is outdated."¹⁵⁸ On another occasion, Toure had to urge that the U.S. should "deal directly with Africa, in terms of African needs and aspirations, and not through Paris and London."¹⁵⁹ In 1960, Nkrumah had to implore the U.S. "to appreciate the African point of view and speak out truthfully and boldly against colonialism and the forces that are militating against nationalism and emancipation."¹⁶⁰

Economic "Assistance"

Gary Hess found that the "substantial growth of American influence" in South Asia "profoundly affected regional developments, and the United States has been the principal

¹⁵⁷ *The New York Times*, 9 July 1959.

¹⁵⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, "Africa and Aid," 27 October 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 702-706.

¹⁵⁹ 611.70B/6-3059, Incoming Airgram from AmEmbassy, Conakry to the secretary of state, 30 June 1959 (NA).

¹⁶⁰ *West Africa*, 28 October 1960.

external political-economic-military force in South Asia."⁴¹⁷ By contrast, the "distinguishing characteristics" of American aid operations in Africa were that they were "held down to modest proportions, that the military element has been slight, and that as a general rule they were deliberately made supplementary to those of the former colonial powers."⁴¹⁸ Thus in fiscal 1960, Britain and France were contributing "about \$830 million" a year to Africa as against "some \$209 million" from the U.S., and with much of this going to North Africa.⁴¹⁹

Without doubt, the outstanding characteristic feature of U.S. "aid" programs in Africa was its perfunctory nature. In 1956, Senator Theodore Green did a study of U.S. economic aid and technical assistance in Africa and reported that "In comparison with our Government's overall program of foreign economic aid, the amount budgeted for Africa has been very small." More specifically, he observed that "Of a total sum of approximately \$1,546.7 million appropriated for fiscal year 1957, it is estimated that somewhat less than \$25 million will be allocated to Africa, or 1.6 percent of the total."⁴²⁰ Another congressional

⁴¹⁷ Gary Hess, "Global Expansion and Regional Balances: The Emerging Scholarship on United States Relations with India and Pakistan," *Pacific Historical Review*, lvi, 2 (May 1987), 259.

⁴¹⁸ Rupert Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy* (Englewood, Cliffs, N.J.: 1967), 36. On this, also see Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 387-9.

⁴¹⁹ John D. Montgomery, *Aid to Africa: New Test for U.S. Policy*, Headline Series No. 149 (New York: Foreign Policy Association-World Affairs Center, September/October, 1961), 37.

⁴²⁰ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Economic Aid and Technical Assistance in Africa: Report of Senator Theodore Francis Green on a Study Mission Pursuant to S. Res. 162, 84th*

report issued in 1957 showed that "Since the end of World War II the United States has given away without requirements of repayment, a total of \$46,142,143,000. Of this total Africa received \$71,595,000, or 0.15 percent."¹¹ The miserly reality of these figures is apparent when it is realized that the went essentially to North Africa. In 1958, \$74 million out of a total package of \$87 million was allocated to Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia; in 1959, \$112 million of a total package of \$161 million went to the same three and Sudan; in 1960, the four countries received \$150 million out of a total of \$178 million.¹² Of course, unlike Africa south of the Sahara, North Africa -- as shown earlier -- had some quantifiable bearing on U.S. "national security."

The origins of U.S. "economic assistance" to Africa lie in the Marshall Plan. And as is well known, that Plan was focused on the rehabilitation of Western Europe. In his 1956 report mentioned above, Senator Green pointed out the implication: "Prior to 1954 aid to the African dependent overseas territories was tied closely to the European reconstruction program. As a consequence, its purpose was to improve the economic position of Europe through development projects which would also increase exports. Little attention was given to the fundamental problems

Cong. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), 4-7, 14-23.

¹¹ House of Representatives, *Report of the Special Study Mission to Africa, South and East of the Sahara (April 5, 1957)*, 85th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), 129.

¹² Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, 389.

characteristic of underdeveloped colonial areas...." But it was not simply that "little attention" was paid to Africa's "characteristic problems": according to Kolko, such problems were indeed "completely subordinated" to America's "overwhelming concern" with European reconstruction.⁴⁷⁷ Thus a 1950 CIA report considered British West Africa important to the U.S., not only because of its strategic minerals, but also because it afforded Britain a major opportunity "for reducing its dependence on non-sterling areas for the necessities of life": dollar exchange, foodstuffs and vital raw materials.⁴⁷⁸

According to Senator Green, a change in focus occurred in 1954, but this was merely a shift to "the more limited objective of technical cooperation." This may explain why, as the senator pointed out, France was unwilling to participate in "a technical cooperation program, divorced from a large development program financed by the United States."⁴⁷⁹ The reality was that the shift of 1954 was hardly of any qualitative significance. Walt Rostow has emphasized that until 1958, the Eisenhower administration exhibited "little effective will to innovate" in foreign aid, and that a change occurred only because of "the sense of gathering crisis in the developing regions." The "sense of gathering crisis" emanated from the rough reception meted out to Nixon in

⁴⁷⁷ *Economic Aid and Technical Assistance in Africa: Report of Senator Theodore Francis Green.*

⁴⁷⁸ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 17, 112.

⁴⁷⁹ CIA, "The Current Situation in British West Africa," ORE 46-50, 29 September 1950, PSF, Intelligence File, Box 257 (HSTL).

⁴⁸⁰ *Economic Aid and Technical Assistance in Africa: Report of Senator Theodore Francis Green.*

Lima and Caracas in May 1958, Fidel Castro's accession to power in Cuba in 1959, and the overthrow of Iraq's Hashemite monarch by anti-Western military officers in July 1958.¹⁰⁰ Africa did not benefit from the resulting policy shift as it had neither a Castro nor Asia's "Communist" complications.

In any case, Washington had its balance-of-payments problem to contend with by 1958/59, when it seemed ready for a more activist economic program in the UDCs. In the period 1958 to 1960, the deficit involved an excess of payments over receipts of about \$10.5 billion.¹⁰¹ Put simply, during the period, the government and residents of the U.S. made payments abroad -- for imports of goods and services, for net private foreign investment and economic assistance -- which exceeded by an average of \$3.5 billion a year the receipts from U.S. exports of goods and services. A huge and persistent payments deficit adversely affects the domestic economy in a number of ways. In particular, it depresses production and employment, and therefore aggregate demand as well. It is thus understandable that Washington took prompt measures to arrest the situation and that foreign aid was an immediate casualty. In his presentation to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs during the 1965 hearings on foreign aid, David Bell, director of the Agency for International Development (AID), recalled that in the early days of the U.S. foreign aid program

¹⁰⁰ W.W. Rostow, *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Foreign Aid* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1985), 141-146.

¹⁰¹ "The New Administration and the Dollar Problem," 30 November 1960, encl. in letter from Edward M. Bernstein, EMB Ltd (Economic Consultants), Washington to Dean Acheson, 2 December 1960, Papers of Dean Acheson (Post-Administration Files), 1960-1962, Box 85 (HSTL).

after World War II, aid appropriations were generally spent "wherever in the world prices were lowest." This, he quickly added, was not entirely true of the Marshall Plan, but the reason was that at the time, the U.S. was the only major source in the world for most of the goods which Western Europe needed. So most of the aid dollars -- although not tied to U.S. procurement -- had to be spent in America. But, "Beginning in 1959, in response to the changed situation of the U.S. balance of payments, our policy respecting aid purchases was changed. Today, with small exceptions, aid appropriations can only be spent in the United States, for goods and services produced in this country." This, he said, was "intended to minimize the adverse effect in some increased cost to the budget," adding, "80 percent of AID's expenditure last year represented not dollars going abroad, but steel, machinery, fertilizer, and other goods and services purchased in the United States."⁴⁴

At any time, U.S. "economic assistance" was -- as a matter of course -- in the form of dollars and had to be ultimately used for buying American goods and services. The 1959 policy meant that U.S. aid, whether as grants or loans, was "tied" to the purchase of U.S. goods and services -- not just ultimately -- but in the first instance. This meant that U.S. "aid" was no give-away (in the sense of a free distribution of cash) any more. It came instead in the form of food, industrial equipment or other items purchased on commercial terms by the "receiving" country

⁴⁴ See *Foreign Assistance Act of 1965, Hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 89th Congress, 1st sess.*, (Washington DC, .: Government Printing Office, 1965), 1277-81.

from the U.S. It can be said that such credits serve a purpose since the "beneficiaries" are usually countries with serious capital shortage, which means that they are not in a position to obtain commercial bank loans to import the goods. But it is also worth emphasizing that aid in this form is, as Lenin regarded it, "usury imperialism," which is "a means of encouraging the export of commodities."¹¹ Africans had been irritated by the "Buy-American" policy as it had existed even before 1959. In March 1958, Clarence Randall, chairman of Eisenhower's Council on Foreign Economic Policy, had to urge that the policy be suspended with respect to Africa. Africans, he found, were "offended by this policy, and regard it as a new form of colonialism, and exploitation by the United States. Their loans are hard loans, and they wish to buy in a free market. In many instances the equipment they need can be obtained at a lesser price in Europe, or it may be complimentary to existing European equipment which they know how to operate."¹²

The payments deficit was also partly responsible for Washington's predilection that Western Europe had the preponderant role in Africa. For example, in December 1959, Henry Claude Blisson, the personal assistant to Prime Minister Mamadou Dia of Senegal, met with officials of the Brussels-based U.S. Mission to the European Communities (USEC). At the time, the Mali

¹¹ V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916; Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947), 79-80.

¹² 611.70/4-3058, Report to Council on Foreign Economic Policy on U.S. Foreign Economic Policy in Africa, South of the Sahara by Clarence B. Randall, chairman, Council on Foreign Economic Policy, vol i, April 1958 (NA).

Federation was sorting out its independence from France. Blisson's purpose was to do a "pre-reconnaissance" of aid possibilities from other Western sources for the federation, after its independence. Deane Hinton of the USEC made it clear to Blisson that given its payments deficit, Washington was more interested than ever in having its European allies carry more of the burden in the UDCs. Hinton added that the U.S. hoped that the French Community would endure and that France would continue to provide economic assistance to African members of the Community; that the U.S. saw no incompatibility between the independence of Mali, continued membership in the French Community, and continued association with the European Economic Community.

All the factors discussed above -- the initial subordination of Africa's interests to the reconstruction of Europe; the fact that the U.S. opted to have the Europeans take primary responsibility for foreign aid to Africa; the absence of Cold War complications in Africa; and America's balance-of-payments crisis -- combined to ensure that U.S. "aid" program in Africa was inconsequential indeed. This reality is very central in any appraisal of the nature and impact of the U.S. presence in Africa. It has already been implied that the size of U.S. aid to any given region was a definite reflection of its strategic interest in that region. However, the more germane point here is that with foreign aid as a basic mechanism for the establishment

851T.0000/12-959, Memorandum of Conversation, "Pre-reconnaissance' of Aid Possibilities," encl. in Memorandum from U.S. mission to the European Communities, Brussels to the Department of State, "Call of H.C. Blisson, Assistant to Senegal Prime Minister," 9 December 1959 (NA).

and sustenance of U.S. influence anywhere, there was an implicit relationship between the size of the aid package and the extent to which the U.S. could project its power in any particular region. The implication of this linkage between aid and power led USOM in London to alert Washington in 1955:

Insofar as political stability in Africa is concerned, it would be extremely hard to prove that the very limited funds we provide to defray the salaries of American technicians have any appreciable effect on political stability in the African UK/DOT's. In view of our extremely limited financial contribution *vis-à-vis* Colonial Development & Welfare grants and other assistance including that provided by the UN, we are not in a position to affect either the pace of development or political stability in the African territories concerned to any marked degree.

Race Matters

So far, the discussion has focused on two of the factors isolated by senators Church, McGhee, and Moss as counterweights to the realization of U.S. objectives in Africa -- Washington's anticolonialism as evidenced by the pattern of its votes at the UN and the related Eurocentric bias of overall policy, as well as the nature and direction of the U.S. "aid" program in Africa. Another inhibition they mentioned was America's domestic racial discrimination, which they described as "the most important of all the natural barriers to a better understanding" between Africa and the U.S.: "even those Africans who understand our problems and respect our efforts quite naturally cannot help but react emotionally to widely advertised instances of racial

... Airgram from USOM, London, "FY56 UK DOT Aid Program," 27 September 1955, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland). Through the Colonial Development and Welfare program, Britain provided loans and grants for development projects in its colonies.

intolerance or violence in this country."⁴⁷ There is a striking similarity here running between the senators' observation and that of Richard Nixon who had preceded them to Africa in 1957. Like the senators, Nixon recognized the problem of racial discrimination in the U.S. and the effect this had in Africa. Every instance of prejudice in the U.S., he said, "is blown up in such a manner as to create a completely false impression of the attitudes and practices of the great majority of the American people, and the result is irreparable damage to the cause of freedom."⁴⁸

It is, however, important to take into account the changes which occurred on race matters between 1957 and 1960. Down to 1957, Africans were reacting largely to what they saw -- and especially, what they heard and read -- about the racial indignities which was the lot of African Americans. But within the three years which followed, a number of African countries achieved independence and this led to a dramatic increase in the presence of Africans in the U.S. -- as visiting political leaders, diplomats (both to the U.S. and the UN), and even as students. Quite often, these Africans suffered the same racial humiliation which had been historically meted out to African

⁴⁷ *Report of Senators Frank Church, Gale W. McGhee, and Frank E. Moss*, 3.

⁴⁸ Department of State, "The Emergence of Africa: Report to the President by Vice President Nixon on His Trip to Africa, February 28-March 21, 1957," 7 April 1957 (S.12:AF8, NA). Writing in 1947, Obafemi Awolowo -- who was later to become a leading Nigerian politician -- cited America's "treatment of the Negroes on her own soil" as one reason which disqualified the U.S. from sitting in judgement over how Britain ran its colonies. See Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 24.

Americans -- they had difficulty renting apartments, and they were often denied service in restaurants; "embarrassed 'City Fathers,'" according to Elliot Skinner, "tried to make amends, but Africans recognized the real source of their discomfort: the relations between Afro-Americans and white Americans." Such discrimination served as a shock therapy for Africans and it led Nigeria's Foreign Minister Jaja Wachukwu to publicly notify the UN General Assembly on 13 December 1960 that "Anybody who is not prepared to eradicate that humiliation that has been meted out to people of African descent or people of our racial stock cannot claim to be in love with us."¹¹

Perception Problematic

In addition to the issues already raised, there was also the problem posed by how Africa featured in the American "official mind." It will be helpful here to note that although foreign policy elites behave like realpolitik rational actors, it is now well-established that psychological attitudes -- world views, belief systems, and perceptions -- function as mental maps which help agents to resolve uncertainty and to coordinate their behavior.¹² In this respect, Hess has argued that "American

¹¹ Skinner, "African, Afro-American, White American: A Case of Pride and Prejudice," 388.

¹² For example, see Douglas W. Blum, "The Soviet Foreign Policy Belief System: Beliefs, Politics, and Foreign Policy Outcomes," *International Studies Quarterly*, 37, 4 (December 1993); Alexander L. George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making," *ibid.*, 13, 2 (June 1969); Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds), *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Irving Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign Policy and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

images of India help to understand the assumptions not only of foreign policy, but also of informational, educational, and economic programs as well....Attitudes about the country reflected distorted, stereotypical images of the Indian people and their culture."⁴⁴ Washington's "image" or perception of Africa and Africans was equally fictive, stereotypical, and exotic.⁴⁵ In 1956, the State Department confessed that "The incomplete comprehension of Africa is to some extent the result of our own disinterest. If the American public thinks of Africa at all, it looks upon it as a place where lions roam, missionaries preach, or natives are exploited."⁴⁶ As might be expected, this perception helped to shackle U.S. initiative in Africa. In the words of Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson, "The assumption that Africa was inhabited by primitive peoples who had barely made a start toward civilization rendered all the more tempting the inclination to abstain from concern with the

⁴⁴ Hess, "Global Expansion and Regional Balances: The Emerging Scholarship on United States Relations with India and Pakistan," 291.

⁴⁵ Historically, the "image" of Africans in the world has been largely a literary, fictive one. In this provenance must be included not merely imaginative literature, but also supposedly non-fictional disciplines like anthropology and history. From his distinguished chair at Oxford -- and as late as October 1963 -- Hugh Trevor-Roper dismissed African History as "the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe." See Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), 9.

⁴⁶ 611.70/2-1756, Department of State Instruction CA-6309, "Paper on United States Problems in Africa," 17 February 1956 (NA). Incidentally, this popular perception is still prevalent, even today. *The New York Times* (20 November 1994) found that "For many Americans, the 'real Africa' is a blurred concatenation of game parks...a Disney-field cradle of civilization." See Howard W. French, "An Ignorance of Africa As Vast as the Continent."

continent."⁴⁴ In August 1943, Henry Villard, assistant chief of the State Department Division of Near Eastern Affairs, referred to Africa as a land with "a relatively primitive population."⁴⁵ Such a public statement may have become anachronistic by the 1950s, but a number of the policy papers cited above clearly show that the residue remained and even shaped policy.

Overall, there is no doubt, the U.S. did succeed in establishing a "consensual hegemony" over Western Europe and its periphery. But as has been discussed above, a number of factors - especially Africa's low rating in Washington's strategic equation and the distance of Cold War complications from the region -- as well as the disinclination of Congress to appropriate the needed funds⁴⁶ ensured that in Africa, the American hegemony was actually very light on the ground, at least

⁴⁴ Emerson and Kilson, "The American Dilemma in a Changing World: The Rise of Africa and the Negro American," 1061.

⁴⁵ Address by Henry S. Villard, assistant chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department, Department of State Press Release No. 345, 19 August 1943, (NA). According to Elliot Skinner, Americans "showed little interest in Africa and Africans" down to the late 1940s. To them, Africans "were cruel, cannibalistic savages...Africa was the place where one went to safari, where missionaries braved all sorts of unknown dangers to raise the heathen from their darkness, and where Tarzan, the noble white savage, ruled as 'king of the jungle.'" See Skinner, "African, Afro-American, White American: A Case of Pride and Prejudice," 384.

⁴⁶ Beyond aid, there were also restrictions, even within what the White House considered a safe range of possibility in terms of policy execution. For example, at an NSC meeting on 14 April 1960, Dillon indicated that the "personnel now being assigned to Africa by [the] State [Department] was higher-caliber." But according to him, more progress had been held up because of congressional parsimony. See Memorandum, "Discussion at the 441st Meeting of the National Security Council," 14 April 1960, AWF, NSC Series, Box 12 (DDEL); also in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 126-128.

relative to other sections of the periphery.

Part II
1950-52

Introduction to Part II

IN his memoir, George McGhee -- the U.S. assistant secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, 1949 to 1951 -- recalled that "in 1950, no comprehensive U.S. policy had been formulated for Africa south of the Sahara." In spite of the absence of a "comprehensive U.S. policy," Africa did feature in Washington's policy formulation before 1950. In early 1948, for example, George Kennan, counselor and director of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, drew attention to how the exploitation of Africa's resources could help the U.S. meet its long term objectives in Western Europe. Kennan started by defining the basic issue for America's global strategy in terms of the constitution of some "form of political, military and economic union in Western Europe if the free nations of Europe are to hold their own" against the Soviet Union. For him, Britain's participation in such a union was a necessary condition to guarantee its viability. But he also understood that "Britain's long term economic problem...can scarcely be solved just by closer association with the other Western European countries, since these countries do not have, by and large, the food and raw material surpluses she needs." This problem, he suggested, "could be far better met" by Britain's "closer association" with Canada and the U.S. However, Kennan was also quick to acknowledge that delinking Britain from the rest of Western Europe might "have the ultimate effect of rendering the continental nations more vulnerable to Russian pressures." As a

¹ McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World*, 114.

way out of the difficulty, he recommended that all of Western Europe, rather than Britain alone, be brought into "a closer economic association" with the U.S. and Canada. But the real key to the puzzle was Africa: "a union of Western European nations" should, Kennan urged, "undertake jointly the economic development and exploitation of the colonial and dependent areas of the African Continent." He contended that since such a project entailed "demands which are probably well above the vision and strength and leadership capacity" of Western Europe, it would require "considerable prodding from outside [the U.S.?] and much patience." But Kennan was not dismayed -- the anticipated harvest was worth the labor: "But the idea itself," he added,

has much to recommend it. The African Continent, is relatively little exposed to communist pressures; and most of it is not today a subject of great power rivalries. It lies easily accessible to the maritime nations of Western Europe, and politically they control or influence most of it. Its resources are still relatively undeveloped. It could absorb great numbers of people and a great deal of Europe's surplus technical and administrative energy. Finally, it would lend to the idea of Western European union that tangible objective for which everyone has been rather unsuccessfully groping in recent months.⁴

As chapter 3 shows, the idea of drawing on Africa to strengthen Europe was institutionalized through programs such as those of the ECA. By their focus and practical implication, the programs subordinated the economic wellbeing of Africans to American and European interests. By the same token, the logic of the programs meant that Africa's strategic importance to Washington was essentially defined in terms of the raw materials

⁴ Report by the Policy Planning Staff, "Review of Current Trends -- U.S. Foreign Policy," 24 February 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, i (1976), 510-511.

it furnished America and its Western European allies. Paradoxically, at the same time that the Truman administration desired a European union which had Africa as its main prong, it was also pressing the European colonial powers for an Open Door for American private capital on the continent.

Washington's policy in Africa during the Truman presidency was a continuity in some respects, just as it marked a departure in others, from the Roosevelt era. The striving for an Open Door, for example, was a carry-over from Roosevelt's New Deal diplomacy. In 1944, the State Department recalled that America's "traditional policy in the past with regard to Africa, as well as the Far East, has been that of the 'Open Door'" and gave a clear hint that the policy remained in sharp focus: "Overseas trade," the department stressed, "will be more important than ever before to this nation in maintaining our vaunted standard of living....Our country will not be able to maintain our heretofore standard of living or even to approximate it unless we can

Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* suggests that the New Deal represented a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign economic policy, a shift which focussed on the global expansion of U.S. foreign trade and investment. For other studies along this line, see Thomas Ferguson, "From Normalcy to New Deal: Industrial Structure, Party Competition, and American Public Policy in the Great Depression," *International Organization*, 38, 1 (Winter, 1984); Jeff Frieden, "Sectoral Conflict and U.S. Foreign Economic Policy, 1914-1940," *ibid.*, 42, 1 (Winter, 1988); Stephen Haggard, "The Institutional Foundations of Hegemony: Explaining the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act of 1934," *ibid.*; James R. Moore, "Sources of New Deal Economic Policy: The International Dimension," *The Journal of American History*, lxi, 3 (December 1974); Frederick C. Adams, *Economic Diplomacy: The Export-Import Bank and Foreign Policy, 1934-1939* (Columbia, MO.: University of Missouri Press, 1976); Benjamin M. Rowland, "Planning the American Ascendancy: The Transfer of Economic Power from Britain to the United States, 1933-1944," in Benjamin M. Rowland (ed), *Balance of Power or Hegemony: The Interwar Monetary System* (New York University Press, 1976).

produce more, export more, and help by our overseas trade to all lands to raise the standard of living of backward peoples so that they may absorb more and more of the products of American agriculture and industry." The point was therefore emphasized that Washington had "the most vital national interest" in achieving an Open Door in Africa and in the Far East and that this goal predisposed the U.S. to oppose "agreements which would relegate in any area of the world American influence to a secondary position."⁴

The question of European colonial rule was another of Roosevelt's major concern. According to one early assessment, "An important phase of the foreign policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt was a vigorous and persistent opposition to colonialism." Although, recent scholarship reveals neither rigor nor persistence in his anticolonialism, it is generally agreed that Roosevelt had very strong misgivings about the European empires and felt that some structural reform should be put in place after World War II. In 1943, he paid a very brief visit to Bathurst,

⁴ 880.00/9-1343, Department of State Memorandum, 13 September 1943 (NA).

Foster Rhea Dulles and Gerald E. Ridinger, "The Anticolonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Political Science Quarterly*, lxx, 1 (March 1955), 1.

See Scott L. Bilss, *Empire and Cold War: The Roots of US-Third World Antagonism, 1945-47* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 5-22; LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina: 1942-45;" John J. Sbrega, "The Anticolonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Reappraisal," *Political Science Quarterly*, 101, 1 (1986); Christopher Thorne, "Indonesia and Anglo-American Relations, 1942-1945," *Pacific Historical Review*, xlv, 1 (February 1976); M.S. Venkataramani, "The United States, the Colonial Issue, and the Atlantic Charter Hoax," *International Studies (Delhi)*, 13, 1 (January-March 1974), 25; Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945: The United States and the*

the capital of Gambia. He was greatly horrified by what he saw: "...it's the most horrible thing I have ever seen in my life....With a little study, I got the point of view that for every dollar that the British, who have been there for two hundred years, have put into Gambia, they have taken out ten. It's plain exploitation of those people." He found "no education whatsoever" and lamented that the British had done nothing to improve agricultural technology in the place. The story was the same in connection with road development: "The only road out of Bathurst" -- to the airport -- was built by the U.S. The Africans he saw going to work in the morning, Roosevelt observed, were in "rags...glum-looking." And he was disturbed to learn that each of them received, as a wage, "one shilling, nine pence (less than fifty cents) a day and a half-cup of rice." With a great deal of uneasiness, he recited their predicament: "Dirt. Disease. Very high mortality rate," and a life expectancy of twenty-six years. "These people," he concluded, "are treated worse than their livestock. Their cattle live longer!" In general, Roosevelt believed that European colonial policy in Africa and Asia was still being run along eighteenth century methods: "a policy which takes wealth in raw materials out of a colonial country, but which returns nothing to the people of that

Decolonization of the British Empire (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1977).

Samuel I. Rosenman (compiled), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin Roosevelt, 13, 1945-45* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1969), 68-69.

Elliot Roosevelt, *As He Saw It* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), 75.

country." To rectify this, he advocated, not the abolition of colonial rule, but the adoption of twentieth century colonial methods which "involves bringing industry to these colonials....increasing the wealth of a people by increasing their standard of living, by educating them, by bringing them sanitation -- by making sure that they get a return for the raw wealth of their community."

However, Roosevelt left little doubt that his prescription of "twentieth century colonial methods" meant no more than the substitution of a "liberal and benevolent" American economic penetration for European imperialism. For him, the Open Door and anticolonialism were not exclusive policy options. A 1944 Council on Foreign Relations study concluded that "preferential trade relations...is a significant factor in explaining American hostility to colonial ties."¹⁰ Thus Roosevelt's brave talks on India's independence went hand in hand with a more insistent demand for an Open Door in India.¹¹ It has also been shown that lend-lease was used by Washington to open up French North and West Africa to private American business interests in the 1940s.¹² His working proposition was that "British and German

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹ Council on Foreign Relations report no. E-B71, "Studies in the American Interests in the War and the Peace," 24 June 1944, Council on Foreign Relations Archives. Cited in David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 64.

¹² See documents in *FRUS, 1941, iii* (1959), 189-199.

¹³ James J. Dougherty, "Lend-lease and the Opening of French North and West Africa to Private Trade," *Cashiers d'Etudes Africaines*, xv (1975). Also see Michael Cowen and Nicholas

bankers have had world trade pretty well sewn up in their pockets for a long time....Well, now, that's not so good for American trade."¹³ He saw in World War II an opportunity to get them to disgorge this loot for America's benefit. When he met in August 1941 with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the coast of Newfoundland, acrimony was generated by Roosevelt's pressure that Britain should dismantle its imperial preferences to guarantee the U.S. economic opportunities in the British Empire.¹⁴ At dinner on 22 January 1943, he drew the attention of Sultan Sidi Mohammed b. Youssef of Morocco to how the "past relationship between French and British financiers combined into self-perpetuating syndicates for the purpose of dredging riches out of colonies." Roosevelt raised the possibility of oil deposits in Morocco; the sultan was excited but regretted the dearth of indigenous personnel who would run the oilfields. At that point, the president proposed that Moroccans could be trained in the U.S. under some exchange program, and that Morocco

Westcott, "British Imperial Economic Policy During the War," in David Killingray and Richard Rathbone (eds), *Africa and the Second World War* (The Macmillan Press, 1986), 52.

¹³ Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 24.

¹⁴ See Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Grand Alliance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951) chap. 4; Sumner Welles, *Where Are We Heading?* (New York and London: Harper, 1946), 7-8, 12-16; idem, *The Time for Decision* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1945), 175-177. Also see Alan P. Dobson, "Economic Diplomacy at the Atlantic Conference," *Review of International Studies*, 10, 2 (April 1984); idem, *U.S. Wartime Aid to Britain, 1940-1946* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (New York: Harper Publishers, 1953), chap. xxi, esp. 677-688; L.S. Pressnell, *External Economic Policy Since the War, i: The Postwar Financial Settlement* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1986), chap. 3 and appendices 3-8.

could engage American firms for its development projects "on a fee or percentage basis." Such an arrangement, Roosevelt pressed, would enable Morocco retain "considerable control over its resources, obtain the major part of any incomes flowing from such resources, and, indeed, eventually take them over completely." The sultan could possibly not have heard any European talk to him in that manner, and he fell for the deal.¹⁵ De Gaulle was later to cynically inquire from the sultan: "When President Roosevelt jingled the marvels of independence before your Majesty at Anfa, what did he offer you beyond the cash and a place among his customers?"¹⁶

In spite of the underlying centrality of the Open Door, much of West Africa's significance in U.S. strategic architecture during World War II derived from the Takoradi-Chad air route to North Africa, but particularly from Dakar.¹⁷ Following the Italian assault on North Africa in 1940, Takoradi -- in the then Gold Coast -- was made an assembly base for war planes which were ferried via Nigeria and Chad to Khartoum and then to Cairo. This meant that from July 1940, U.S. war planes were flown to the Takoradi air route and from there to Egypt and the theater of war in the Eastern Mediterranean. This route grew in importance for the Allied forces in 1941 and 1942, after the U.S. had helped to

¹⁵ Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 110-112.

¹⁶ De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs*, 923.

¹⁷ I am grateful to my friend, Rob Hanks, for drawing my attention to the issues involved in this discussion (especially, the strategic importance of Dakar) and much of the relevant literature as well.

modernize the facilities at Takoradi.¹⁰ As Lord Swinton, Britain's wartime resident in West Africa, told the Royal Empire Society in 1945: "West Africa became literally the lifeline of our Air Force and of the American Air Force also. It was the only way by which aircraft could be brought to Egypt and to the battle front in Libya, and by which aircraft could pass to India, the Middle East, Russia and China."¹¹

Dakar -- the westernmost tip of Africa -- assumed particular importance for Washington after the fall of France to Nazi forces in 1940. This stemmed, above all else, from the fact that Dakar is separated from Natal in Brazil by only a 1,500-mile stretch of ocean. There was thus the worry that the Germans could seize and use it as a raider and submarine base against Brazil, thereby directly threatening the U.S. itself. It was in this context that Secretary of War Henry Stimson stated Washington's strategic interest in Dakar and West Africa on 15 August 1941:

Germany has been pushing into North Africa and we have reason to believe that a major advance will be made by her into that continent. At Dakar, which is held by Vichy forces, now friendly with Germany, the great western bulge of the African coast narrows the South Atlantic Ocean until the distance from Dakar to the easternmost point of Brazil can be easily traversed either by air or sea. The German controlled press of Paris today is openly urging that Germany be invited by Vichy to come into Dakar.¹²

The issue of Dakar as a potential menace was a matter of serious concern, not just for Washington, but for a broad spectrum of the

¹⁰ Deborah Wing Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Roosevelt's Prewar Venture Beyond the Western Hemisphere," *The Journal of American History*, lxii, 2 (September 1975), 355-356.

¹¹ *West Africa*, 3 March 1945.

¹² Quoted in William L. Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 187.

American public as well. "In our eyes," Dakar, according to Thomas Wasson of the State Department,

became a loaded pistol pointing across the Atlantic at the heart of Brazil and the New World. The menace of Dakar worried, not only our learned columnists and radio commentators, our editorial writers and journalistic strategists, our professional purveyors of gossip, the people who write letters-to-the-editor, and authors of magazine articles and books. At dinner tables and cocktail parties the mere mention of 'Dakar' became freighted with sinister overtones. Perhaps it is seldom that so much is said by so many about a place so little known."

Roosevelt himself never disguised his conviction that "Dakar in unsure hands was a direct threat to the Americas." From the onset, Washington worked to shield Dakar from "unsure hands." In September 1940, the U.S. hurried to resuscitate its consulate there with the express intention of keeping a close watch on the Germans. That same month, a feeble joint British/Gaullist expedition led by de Gaulle himself tried to eliminate the danger by seizing Dakar. The expedition was beaten back and so the problem remained, and "President Roosevelt looked apprehensively at this African bulge which curved menacingly into the Atlantic." But he was not giving up yet on preemptive measures. In May 1941, Roosevelt proposed sending a message to Congress

¹ Thomas C. Wasson, "The Mystery of Dakar: An Enigma Resolved," *The American Foreign Service Journal*, 20, 4 (April 1943), 169.

² "Tripartite Dinner Meeting, November 28, 1943, 8.30 p.m., Roosevelt's Quarters, Soviet Embassy," *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943* (1961), 509.

³ William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Challenge of Isolation, 1937-1940* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1952), 736.

⁴ Arthur Layton Funk, *The Politics of Torch: The Allied Landings and the Algiers Putsch, 1942* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1974), 5; Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941*, 64-66.

declaring all of West Africa north of the Equator, as well as the Atlantic islands of Azores, Cape Verde, Madeira, and Canaries "as thenceforth falling under the protective provisions of the Monroe Doctrine." He was restrained by Secretary of State Cordell Hull who argued that the threat from a German occupation of the islands or Dakar "could be better stated nakedly without raising a technical Monroe Doctrine issue."⁴³ The following month, the president announced that in order to neutralize the possibility of Hitler invading the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. "must and will take military action without further notice to prevent Germany from acquiring bases in Greenland, Iceland, Dakar, the Azores and Cape Verde Islands."⁴⁴

Roosevelt dropped no hint as to how he intended to take the wind off Hitler's sail. But given the circumstances, it is possible to trace a direct linkage from the White House to a plan drawn up by the Office of Strategic Studies. Issued in December 1941, the paper asserted that for a number of reasons, West Africa was threatened by the possibility of a German attack. The OSS assumed that since Germany would want to secure its North African position from an attack which originated from West Africa, it had every incentive to control places such as Dakar, Gao, and Fort Lamy. The Germans also needed to secure West Africa as a jumping-off point for South America or to obstruct the Cape shipping route; to control the supply of African vegetable oil which was "urgently needed for continental economy" and to

⁴³ Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, 369.

⁴⁴ *Life*, 9 June 1941, 32.

prepare for the conquest of all Africa or, in case of setbacks, to have fall-back positions in Africa to protect the approaches to Europe. The paper ruled out equipping or helping France and Britain to counter the German menace to West Africa: France because "of general objection of most Frenchmen to de Gaulle, caused by previous deep misunderstandings. Full military aid and recognition of de Gaulle would mean extension to the United States of French objections to de Gaulle"; and Britain because of "fear of British conquest and existing psychological antipathies between the French and British." A U.S. expedition, "undertaken in conjunction with long-term plan," was thus considered to be the most viable option.

The proposed expedition involved the landing of U.S. forces in the Gulf of Guinea "using as many ports as possible from Brazzaville to Freetown" to minimize their exposure to German "bombing dangers." Once on the West African coastline, their immediate inland targets were to be Gao, "for control of Niger basin"; Fort Lamy, "a center of communications which is essential for control of the Niger-Nile road"; and Bamako, "a strategic center for future conquest toward Kayes-Dakar." They were also to secure "protective outposts" in the Sahara, particularly the Hoggar Massive which was considered essential for the protection of the Niger valley; and mobile advance posts were to be established on the Tanezrouft road, Taoudenni, and Ghat. To take

"Africa and the U.S.A.," enclosure in Memorandum by Sherman Kent, chief, Mediterranean Section, 11 December 1941, OSS/State Department Intelligence and Research Reports: Part xiii -- Africa, 1941-1961. A microfilm project of University of America Publications Inc, Washington, DC., 1980. (Available at the Robarts Library, University of Toronto.)

Dakar, the expedition was to advance on the Bamako-Kayes-Dakar road, "with the right flank protected by the Hoggar outposts."

Among other dividends for the U.S., the paper argued that American occupation of West Africa "would be a logical and just objective for post-war reconstruction" and that "It [West Africa] would be a future American buffer to Europe and a territory of free economic enterprise for United States business to counter-balance South American exigencies." To dignify this imperialist design, it was recommended that the U.S. should promise "the organization of a new, independent Africa, based on the federation of African states. Africa for the Africans!" Nonetheless, the paper acknowledged that the proposal would be met with strong objections from Britain and France "and therefore should not be publicized until a later date."

Framed in the guise of safeguarding West Africa from possible German occupation, the proposal that the U.S. should invade and occupy West Africa was an extreme and bizarre form of U.S. intervention in a European sphere of influence. Otherwise, the project was in substantial harmony with Roosevelt's diplomacy of intertwining anticolonialism with the quest for an Open Door.

To return to the Truman period, the thrust of the chapter which follows is that on the whole, Washington managed to pursue a policy which was replete with contradictions: at the same time that it was pressing the European powers for an Open Door in

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.* I found nothing on how the OSS proposal was received by the State Department or the White House or a follow-up on it.

Africa, it was also interested in the exploitation of African resources to strengthen Western Europe. And there was the troubling dilemma of satisfying, at one and the same time, the conflicting interests of Britain and France -- key partners in the anti-Soviet coalition -- on the one hand and the question of African self-determination on the other. It was not always possible to walk this tight-rope, especially, because as McGhee recalled in his memoir, "We [the U.S.] had few national interests of importance" in Africa, "most of which we recognized was the responsibility of the European 'metropolitan' powers....World-wide we were at that time concerned primarily with our Cold War with the Soviet Union, which had reached crisis proportions with the Korean War. In meeting the Communist threat, the cooperation of our European allies was essential." These mediating factors ensured that when it came to making a choice, Washington took the side of its European allies.

Frederick Lugard made his mark as a leading British colonial administrator in Africa. To him belongs the coinage of the 'dual mandate,' a supposedly reciprocal relationship between Europe and Africa. Lugard's premise was that since the Europeans could no longer survive without tropical raw materials and foodstuffs, the responsibility was theirs for the adequate exploitation of the tropics. Africa was according to him, "the heritage of mankind" and the colonial powers were there to act as "trustees of civilization." This thinking led to the insistence that Africans could not deny Europeans access to the resources. The 'dual

McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World*, 114.

mandate' thus implied that the European colonial powers were to see to the "development" of African resources for the benefit "of the congested populations whose lives and industries depend on a share of the bounties with which nature has so abundantly endowed the tropics." Africans were to benefit from this "development" as "much of these products is returned to the tropics converted into articles for the use and comfort of its people."¹ It is easy to see the 'dual mandate' for what it was: a rationalization for the colonial exploitation of Africa's resources. Lugard's 'dual mandate' provides an adequate analogy, perhaps even the conceptual framework, to understand and explain much of the U.S. involvement in Africa in the period 1950-52.

In its classical form, the "dual mandate" was incongruous with African self-government, understandably so, given the presence of the European "trustees." Thus in response to African nationalist endeavor, Lugard wrote: "However strong a sympathy we may feel for the aspirations of these African progressives, sane counsellors will advise them to recognize their present limitations. At no time in the world's history has there been so cordial a hand held out to Africa...or a keener desire to assist the African in the path of progress."² On this score too, Truman's bent was reminiscent of Lugard's. According to Gabriel Kolko, especially for the sake of Europe's recovery, Washington had a vested interest in raw materials extraction from the

¹ See Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922; London: Frank Cass, 1965), 42-44, 60-61; idem, "The White Man's Task in Tropical Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, 5, 1 (October 1926).

² Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 85.

underdeveloped countries (UDCs). This, he says, was partially why "Washington opposed an accelerated decolonization process that cut the economic ties that bound much of the Third World to European imperialism."

¹¹ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 41-43.

IN the Introduction to Part II, it was shown that for most of the World War II period, Americans feared that from Dakar, the Germans could cut through the Atlantic and threaten their security by way of Brazil. As a consequence, West Africa -- and especially Dakar -- was of intrinsic and key geostrategic importance to Roosevelt. As he understood it, "the Germans had in their power to take over Dakar and use it as a raider and submarine base. It's a direct threat against Brazil and this continent, the West Indies, and so forth." He therefore proposed that at the end of the war, West Africa would be demilitarized "all the way down," and there should be "a strong point in either Dakar or Bathurst, where we will have sufficient air strength, sufficient Navy, and sufficient airfields, and so forth, to prevent any aggressor Nation in the future from reestablishing a threat against this continent."¹ When de Gaulle visited Washington in July 1944, Roosevelt "raised one of the questions that absorbed him, the need for some strategic bases such as Dakar to safeguard American security."²

The Policy Framework

In the early 1950s, there were still indications of U.S. commitment "to assure the security of the 'bulge' area near

¹ Rosenman (compiled), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. 12, 1943 (New York: Russel and Russel, 1969), 87.

² Arthur L. Funk, *Charles de Gaulle. The Crucial Years, 1943-1944* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1959), 280.

Dakar." But it is truer to say that under Truman, West Africa lost the prominence Roosevelt had accorded it in U.S. strategic architecture. Paradoxically, a glance at the *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* clearly shows that it was in 1950 -- under Truman rather than Roosevelt -- that the foreign policy establishment in Washington started to grapple with defining an African policy. The launch-pad was a panel discussion on Africa, organized by the State Department on 6 February 1950 and chaired by George McGhee, the assistant secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs. In addition to officers of the State Department, the discussants were drawn from academia, foundations, and various commercial and religious organizations involved with Africa. They considered Africa to be some clay awaiting to be molded by external agents. It was acknowledged that the Europeans -- America's allies -- were already on the ground doing the job, only they seemed ill-equipped. The panelists therefore envisaged that in addition to supplying vital construction materials, the U.S. would be the site supervisor, providing some leadership for the Europeans. According to their final report:

Africa is a relatively malleable area, more susceptible at present and for some time to come to outside determinism than any other large area of the world. Accordingly, it is the last large region in which outsiders can continue for a time to do very much as they please, because of the limited economic and political powers of the African peoples, their lack of cohesion and solidarity on a continental scale, and their helplessness except through the medium of world public opinion.

Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) Document Brief, "ECA Objectives and Program in French Overseas Territories," 6 September 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland).

This alleged helplessness, they held, imposed a great responsibility on Western powers. And the role of the U.S. in this was regarded as particularly crucial. As the panel put it:

The U.S. is in a position of great influence to determine the actions of the Western nations with regard to Africa, because Africa contains no resident powers possessing sufficient strength and historical and ideological acceptability to gain pan-African predominance; because we are effectively allied with all of the governing powers except Spain, which are in high degree dependent upon us; because many Africans look upon American institutions, influence, and support as desirable; and because of their recognition of our sympathy towards and contribution to the rapid indigenous development of all peoples. Accordingly, of all the nations having access to Africa, the U.S. is in the best position to influence for good the entire continent....

Essentially, the panel recommended that the U.S. should seek the accomplishment of its objectives and policy in Africa through the operations of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) and Point IV.¹ McGhee later reported to Secretary of State Dean Acheson that the panel agreed that "the real basic objective of our policy in Africa is to accelerate its development," and that this was to be achieved in "cooperation with the European colonial countries" and Africans themselves. "While Point IV should be administered primarily for the African people themselves, we should work for a maximum possible understanding with our Western allies, Britain, France and Belgium." It was therefore suggested that "Serious consideration should be given to the holding of a conference at the highest level to reach agreement on the broad aims of colonial policy. We should work

¹ Report prepared in the Department of State, "Political and Economic Problems of Africa," (n.d.), *FRUS, 1950*, v (1978), 1503-1509; McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World*, 115-117.

towards a reasonable acceleration of the political and economic development of the African peoples."

The panel was part of the groundwork for the West and East African Regional Conference held in Lourenco Marques, Mozambique, from 27 February to 2 March 1950. The conference was chaired by McGhee and attended by U.S. consular officials in sub-Saharan Africa. It was, according to one official report, the first U.S. consular conference exclusively concerned with the region. The report added that "The objective of the conference was to develop information which would assist the [State] Department in formulating a U.S. policy for Africa -- a policy that would recognize our longrange interests in the area without prejudicing our relations with the European powers." McGhee later explained that the Lourenco Marques conference "developed a preliminary statement regarding our attitudes, objectives and policy towards Africa." In the main, the policy was to be a balancing act, accommodating U.S. interests without harming the European position. The conference recommended that in the political sphere (possibly meaning in matters of colonial administration), the U.S. should not "inject itself into the situation"; the initiative was to be left to the European powers on the ground.

611.70/2-1750, Memorandum, "Panel Discussion on Africa," from NEA - Mr McGhee to the secretary, 17 February 1950 (NA).

Samuel J. Gorlitz, "Economic Situation in Africa (South of the Sahara): Report of Lourenco Marques Conference," 22 May 1950, Supplement to the Daily Economic Summary, Office Files of Gordon Gray as special assistant to the president, Working Papers: General File, Box 8 (HSTL).

Memorandum, Mr McGhee to the secretary, "Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations Reached at Lourenco Marques Conference," 12 April 1950, Lot 53 D468, Box 9 (NA).

But in matters which were beyond the capability of the Europeans -- notably, combatting "organized Communism" -- the U.S. had to step in, indeed, take the lead. It was agreed that "a negative approach to the problem of Communist penetration should not be overemphasized; rather positive programs such as Point Four, ECA, and Educational Exchange, accompanied by intelligently prepared USIS [United States Information Service] material on objectives of these programs would be effective counter weapons." The U.S. would also seek economic returns from Africa: while acknowledging that the entrenched positions of metropolitan European business interests militated against the penetration of U.S. private capital, the conference discussed the possibilities of increasing African commodity exports to the U.S. and ensuring that America's access to the region's economic resources equalled that of the Europeans.

The Lourenco Marques conference was fully reflected in the policy which followed. McGhee's address to the Foreign Policy Association of Oklahoma City on 8 May 1950 was possibly the first official enunciation of U.S. African policy. He described Africa as "a region in which we have few direct responsibilities," and emphasized that "Other nations, chiefly those with whom we are associated under the North Atlantic Treaty, are directly responsible for solution of the day-to-day problems of Africa." The speech left no doubt that the U.S. considered Africa to be Europe's primary responsibility. As McGhee put it, "We must keep in mind the fact that we are not in a position to exercise direct

Ibid.

responsibility with respect to Africa. We have no desire to assume the responsibilities borne by other powers and, indeed, our principles, our existing commitments, and our lack of experience all militate against our assumption of such obligations." By highlighting these limitations, the speech sent a clear signal that the U.S. intended to work in Africa, in cooperation with -- not in opposition to -- the Europeans. In this regard, McGhee observed that "Communism" had not made any significant inroad into Africa, thus providing the U.S. and its European allies the opportunity to develop "healthy political, economic, and social institutions" in Africa; "to create an understanding on the part of Africans of the forces of communism...and to inspire a determination to resist those forces."

It was against this background that McGhee outlined the objectives of U.S. African policy. The U.S. favored "the progressive development" of the African territories "toward the goal of self-government or, where conditions are suitable, toward independence." Second was the desire for the development of mutually advantageous economic relations between Western Europe and Africa, "in the interests of contributing to the restoration of a sound European economy and in the interests of furthering the aspirations of the African peoples." At the same time, the U.S. wished to "preserve its rights of equal economic treatment in the territories of Africa" and to participate "both commercially and financially" in Africa's development "along with other

¹ George C. McGhee, "United States Interests in Africa," *Department of State Bulletin*, June 19 1950, 999-1003.

nations of the world." In the same vein, the U.S. "must continue to have access to Africa's vital reservoir of minerals which are critical stockpile items in the United States -- manganese, chrome ore, rubber, industrial diamonds essential to our machine tool industry, asbestos, and many other important minerals." Finally, and as a counterpoise to "Communism," it was "a major" U.S. objective to assist in the establishment of an environment in which Africans "will feel that their aspirations can best be served by continued association and cooperation with the nations of the free world, both in their present status and as they advance towards self-government or independence and in accordance with the UN Charter." He added that these objectives were to be promoted through the ECA, the USIS, the Educational Exchange program, and Point IV.¹¹ As McGhee had proposed, the ECA, Point IV, and later, Mutual Security Agency (MSA) programs were the basic mechanisms of U.S. involvement in Africa during the Truman presidency.

The Quest for Raw Materials and Europe's Economic Health

In enacting the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, the U.S. Congress established the ECA and authorized it to provide material and financial assistance to any country which had adhered to the report of the Committee of European Cooperation at Paris on 22 September 1947, "together with dependent areas under its administration." From 1948, this provision enabled the U.S. to extend "assistance" to European colonies, including those in

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Africa, as part of the assistance to the metropolitan countries.¹¹ Point IV which followed in 1950 was exclusively focussed on "technical assistance." As passed by Congress in September 1950, the program's legislation provided for furnishing technical assistance to governments of underdeveloped countries (UDCs) and territories. As set out by the legislation, technical assistance could be in the form of providing experts to advise a government or to conduct demonstration projects or to "impart techniques by other means in the fields of agriculture, power development, mining, health, education, etc." It also included training the nationals of a cooperating country in the U.S. or other country agreed upon with the U.S. But it did not include the provision of capital for a development project. Thus Point IV funds could be used to assist a government if it required expert advice or a survey in connection with land reclamation, but not for the reclamation itself. Congress ruled that technical assistance in this sense did not constitute a further obligation by the U.S. to provide loans or grants, and that funds provided under Point IV were to be used only for the purposes of demonstration or instruction.¹²

¹¹ ECA, *ECA: Development of Overseas Territories of Marshall Plan -- Special Report* (ECA, European Program Division, Dependent Areas Branch, 24 August 1951), 2, 9, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland); Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, Title I, Public Law 472, 80th Congress.

¹² 811.05145S/10-1750, Outgoing Airgram from Department of State to AmConsul, Kenya, 6 December 1950 (NA); The Department of State, *Point Four: Cooperative Program for Aid in the Development of Economically Underdeveloped Areas*, Department of State Publication 3719, Economic Cooperation Series 24 (Washington, DC., January 1950); William Adams Brown, Jr., and Redvers Opie, *American Foreign Assistance* (Washington, DC.: The Brookings Institution, 1953), 392-396.

Under its procurement authorization procedure, requests for ECA programs in Africa could only emanate from the metropolitan countries and for such projects as they designated. For French West Africa, for example, the first stage of the procedure was a request for its annual requirements under the European Recovery Program (ERP) by the Ministry of Overseas Territories in Paris. The ministry itself was required by the coordinating committee of the *Commission des Approvisionnements* to make similar submissions concerning all the territories under its jurisdiction. The estimation of the annual requirements of French West Africa was the responsibility of the Service of Economic Affairs in Dakar, which relied on submissions filed by the constituent territories of the federation and government departments. Such submissions were screened in accordance with the needs of each particular territory and within the context of development plans. After the screening, the Service of Economic Affairs forwarded its total requests to Paris. In Paris, the submissions were reviewed in the Ministry of Overseas France and subsequently by the *Commission des Approvisionnements*. From Paris, the proposals went to Washington, where they were finally reviewed and approved by the ECA.¹³

The authorization procedure ensured that ECA programs in Africa were integrated into existing colonial development schemes.¹⁴ Essentially, the ECA limited itself to using American

¹³ ECA, "Report on the Application of ECA Assistance to the Development of French West Africa," 31 December 1949, enclosure in Desp. No. 283 from the ECA France to ECA, Washington, RG 469, Europe: French West Africa 1948-53, Box 2 (Suitland).

¹⁴ ECA: *Development of Overseas Territories*, 2.

dollars to obtain capital equipment or technical personnel not available in the participating countries. This meant that apart from providing American personnel, ECA funds were used to purchase American capital goods -- tractors, scrapers, graders, and other types of earth-moving equipment and agricultural machinery. Such funds did not cover expenses in local currency or equipment available in the participating countries.²²

By its very nature -- the animating impulses, degree of financial involvement, scope and objectives -- U.S. involvement in Africa was very conservative. To begin with, the financial input of the ECA and Point IV, even as "technical assistance" programs, was rather miserly. By the end of 1950, the maximum ECA dollar expenditure per project was pegged at two percent of total cost (down from ten to fifteen percent at the beginning of the Marshall Plan). The bulk of the expenditures for programs involving the ECA were in local currencies provided by the metropolitan and local governments.²³ In its turn, Point IV -- according to Gabriel Kolko -- was "a program with inflated pretensions but very little money."²⁴ Truman had requested for \$45 million as the total cost for the first year of Point IV, but Congress approved \$34.5 million.²⁵ And that was for all of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Far East, and Latin America.

²² John E. Orchard, "ECA and the Dependent Territories," *The Geographical Review*, xli, 1 (January 1951), 71, 74-75.

²³ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

²⁴ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 42.

²⁵ Brown, Jr., and Opie, *American Foreign Assistance*, 393, 396-397.

Of course, it was made quite explicit that the U.S. was not taking on a "principal role" in the "development" of Western Europe's colonies. That responsibility, according to the ECA, was "already being met, in substantial measure, by the European countries and the territories themselves."¹³

The implication of their financial slenderness was that neither the ECA nor Point IV programs made any provisions for capital development. Indeed, Robert Pollard has shown that the Truman administration had no development or foreign aid program for the UDCs. Instead, it believed that recovery in Europe would trickle down, through the intermediation of private capital, to spur economic activity in the UDCs.¹⁴ Of greater significance, however, was the realization in Washington that the economic problems of the UDCs were more deeply-rooted than those of Europe. In this sense, the solution to the former was perceived not only as a long drawn process, but also a frustrating -- if not daunting -- exercise which would have required more financial input than the U.S. could possibly afford. This distinction and its policy implications were put in perspective by the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department in July 1947. While acknowledging that "There are, and will continue to be areas outside of Europe which will have need of U.S. cooperation in their development," it was noted that "Europe's needs are, in their aggregate, clear in outline, readily susceptible of short-term solution...." Comparing the European situation with that of

¹³ ECA: *Development of Overseas Territories*, 2.

¹⁴ Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War*, 203-207.

the UDCs, the planning staff felt that "The problem in Europe is basically one of releasing the capacity for self-help already present in certain highly advanced countries. This is a short-term problem. In the case of many non-European areas, what is needed is not the release of existing energies but the creation of new ones. This is a long-term problem...."⁴¹

The U.S. programs were rendered even more conservative by their objectives and underlying impulses. Kolko says that after World War II, the U.S. had hoped that Western Europe's economic health would be fully restored after a "short period of loans and grants." When it became clear that this was not to be, the Truman administration embraced the idea that the solution lay in Europe earning "far more dollars through increased exports to the United States from its present and former colonies." This, according to Kolko, was the background to Point IV, with the implication that the "primary goal" of the entire effort was raw materials extraction. Numerous official records confirm that both the ECA's involvement in the UDCs and Point IV were animated and focussed on increased supplies of raw materials. Western Europe was intended to be the primary beneficiary, with Africa as the pivot of the entire scheme. In July 1950, John Orchard, chairman of the ECA Advisory Committee on Overseas Territories recounted the two "original reasons" for the ECA overseas development

⁴¹ Records of the Policy Planning Staff, "Certain Aspects of the European Recovery Problem from the United States Standpoint (Preliminary Report)," 23 July 1947, in Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis (eds), *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 112-113.

⁴² Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 41-43.

program: (1) to support European recovery, and (2) the possibilities of increasing raw material production, including "strategic materials" for the U.S. stockpile. "Recent developments," he added, "have given us a selfish interest in carrying forward the program...the possibilities of finding and developing sources of industrial and strategic materials in defensible areas, particularly Africa." A year later, Allan Smith, acting director, ECA Overseas Territories Division, spoke in a similar vein and criticized this ingenious pattern of "economic assistance." to Africa. "We specifically feel," he emphasized, "that we must not repeat not continue to regard aid to African territories as merely supplementary to and part of aid to Europe." He recalled that economic aid to Europe was "oriented to maintaining and building up economic conditions required for a strong rearmament effort," but when applied to Africa which had "no direct rearmament facilities," the objective "would indicate support [for] only increased production [of] strategic materials

"Meeting of Advisory Committee on Overseas Territories, Economic Cooperation Administration, Washington, Thursday, July 20, 1950," ECA, Record of Action, ACOT/RA-5, August 9, 1950 in RG 469, Europe Program Division ACUA, 1949-1951, Box 3 (Suitland). In January 1951, Allan Smith, the acting director, ECA Overseas Territories Division, remarked that "The Dependent Overseas Territories have generally been considered by ECA as appendages of European economy or as producers of strategic materials for the U.S. stockpile." See Draft Cable to Washington, "Legislative Presentation of OT Policies," encl. in Memorandum from Allan Hugh Smith, 22 January 1951, RG 469, Special representative in Europe, Office of the General Consul, Subject Files, 1948-53, Box 47 (Suitland)

and financing collateral development required in this regard such as port and rail facilities, possibly power."⁴⁴

In May 1950, McGhee graphically illustrated the significance of Africa's contribution to Europe's wellbeing. He pointed out that the volume of Africa's exports to Western Europe in 1948 "totaled about 2.5 billion dollars, or approximately half as much as the United States itself exported to Europe," so that "a relatively small increase in Africa's production will go far toward improving the present dollar deficit position of the Western European countries."⁴⁵ Another report described the ECA program in Africa as "closely related to the economic recovery of Europe, inasmuch as resource development in Africa could contribute (a) to reduce the dollar import requirements of the colonial powers, and (b) to provide those powers with additional sources of dollar earnings." In 1950, the calculation was that ECA activities would enable African territories "by FY 1953, to increase their dollar earnings and savings" by half a billion dollars as compared with their pre-ECA performance. This increased earning was intended to make a significant "annual

⁴⁴ Draft Cable to Washington, "Legislative Presentation of OT Policies," 22 January 1951, encl. in Memorandum from Allan Hugh Smith, acting director, Overseas Territories Division, "Overseas Territories in Africa Legislative Presentation," 22 January 1951, RG 469, Special representative in Europe, Office of the General Consul, Subject Files, 1948-53, Box 47 (Suitland).

⁴⁵ George C. McGhee, "United States Interests in Africa," *Department of State Bulletin*, 19 June 1950, 1002. In this respect, Orchard, "ECA and the Dependent Territories," is also worth reading.

contribution to the balance-of-payments positions of the metropolitan countries."⁴⁵

It is worth emphasizing that America itself also had a great need for Africa's raw materials. So great was this need that in January 1951, Truman established an International Materials Policy Commission chaired by William Paley to examine the overall position of the U.S. with regard to the supply of raw materials necessary for its national defense purposes. In June 1952, the commission submitted the first volume of its report, which emphasized that on account of the speed with which they were being utilized by the industrial nations, raw materials were in such high demand and were thus rising so rapidly in price that there existed a threat to "undermine our rising standard of living, impair the dynamic quality of American capitalism, and weaken the economic foundations of national security." To avert this threat, the commission recommended that the U.S. "must principally look for an expansion of its mineral imports" in Canada, Latin America, Africa, the Near East, and South and Southeast Asia.⁴⁶ In this way, the Paley Commission reminded U.S. policymakers of the long-term economic importance of the UDCs to American prosperity. The ECA itself did not disguise the fact that it also devoted "a major share of its effort" in the European colonies to the "procurement of strategic materials for

⁴⁵ "Africa Area Paper, (July 1950?)," Office Files of Gordon Gray as special assistant to the president, Working Papers (General File), Box 8 (HSTL).

⁴⁶ President's Materials Policy Commission, *Resources for Freedom, vol. i: A Report to the President* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), 1, 59-60.

the U.S. stockpile."⁴¹ It explained that "Most contracts are written to provide for repayment of ECA's investment in a portion of the materials being developed."⁴²

In the early 1950s, Africa was the principal source of a number of America's strategic minerals: ninety-seven percent of U.S. columbium ore requirements came from Nigeria and Belgian Congo; eighty-one percent of its palm oil, sixty-eight percent of its cobalt, and fifty-two percent of its industrial diamonds came from Belgian Congo; while twenty-three percent of its manganese ore came from the Gold Coast and Morocco. In addition, Africa provided the U.S. with appreciable quantities of corundum, tantalite, copper, lead, zinc, graphite mica, tin, quartz, platinum, sisal, ivory, cocoa, palm products, tropical hardwoods, as well as cinchona and derivatives. All these were very important supplies since the degree of their substitutability by U.S. domestic production was relatively low.⁴³

The ECA attributed America's strategic interest in raw materials to the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, and the vast defense program which it occasioned, "It was quickly apparent," the ECA observed,

⁴¹ "Objectives and Character of ECA Program in the French Overseas Territories," enclosure in letter from Paul R. Porter, ECA assistant administrator to Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee, 11 July 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland).

⁴² *ECA: Development of Overseas Territories*, 16.

⁴³ ECA Document Brief, "ECA Objectives and Program in French Overseas Territories," 6 September 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland); "Africa Area Paper, (July 1950?)," Office Files of Gordon Gray as special assistant to the president, Working Papers (General File), Box 8 (HSTL).

that if steadily mounting rearmament programs in the United States and Western Europe were to be carried out without precipitating disastrous declines in living standards throughout the free world, it would be necessary to bring about a swift and substantial expansion in the supply of strategic and other basic materials. For many of these primary commodities required in both military and civilian production, the United States, as well as Western Europe, must rely heavily and in some cases almost entirely, upon production in the overseas territories -- chiefly in Africa and the Far East.¹¹

The centrality of raw materials in U.S. operations in Africa was amply reflected in the nature of the projects in which the ECA was involved. Thus ECA funds were used for the procurement of diesel-electric locomotives for the Dakar-Niger line; the Dakar-based *Bureau Minier de la France d'Outre-Mer*, a government corporation engaged in mineral exploration and prospecting, obtained \$8,000 for its laboratories, \$3,000 for a large pickup, and \$26,000 for a pilot mill which was used in ore concentration; *Péchiney*, a French private concern which was working on a phosphate deposit, received ECA compressed air equipment, conveyor, and mechanical shovel worth about \$160,000. In addition, there was a road construction from Douala, a major port of the Cameroons, into the hinterland "tapping the diamond and tin producing areas, among others"; the development of the "iron mine and mineral port" at Conakry, Guinea; the modernization of the Congo-Ocean railroad "which taps French Equatorial Africa and

¹¹ ECA: *Development of Overseas Territories*, 3; ECA Document Brief, "ECA Objectives and Program in French Overseas Territories," 6 September 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland).

¹² ECA, "Report on the Application of ECA Assistance to the Development of French West Africa," 31 December 1949, enclosure in Desp. No. 283 from the ECA France to ECA, Washington, RG 469, Europe: French West Africa 1948-53, Box 2 (Suitland).

the Belgian Congo"; expansion of the port, power, and water supply facilities of Brazzaville, "the key processing and transport center" for French Equatorial Africa; as well as geological mapping and research.¹³ There was the construction of hydroelectric power stations in Leopoldville, Stanleyville and Albertville, all in the Belgian Congo, to "facilitate production and export of palm oil, rubber, as well as other essential raw materials found in the Congo."¹⁴ The ECA explained that it got into these projects because of the realization that "Production cannot be sharply expanded in underdeveloped areas simply by increasing the capital equipment employed for directly productive purposes. Provision must also be made for essential supporting facilities -- railways, roads, and ports for importing equipment and supplies and evacuating the output; power and other utilities at the site of production and at transportation and processing centers; housing and health facilities for workers; etc."¹⁵ From the ECA, France secured equipment for an irrigation and land reclamation project for rice cultivation, involving some 50,000

¹³ "Objectives and Character of ECA Program in the French Overseas Territories," enclosure in letter from Paul R. Porter, ECA assistant administrator to Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee, 11 July 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland).

¹⁴ ECA European Program Division/Division of Statistics and Reports, "ECA Special Report: Development of Overseas Territories...of Marshall Plan Countries," 24 August 1951.

¹⁵ "Objectives and Character of ECA Program in the French Overseas Territories," enclosure in letter from Paul R. Porter, ECA assistant administrator to Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee, 11 July 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland).

acres of land in Markala, on the central Niger River." This too was tied in to increasing raw material production. "During the last war," the ECA explained, "the production of peanuts in French West Africa, which provide a major share of Europe's supply of edible fats, fell to a fraction of normal, for one reason only: When imports of Far Eastern rice to FWA [French West Africa] were largely cut off the peasant producers of peanuts overwhelmingly reverted to growing millet for their own food."

On 24 May 1951, Truman sent a message on foreign aid to Congress, asserting that "The condition of the people in the underdeveloped areas would be a matter of humanitarian concern even if our national security were not involved." Nonetheless, "national security" -- defined in terms of securing raw materials -- was his primary consideration: he stressed that Africa, Asia, and South America "produce strategic materials which are essential to the defense and economic health of the free world. Production of these materials must be increased" as they helped "the whole free world by increasing the supply of raw materials

Orchard, "ECA and the Dependent Territories," 74.

"Objectives and Character of ECA Program in the French Overseas Territories," enclosure in Letter from Paul R. Porter, ECA assistant administrator to Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee, 11 July 1951, RG 469, Overseas Development Subject Files, 1949-53, Box 15 (Suitland). Elsewhere, ECA had stated that "Experience during World War II had shown that the bringing of new labor into an area or the diversion of local labor from production for domestic consumption often tended to create shortages in housing, food, and other basic necessities. If output of materials exported from the territories was to be expanded to any large degree, local food production would have to be increased..." See *ECA: Development of Overseas Territories*, 10.

essential to defense and to an expanding world economy." In the same year, the MSA absorbed both the ECA and Point IV, inheriting their functions, objectives and traditions. As with its predecessors, MSA's programs in Africa were "on a modest scale, supplementing at certain key points the much larger programs financed by the European countries themselves." The programs were specifically designed to serve three purposes: raw materials production and support projects; military support projects, and technical assistance. Technical assistance -- provided in response to requests from the relevant European governments -- consisted principally of providing the services of American experts to help local administrators and technicians; scientific data on special problems; opportunities for advanced training and observation in the U.S. or elsewhere for selected specialists from the territories; and limited equipment and supplies essential to the effective execution of the technical assistance provided."

As with the ECA and Point IV, the MSA continued to define the relevance of the UDCs primarily, if not exclusively, in terms of their role as sources of raw materials: "The overseas territories," it was stated, "are important producers of mineral and other raw materials now required, in increasing volume, for the defense program. Together they constitute the free world's

" 700.5-MSP/5-2951, Memorandum from David M. Clark to Mr Miller, "Foreign Allocations Policy Statement," 29 May 1951 (NA).

" (Author not indicated), "Statement for the Record on the Mutual Security Program in the Dependent Overseas Territories," 17 April 1952, RG 469, special representative in Europe, Office of the Consul General, Subject Files, 1948-53, Box 46 (Suitland).

largest reservoir of untapped natural resources." Again as with the ECA and Point IV, Europe continued to be the MSA's major concern. As the agency put it, "The European metropolitan countries are heavily dependent upon a constant inflow of the raw materials without which their highly industrialized economies cannot function. An expansion in the production and export of basic resources is imperative in order to meet minimum industrial requirements in Europe, to check the inflation of production costs in the rearmament program, to reduce dependence upon American sources, and to earn as well as save dollars." These concerns meant that the MSA mission was primarily focussed on raw material extraction. Thus the agency favored "the development or improvement of transport and port facilities, power installation and other auxiliary services vital to expansion in the production and export of basic materials required in both Europe and the United States."¹¹ Its technical assistance program involved "the surveying of mineral resources; the adoption of technological improvements in mineral production; increased agricultural efficiency to expand available supplies of foods and also as a means of releasing local manpower for other productive work; the improvement of health conditions in Africa, an important obstacle to production increases; the prevention of plant and animal diseases; and the training of local workers."¹² For West Africa in particular, the agency emphasized that transportation, notably roads, was "especially important to open up new mineral areas and

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

enable the product to be evacuated, and to permit more efficient production and exchange of food and other agricultural output."⁴²

Strangers in Paradise

In part, the drive -- by the ECA, Point IV, and the MSA -- for Africa's raw materials reflected America's post-1945 commitment to rebuild Western Europe, especially Britain and France. In turn, this commitment should be seen within the context of the post-World War II asymmetrical partnership in which the U.S. emerged as a hegemon and undertook to defend Western Europe while the latter agreed to follow the U.S. diplomatic lead. It is, however, usually difficult to draw a line between where a hegemonic or collective interest ends and the more limited national one begins as hegemons do not and need not entirely suspend their own self-interest. This difficulty in delimiting the two goals creates room for suspicion of the hegemon's motives by other members of the alliance. It is therefore hardly surprising that in spite of Washington's repeated affirmations of a common goal with them in Africa, the colonial powers were highly suspicious of its motives. In June 1950, the U.S. diplomatic mission in Dakar reported that the "attitude of officials of the French West African Government toward the United States remains one of suspicion and mistrust." The French were reported to have believed that the U.S. intended to push for the early development of self-government and independence in Africa, a development which would have undermined

⁴² (Author not indicated), "Overseas Territories Development Program Budget Presentation Fiscal '54," 4 November 1952, RG 469 N.Euro./Yugo. Division, U.K. Subject Files 1948-57, Box 7 (Suitland).

the French scheme to develop its African colonies as "integral parts of the French Union." As well, the U.S. was suspected of wanting to use the Marshall Plan and the Point IV program as "stalking horses for the economic penetration of Africa." Finally, it was reported that "The strategic concern of the United States with the territory of French West Africa," on account of its geographical location on the Atlantic, was "fully understood by French officials and further buttressed their suspicion that the United States has ulterior motives in any form of relationship with their territories."⁴¹

France was not alone in suspecting that the U.S. meant to supplant it in Africa. After eighteen months in Paris as special advisor on overseas development to the special ECA representative in Europe, John Orchard reported in July 1950 that "it had been a difficult job to break down European suspicions of U.S. intentions in Africa."⁴² Writing to McGhee in May 1950, ECA Assistant Administrator for Program Richard Bissell, Jr. enumerated specific European suspicions: that enamored with thoughts of a "bold new program," the U.S. would "insist upon the launching of far-reaching but impractical schemes in the colonial areas"; "a fear of American economic expansion and influence within the territories which may undercut the authority and influence" of the colonial powers; a suspicion that "unexpressed

⁴¹ Encl. in Desp. 176 from consul general, Dakar to the State Department, 15 June 1950, RG 469, Dependent Areas Branch, Country Files, (France: French West Africa-Madagascar) 1948-52, Box 13 (Suitland).

⁴² 870.00TA/7-1850, Memorandum of Conversation, "Visit of Dr John Orchard, Special Advisor on Overseas Development to the Special Representative, Paris," 18 July 1950 (NA).

strategic aims may be primarily responsible" for U.S. interest in the economic development of Africa; a concern that either directly or through the UN, the U.S. may exert "increasing pressures toward progressive political independence in the colonies at an unrealistic rate"; a fear that the U.S. was "thinking too much in terms of rapid exploitation of African resources for the benefit of Europe and the U.S. without sufficient attention to the needs of basic economic development" in the colonies themselves. And there was the apprehension that America's "private investment, burgeoning in an unrestrained fashion, may create new problems and pressures, upsetting vested interests and existing controls." Bissell urged that the European worries be taken fully into account in policy formulation, emphasizing that "The extent to which these apprehensions are real, and the extent to which they are rationalizations of a desire to handle colonial problems without external influence, is immaterial so long as they stand in the way of effective cooperation between the European powers and the U.S. in accelerating economic development in the African colonial territories."

In April¹⁰ 1950, *The Economist* speculated that the ECA and Point IV were only the harbingers of a more activist U.S. economic presence in Africa. After observing that "The possibility of bigger and better developments in Africa has caught the imagination of the State Department and of ECA officials," *The Economist* cautioned that "The development of

¹⁰ 391.1 LO/5-350, Letter, Richard M. Bissell to Honorable George C. McGhee, 3 May 1950 (NA).

Africa, however, is not as simple as some think." It noted that because of African nationalism and "the lack of food and lack of labor," the Europeans had "to move slowly and cautiously with their plans," adding, "If Africa had been a plum simply needing to be picked to be enjoyed, it would have been picked a long time ago." The editorial insisted that "difficulties in the way of the sort of development which the Americans visualize are immense, and they cannot easily be overcome." It then concluded:

This does not mean to say that American help under Point Four is not needed in Africa; it is as welcome there as it is in Europe. But if quick results are wanted, they will not be achieved in the Colonies. If, on the other hand, the American Administration -- and, what is most doubtful, the private investor -- is prepared to look a long way ahead and to help the European colonial powers to lay the foundations for later developments -- railways, agricultural schemes and power plants -- rather than try at once to tap Africa's hidden wealth, success will be more certain and more lasting.

European discontent was well-founded. As already indicated, Europe's wellbeing was a major motive for the U.S. drive for African raw materials. But it was also clear that Washington had its own distinct agenda on the matter, especially for "strategic" minerals. And it aggressively pursued this agenda, breaching the colonial cordon when necessary. It did so, by for example, inflating the market price in the case of Nigeria's columbium.

* *The Economist*, 1 April 1950, 702.

* Nigeria was then supplying about 95 percent of the world's requirements for columbium, a metal which occurs with tin ore and for which there was a very high world-wide demand. This demand derived from its strategic importance for armament and industrial projects: it was primarily used in the manufacture of gas turbines and jet engine components; it was also extensively used as a carbide stabilizer in stainless steels, in electrodes for welding stainless steels, and in the manufacture of special alloys and chemical equipment. See 845H.2547/7-2252, Desp. from AmEmbassy, London to The Department of State, "Comment by Mining

An article in the 18 July 1952 issue of *The Mining Journal* of London showed that America's needs for the metal were such that the U.S. Defense Materials Procurement Agency (DMPA) had to introduce a new pricing policy for it in May 1952. Under the new prices, producers were to receive 320s. 6d. for ores containing sixty-five percent columbium; and there was, in addition, an incentive bonus of 100 percent on the prices. Before the new pricing policy, the Nigerian producers were receiving approximately 320 shillings per unit "equivalent to 1,040 pounds per ton consisting of 65 units (of ore) to the ton." Besides, rather than being fixed, the price was related to the quality of the ores per ton, and therefore varied depending on whether the ore was high-grade or low-grade. The essence of the DMPA pricing policy, said the article, was to "establish a guaranteed purchase program to encourage the expansion of the production of columbium-tantalum bearing ores and concentrates in countries of the free world."¹¹ There is little doubt that the new prices also put Britain at a disadvantage, thus creating the ground for suspicion.

More worrying to the Europeans must have been the U.S. commitment to achieving an Open Door in Africa. As already indicated, this was expressed on a number of occasions: at the

Journal on DMPA Columbium-Tantalum Guaranteed Purchase Program, "22 July 1952. (The article titled, "New D.M.P.A. Order Stimulates Columbine Production," was attached as an enclosure to the despatch.)

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Lourenco Marques Conference", in McGhee's policy speech in May 1950, and at the May 1950 tripartite foreign ministers' (France, Britain, and the U.S.) meeting in London. On the latter occasion, Washington expressed its belief that an increase in Africa's economic activity, including a greater participation in world trade, would benefit Europe, the U.S. and the African peoples; it therefore pledged to assist Britain and France in their efforts in this regard. But the U.S. was also mindful of its own particular interest and emphasized: "On our part we desire to develop our trade, transportation and investment interests in Africa whenever and wherever possible; to have access to raw materials, air and sea facilities, air routes and communications points; and to have guaranteed rights of equal treatment in Africa for American capital and nationals." To allay their fears that there were any sinister motives, Britain and France were assured that the U.S. desired "the greatest possible mutual cooperation and understanding with the UK and France on African matters."

For Washington there was no contradiction in its commitment to ensure the economic integration of Africa with Europe and at the same time press for an Open Door in Africa for American business interests. A State Department policy statement observed that the "gradual weakening of the economic ties of the European

" See Memorandum, Mr McGhee to the secretary, "Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations Reached at Lourenco Marques Conference," 12 April 1950, Lot 53 D468, Box 9 (NA).

" See Policy Information Committee, Department of State, Weekly Review, 21 June 1950; Policy paper prepared by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, "Future of Africa," 18 April, 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, v (1978), 1524-1538.

powers with their Far Eastern possessions and the need for rehabilitating their domestic economy has led these nations to look to the development of Africa as a means of strengthening their overall economic and strategic position in the world." It was stated that the U.S. "supports this objective through ECA assistance and Point Four aid." But the statement immediately went on to note that "in seeking to attain this objective there is a growing tendency for some European colonial powers to endeavor to monopolize colonial trade to the detriment of U.S. commercial interests." In considering how to eliminate this monopoly and advance U.S. business interests, it recommended that the U.S. should (a) continue to seek the removal or liberalization of such policies and practices of the colonial governments which discriminate against American trade and investment; (b) inform the appropriate European authorities that restrictive economic and financial policies may lead to unfavorable public reaction in the U.S., "and that a more liberal policy would seem advisable if U.S. financial aid is to be continued"; (c) urge the colonial powers to liberalize their investment and exchange control policies in Africa so as to encourage the flow of American investment capital to the region; (d) continue the effort to expand the U.S. market for commodities in which the Africans were actual or potential producers; and (e) continue to take all necessary steps, with the assistance of the ECA, to assure the continued flow of strategic materials from

Africa to the U.S.²² It is worthy of note that practical measures were undertaken in pursuit of the Open Door. For example, as a follow-up to the Lourenco Marques conference, the U.S. had separate discussions with Britain and France in September 1950 to seek ways of eliminating discriminatory trade practices in Africa.²³

In spite of their irritation, Britain and France allowed, even solicited, U.S. economic involvement in their African colonies. In April 1949, the American consulate general in Dakar reported that there were considerable quantities of American agricultural, road making and earth moving machinery (including tractors and trucks) in French West Africa, acquired under the Marshall Plan. It added that a special section, the "Marshall Plan Section," had been created in the Economic Affairs Department of the government general of French West Africa.²⁴ By April 1950, the officials in the African Affairs department of the French Foreign Office were canvassing the view that Soviet penetration into Africa could only be restrained through a coordinated large-scale Western economic and social development program for the region; and they expected the U.S. to be actively

²² Policy statement prepared in the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, "Regional Policy Statement on Africa South of the Sahara," 29 December 1950, *FRUS, 1950, v* (1978), 1587-1597.

²³ See Memorandum of Conversation prepared in the embassy in the United Kingdom, "Economic Questions Concerning Africa," 20 September 1950, *FRUS, 1950, v* (1978), 1554-1568.

²⁴ Airgram from American consulate general to the secretary of state, 23 April 1949, RG 469, Europe: French West Africa 1948-53, Box 2 (Suitland).

involved in such an effort.³⁴ They went to the May 1950 foreign ministers meeting in London, prepared for an extensive discussion of the economic development of Africa and could not conceal their disappointment that the meeting provided no opportunity for such a discussion.³⁵ At the meeting, the French submitted a paper which stressed that for the implementation of their development plans in Africa, "it will be necessary to seek all the available resources of the countries of Western Europe who see therein a means of manifesting solidarity, as well as the United States, who are interested, as in Europe, in African development."³⁶ Even after the meeting, the French did not give up their efforts to involve the U.S. in the economic development of its African colonies. In July 1950, Elmer H. Bourgerie of the State Department Office of African and Near Eastern Affairs had to inform McGhee that "From previous conversations I have had with members of the French Embassy, I gained the impression that the French Government is very much interested in interesting the U.S. Government in making substantial financial commitments in Africa to assist them in carrying out their development plans." But Bourgerie advised that "in view of the present temper of Congress, it would be unwise for us to give the French any encouragement at this time regarding U.S. financial participation

³⁴ 396.1-LO/4-2050, Memorandum of Conversation, "French Plans for the Discussions on Africa at the Foreign Ministers Meeting," 20 April 1950 (NA).

³⁵ 396.1-LO/5-550, Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 5 May 1950 (NA).

³⁶ 740.022/71350, Memorandum from Mr Bourgerie to Mr McGhee, 13 July 1950 (NA).

in such a plan." On several occasions, British officials too went out of their way to invite U.S. assistance for their colonies. As already noted, Britain issued a despatch to its colonial administrations in 1952, emphasizing its interest in creating conditions which would stimulate the flow of U.S. private capital.

Nonetheless, European apprehensions also made them wary of allowing U.S. activities into the colonies. In January 1950, the American consulate general in Dakar notified the State Department that the governor general of French West Africa did not wish to see Point IV programs introduced into his territory. Nor did the federation's director general of Public Health, for the "French are very proud of their development of health research and activities in this territory." Another despatch from Dakar clearly shows that the situation had not changed by 1951.

Ibid.

For example, see 854H.00R/11-350, Despatch from Lagos to Department of State, "Visit of Deputy ECA Administrator Curtin," together with encl., "Record of a Meeting Held in Government House, Lagos, on the 1st of November, 1950," 3 November 1950 (NA); Memorandum, "UK Interest in Loans for Colonial Development," 20 September 1951; RG 469, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 7; Despatch from AmConsul, Lagos to Department of State, "Point Four Trainee Program for Nigeria," 24 April 1951; RG 469, Europe: Dependent Areas Branch, 1948-52, Box 24 (both at Suitland).

Airgram from ECA special representative in Europe, Paris to Paris, Brussels, Lisbon, Hague, Rome, 29 August 1952, RG 469, special representative in Europe, Office of the Consul General, Subject Files, 1948-53, Box 46 (Suitland).

851T.00T.A./1-2150, Despatch from Dakar to the Department of State, 21 January 1950 (NA).

851T.00-TA/8-2951, Despatch from AmCongen, Dakar to the Department of State, 29 August 1951 (NA).

British officials also engaged the U.S. in a hide-and-seek game. In February 1950, R.E. Vidal, the Gold Coast acting secretary of Commerce, told Hyman Bloom, the U.S. consul in Accra, that he knew of no private or official projects in the territory which would require any form of ECA assistance.¹² A year later, the ECA complained that "The offer of American aid for the DOT's is not received with enthusiasm by the British. Americans who have not had comparable experience with dependent peoples are felt to be too rash in their undertakings....There is also some fear of increased competition from American exports."

This lack of enthusiasm may explain why the framework for the injection of U.S. "aid" programs seemed somewhat chaotic in British colonies. The chaos may well have been a ploy by the British to hedge their colonies against excessive U.S. penetration. In April 1951, Nigeria's Acting Principal Assistant Secretary C.W. Michie complained that while his office was "constantly preparing reports, submitting projects, and carrying on discussions" with the ECA, he had very little to show for his efforts. He attributed this to "inadequate coordination of activity between the Nigerian Government and the Colonial Office" in respect of ECA programs, so that ECA officials in London did

¹² 845K.25A/2-250, Telegram from Accra to the Department of State, 2 February 1950 (NA).

¹³ ECA, "British Colonial Development Policy and the Role of the United States in the DOT's," Confidential Document Brief, 27 February 1951.

not get the "complete and exact information concerning the Nigerian side of the picture."⁴

The primary documents reveal that the French also put up subtle but effective barriers to limit U.S. economic presence in their colonies. By 1950, they would not even let in U.S. capital equipment: a decree issued in December 1949 prohibited the importation into French West Africa of some equipment and materials which could be produced in France. According to the interpretation of the U.S. consulate general in Dakar, the decree was aimed at excluding the entry of American products as part of the ECA program.⁵ There were also instances of the French refusing to grant licenses for the importation of American products into West Africa, even where no French dollar foreign exchange was involved, as the importers intended to utilize their own dollars in the U.S.⁶ American technicians (and perhaps, other personnel as well) suffered the same restriction. The excuse, as put by Gabriel van Laethem, the second secretary, French embassy in Washington, was that the French thought there were several problems connected with sending technicians to Africa. In his words, "In French Africa there are already many

⁴ Despatch from AmCongen, Lagos to the Department of State, "Attitude of Nigerian Officials Towards ECA," 13 April 1951, RG 469, Europe: Dependent Areas Branch, 1948-52, Box 24 (Suitland).

⁵ 851T.00R/1-2050, Despatch from Dakar to the Department of State, 20 January 1950; 851T.00R/1-2850, Despatch from Dakar to the Department of State, 28 January 1950 (both at NA).

⁶ Despatch from AmCongen, Dakar to the Department of State, "French Refusal to Grant Licenses for the Importation of American Products into FWA," 31 December 1952, File 510-511, Dakar consulate general Records, 1950-55, Box 9 (Suitland).

French technicians. To have an influx of American or other technicians might create an unsatisfactory atmosphere."

American private capital fared no better as the French were not favorably disposed towards "foreign" (and especially U.S.) private capital. In the early 1950s, the governments of French West and Equatorial Africa assisted the *Compagnie Française de Distribution des Pétroles en Afrique* (CFDPA) to establish a more favorable marketing position in the areas under their jurisdiction, at the expense of the more established American companies such as the Texas Company. The measures the governments adopted included: (a) impeding plans by the American companies to expand their bulk storage terminals, (b) pressure on local chambers of commerce to allocate to CFDPA import quota percentages in excess of its capacity; (c) permitting CFDPA to import quantities in excess of those estimated and licensed by the government; (d) increasing the estimate of annual colony consumption and allocating the surplus to CFDPA; (e) waiving official storage regulations to permit CFDPA to store excess imports in the open; such dumps could later be declared public hazards, but at that point, the government purchased the stocks from the company."

770.00/5-250, Memorandum of Conversation, "Future of Africa," 1-2 May 1950 (NA).

851T.2553/2-2550, Desp. from Dakar to the Department of State, "Efforts of French West African Government to Replace American Petroleum Companies in the Petroleum Trade in French West Africa by the *Compagnie Française de Distribution de Petrol d'Afrique*," 25 February 1950; 851T.2553/6-2350, Desp. from Dakar to the Department of State, "Efforts of French West African Government to Replace American Petroleum Companies in the Petroleum Trade in French West Africa by *Française de Distribution de Petrol d'Afrique*," 24 June 1950 (all at NA).

The French administrative intervention in the oil business worried the American consulate general in Dakar since "The commercial operations of the American petroleum companies constitute the largest and most active single element in the trade relations of the United States and these territories." The State Department resented France's discriminatory practices and cartel arrangements, stressing that it would only tolerate practices "confined to accepted competitive devices." The U.S. embassy in Paris was therefore asked to strongly protest the French regulation of the oil market. The department later involved itself in the negotiations with the French, on behalf of the American oil companies. It does not appear that the French were moved by the department's protests and pressures.

It is important to put the French regulation of the oil market in its wider context. Daniel Yergin says that in the 1950s, the West considered Africa to be the "new frontier" in world oil production and that France took a lead in exploring it.

851T.2553/2-2550, Desp. from Dakar to the Department of State, "Efforts of French West African Government to Replace American Petroleum Companies in the Petroleum Trade in French West Africa by the *Compagnie Française de Distribution de Petrol d'Afrique*," 25 February 1950 (NA).

851T.2553/1-1050, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Paris, 10 January 1950 (NA).

851T.2553/10-550, Telegram from Paris to the secretary of state, 5 October, 1950; 870.2553/9-2050, Memorandum of Conversation, "African Petroleum Terminals' Difficulties in Obtaining Approval of French Government to Proceed with Construction of Petroleum Storage and Distribution Facilities at Douala and Conakry," 20 September 1950; 870.2553/10-2050, Memorandum of Conversation, "Latest Developments in APT's Efforts in Paris to Negotiate a Satisfactory Arrangement for Construction and Operation of an Oil Terminal at Douala," 20 October 1950 (all at NA).

According to Yergin, France believed that it had to have its own petroleum supplies if it was to remain a great power; to this end, de Gaulle ordered a maximum effort to develop oil sources within the French Empire.⁷² In this setting, France must have been quite disposed to squeeze all foreign competitors out of its (colonial) market.

Overall, care must be taken not to exaggerate the degree of British and French resentment over Washington's intentions and presence in Africa. The disagreements were not deep-seated enough to disarticulate the content and form of their approaches towards Africa. The U.S. certainly desired an Open Door in Africa, but it does not seem to have pushed hard for it. The effort was half-hearted, not so much because Britain and France locked the U.S. out as that the latter was more interested in Europe's economic recovery via African products and markets. This commitment induced Washington to tolerate trade and investment restrictions by the European countries, not just in Africa, but as a matter of general policy. In other words, there is a clear indication

⁷² Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (Simon & Schuster, 1992), 525.

⁷³ For example, because of its balance of payments crisis, Britain abandoned sterling convertibility on 20 August 1947, after only five weeks of having it in place. Thereafter, it rebuilt the sterling area as a discriminatory currency area. In June 1949, Acheson affirmed that section 9 of the Anglo-American Financial Agreement which disallowed discriminatory import controls by Britain was no longer applicable. See Alan P. Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship, 1940-1987* (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 104, 120; Scott Newton, "Britain, the Sterling Area and European Integration, 1945-50," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xiii, 3 (May 1985), C.C.S. Newton, "The Sterling Crisis of 1947 and the British Response to the Marshall Plan," *The Economic History Review*, 2nd series, xxxviii, 3 (August 1984).

that the U.S. could retreat from the doctrinaire laissez-faire international economic regime which it advocated when it was considered inconvenient, either for its key partners or for itself. In the case of Africa, America's paramount objective was not so much to achieve an Open Door as to help the Europeans to exploit African resources -- with the intention of rebuilding Europe and simultaneously expanding the U.S. raw materials supply base. This symbiosis created more grounds for cooperation and amity than conflict.

ENTENTE CORDIALE ON COLONIALISM

As demonstrated in chapter 2, public goods theorists project hegemony as the authors and guardians of international free market practices. But Immanuel Wallerstein has broadened the analytical framework, arguing that hegemony "extends this liberalism to a generalized endorsement of liberal parliamentary institutions (and a concurrent distaste for political change by violent means), political restraints on the arbitrariness of bureaucratic power, and civil liberties (and a concurrent open door to political exiles)."⁷⁴ This analysis can be stretched to say that a hegemon -- even one solely interested in a liberal world economic system -- would have every incentive to support the termination of colonialism, which essentially distorts the free flow of capital. There is thus no disjunction between the promotion of free international trade and independence for

⁷⁴ Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World-Economy*, 41.

colonies by a hegemon.¹⁰ But as Wallerstein also recognized, this does not imply that "there is ever any moment when a hegemonic power is omnipotent and capable of doing anything it wants."¹¹ Again, as shown in chapter 2, Washington was well aware of this structural limitation of hegemonic power; and in turn, this awareness induced it to rely on the European powers as stabilizing agents. This necessarily put a definite limit on the extent Washington could press them on the colonial question.

In general, the Truman administration regarded U.S. "national security" interests as an integral part of its policy on the colonial question. It was thus explained at the time that "In the formulation of United States policy on colonial questions considerations relating to the security of the United States and to general international security are clearly of great importance." Those interests were broadly conceived to include "such remote elements" as an adequate landing strip "on an obscure Pacific atoll or a friendly administration in a little known territory of Central Africa." It was therefore believed that "In most dependent areas of the world the security interests of the United States at the present time will best be served by a policy of support for the Western Colonial Powers."¹² This expansive "national security" factor was given great urgency and

¹⁰ See Jeffrey A. Frieden, "The Economics of Intervention: American Overseas Investments and Relations with Underdeveloped Areas, 1890-1950," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31, 1 (January 1989).

¹¹ Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World-Economy*, 39.

¹² "United States Policy Toward Dependent Territories," 26 April 1950, *FRUS 1952-1954*, iii (1979), 1078-1079.

concreteness by the Cold War. At the San Francisco conference in October 1945, China and the Soviet Union proposed "independence" as an objective of the UN trusteeship system. But the U.S. joined Britain and France to favor "progressive development toward self-government." The U.S. preference was conditioned by the emerging Cold War entanglements. Thus Isaiah Bowman, who was on the U.S. delegation to the conference, wondered: "When perhaps the inevitable struggle came between Russia and ourselves the question would be who are our friends. Would we have as friends those we had weakened in the struggle....Would we have the support of Great Britain if we had undermined her position?"¹ In this context, many in Washington agreed with the CIA that independence was "no longer a purely domestic issue between the European colonial powers and their dependencies." It was related to the complications in U.S.-Soviet diplomacy. Independence worried Washington for "In contrast to the ever closer integration of the Satellites into the Soviet system, there is an increasing fragmentation of the non-Soviet world."² There was also the fear that independence may result in a "situation of weakness" which creates an opening for Soviet penetration.³ By 1948, American anticolonialism had so mellowed that Britain's

¹ Minutes of the forty-fifth meeting of the United States delegation held at San Francisco, Friday, May 18, 1945, 9 a.m., *FRUS*, 1945, i (1967), esp. pp. 792-793, 795.

² CIA, "The Break-up of the Colonial Empires and its Implications for US Security," 3 September 1948, HSTP, PSF, Intelligence File, Box 255 (HSTL).

³ Ridgway B. Knight, "Preliminary Thoughts on the Subject of a U.S. Policy Towards Colonial Areas and Colonial Powers," 21 April 1952, *FRUS* 1952-1954, iii (1979), 1106-1107.

Secretary of State Arthur Creech Jones believed that "the United States have largely come round to our point of view...[and] are at present too much preoccupied with communism to spare much time for 'British imperialism.'" Two years later, the British ambassador in Washington confirmed that "Anti-colonialism in the United States today is a traditional attitude rather than an active crusading force....the broad masses of the American people, including the liberals, are convinced that the supreme danger confronting their civilization is not old-fashioned colonialism but modern communism. They therefore regard the democracies of Western Europe, among whom the chief colonial powers are numbered, as their natural and indispensable allies." There is thus much evidence that America's anticolonialism was shackled by the Cold War. This is not to say that the U.S. endorsed or followed the colonial powers all the way; instead, it does explain why "Under President Truman anti-colonialism was," as John Hargreaves has put it, "more muted than under Roosevelt."

For Africa, the matter was further complicated by a number of additional factors. When he spoke at Oklahoma City on 8 May

¹¹ CAB 129\24, Memorandum by colonial secretary, Cabinet Papers, 36, 30 June 1948 (PRO, London).

¹² CO 537/7136, Confidential Despatch from HM ambassador in Washington (Oliver Franks) to the secretary of state for foreign affairs, 14 January 1950 (PRO, London).

¹³ Also see Bills, *Empire and Cold War*; Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 567; Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985); Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, chap. 10.

¹⁴ Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa*, 92.

1950, McGhee pointed out that "By virtue of the European Recovery Program and the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, the Western European powers, which are also the leading metropolitan powers in Africa, have a closer and more intimate relation with us than at any other time in history. This is a reciprocal relation for defense and for economic recovery which none of these powers wishes to disturb."¹¹ Thus as Melvyn Leffler found, the U.S. believed that to be strong and prosperous, Europe needed access to Africa's markets, raw materials and foodstuffs. In the circumstance, "There were serious thoughts [in Washington] about integrating Africa and Europe."¹²

Part of the earlier discussion here revealed that the Europeans were highly suspicious of U.S. designs in Africa. It is thus instructive that in his speech in Oklahoma City, McGhee admitted that U.S. policy toward Africa was affected in an important way by the European response towards U.S. involvement in Africa, a response which was "at the same time friendly, critical, and suspicious." In particular, he drew attention to European fears "of what they regard as an apparent American tendency to give indiscriminate and uncritical support to movements towards self-government or independence without adequate consideration of the experience and resources of the peoples concerned." The Europeans, he continued, were also

¹¹ George C. McGhee, "United States Interests in Africa," *Department of State Bulletin*, 19 June 1950, 1001.

¹² Melvyn P. Leffler, "The United States and the Strategic Dimension of the Marshall Plan," *Diplomatic History*, 12, 3 (Summer 1988). The quotation is from p. 302.

fearful lest too much encouragement to peoples who are politically immature and whose economies are still primitive, will result in political and economic chaos. Such a development, they believe, would be of grave disservice to the peoples for whose welfare they are responsible and would give rise to a situation which would play directly into the hand of the Communists. The European powers are convinced that the rate of political advancement for their dependent peoples must be carefully geared to the tempo of progress in economic, social, and educational institutions. They feel that they understand the situation better than we, and they are, in many cases, proud of the progress which has been made.

This concern for European sensitivities accounted for much in the actual policy-making process. Time and again, the U.S. felt the need to reassure the Europeans that its design was only that Africa should serve to strengthen their economy, and that its "activities, `economic and informational'" would therefore not be "directed toward undermining" their "position overseas".

Finally, there was the "Acheson factor." Acheson is said to have been generally "antipathetic and condescending to the European colonies struggling to become independent states." In 1952, he strongly resisted entreaties by Senator Francis Green

George C. McGhee, "United States Interests in Africa," *Department of State Bulletin*, 19 June 1950, 1001.

For example, see Summary Record of Colonial Policy Talks with the United Kingdom, 5 July 1950. File 350, Accra consulate, Classified General Records, 1950-52, Box 5 (Suitland); Summary Record of Colonial Policy Talks with the French, 11 July 1950. Lot 53 D246, Records of the French Desk, 1941-51, Box 1; also 350/8-1450, encl. in Memorandum, State Department to the American consular officer in charge, Dakar, French West Africa, 11 August 1950; 851T.00-TA/9-2550, Memorandum of Conversation, "General Review of Problems in French Africa below the Sahara," 25 September 1950 (all at NA).

For example, see 396.1-LO/5-350, Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 3 May 1950; 396.1-LO/4-2950, Telegram, London to the secretary of state, 29 April 1950 (all at NA).

Douglas Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-71* (New Haven and London; Yale University Press, 1992), 303.

that "the sympathy of the American people for those who were trying to get self-government should be broadcast even if all we can do is to put this sympathy into words." Acheson would not relent even when the senator suggested that "some words or phrases should be inserted in the appropriation bills" instead.¹¹ As late as 1964, Acheson wrote that "anticolonialism is not a policy. It is merely an attitude of mind and not a very sensible one at that."¹² Lucius Battle, his former special assistant, recalls that as secretary of state, Acheson "considered the core relationship that the United States had in the world was with Europe....This point of view assumed the preservation, as much as possible, of the status quo of the various empires or near-empires that existed at the time."¹³ Until his death in October 1971, Acheson was never converted to the idea of black African self-determination, whether in the Portuguese territories, or in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), or in South Africa.¹⁴

¹¹ "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation," 25 March 1952. Papers of Dean Acheson, Box 67 (HSTL).

¹² Dean Acheson, "The Foreign Policy of the United States," *Arkansas Law Review and Bar Association*, 4 June 1964, 232.

¹³ Letter from Lucius Battle to Helen Kitchen, 19 January 1988, quoted in Helen Kitchen, "Still on Safari in Africa," in L. Carl Brown (ed), *Centerstage: American Diplomacy Since World War II* (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1990), 177.

¹⁴ See his criticism of U.S. opposition to the Anglo-French Suez operation of 1956 and of John F. Kennedy's speech on Algeria in Acheson, *Power and Diplomacy*, 110-126. In 1969, he appeared before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs to oppose economic sanctions against Rhodesia and support Portuguese colonial and South African racist policies. See Dean Acheson, *Grapes From Thorns* (New York; W.W. Norton, 1972), 177-182. Also, Dean Acheson, "U.S. Involvement in South West Africa," *The Washington Post*, 2 January 1971; idem, "Fifty Years After," *The Yale Review*, li, 1 (October 1961). Also, Douglas Brinkley and G.E Thomas, "Dean Acheson's Opposition to African Liberation," *TransAfrican*

These factors -- U.S. security needs, the Cold War, Africa's relevance to Europe's economic stability, the need to constantly reassure the Europeans that there was no intention to harm their positions in Africa, the Acheson factor, and what Kolko calls the "implicit racist disdain American officials had for Africans"¹³ -- combined to ensure a diplomatic and political entente cordiale between the U.S. and Africa's colonial powers during the Truman presidency. Thus in respect of French West and Equatorial Africa, the stated U.S. "primary objective" was to keep them under "friendly and effective administration," and this meant the recognition of the "legitimacy and desirability of French political control." As a consequence, Washington approved what it called "the liberal measures of the Constitution of 1946" and committed itself to the "orderly development of democracy in both territories within the structure of the French Union."¹⁴ At the July 1950 Anglo-American colonial policy talks, U.S. Assistant Secretary for UN Affairs John Hickerson assured the British that the U.S. "was not out to break up the [British] Empire. We consider it as a great force for stability."¹⁵ Using exactly the same words, he gave a similar assurance to the French at the Franco-American colonial policy talks which followed a few days

Forum, 5, 4 (Summer 1988); Brinkley, *Dean Acheson, The Cold War Years*, 43-46, chap. 10.

¹³ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 112.

¹⁴ Policy paper prepared by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, "Future of Africa," 18 April 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, v (1978), 1528.

¹⁵ Summary Record of Colonial Policy Talks with the United Kingdom, 5 July 1950, File 350, Accra consulate, Classified General Records, 1950-52, Box 5 (Suitland).

later. This time, McGhee pointed out the inconsistency "if the United States followed a policy of encouraging European unity and at the same time fragmentation in Africa. We desire political stability in Africa and we realize that this condition would be achieved only if the economic resources of Africa could be developed for the mutual benefit of the metropolitan countries and the colonial peoples."

The preoccupation with establishing a common front with the Europeans over Africa was indeed the more dominant theme of the Truman presidency. At Northwestern University on 27 June 1951, McGhee spoke on "Africa's role in the free world," which meant the U.S., Western Europe and their colonies. McGhee was particularly upbeat about the cooperative nature of the economic projects of the colonial powers and the U.S. in Africa, emphasizing that "maximum results will be obtained only by combining the African peoples' traditional and intuitive knowledge of their country (sic) with the European and American heritage of scientific and industrial advance." The main focus of the address was on how the U.S. was concerting with the Europeans to check the "Communist" threat to Africa. McGhee demonstrated how European colonialism was serving as a bulwark against this threat. He acknowledged that European colonial rule had ensured Africa's automatic orientation towards the West:

" Summary Records of Colonial Policy Talks with the French, 11 July 1950, Lot 53 D246, Records of the French Desk, 1941-51, Box 1; also 350/8-1450, encl. in Memorandum, State Department to the American consular officer in charge, Dakar, French West Africa, 11 August 1950 (all at NA).

" George C. McGhee, "Africa's Role in the Free World Today," *Department of State Bulletin*, 16 July 1951, 97-101.

"Since three-fourths of the Continent's inhabitants are under European control, and the sovereign countries of Africa are allied both economically and politically with Europe and the United States, Africa is firmly associated with the free world." He indicated that Africa's value for the West lay in its strategic importance to the Europeans. "The Europeans," McGhee emphasized, "regard their African territories as essential to their economic wellbeing, their military security, and their political position in the world community. Since the Second World War, Africa's importance to them has been greatly enhanced." Given that Africa's linkage with the West, and thus insurance against "Communism," derived from the colonial relationship and given that Africa was so important to Europe, McGhee's logic implied that the U.S. should not be expected to support the anticolonial crusade. It is therefore not surprising that he was impressed by the European colonial record, pointing out that since 1945, "countries containing 550 millions of people have become independent...and others are moving forward toward independence." But afraid that independence would undermine European influence in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and thus open up the areas to "Communist" expansion, the assistant secretary hinted that the U.S. did not welcome the new political configuration in the colonies. He therefore found it imperative to caution that "Immediate independence is, however, not a cure for all colonial problems." The U.S., he added, "has always maintained that premature independence for primitive, uneducated peoples can do them more harm than good and subject them to an exploitation by indigenous leaders, unrestrained by the civil

standards that come with widespread education, that can be just as ruthless as that of aliens. Also, giving full independence to peoples unprepared to meet aggression or subversion can endanger not only the people themselves but the security of the free world."

In Washington's estimation, Africa fell into the category of "primitive, uneducated peoples" for whom "premature independence" would have been an ill-wind. At the May 1950 tripartite foreign ministers' (France, Britain, U.S.) meeting in London, the U.S. began from the premise that it was in the common interest of the Western powers to have short and long range conditions of political, economic and social stability sufficient for Africa to resist domination by unfriendly movements or powers either through aggression or subversion. From this premise, the U.S. favored the advancement of social, political, economic and educational conditions in Africa and also believed in the "advancement of the economic and, where suitable, the strategic advantages to France and the UK of their colonies and trust territories and favors the strengthening of the relationship between the metropolitan powers and the colonial territories so long as the people therein desire such development." As a sequel to strengthening the colonial relationship, the U.S. now excluded Africa from its belief in the "progressive development of all dependent people towards self-government and where conditions are suitable towards independence." The excuse was that "the peoples of 'Black Africa' have not yet achieved full understanding of

Ibid.

modern political, social and economic institutions."

Consequently, Washington proposed a paternalistic mission for the colonial powers: "we believe that there must be an orderly, guided development of these people towards political maturity which only time and patience can provide."¹⁰¹

The "Ewe Question"

There are clear indications from the foregoing that the U.S., Britain, and France had various bilateral and tripartite institutional platforms to harmonize political and diplomatic policy on Africa. The more obvious of such platform were the annual colonial policy talks and the foreign ministers' meetings. For example, at their May 1950 foreign ministers' meeting, it was agreed that consultation between the three countries on colonial territories "with a view to concerting their positions" should precede UN meetings.¹⁰² One issue which evidenced a lot of such consultation and cooperation was the "Ewe question," which the State Department described in June 1951 as "among the controversial issues facing U.S. in Trusteeship Council and General Assembly."¹⁰³

By 1946, the Ewe were estimated to number 800,000. But they were splintered by three state boundaries -- the Gold Coast, and the two UN trust -- originally, League of Nations mandated --

¹⁰¹ See Policy Information Committee, Department of State, Weekly Review, 21 June 1950; Policy paper prepared by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, "Future of Africa," 18 April 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, v (1978), 1524-1538.

¹⁰² See Policy Information Committee, Department of State, Weekly Review, 21 June 1950.

¹⁰³ 745 K.00/6-2151, Telegram from the Department of State to AmConsul, Accra, 20 June 1951 (NA).

territories of Togo (British Togoland under French Togoland). As early as September 1919, the Ewe were petitioning the British Colonial Office. Later, they laid their case before Warren Harding (U.S. president, 1921-23), and the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. Their petitions complained of the difficulties arising from their fractionalization -- especially, the separation of people of the same lineage from one another and villages from farms. Those petitions yielded no results. But the Ewe did not give up. Their petition was among the earliest to be brought to the attention of the Trusteeship Council (TC) during its first session. Dated 2 April 1947, the petition which came from the All-Ewe Conference, notified the TC that "We deplore and protest against the partition of Eweland. Request unification of Eweland under single administration to be chosen by people themselves by plebiscite."¹¹⁴ Seven Ewe petitions were examined by the Council at its second session, two during the third session, one at the fourth and fifth sessions. More than 100 Ewe petitions, presented to the UN Visiting Mission which went to Togo in November/December 1949, were considered during the TC seventh session in 1950. By then, the "Ewe question" had assumed a dominant and enduring presence on the TC agenda. Thus of "the over 188 petitions" before the TC by mid-1950, 105 related to the Ewe question.¹¹⁵ Like the earlier ones,

¹¹⁴ See UN Trusteeship Council, *Official Records (TCOR)*, First Year, 1st sess. (Supplement) (1947), 151.

¹¹⁵ Policy Information Committee, Department of State, *Weekly Review*, 7 June 1950.

the petitions called for the unification of all Ewe under one administration.¹⁰

Before the second session of the TC convened, the All-Ewe Conference -- an organization formed in June 1946 to crystallize Ewe opinion -- petitioned for the opportunity to send representatives to submit their written petition with an oral statement in accordance with Rule 80 of the Council's Rules of Proceedings. This request, which had no precedent, was extensively discussed and approved after the TC opened its second session on 20 November 1947. Meanwhile, in a joint memorandum dated 17 November 1947, Britain and France presented their views on the Ewe petitions to the TC. They acknowledged that "there are disabilities arising from the present system, and that the Ewes have certain legitimate grievances." But while willing to attend to the grievances, the two administering authorities opposed Ewe unification, as "such a territorial unit based on tribal (sic) unity could not, under any circumstances, possess a national character in the modern sense of the word." The gist of their remedial proposals was to instruct local governments to remove any obstacles to the movement of persons and goods across the

¹⁰ For details on the Ewe "question," see D.E.K. Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1989); Benjamin Gerig and Vernon MacKay, "The Ewe Problem: A Case Study in the Operation of the Trusteeship Council," *Department of State Bulletin*, 22 January 1951, 128-137; John Kent, "The Ewe Question, 1945-56: French and British Reactions to Nationalism in West Africa," in Michael Twaddle (ed), *Imperialism, The State and the Third World* (London and New York: British Academic Press, 1992); Emil J. Sady, *The United Nations and Dependent Peoples* (Washington, DC.: The Brookings Institution, 1956), esp. pp. 155-160; Claude E. Welch, Jr., *Dream of Unity: Pan Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), chaps. ii-iii.

frontiers, to harmonize tax rates in the two territories and ensure that individuals were not subjected to double taxation, and to introduce the teaching of French language in the schools in British Togo and the teaching of English in the schools in French Togo. To coordinate and "give necessary impetus" to these proposals, a standing consultative commission for Togoland Affairs was to be established. Jointly chaired by the governor of the Gold Coast and the *commissaire de la République* of French Togoland, the commission consisted of two representatives of the inhabitants of each of the trust territories.¹⁰⁰

On 8 December 1947, Sylvanus Olympio, representing the All-Ewe Conference, appeared before the TC for the first time to present the Ewe case. He recited the problems the people had to contend with as a result of the arbitrary partitioning of their territory and stressed that their case was simply the request of an ethnic group "to be allowed to live together under one roof, and one government, so that they could achieve peace and prosperity." He therefore dismissed the reforms proposed by Britain and France as "hopelessly inadequate" to solve the problems involved.¹⁰¹ Three days of discussions at the TC followed, with Olympio in attendance. In the course of discussions, the U.S. representative obtained from the French the clarification that the reform proposals could be regarded as a transitional step towards unification. This paved the way for the Council to adopt a resolution. In its preamble, the resolution

¹⁰⁰ Gerig and MacKay, "The Ewe Problem: A Case Study in the Operation of the Trusteeship Council," 130.

¹⁰¹ TCOR, II (First Part), 8 December 1947, 321-336.

conceded that the All-Ewe Conference represented the wishes of the majority of the Ewe and that the political boundaries caused many difficulties and much resentment. It also noted that the representative of the All-Ewe Conference was dissatisfied with the remedial measures proposed by the administering authorities. But the resolution itself welcomed the measures as an earnest and constructive initial effort and recommended that the administering authorities should take steps to ameliorate the circumstances against which the Ewe complained.¹⁰⁰

The Joint Anglo-French Consultative Commission was duly set up. It first met on 26-27 May 1948, with the pro-unification Ewe leaders participating: Olympio and Emphraim Amu (secretary general of the All-Ewe Conference) were among its members. But because it was, by definition, an inadequate forum to press Ewe unification, the commission could not assuage the worries of the pro-unification forces.¹⁰¹ Nor was its legitimacy helped by the TC Visiting Mission of 1949, which reported that the joint effort of the administering authorities was a step in the right direction but an inadequate one. Perhaps, more importantly, the mission found that the pro-unification movement was assuming "the character of a popular nationalistic movement."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Trusteeship Council Resolution 14 (II), 15 December 1947.

¹⁰¹ Welch, Jr., *Dream of Unity*, 78-79.

¹⁰² TC, *Special Report of First Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and Togoland under French Administration on the Ewe Problem*, Doc. T/463, 17 February 1950, 34.

Before the TC again on 20 March 1950, Olympio stated that the demand for unification was primarily political and could not be solved through piecemeal economic palliatives. He held that the commission was "utterly inadequate," and called for a body with full powers to deal with all the dimensions of the problem. In addition, he proposed the unification of the Ewe under a five year plan, with self-government at the end of the period.¹¹¹

From the onset, Britain and France solicited U.S. support for any proposals they might put before the TC as a response to Ewe petitions.¹¹² They were thus able to harmonize their position with the U.S. The administering authorities were actually opposed to any change in the political status or boundaries of the territories. Britain which administered its Togo trust territory as part of the Gold Coast was not attracted by the prospect of all Ewe unification as that would have involved a reduction in the geographical spread of its overall Gold Coast territory. D.K. Amenumey has offered two explanations for the French hostility to the Ewe unification movement. First, the Ewe showed an open preference for British administration. As a result, France tended to see "the whole business of Ewe unification as a ruse to snatch her trust territory for Britain." Besides, the implications of the Ewe demand went against the grain of French colonial policy and aims. As Amenumey pointed out, "Even though France had placed

¹¹¹ TCOR, vi, 20 March 1950, 498-500.

¹¹² Memorandum of Conversation, "Petition Received by the Trusteeship Council from Ewe Tribesmen (sic) in Togoland," 13 October 1947; Memorandum of Conversation, "The Ewe Petitioners to the Trusteeship Council," 3 November, 1947, both in Lot 53 D246, Records of the French Desk, 1941-51, Box 1; 350/6-950, Memorandum, Department of State, 19 June 1950 (all at NA).

her mandated territories under the trusteeship system in 1946 and signed trusteeship agreements by which she undertook to promote the progressive development of her trust territories to self-government and independence, she still intended quite clearly to keep the territories of Togo and Cameroun firmly within the French Union."¹¹⁴

But as the Ewe issue was on the international agenda, both Britain and France also recognized that they had to occasionally yield ground to head off TC pressure for more radical adjustments. Following the observations of the 1949 Visiting Mission and obviously influenced by the impact of Olympio's appearances before the TC, Britain and France jointly proposed to enlarge the competence and composition of the Joint Commission. The commission was now to have seventeen representatives from British Togoland and twenty-two from French Togoland, all elected by the inhabitants of the respective territories. And it was now to be charged with submitting to the two governments its views as to the practical means of satisfying the wishes of the inhabitants of all parts of the trust territories, "within the framework of British and French administration."¹¹⁵ An *aide mémoire* outlining this proposal was submitted to the U.S. by

¹¹⁴ D.E.K. Amenumey, "The General Elections in the 'Autonomous Republic of Togo,' April 1958," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, xvi, 1 (June 1975), 48-49.

¹¹⁵ UN Doc. T/702, *Joint Observations to the Government of France and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the Special Report of the Visiting Mission Concerning the Ewe Problem*, 19 June 1950.

France in May 1950.¹⁰⁰ (It is safe to assume that a similar submission was made to Washington by London). A month later, Washington informed London and Paris that it supported their proposal to enlarge the scope of the commission.¹⁰¹ The proposal was adopted by the TC.

However, appearing again before the TC on 5 July 1950, Olympio announced that the All-Ewe Conference was not going to participate in the enlarged commission since it was convinced that its terms of reference precluded it from dealing with the question of unification. But this position was complicated by alternative Ewe proposals at the same TC session. There was never a common Ewe position on the unification issue. The Ewe in British Togoland, for example, favored a unification of the two Togo trust territories, without the inclusion of the Ewe of the Gold Coast.¹⁰² This and other viewpoints which contradicted the pro-unification elements were vigorously canvassed at the TC. S.G. Asare and F.Y. Antor, on behalf of the Togoland Union, the Natural Rulers of Western Togoland, and the Togoland Farmers Association made a case for the unification of the two Togolands rather than the Ewe. Pedro Olympio, cousin of Sylvanus, appeared for the Togoland Progress Party and canvassed for the territorial integrity of Togoland under French administration. Pedro proposed that the Ewe should cooperate with the French administration so

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, "French Ambassador's Visit to Mr McGhee," 25 May 1950, Lot 53 D468, 1945-1953, Box 9 (NA).

¹⁰¹ 350/6-850, Telegram from the Department of State to USUN, New York, 19 June 1950 (NA).

¹⁰² Amenumey, "The General Elections in the 'Autonomous Republic of Togo,' April 1958," 48.

that the Togolese could gradually take over the responsibility of the territory. D. Ayeva, representing the chiefs and people of Northern Togoland, was in agreement with Pedro Olympio, opposed the unification of the two Togolands and condemned the Ewe movement as subversive.³³³

In the ensuing TC discussion, there was considerable opposition to the new Anglo-French proposal. Following this, Britain and France decided to clarify the section referring to a solution "within the framework of the British and French administration" by adding to it the phrase "and not precluding the unification of any parts of the two trust territories." The U.S. representative held that the consultative commission was, on this account, authorized to make recommendations regarding the unification of the Ewe people and that such unification could take place either under British, French, or Anglo-French administration. As it turned out, the so-called clarification and interpretation were more of a ruse to get Sylvanus Olympio out of the way. Once he had left, satisfied with the interpretation, the U.S. and Argentina submitted a joint draft resolution which expressed the hope that the administering authorities would proceed along the line they had proposed and would take all appropriate steps to ensure that the consultative commission would equitably represent the different sections and groups of the two trust territories. The Chinese, Iraqi, and Philippine delegations proposed amendments to the U.S./Argentine draft: these asked that the fresh Anglo-French scheme be ignored and

³³³ Gerig and McKay, "The Ewe Problem: A Case Study in the Operation of the Trusteeship Council," 136.

that the problem could only be solved by the unification of the Ewe under a single administration. The U.S./Argentine draft was adopted on 14 July by the Council, 8-2 votes (Iraq, the Philippines) and one abstention (China).¹⁴⁷

The elections to the enlarged consultative commission on Togoland Affairs were held in October 1950. The French went out of their way to ensure that no seats were won by the *Comité de l'Unité* (CUT), the party controlled by the All-Ewe Conference. According to a British account, Africans who were not legally qualified to vote were added to the electoral roll, political parties opposed to the CUT were established with government funds, and pro-unification partisans were deported or imprisoned.¹⁴⁸ On 30 September 1950, the Ewe pro-unification group cabled the UN secretary-general, complaining of the corrupt methods adopted by the French in the election of the members of the consultative commission.¹⁴⁹ In spite of French protests that the established procedure was for such matters to go to the TC first, the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly took the petition up. India, Indonesia, Iraq, the Philippines, and

¹⁴⁷ See Department of State Instruction for the United States Delegation to the Eighth Session of the Trusteeship Council, "The Ewe Problem (Item 17 on the Provisional Agenda)," 12 January, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 521-529, esp. p. 522. A text of the resolution is in *ibid.*, 527-28.

¹⁴⁸ See Kent, "The Ewe Question, 1945-56: French and British Reactions to Nationalism in West Africa," 194. Also, see Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*, 95-97; Welch, Jr., *Dream of Unity*, 95-96. On account of these irregularities, the CUT boycotted the elections.

¹⁴⁹ See Department of State Instruction for the United States Delegation to the Eighth Session of the Trusteeship Council, "The Ewe Problem (Item 17 on the Provisional Agenda)," 12 January, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 523.

Yugoslavia later submitted a joint draft resolution which was adopted by the Committee and then by the General Assembly on 2 December 1950. The resolution called for an adequate solution to the Ewe question "as soon as possible," in accordance with the wishes and interests of the people; emphasized the necessity of conducting elections to the consultative commission in a democratic manner; and directed the administering authority to "investigate promptly the practices complained of in the petition with a view to ascertaining whether the methods of election which have been applied ensure that the views of all sections of the population are faithfully reflected." France was asked to report on this investigation at the next session of the TC, and the latter was requested to devote to the Ewe question a special chapter or subchapter of its annual report to the sixth session of the General Assembly.¹⁴³

In 1951, the basic Anglo-French objective was to convince the TC that the elections they conducted to the Joint Commission allowed enough room for all parties to be equitably involved, that the door was still open for the Ewe pro-unification forces to participate in the commission, and therefore that the Council should urge the Ewe pro-unification groups to join the commission. This was embodied in a joint resolution they proposed for the TC.¹⁴⁴ To entice the pro-unification groups into the deal,

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 523-527; Gerig and McKay, "The Ewe Problem: A Case Study in the Operation of the Trusteeship Council," 13.

¹⁴⁴ See encl. to 745K.00/2-1451, Memorandum of Conversation, "The Ewe Problem," 14 February 1951 (NA); The Permanent Delegation of the United Kingdom at the United Nations to the United States Mission at the United Nations, "Aide Mémoire -- Ewe Problem," 6 February 1951, *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 529-531. For

Britain and France offered to increase the membership of the commission, allocating eight seats to the CUT and a proportionate five seats to "be selected" for British Togoland "by the existing parties in proportion to their present strength" in the commission. The objective and proposal were discussed at length at a meeting of the TC representatives of Britain, France, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. on 16 February 1951.¹⁴³ In addition, Britain and France discussed this proposal separately with the U.S. on several occasions in February 1951.¹⁴⁴

Washington itself acknowledged that the consideration of the Ewe petition by the Fourth Committee in late 1950 "not only established a precedent but also was evidence of the growing impatience of a number of non-administering countries with the slow progress made by the administering authorities concerned and by the Trusteeship Council toward a solution of the problem." It was further felt that this concern "introduces a new element of urgency and gives greater weight to the desirability of making

the resolution, see *ibid.*, 537.

¹⁴³ Minutes of meeting of administering members of the Trusteeship Council, New York, February 16, 1951, "Subject: Meeting of Administering Members to Discuss Ewe Problem," *FRUS*, 1951, ii (1979), 532-541.

¹⁴⁴ See 350/2-1351, Memorandum of Conversation, "French Proposals Regarding the Ewe Problem," 13 February 1951; 745K.00/2-1451, Memorandum of Conversation, "The Ewe Problem," 14 February 1951; 745K.AWEIGH/2-1951, Memorandum of Conversation, "The Ewe Problem," 19 February 1951; 745K.AWEIGH/2-1951, Memorandum of Conversation, "The Ewe Problem," 19 February 1951; 350/3-151, Memorandum of Conversation, "The Ewe Problem before the Trusteeship Council," 1 March 1951; 350/6-2751, Telegram from USUN New York to the secretary of state, 27 June 1951 (all at NA).

demonstrable progress before the next session of the Assembly."¹²⁷ On this account, the U.S. undertook to help its allies pull their chestnut from the fire by offering an amendment to the Anglo-French proposed resolution. The amendment adopted the Anglo-French proposal, but also provided the alternative of fresh elections in the southern part of French Togoland, where the CUT had not participated.¹²⁸ But the French rejected any fresh elections, arguing that in addition to creating "endless recriminations, with no settlement of problem possible," it "would be an admission that [the] original elections [were] not properly conducted, and might give rise to demands for review of electoral results in districts other than those predominantly Ewe."¹²⁹ In addition, the French deplored "possible parading of lack of unanimity among North Atlantic powers before Trusteeship Council on Ewe problem."¹³⁰ Confronted with French intransigence, the U.S. softened. U.S. Acting Secretary of State James Webb promptly telegraphed Paris that "U.S. suggestions were made privately" to France and Britain, "in effort be helpful meeting situation with which both confronted in TC." France was assured that the "U.S. does not consider its proposal implies that conduct of original elections in any way questionable."¹³¹ At

¹²⁷ See Department of State Instruction for the United States Delegation to the Eighth Session of the Trusteeship Council, "The Ewe Problem (Item 17 on the Provisional Agenda)," 12 January, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 521-529, esp. p. 524.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 544-545.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 547.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 555.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 558.

their meeting on 1 March 1951, Webb further assured French Ambassador Henri Bonnet that "The last thing on our minds was to create more difficulties for the French and we thought that by offering the Ewes who refused to participate in the previous election a choice of two alternatives, it would be more difficult for them to reject either one and would, at the same time secure wider support in the Trusteeship Council and perhaps obviate an acrimonious discussion later in the General Assembly."¹²⁸

On 5 March 1951, the British representative on the TC, Alan Burns, suggested to the U.S. delegation in New York that a way out of the impasse might be for the TC to merely take note of the steps thus far taken by the two administering authorities in regard to the Ewe question, to request them to continue their efforts to set up procedures for consulting all elements of the population of the two Togolands, and to request them further to report back to the next session of the Council.¹²⁹ The State Department was "impressed" with this, and promised to introduce an amended resolution embodying the suggestion, "after having determined that such an amendment is acceptable to the French and British Delegations."¹³⁰ Essentially, the amendment was to take note of the "statements made by the administering authorities" and "request them to continue their efforts to complete the composition of the Consultative Commission in such a manner as to make it representative of the principal elements in the

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 556.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 559-560.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 561-565.

population."¹³³ This was discussed with the French delegation in New York on 5 March 1951¹³⁴ and they found it "acceptable." The following day, Alan Burns was given a copy of the amendment, and he thought it was "an excellent one and that it was acceptable to the United Kingdom Government." At the same time, he suggested that the U.S. should work to get Iraq as a co-sponsor of the amendment,¹³⁵ possibly to make it more credible and ensure an easier passage. Assured of Anglo-French support to the amendment, the U.S. went ahead to do the groundwork for an outcome favorable to the British and the French at the TC. It is fitting to quote the State Department itself on this:

After considerable consultation with French, British and other interested dels fol plan was evolved: that Franco-British res (T/L.140) would be introduced by British rep with appropriate statement; that Iraq-U.S. res (T/L.141) would then be introduced; that President would call for vote on latter first; that France and UK would abstain on this vote; and that adoption of Iraq-U.S. res would render unnecessary vote on Franco-British res. This plan was successfully followed, resulting on March 9, 1951, in adoption by vote of Iraq-U.S. res...Both [Britain and France] expressed their appreciation to U.S. Del for our help in persuading Iraq to cosponsor res which avoided serious clashes on Ewe questions in TC...The French and British Govts will presumably consult this Govt before next session of TC with view to obtaining our support for such substantive proposals as they agree to make.¹³⁶

¹³³ *Ibid.*; 350/3-651, Position to be adopted by the United States delegation to the Trusteeship Council on the Ewe Question, 6 March 1951 (NA).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 564-565; 745K.AWEIGH/3-651, Memorandum of Conversation, "The Ewe Question," 6 March 1951 (NA).

¹³⁶ The secretary of state to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, 12 April 1951, *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 573-574; 350/4-1251, Airgram from the Department of State to Certain American Diplomatic and Consular Officers, 12 April 1951 (NA). It is a UN procedure to vote on the last resolution on a subject first. After the adoption of the Iraqi-US resolution, the French

The Council resolution adopted by a vote of 9-0-3 (Britain, France, Soviet Union) drew the attention of the administering authorities to the necessity of seeking a solution with the utmost expedition; invited them to continue their efforts to solve the problem in the spirit of the Council's resolution of 14 July 1950; urged the Ewe pro-unification parties to cooperate with the administering authorities; and recommended that whether or not the composition of the consultative commission was completed, the administering authorities should "as soon as possible" formulate substantive proposals for a practicable solution of the question and inform the Council accordingly not later than 1 July 1951.¹³³

In order to meet the requirements of the resolution, Britain and France jointly drew up a proposal for a reconstituted consultative commission. The proposal ruled out the possibility of any "alteration in boundaries or political allegiance" on the grounds that no arrangement along such lines will have the support of the "peoples of [the] territories or even agreement of majority." It claimed that the consultative commission had served its purpose and should therefore be supplanted by another forum which would enable the peoples of the Togolands under British and French administration to exchange and coordinate views and measures on development "in every field harmonized." It was

delegate made a statement on the French abstention and then announced that France desired to withdraw the Anglo-French draft resolution; his British counterpart concurred. See "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 572.

¹³³ For a text of the resolution, see *Department of State Bulletin*, 26 March 1951, 509.

intended that such a body would advise the two administering authorities on "planning and implementation of program of development, economic and social, in [the] light [of] available resources and on all other practical questions relating to [the] preservation [of] close connection between peoples on each side of frontier." This proposal was forwarded in advance to the U.S. for its comments.⁴⁷ Although it held that the proposal would be widely seen as too "negative and defensive," the State Department considered it the "minimum" which provided a basis "on which [to] proceed." Nonetheless, it emphasized the desirability of "changing the impression that the door to political unification was closed, for although this may be [the] fact," the TC would have great difficulty endorsing such a statement.⁴⁸ At the same time, the U.S. TC delegation was advised that in order to leave the room for negotiation, it would not be fruitful to "push

⁴⁷ 350/6-2751, Telegram from New York to the secretary of state, 27 June 1951 (NA), reproduced in *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1982), 577-578.

⁴⁸ In reality, the U.S., like Britain and France, did not believe in the feasibility of Ewe unification. In October 1952, the State Department asserted: "With regard to unification, it appears that the views of the unificationists in the two Togolands are in a state of flux. In this situation it is difficult and probably unwise to recommend any drastic alteration of the present political status. Furthermore, in considering steps to meet the wishes of certain groups in the two Togolands, it is necessary also to consider the effects of such actions on the remaining inhabitants of the territories. For example, the interests of the inhabitants of the northern parts of the two territories (where the inhabitants, who form numerical majorities in both territories, have thus far been generally opposed to unification) must certainly be given proper consideration along with the interests of the predominantly Ewe-inhabited southern parts of the territories." See Circular Airgram to Certain American Diplomatic Officers, 18 October 1952, File 350, Accra consulate, Classified General Records, 1950-52, Box 5 (Suitland).

Britain and France into submitting [a] proposal containing [the] maximum to which they can agree."¹⁴²

Britain and France went along with the suggestion that, for purposes of strategy, they should not foreclose the possibility of Ewe unity and redrafted the proposal accordingly.¹⁴³ The U.S. itself later produced a draft amendment to the revised Anglo-French proposal. The draft accepted the view that the consultative commission had outlived its usefulness and should therefore be replaced as proposed by Britain and France. It was proposed that the administering authorities be allowed to establish the new body which should be able to deal with all questions of common concern to the people of the two trust territories. The U.S. also proposed that the body should include all sections of the people of the Togolands.¹⁴⁴ Britain and France welcomed the draft, except that the latter wanted the deletion of the paragraph which enjoined them to ensure that all major groups in the territories participated in the new body.¹⁴⁵ On 24 July, the TC adopted the U.S. amendment which was sponsored by the Dominican Republic, Thailand, and the U.S. and then adopted the

¹⁴² 350/6-2951, Telegram, the Department of State to USUN New York, 29 June 1951 (NA), reproduced in *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 578-79.

¹⁴³ Minutes of meeting of administering members of the Trusteeship Council, New York, 3 July 1951, *FRUS, 1951, ii* (1979), 580. For the detailed redraft, see Annex: "Redraft of Anglo-French Memorandum," *ibid.*, 583-587.

¹⁴⁴ Telegram from the secretary of state to the United States representative at the United Nations, 18 July 1951, *ibid.*, 603-604.

¹⁴⁵ Telegram from the United States representative to the secretary of state, 19 July, 1951, *ibid.*, 604.

Anglo-French proposal as amended. The Council approved that a new Joint Council be set up in a manner which would secure the participation of all major groups in the two territories and, that the new body should be given a fair and reasonable opportunity to prove its effectiveness as means for the people to influence developments in which they have a common concern. The resolution recommended that the new body should be implemented in time for the 1952 UN Visiting Mission to West Africa to make an evaluation of its accomplishments.¹⁴⁶

The new Joint Council was not set up as quickly as the TC resolution had envisaged. Even a UN General Assembly resolution of 18 January 1952 which urged speed in implementing the TC resolution did not have any impact on Britain and France. The two had their reasons for being tardy on the matter. By late 1951, Britain had become committed to the integration of British Togoland with the Gold Coast; it felt that a strengthened Joint Council of the two Togolands would frustrate this objective. The French, who had opposed unification from the start, were in no hurry either.¹⁴⁷ Since the Joint Council was not in place, Britain and France were anxious to delay receiving the UN Visiting Mission for as long as they could. For example, France argued that it was undesirable for the mission to arrive during the campaigns for the elections to the Representative Assembly of French Togoland scheduled for 30 March 1952. They proposed early July as a better date for the mission to arrive. At the time, the

¹⁴⁶ TC Resolution 345 (ix), 24 July 1951.

¹⁴⁷ Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*, 103.

British were thinking of early September.¹⁴⁴ Britain and France had the support of the U.S. in delaying the arrival of the Visiting Mission to Togo until September 1952. On 29 February 1952, Alan Burns expressed his appreciation to the U.S. delegation to the TC for the "support and assistance" which the United States had given to the United Kingdom and France in connection with their desire to have the Visiting Mission to West Africa arrive in the Togolands as late as possible." According to the records, Burns

referred to the fact that, after the British and French delegations had outlined the various reasons why it would be impossible for them to receive a Visiting Mission before September 1, Ambassador [Francis] Sayre had proposed that the Council [TC] decide that the Visiting Mission assemble at [the UN] Headquarters in August, arrive in the Togolands not later than September 1, spend 30 days in investigations in the territory, and prepare their report in time for examination by the Trusteeship Council at a session to convene not later than November 7.¹⁴⁵

Down to the end of the Truman administration, Britain and France continued to enjoy the full backing of the U.S. on the Ewe question. The strategy was the same: harmonizing positions with the Europeans and shielding them from serious scrutiny and indictment at the UN platforms. Diplomatic support such as this at the UN and its agencies was of considerable importance to the Europeans. It shielded them from the huge embarrassment of being

¹⁴⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, by the assistant secretary of state for United Nations Affairs, "Problems Arising at the Tenth Session of the Trusteeship Council," 25 February 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, iii (1979), 1184-1185.

¹⁴⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, by an adviser of the United States Delegation to the Trusteeship Council, 29 February 1952, *ibid.*, 1188. (Francis B. Sayre was the U.S. representative on the Trusteeship Council, from the Council's inception in 1946 until 1 June 1952, when he resigned).

isolated in an international arena that was increasingly hostile to colonialism. On this account, and in spite of the irritation over America's economic encroachment into their spheres, the Europeans placed a very high premium on their relationship with the U.S. The diplomatic support was indeed an adequate compensation for their problems in the economic sphere.

Conclusion

What clearly comes out from this chapter is that in practical terms, U.S. presence in Africa during the Truman presidency was achieved through the programs of the ECA, Point IV, and the MSA. Those programs, it needs to be recalled, were extensions of the Marshall Plan. In his memoir, Truman explained that the Plan "was purely for postwar rehabilitation in the countries of western Europe whose production and economy were ruined by the war."¹⁰ But recent scholarship shows that Western European economies were not merely reconstructed, they were also transformed through the transfer of American technology, the introduction of American managerial and production methods, and the infusion of American private investment. Michael Hogan, for example, stresses that "Through the Marshall Plan, American leaders sought to recast Europe in the image of American neocapitalism. They envisaged a Western European system in which class conflict would give way to corporate collaboration, economic self-sufficiency to economic interdependence, international rivalry to rapprochement and cooperation, and

¹⁰ Truman, *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman*, ii, 231.

arbitrary national controls to the integrating powers of supranational authorities and natural market forces."¹¹¹

There is thus an increasing emphasis on what Leffler calls the strategic dimensions of the Marshall Plan.¹¹² In this context, it is now clear that the conditions attached to aid under the Plan forced its European recipients into close cooperation, through the Organization for European Economic Cooperation and the European Payments Union; the same pressure also pushed France into the proposal for a European Coal and Steel Community, and ensured the integration of a strengthened Western Germany into Western Europe. Besides, the Plan established and legitimized American presence in influencing -- if reshaping is too strong a word here -- the character of postwar Western European politics: political parties and labor movements were overhauled, and the threat from the left neutralized.¹¹³ Leffler also demonstrates that the strategic and geopolitical implications of the Marshall Plan "stretched beyond Europe." According to him, because the dollar gap -- which had

¹¹¹ Michael J. Hogan, "American Marshall Planners and the Search for a European Neocapitalism," *The American Historical Review*, 90, 1 (February 1985), 45.

¹¹² Leffler, "The United States and the Strategic Dimensions of the Marshall Plan," 278.

¹¹³ See the following by Michael J. Hogan, "The Search for a 'Creative Peace': The United States, European Unity, and the Origins of the Marshall Plan," *Diplomatic History*, 6, 3 (Summer 1982); "Revival and Reform: America's Twentieth-Century Search for a New Economic Order Abroad," *ibid.*, 8, 4 (Fall 1984); "Paths to Plenty: Marshall Planners and the Debate over European Integration, 1947-1948," *Pacific Historical Review*, liii, 3 (August, 1984); *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe*. Also see Leffler, "The United States and the Strategic Dimensions of the Marshall Plan."

originally prompted the Plan -- was so intractable, "American officials focussed significant attention on safeguarding European access to Third World markets and natural resources. Far from limiting American attention to Europe, the Marshall Plan, along with other considerations, accentuated American interest in those areas around the globe that appeared to be of paramount commercial and financial importance to Britain, France, western Germany, and other participants in the ERP."³⁴

To sum up, the Marshall Plan was the agency through which Western Europe was retooled to fit into an integrated international political economy designed and controlled by the U.S. Given the very strong center-periphery relations existing at the time between Western Europe and its African colonies, Africa could not have escaped the broader implications of the consolidation of American hegemony over Western Europe. In other words, just as the Marshall Plan facilitated the incorporation of Western Europe into the American world system, the programs of the ECA, Point IV, and the MSA ensured the accommodation of -- or at least, formalized -- the American presence in Africa's relations with the West. The European powers were alarmed by this broadening of the center-periphery relations since the American involvement had the potential of weakening the structures established by colonial rule. In the event, McGhee has recalled that while "there was no endorsement of the views attributed to the colonial powers," there was also "no hint of boldness" on the part of Washington "with respect to the promotion of

³⁴ Leffler, "The United States and the Strategic Dimensions of the Marshall Plan," 278.

decolonization." The focus, according to him, "was on stimulating cooperation [with the colonial powers] in the economic field."¹⁵⁵ In developing the framework of this "cooperation" with the colonial powers, Washington not only hoped but also pressed for a liberalization of economic access to Africa. It was thus Truman's hope that "if we encourage stabilized governments in underdeveloped countries in Africa, South America, and Asia, we could encourage the use for the development of those areas some of the capital which had accumulated in the United States."¹⁵⁶ But it is also apparent that the Truman administration did not undertake the same degree of intervention in the UDCs as it did in Western Europe via the Marshall Plan. The result was a horizontal division of labor with a great deal of interdependence among the core states and a less integral role for the periphery, and even far less for Africa which was in the outermost periphery of the American world system.

¹⁵⁵ McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World*, 128, 123-124.

¹⁵⁶ Truman, *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman*, ii, 231.

Part III
1953-60

Introduction to Part III

BY the time, Dwight David Eisenhower moved into the White House in January 1953, "Third World" issues -- notably, nationalism and nonalignment -- had acquired prominence in international relations. Chapter 2 touched on Washington's response to nationalism, especially as far as Africa was concerned. The chapters which follow pursue the discussion further and in considerable detail. For this purpose, Ghana, and to a lesser extent, Guinea, serve as country case studies. Drawing on these two has been determined by the availability of primary sources.

Eisenhower's response to Guinea's independence suggests that in dealing with Africa, Washington was unable to divest itself of the a priori thought that it needed to give first consideration to Western European sensitivities, even after colonial rule had ended. There was, of course, little doubt that the "Communists" desired a foothold in West Africa and that Guinea -- because of the manner in which it became independent, the petulant French reaction to it, its structural economic weakness, and the Marxist bent of its leaders -- was a good starting point. But the job was made much easier for them by the West, and especially, the U.S. The "Communist" countries were among the first to recognize Guinea, establish diplomatic missions in Conakry, and offer economic and military aid. Conversely, the U.S. -- in deference to France -- kept its distance from Guinea and even shunned its overtures.

At the center of U.S. dealings with Ghana during Eisenhower's tenure was the Volta dam project. The project

remains a very emotive issue in the history of contemporary U.S. relations with Africa. Even as "Black Box" in the BBC-TV documentary, "Pandora's Box," it comes handy as a classic case-study of the development of underdevelopment -- and neocolonialism -- in Africa by the West.¹ The "Black Box" version is the story of the involvement of Edgar Kaiser in the establishment of an aluminium plant in Ghana. By the time he got into the project, Kaiser desperately needed power for his aluminium plant in the U.S. Thus although Ghana's bauxite deposits could sustain a fully integrated industry -- from mining the ore to processing it and manufacturing finished products -- Kaiser was able to get Nkrumah to agree that the Ghanaian plant should process Kaiser's bauxite. Besides, Kaiser was able to secure electricity at the lowest rate paid by his global competitors. In essence, Ghana ended up subsidizing Kaiser to process his own bauxite to provide aluminium ingots for American industry. By 1966, when the dam was completed, the project had pulled Ghana into heavy external debt, and with very minimal returns.

However, it is not usually acknowledged that Nkrumah was a willing and very active agent in Kaiser's neocolonialism. To begin with, he attached particular importance to harnessing the Volta's power because he believed that electricity had enormous external economies on the entire economy, and for industrialization in particular. But Ghana did not have the

¹ Also see Howard, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in Ghana*, 227; no author, "Imperialism and the Volta Dam, West Africa," 24 March 1980.

wherewithal to execute the project. This put the dam at the mercy of external parties. In the event, both the British and the U.S. governments insisted that the existing and estimated future demands for electric power in Ghana were insufficient to justify the hydroelectric project, and therefore that it would only make economic sense if an adequate demand could be guaranteed in advance. Incidentally, Ghana also had considerable deposits of bauxite; and a heavy consumption of power goes with the conversation of bauxite into alumina and then into aluminium. This was how aluminium production became the economic justification for the original dam project. By 1954, Britain had dropped out of the project on account of its escalating costs. It was at that point that Nkrumah turned to the U.S. Even before that date, several American speculators had gone to Accra to pick up the project. At first, the State Department paid no serious attention to those approaches until Kaiser Aluminium showed up. From that point, the Eisenhower administration -- pressured at every turn by Nkrumah -- came into the picture. Without doubt, there were economic reasons for U.S. interest in the project. But there might also have been flashbacks of the aftermath of Washington's off-handed treatment of Egypt's Aswan dam project. On 21 September 1960, Ghana invited tenders for the construction of a rock-filled dam, 370 feet high over the Volta River at Akosombo, with a volume of 10.9 million cubic yards and with a saddle dam 120 feet high. The specification called for the dam to be ready for water storage by July 1964 and for the first

generating unit to be producing commercially by September 1965.⁴ As chapter 6 shows, getting to that point was a difficult journey for both Washington and Accra.

As a rule, a country's real foreign policy -- as distinct from the declarations of intent expressed in policy papers -- is affected by the attitudes of other countries as well. Thus while U.S. policy in Guinea was hampered by the French attitude, it benefitted in Ghana by Nkrumah's attitude. Nkrumah's disposition was conditioned, in the case of the Volta project, by his need for U.S. assistance. But more generally, U.S. policy in Ghana in the period 1957-60, was facilitated by the ideological orientation of Nkrumah and his government.

According to one of his biographies, Nkrumah was preoccupied with "the total liberation of the African continent from colonialism, imperialism, neocolonialism and settler minority regimes," as well as the "political unification and the establishment of a socialist All-African Union Government."⁵ This is an idealized image which may be true of the Nkrumah of the 1960s, not of the 1950s. For example, his idealized image as a fervent pan-Africanist glosses over the fact that shortly after its independence, he pulled Ghana out of the West African Airways Corporation, the West African Currency Board, the West African Cocoa Research Institute, and the West African Court of Appeal. These institutions, which were created by British, could have been elaborated upon to foster regional cooperation in all of

⁴ *The New York Times*, 22 September 1960; *The Economist*, 15 October 1960, 274-275.

⁵ Panaf Great Lives, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 7.

West Africa. In other respects, Nkrumah's early moves were even more conservative. At the 1957 Commonwealth prime ministers' conference, "he was unwilling to take a contentious stand on any issue," and more, particularly, he quickly struck a cordial relationship with racist South Africa. "His approach resembled India's, that the Commonwealth was big enough for both Ghana and South Africa, and that the Commonwealth conferences were not the forum to discuss *apartheid*." As late as 1960, "Nkrumah was still committed to the belief that the `multi-racial example of Ghana' could affect developments in South Africa, and in fact [his foreign minister, Ajo] Adjei had invited [South Africa's] Foreign Minister Eric Louw to Ghana, when they met at the 1959 UN General Assembly."

Nkrumah's conservatism was more evident in his anti-communism. Shortly after he came out of prison in February 1951, he declared: "I would like to make it absolutely clear that I am a friend of Britain...I want for the Gold Coast Dominion status within the British Commonwealth. I am no Communist and never have been." Nkrumah wasted little time in demonstrating his sincerity. John Hargreaves says that by February 1954, Britain had secured Nkrumah's commitment to ban the entry of all "Communist" literature into the Gold Coast; exclude any European with "Communist" sympathies from the public service and Africans with similar inclinations from government departments such as the

¹ W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton University Press, 1969), 42-43, 96-97.

² *West Africa*, 17 February 1951.

administration, education, and the police; and confiscate the passports of Gold Coast indigenes who wished to travel to "Communist" countries." That must have been the background of Nkrumah's February 1954 announcement that the government of the Gold Coast would "in future refuse to employ, in certain branches of the Public Service, persons who are proved to its satisfaction to be active Communists." The affected departments were administrative (including advisory posts in the ministries), education (including mass education and community development), labor, information services, police, army, and the Gold Coast commissioner's overseas office. He also noted that some people were attending conferences "behind what is generally known as the Iron Curtain," with all expenses paid; that scholarships were being offered for Gold Coast students to attend conferences and seminars "organized by Communist organizations," and promised that the government was "taking measures to deal with this aspect of the matter."

But Nkrumah's anti-communism did not begin in 1954. His government had first proposed restrictions on the travel of Gold Coast indigenes to the "Communist" bloc in 1953. At the same time, he threatened the editor of the CPP daily, *The Evening News*, with dismissal if he continued to publish "pro-Communist"

Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa*, 120.

A verbatim of Nkrumah's speech is in 745K.001/2-2654, Desp. from AmCongen, Accra to the Department of State, "Nkrumah's Statement on Communists in Government," 26 February 1954 (NA).

materials. This campaign was more effectively executed against labor leaders and unions with "Communist" affiliations. On 22 October 1953, Albert Hammerton, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) representative in West Africa, met with William Cole, the U.S. consul in Accra; Vice Consul Robert Fleming; and USIS/Consulate Public Affairs Officer Eugene Sawyer. Hammerton who was getting set for an international executive meeting of the ICFTU in Brussels, wanted a briefing on the Gold Coast political situation. He expressed concern that "the recent infiltration into the Gold Coast Trade Congress of Communist sympathizers such as [Anthony] Woode and Turkson Ocran" would be most unfavorably regarded in Brussels, especially given the CPP's known hostility against the ICFTU. (At its annual conference in August 1953, the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress (TUC) had disaffiliated from the ICFTU). Above all, Hammerton doubted Nkrumah's ideological orientation and stressed the international public relations value of demonstrating at Brussels that "the CPP is not in fact conniving to support Communist activities." Cole and Fleming assured him that it was their "understanding that Nkrumah held a sincerely neutralist position." But there was still the feeling by the consulate officials that Hammerton

745K.001/6-1153, Desp. from American consulate, Accra to the Department of State, "Anti-Communist Measures of Gold Coast Government," 11 June 1953 (NA).

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) had emerged after World War II as the global fusion of all labor unions. But by 1949, the international labor movement had split along Cold War lines: the Western labor federations disaffiliated to form the ICFTU, leaving the WFTU for the "Communist" bloc. See Harold K. Jacobson, "Labor, the UN and the Cold War," *International Organization*, xi (1957).

needed a more concrete assurance of the standing of the CPP and Nkrumah. Thus Fleming went to Nkrumah immediately after the meeting and impressed upon him the advisability of making a public statement on his position on "Communist" activities in the Gold Coast. Another meeting followed, involving Nkrumah, Fleming, and Hammerton. In the course of the meeting, Nkrumah promised that the ICFTU would again be given a free hand in the Gold Coast, but he could not promise immediate reaffiliation of the TUC so as not to give the impression that he had been "bought over."¹¹

On 23 October, Nkrumah convened the CPP central executive. They rose to announce the suspension of Woode and Ocran from both the party's executive and the CPP itself. Two days later, Nkrumah used the platform of the national congress of the United Nations Students Association to publicly acknowledge that there was "confusion in the minds of some people...regarding where I and my Party stand in the present struggle between the Eastern and Western Democracies." To dispel any "future doubt," he declared that "we regard our country as being wedded to the democracies that are friendly to us."¹² Shortly after, Ocran was relieved of

¹¹ 845K.062/11-753, Desp. from American consulate general, Accra to the Department of State, "Transmitting Report by Vice Consul Fleming Regarding Meeting between Prime Minister and ICFTU Representative," 7 November 1953; 845K.062/11-353, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 3 November 1953 (all at NA).

¹² Quoted in Douglas G. Anglin, "Ghana, the West, and the Soviet Union," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, xxiv, 2 (May 1958), 160.

his post as the TUC general secretary.¹² On 28 February 1954, the TUC reaffiliated with the ICFTU.¹³

Recalling its discomfort with the "course of developments in the Gold Coast tending towards the complete domination of the local trade unions movement by supporters of the World Federation of Trade Unions," the State Department commended its officers in Accra for sensitizing Nkrumah to the need for "drastic remedial measures."¹⁴ But apart from helping America's cause, Nkrumah was -- in this particular instance -- also safeguarding his own political career. According to Jitendra Mohan, he feared that the labor leaders, "if allowed to prevail, could sabotage the neocolonial accommodation being essayed by CPP leaders and colonial interests. That was why those elements had to be subdued, and the trade union movement deprived of its autonomy and of its political capacity."¹⁵

Nkrumah was certainly attracted to Marxism by the 1950s. But as Douglas Anglin observed in 1958, this personal preference never "translated into a policy of conciliation to Communism either at home or abroad."¹⁶ It is true that Nkrumah was

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ 845K.062/3-554, Desp. from American consulate general, Accra to the State Department, "Reaffiliation of Gold Coast TUC with International Confederation of Free Trade Unions," 5 March 1954 (NA).

¹⁴ 845K.062/11-753, Department of State Instruction A-27 to the American consulate general, Accra, "Commendations for Consul Cole and Vice Consuls Sawyer and Fleming," 15 January 1954 (NA).

¹⁵ Jitendra Mohan, "Nkrumah and Nkrumahism," in Ralph Miliband and John Saville (eds), *The Socialist Register 1967* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), 199.

¹⁶ Anglin, "Ghana, the West, and the Soviet Union," 160.

surrounded by a number of people with strong Marxist credentials. Notable in this category were Adviser on African Affairs George Padmore; Attorney General Geoffrey Bing who had long been associated with the extreme British Left; and James Markham, secretary of the Pan-African Office, who had been with the Anti-Colonial Bureau of the Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon. But these were more than matched by those with opposing ideological orientation. In 1956, St. Clair Drake observed that "All the members of the Cabinet are Western oriented."¹⁷ In any case, the Marxists were not even averse to a visible American presence in Ghana. For example, Padmore advocated that if the U.S. was "really worried about Communism taking root in Africa," it should undertake "a Marshall Aid programme for Africa" and, more specifically, "construct the Volta River project in the Gold Coast."¹⁸ "The nature of the situation, then, and the predisposition of the leaders," according to W. Scott Thompson, "made a 'pro-West' bias for Ghana inevitable at the beginning."¹⁹

¹⁷ St. Clair Drake, "Prospects for Democracy in the Gold Coast," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 306 (July 1956), 86.

¹⁸ George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1956), 375-376.

¹⁹ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 14.

ONE of the defining developments of the 1950s was the rise of the "Third World" to self-assertion. This assertion or nationalism was essentially anticolonial in focus; it was, in other words, primarily concerned with the repudiation of European political -- and, in some cases, economic -- control. As the decade wore on, anticolonialism was broadened to include experiments in state capitalism and nonalignment in the U.S.-Soviet superpower conflict. The basic contours of these developments crystallized in the 1955 Bandung conference. The general outline of much of the literature is that to Dwight Eisenhower and his team, "the revolutionary changes that seemed to be activated all over the globe by the collapse of European colonial empires were...regarded as merely the newest form of world communist aggression, requiring an American response not unlike that undertaken in Europe." The result was that from "its first years in office," the administration began "to develop and elaborate a conception of containment in those non-Western areas regarded as peripheral by Kennan, Acheson, and the other framers of the containment policy." It is thus contended that by its failure to "distinguish international communism and nationalist or anticolonial revolution, by seeing the latter as indistinguishable from the former," the Eisenhower administration "set American policy against the nationalist revolutions of the non-Western world."

James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, *United States Foreign Policy and World Order* (4th edition; Glenview, Illinois, Boston, London: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1988), 146-147, 155-156, 176. Also see Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United*

In spite of his undoubted anti-Sovietism, Eisenhower recognized the potency of the anticolonial movement. In a letter to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in July 1954, he stressed that "Colonialism is on the way out as a relationship among peoples," especially because "there is abroad in the world a fierce and growing spirit of nationalism. Should we try to damn it up completely, it would, like a mighty river, burst through the barriers and create havoc." On 30 November 1954, he wrote to General Alfred Grunther, the supreme commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, that "[French Prime Minister] Pierre Mendes-France is Churchillian in his attitude toward `dependent peoples.' He has the same obsession...that his prestige is lowered if he should lose one iota of the area of function over which he exercises some degree of influence or control....Consequently he may feel that unless he makes certain of continued French domination of North Africa, he would immediately become an `ex.'" Eisenhower dismissed such an attitude as "short-sightedness" and emphasized that "In this day and time no so-called `dependent people' can, by force, be kept indefinitely in that position."

States, 218-220. For a broad historiographical survey of this theme, see Robert J. McMahon, "Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists," *Political Science Quarterly*, 101, 3 (1986).

See personal letter to Churchill, marked "Eyes Only -- Top Secret," 22 July 1954, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 7 (DDEL).

Letter to General Alfred M. Grunther, marked "Personal and Confidential," 30 November 1954, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 8 (DDEL).

To be sure, Eisenhower was neither advocating nor, in fact, anticipating (automatic) independence for the colonies: he agreed with Churchill that "in a number of areas people are not yet ready for self-rule and that any attempt to make them now responsible for their own governing would be to condemn them to lowered standards of life and probably to communistic domination." But he hoped that the recognition of the vitality of nationalism by the colonial powers would lead to a change of strategy: "if we are intelligent enough to make use of this force," he continued, "then the result, far from being disastrous, could redound greatly to our advantage, particularly in our struggle against the Kremlin's power." In order to canalize "Third World" nationalism, he suggested to Churchill "a thoughtful speech of the rights to self-government." Such a speech, Eisenhower urged, should include "the economic requirements of independent existence," and "the burdensome responsibilities of self-rule; internal and external security; proper systems for the administration of justice; the promotion of health and general welfare." He hoped that by thus emphasizing the problems of nation-building, the speech would dampen the demand for independence. This, in turn, would ensure that none of the colonies would opt for independence; instead, "Each would cling more tightly to the mother country and be a more valuable part thereof."

See personal letter to Churchill, marked "Eyes Only -- Top Secret," 22 July 1954, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 7 (DDEL). In his reply dated 8 August 1954, Churchill stated that the "sentiments and ideas" expressed by Eisenhower were "in full accord with the policy now being pursued in all the Colonies of the British Empire. In this I must admit that I am a laggard. I

Eisenhower's letter to Grunther reiterated the themes he had developed in the letter to Churchill. Again, he emphasized that Churchill "is absolutely right in his contention that a number of these peoples who are screaming for independence are not yet equipped to support it, and that by now laying down British responsibility in this regard, he would be merely contributing to further unrest and possibly the spread of Communism in the world." So more as a propaganda stunt, he advocated that the colonial powers "should insist upon the independence of all these peoples and announce in glowing language a great program of preparing these people to support independence, *with all its obligations and costs*, as well as its satisfaction of the spirit of nationalism." As in his letter to Churchill, Eisenhower made it clear that he did not expect such a move to scuttle colonialism: "My own belief," he stated, "is that their [the colonial powers] experience would be much like ours in Puerto Rico -- in most cases, faced with such prospects of responsibilities and increased costs, these peoples would insist upon retaining their connections with the mother country."

Besides the ambivalence manifested in his letters to Churchill and Grunther, Eisenhower's "anticolonialism" was also negated by its in-built contradiction. On 27 March 1957, he

am a bit skeptical about universal suffrage for the Hottentots even if refined by proportional representation. The British and American Democracies were slowly and painfully forged and even they are not perfect yet." See letter from Churchill to Eisenhower, *ibid.*, Box 8 (DDEL).

⁵ Letter to General Alfred M. Grunther, marked "Personal and Confidential," 30 November 1954, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 8 (DDEL). Emphasis added.

reminded Treasury Secretary George Humphrey that "few individuals understand the intensity and force of the spirit of nationalism that is gripping all peoples of the world today....It is my personal conviction that almost any one of the newborn states of the world would far rather embrace Communism or any other form of dictatorship than to acknowledge the political domination of another government even though that brought to each citizen a far higher standard of living." Yet when the Republican congressional caucus informed him on 2 July 1957 that Senator John Kennedy intended to propose a resolution in favor of Algerian independence, Eisenhower held that the "people of Algeria still lacked sufficient education and training to run their own government in the most efficient way."

Eisenhower was not alone in his ambivalence and caution on independence for the European colonies. His dilemma, shared by many in Washington in the 1950s, derived from the fact that the U.S. was caught in the jaws of a vice of its own fabrication: on the one hand was the acknowledgment of the power of nationalism, and on the other was the need to solidify relations with its key European allies in the anti-Soviet alliance. Related to the latter was the fear of possible Soviet in-roads into areas vacated by the colonial powers. The Navy Department, for example, was apprehensive that independence meant a loss for the West in the global balance of power. In early 1960, the department

Personal letter to Honorable George Humphrey, 27 March 1957, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 22 (DDEL).

See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower, ii: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 378.

prepared a position paper as part of a broader National Security Council study of the possible changes in the global distribution of power. The paper estimated that "Within the next 5 to 10 years virtually all of Africa," as well as some Middle Eastern and Far Eastern territories "presently under Western control will gain either complete independence or a high degree of autonomy, often associated with an increased drift from Western influence." As a consequence, the department envisaged that independence would entail "the withdrawal of Western military and naval forces from, and the denial or restriction of Western military base facilities in, many of these areas." The West's loss, it was believed, would be the Soviet's gain. The department anticipated that "In some of these areas significant indigenous military forces...are likely to be developed only with the direct or indirect assistance of the Soviet bloc." It was also calculated that independence would lead to the "strengthening of anti-Western voting strength in the UN"; but worse, was that it promised to provide a pool which the "Soviet bloc" could -- "under the guise of `peace' and `anti-imperialism`" -- mobilize to further its interests at the UN.

A 1955 State Department memorandum explained that "the United States position on many colonial and trusteeship questions are the result of compromises reached by Interior, Defense and State, and therefore reflect what is practical, what is safe, and

Navy Department, "Factors Affecting Changes in the Power Position in Areas Bordering the Southern Oceans (Indian Ocean, South Atlantic)," encl. 1 in memorandum from Director, Long Range Objectives Group, "Long-Range Requirements for the Southern Oceans," Ser. 0079P83, 31 May 1960 (Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

what is right and diplomatically expedient." But the view expressed by the navy -- essentially that the end of colonialism would tilt the global balance of power against the West -- was decisive in policymaking. In his speech of 18 November 1953, which set out the administration's "general policy in the colonial field,"¹⁰ Secretary of State Dulles placed the colonial question within the wider context of U.S. foreign policy. He identified three main theaters in the global struggle between "liberty and despotism": the home front, the "free world" front, and the "Third World" front. "On the free-world front the colonial and dependent areas are the field of dramatic contest. Here the policies of the West and those of Soviet imperialism come into headlong collision." Dulles held that while the ruthless nineteenth century brand of Western colonialism was "transitory and self-liquidating," "international Communism" has, as part of its drive for world domination, "hit on nationalism as a device for absorbing the colonial peoples." The Western powers -- including the U.S. -- were thus faced with "a task of indefinite difficulty and delicacy" in responding to the demands by the colonial peoples for independence. He was concerned that "There are some who, having just gained political independence,

¹⁰ Memorandum from the assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs (Key) to the deputy under secretary of state (Murphy), 20 April 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, xviii (1989), 6.

¹¹ The speech was frequently described as such. See letter from the secretary of state to the representative at the United Nations (Lodge), 9 February 1955, *ibid.*, (1989), 3; Memorandum from the assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs (Key) to the deputy under secretary of state (Murphy), 20 April 1955, *ibid.*, 6.

already stand close to losing it in the way the Communists planned. Some non-self-governing peoples, if they won today what the extremists demand, would find that they had fallen into the Communist trap." Therefore to those who felt that the U.S. was being too cautious on the colonial question, he counselled that "Zeal needs to be balanced by patience."¹¹

In "balancing zeal by patience," the Eisenhower administration opposed "premature independence" and therefore advocated that Africa's advance to independence should be "evolutionary." This preference was informed by two main reasons: (1) sudden European withdrawal would create a power vacuum, "an area of weakness which invites internal disorder and external aggression," especially Soviet imperialism; and (2) the stability and strength of the colonial powers, in which the U.S. had a stake, would be adversely affected by a sudden retreat from imperial status.¹² As late as October 1958, Dulles assured Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Wigny that the U.S. understood that the process of preparing colonies for self-government was "a slow and difficult one" and regretted that most of "the new independent countries" which had not undergone such a long tutoring "had become targets for international Communism." His sensitivities were thus offended because "the admission of these

¹¹ John F. Dulles, "The Moral Initiative," a speech before the Congress of Industrial Organizations at Cleveland, Ohio, on 18 November 1953, *Department of State Bulletin*, 13 November 1953, 741-744.

¹² *Ibid.*; Henry A. Byroade, assistant secretary for Near Eastern South Asian and African Affairs, "The World's Colonies and Excolonies: A Challenge to America," address delivered on 30 October 1953, *ibid.*, 16 November 1953, 655-660.

newly independent, but unprepared nations into the UN with the same vote as older and greater powers debased the concept of independent nations exercising self-responsibility in international affairs." In particular, Dulles scoffed at Guinea's independence, saying that it "could only be described as 'premature.'" He insisted that as an essential precondition for independence, "the governing elements should be educated, moral and self-disciplined and that much time is required to achieve this degree of preparation." Drawing on America's experience in the Philippines, he volunteered what he considered an adequate time-span to groom a colony for independence: the U.S., he recalled, had "spent 50 years preparing the Philippines for independence and there were times we believed that had perhaps not been long enough."¹¹ This hedging, this enduring perception of independence as a very gradual and long process predicated on the creation of "modernized" societies, signalled to many that Washington did not consider the transfer of power a topical issue in colonial administration. It was on this account that the 1959 study prepared for the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations by the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University regretted that the U.S. had "been reluctant to acknowledge the principle of self-government as fully applicable" to Africans, with the result that

We write many prescriptions for self-government. African leaders must be able to withstand "extremist" pressures, and forsake "short-term" domestic political rewards; they must show moderation; they must be able to "rise above mere chauvinism" in border disputes; they must show preference

¹¹ Memorandum of Conversation, "Belgian Congo," 8 October 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 252.

for democracy as a political form; they must expand the area of their competence as legislators; they must be friendly to the metropolitan powers, recognizing the colonial contributions and showing a willingness to continue or expand existing ties with the metropole; they should demonstrate a preference for free enterprise, at least to the extent of choosing a "mixed" economy; they should be receptive to Western economic cooperation.¹³

Eisenhower bears personal witness that his administration was not enthusiastic about Africa's transition to independence because "with a position of leadership in the Free World, we...could not afford to see turmoil in an area where the Communists would be only too delighted to take an advantage."¹⁴ The result was that the U.S. adopted what Thomas Noer calls "a 'Europe first' approach," which while ensuring "immediate support for America's Cold War efforts," also "identified Washington with the dwindling pockets of white rule."¹⁵ Similarly, Richard Mahoney found that "the Eisenhower administration's response to African independence was essentially defensive" as "Anticolonial zeal was frowned upon." He noted that the administration "viewed the proper American role in Africa's transition from colonialism as one that supported the European powers." Mahoney attributes this attitude to two factors. One was "the fear that nationalist upheaval in Africa would open the door to communist subversion, as had allegedly happened in Southeast Asia and in the Middle East." The other reason was that Eisenhower's "fundamental point

¹³ Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, *Africa: A Study Prepared at the Request of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, United States Foreign Policy No. 4, October 23, 1959; 86th Congress, 1st sess.* (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1959), 1-2.

¹⁴ Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 572.

¹⁵ Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 60.

of reference in foreign policy" was Europe.¹⁷ This "Europe first" commitment defined the administration's policy towards Guinea. In his reminiscences, John Morrow -- the first American ambassador to Guinea -- did not have many kind words on Washington's policy towards Conakry. He blamed this on "Washington officials" who "wanted everyone to exercise great care that nothing was done in Guinea to offend General de Gaulle" even when

It was perfectly clear that De Gaulle hoped that the Guinean experiment would fail and that its failure would serve to deter other French African territories from taking a similar leap toward independence...American officials were unwilling to heed my fervent pleas concerning the necessity of treating Guinea as an independent nation and making good on our oft-repeated assertions of interest in the self-determination of emerging nations. Instead of seizing the initiative...the State Department saw fit to stick to its 'notion of residual interest' in its dealings with Guinea.¹⁸

Guinea: The Weight of Residual Interests

Overnight, Guinea, alone of all the French territories in Africa, became independent simply by voting massively against the constitution of the Fifth French Republic on 28 September 1958. But in the eyes of the French, Guinea had sinned. A day later, all French economic and financial aid to Guinea ceased; and Paris told Conakry that French officials, some 3,000, would be withdrawn over two months. The French "withdrawal" was that of an army in retreat: immediately, it ceased to buy Guinea's bananas, which it had done at subsidized prices; equipment -- including files, maps, telephone sets and lines, medical supplies and even

¹⁷ Richard D. Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 34-35.

¹⁸ John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea* (New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), 249-250. (Morrow was the first U.S. ambassador to Guinea, 30 July 1959 to 3 March 1961).

plates in the Government Palace -- were either "withdrawn" or destroyed. The police and army left only after destroying their barracks. Guinean students in Paris and Dakar suddenly lost their French scholarships. French officials who stayed back lost their seniority in the French public service.³³

Guinea formally proclaimed its independence on 2 October 1958. From then till the end of the Eisenhower administration, it was treated like a pariah by Washington. And that was in spite of Guinea's overtures. Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Satterthwaite was in Conakry in June 1959 and reported that he found on his arrival "an exceptional cordial atmosphere toward [the] U.S. as indicated by fact President Sekou Toure and members of government have given me a very cordial reception."³⁴ Senator Stuart Symington, a Democratic presidential aspirant, visited Guinea in December 1959. Morrow recalled that the senator was "very much impressed by the fact that wherever we went...Guineans, old and young, stopped to wave, call out friendly greetings, and applaud. The senator told me that this was the first time he had ever seen this happen. I do believe that he must have concluded after three days of this kind of treatment that the showing of friendship was genuine and not

³³ Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 74; Edward Mortimer, *France and Africans, 1944-1960: A Political History* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), 333; Thomas Hodgkin and Ruth Schachter, "French-Speaking West Africa in Transition," *International Conciliation*, 528 (May 1960), 423.

³⁴ 611.70B/6-2459, Incoming Telegram from Conakry to the secretary of state, 24 June 1959 (NA).

something arranged for his visit."⁴¹ The answer as to why Guinea made no headway in its efforts to cultivate cordial relations with the U.S. was provided in a State Department memorandum of 21 August 1959 which observed that since Guinea's independence, "United States policy has been hesitant" because Washington "deferred to French sensibilities."⁴² This deference was evident in the recognition of Guinea, its admission to the UN, assigning an ambassador to Conakry, and in providing it with economic assistance.

At least three days before the referendum of 28 September 1958, Washington was certain that Guinea would vote "No." This created a dilemma for the U.S. In the first place, the State Department believed that it made better sense for France to take the lead in according any *de jure* recognition following the results of the referendum. But there was also a strong feeling that the U.S. should not wait for a French decision, if countries such as Egypt and the Soviet Union offered recognition. On 25 September, the department instructed the U.S. embassy in Paris to inform the French that barring the Egypt-Soviet dimension, the U.S. would have preferred to "proceed cautiously in recognizing Guinea since recognition would create serious complications in other African areas, could be interpreted as endorsement [of the] fragmentation of Africa and of [a] regime of questionable ability

⁴¹ Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, 209-211.

⁴² 611.70B/8-2159, Office Memorandum from G.R. Kenny and W.H. Price to Mr Stephen Brown, "Guinea," 21 August 1959 (NA).

and political orientation."²³ A day before the referendum, Amory Houghton, the U.S. ambassador in Paris, reported a meeting he had with Louis Joxe, the secretary general of the French foreign ministry. Joxe told Houghton that negotiations would be necessary to establish Guinea's status; that immediate U.S. recognition would have a "catastrophic moral reaction" in France and that the U.S. "should therefore wait and see what relations Guinea wished to have with France before taking any action."²⁴

Without a nod from Paris, Washington decided to hold back on the recognition of Guinea. Meanwhile, on 2 October 1958, Toure circulated a message to various governments, requesting them to recognize Guinea and enter into diplomatic relations with it. When Toure's message reached the White House two days later, Deputy Under Secretary Robert Murphy turned to Hervé Alphand, the French ambassador in Washington, on how the U.S. should respond. Alphand confirmed Houghton's report -- that an agreement would have to be concluded between France and Guinea before the latter could be considered independent and, that this would not take long. Murphy emphasized the delicate nature of the matter, "particularly in view of the possibility of recognition of Guinea in the near future by the Soviets and other governments." On this account, he hoped that France would "regularize the situation

²³ Telegram from the Department of State to the embassy in France, 25 September 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 670-671.

²⁴ Telegram from Paris to the secretary of state, 27 September 1958, *ibid.*, 671, n. 3.

promptly" and requested that the State Department be kept abreast of the discussions with Guinea.⁴⁵

The Soviet Union recognized Guinea on 5 October and the East Europeans quickly followed. This development made the pressure on the U.S. more immediate. But there was also Toure's own pressure. In response to his message of 2 October, the U.S. consulate general in Dakar could only promise Toure a reply "when all aspects of the juridical position of Guinea are clarified."⁴⁶ For Toure, this must have seemed quite incomprehensible as he could not think of anything about Guinea's status which still required clarification. Against this background, he wrote Eisenhower on 13 October, emphasizing the importance he attached to recognition by the U.S., requested diplomatic relations with the U.S., and stated that he realized that it was in Guinea's interest to remain aligned to the West. This letter induced the State Department to assure Toure that the U.S. was "giving due consideration to the question of the recognition" of Guinea as an independent state.⁴⁷ On 14 October, the department instructed the embassy in Paris to take up the question with French Foreign Minister Couvre de Murville. The embassy was to stress the

⁴⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, "Guinea's Request for Recognition," 4 October 1958, *ibid.*, 671-672.

⁴⁶ The telegram is filed as an enclosure in 770B.02/10-858, Desp. from Dakar to the Department of State, 8 October 1958 cited in *ibid.*, 674, n. 2.

⁴⁷ Telegram from Dakar to the secretary of state, 13 October 1958, *ibid.*, 673, n. 2; 611.70B/10-1758, Outgoing Telegram from the Department of State to AmConsul, Dakar, 17 October 1958 (NA). For Toure's letter of 13 October, see 611.70B/10-1458, Outgoing Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Paris, London, AmConsul, Dakar, 14 October 1958 (NA).

"increasingly difficult posture of the United States" as more countries recognized Guinea and to inquire as to "what point France's friends can extend recognition with French acquiescence." The embassy gathered why France was in no hurry to clear the way for Guinea: it was loath to "reward" Guinea for its choice to avoid giving the other African territories grounds for feeling that they too would have been better off with a "No" vote. In the end, the embassy could only extract a pledge that France would consult with its allies, especially the U.S. and Britain; this was coupled with a renewed French request that they postpone recognizing Guinea "for some weeks."

By 21 October, Washington had information from London that France had withdrawn its objections to the recognition of Guinea.¹⁰ Details of the revised French position to the State Department were conveyed to Washington three days later. France held that Guinea had "juridically speaking become a separate entity" by its "No" vote, and that although "it was not capable of exercising sovereignty," France would not object to the recognition of Guinea's "new status" by the U.S. However, Paris hoped that it would be "a qualified rather than formal recognition of a full sovereign state." It would "be very premature," France further contended, to consider the establishment of diplomatic relations or admission to the UN. The

¹⁰ Telegram from the Department of State to Paris, 14 October 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960, xiv* (1992), 672, n. 1.

¹¹ Telegram from the embassy in France to the Department of State, 15 October 1958, *ibid.*, 672-673.

¹² *Ibid.*, 675, n. 2.

department found the French position too garbled to be helpful.¹⁴ A meeting Dulles had on 25 October with Alphand did not straighten matters either. There was "no question," the ambassador said, "that Guinea would be independent and a member of the UN, but we did not wish to go too fast. Guinea will be separated from the French Community and will be recognized." This confusing explanation was silent on when France would "turn Guinea loose entirely" as Paris claimed to be still preoccupied with matters concerning the territories which voted in favor of the Community. "If the others believed it [Guinea] was favored," Alphand pointed out, "they would be encouraged to follow the same course with the resulting Balkanization of Black Africa, a development which would be against the interests of the West as a whole." France was also pressing its allies not to "rush diplomatic representation nor UN membership" for Guinea. Dulles drew Alphand's attention to the discomfort the non-recognition of Guinea was causing Britain, especially "because of the effect in Ghana and elsewhere." On UN membership, Dulles pointed out that his "basic sympathy" lay with the French but that was tempered by the fact that "precedents for delaying UN membership were not good."¹⁵

On 31 October, Britain informed the U.S. that it was set to recognize Guinea the following day.¹⁶ There was a ready consensus

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 678, n.1.

¹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, "Guinea," 25 October 1958, *ibid.*, 678-679.

¹⁶ In advance of this move, Britain consulted France. The British decision encouraged not only the U.S., but Italy and West Germany as well to quickly follow suit in recognizing Guinea. See

in the State Department that the U.S. should not delay recognition beyond a day or two after the British.¹⁴ Dulles immediately informed Eisenhower that France had "reluctantly given qualified concurrence to the recognition of Guinea" and that Britain was to announce its recognition the following day. On these grounds, he recommended that the U.S. should follow suit.¹⁵ This enabled Eisenhower to write Toure on 1 November 1958, informing him of the U.S. recognition of Guinea.¹⁶

In advising Eisenhower on the question of recognition, Dulles had informed him that France disapproved of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Guinea "at present," and had "also requested assistance in delaying Guinea's entry into the United Nations Organization." On both scores, Dulles went along with the French: he recommended that "the question of establishment of diplomatic relations with Guinea be held in abeyance for the time being," adding that the department would consult with Britain and France "to determine what practical steps might be taken to dissuade Guinea from requesting admission

¹⁴ "U.K. Recognizes Guinea," *West Africa*, 8 November 1959, 1064.

¹⁵ Telephone Call to Mr Elbrick, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Telephone Calls Series, Box 9 (DDEL).

¹⁶ Memorandum from Secretary of State Dulles to President Eisenhower, "Recognition of the Republic of Guinea," 31 October 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 679-680.

¹⁷ Letter from Eisenhower to Sekou Toure, 1 November 1960, AWF, International Series, Box 25 (DDEL); 870B.47411/11-158, Outgoing Telegram from the White House to Sekou Toure, 1 November 1958 (NA).

to the United Nations during the current session." Not only would the U.S. dissuade Guinea from seeking UN membership, it also discouraged other countries from taking the alternative action. In October 1958, Nkrumah had revealed to Wilson Flake, the U.S. ambassador in Accra, his intention to sponsor Guinea for UN membership "this session." Flake tried to talk him out of it, suggesting that his efforts would be in vain since "it would be a while before Guinea met the criteria for UN membership." This had its effect: Nkrumah now felt the need to test the waters first and assured Flake that he "would sponsor only when [he was] sure of [a] favorable outcome."

Meanwhile, Guinea continued to work towards cultivating America's diplomatic support and relationship. In November 1958, Toure despatched Telli Diallo as his personal emissary to Washington. Part of Diallo's brief was to express Guinea's appreciation of the recognition accorded it by the U.S. and to request the establishment of diplomatic relations, as well as Washington's support for Guinea's admission to the UN. But the U.S. remained attached to the French position. On 26 November 1958, the State Department assured Charles Lucet, the minister of the embassy of France, that it intended to consult with Diallo "concerning the possibility that Guinea might delay its

Memorandum from Secretary of State Dulles to President Eisenhower, "Recognition of the Republic of Guinea," 31 October 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960, xiv* (1992), 679-680.

645J.70B/10-2858, Incoming Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 28 October 1958 (NA).

For the letter, see the enclosure in 870B.47411/12-558, "Message to Secretary from Sekou Toure," 5 December 1958 (NA).

application for membership of the United Nations."⁴⁷ In spite of this maneuvering, Guinea was admitted as a member of the UN in December 1958 following a motion sponsored by Iraq and Japan. There was no opposition to the motion, but France abstained as it did when the issue was put to vote at the Security Council.⁴⁸

As with the recognition of Guinea, Washington also awaited a clear signal from Paris before establishing its diplomatic mission in Conakry. In February 1959, Robert Rinden assumed duties as the U.S. chargé at Conakry. Although he welcomed this development, Toure again urged action on the exchange of diplomatic missions.⁴⁹ But in Washington, French opinion carried greater weight, and down to the end of April 1959, Paris not only insisted that it did not "wish to honor the Guineans by sending an ambassador" to Conakry but canvassed that the "U.S. also not send one."⁵⁰ Washington was released from this obligation on 11 May, when information came from Rinden that Paris no longer objected to the "immediate naming of an American Ambassador to Guinea." The French were now convinced that Western interests

⁴⁷ 320.14/11-2658, Memorandum of Conversation ii of ii, "Conversation with Mr Charles Lucet, Minister of the Embassy of France (Discussion of Cameroun and Guinea)," 26 November 1958 (NA).

⁴⁸ *West Africa*, 13 December 1958, 1183; *ibid.*, 20 December 1958, 1211.

⁴⁹ For the letter, see enclosure in 611.70B/1-1459, Desp. from AmCongen, Dakar to the Department of State, "Transmitting letter to the Secretary from Sekou Toure, President of Guinea," 14 January 1959 (NA).

⁵⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, "Sixth Tripartite Talk on Africa," 28 April 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 691, 690.

would be better served by a fully-fitted U.S. Embassy in Conakry.¹¹ This was why the nomination of John Morrow as the first U.S. ambassador to Guinea was not announced until 28 May 1959.¹²

On one occasion, Satterthwaite had to remind Deputy Assistant Secretary James Penfield that the determining factor in U.S. dealings with Guinea was "the importance to the United States of cordial relations with France and of the NATO alliance."¹³ The Konkoure dam project shows that this consideration cast its spell not only in the diplomatic sphere but over U.S. economic assistance to Guinea as well. The dam -- an ancillary of the Fria aluminum project -- was one major issue Guinea had to confront following its rupture with France. The alumina plant was being built by an international consortium, but it was coupled to a scheme to harness the Konkoure river for hydropower. By the original arrangement, the French government had a minority equity interest in the dam company. In addition, the company was to secure a loan from the Bank of France and the World Bank, both guaranteed by the French government.¹⁴ But the dam project ran into a hitch as France stood by its word and withdraw economic support after Guinea's independence.

¹¹ 611.70B/5-1159, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Conakry to the Department of State, "French Charge Comments on Technical Assistance to Guinea," 11 May 1959 (NA).

¹² Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, 11.

¹³ 611.70B/10-2458, Memorandum of Conversation ii of ii, "Liberian Offer of 'Good Offices' towards Establishment of U.S.-Guinean Relations," 24 October 1958 (NA).

¹⁴ See "Industrializing Guinea," *West Africa*, 18 April 1960, 377.

In May 1960 -- in the course of a meeting with Under Secretary of State Douglas Dillon -- Diallo raised the possibility of the U.S. assisting in building the dam.⁴⁷ Washington was prepared to make some gesture in this regard, but not without approval from Paris. On 9 June 1960, the State Department informed France of the possibility of a U.S.-sponsored updating survey of the dam project. France asked for time to consider how the proposal would be received by the *Conseil de l'Entente* states; meanwhile, it disapproved of Guinea being informed of the U.S. proposal on the grounds that it would "have adverse effect elsewhere in Africa, especially in [the] evolving [French] Community." But if Conakry had to be informed, Paris suggested that the Konkoure project be placed in the wider context of the hydroelectric development of the entire West Africa. Following this prompting, the U.S. accepted to delay informing Guinea of its intention,⁴⁸ and also accepted that any announcement on the Konkoure project should be linked to similar projects in West Africa. In addition, France received assurances that the "commitment to make [the] study is not tantamount to commitment [to] construct [the] project," and that the study only afforded a period of grace "to think [the] subject through more thoroughly."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, "Economic Assistance," 18 May 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 709-710.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 713, n. 3.

⁴⁹ Telegram from the Department of State to the embassy in France, 24 June 1960, *ibid.*, 713-714.

On 8 July, Dillon gave Alphand a draft press release and told him that the U.S. proposed to inform Guinea of its proposal on the dam the following week. Alphand again told him that Paris would prefer a postponement. Four days later, inquiries by the State Department showed that Paris still had still not shifted any grounds, "but fully understood what the United States intended to do." On 21 July, the U.S. finally informed Guinea that it was prepared to undertake, at its own expense, an update study of the Konkoure hydroelectric project. Guinea was promised that if the project proved to be economically feasible and private financing for the related aluminum smelter facilities was assured, the U.S. would "consider how it might assist financially, in addition to financial participation of other private and public sources, in the construction of this project." To mollify the French, the aide-mémoire added: "It is observed that the proposed Konkoure Dam and related aluminum operations in the Republic of Guinea form one of a number of power-aluminum complexes, such as the Volta, Kouilou and Inga projects, which are at some stage of consideration in several states of Africa by various governments, enterprises or international institutions." The U.S. offer was declined. In the first place,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 714, n. 5.

¹² Telegram from the Department of State to the embassy in Guinea, 21 July 1960, *ibid.*, 714-715. Two days before the proposal was passed on to Conakry, Toure had written to Eisenhower. He described Guinea's huge bauxite and iron ore deposits and discussed the Konkoure dam project, which was being held back because France had withdrawn its guarantee for the World Bank loan. Part of the letter suggested that it was not exclusive to Eisenhower, but rather a circular "appeal to friendly powers that sincerely desire to help us achieve rapid progress on the African Continent and a better future for

it was according to Ambassador Diallo, qualified by "so many conditions," that "Guinea was unable to conclude whether the U.S. was genuinely prepared to go ahead with this project or not. For this reason the American offer was considered as possibly constituting a delaying action."¹¹ More decisive, however, was that Guinea already had a more attractive offer from the Soviet Union: a long-term loan to finance the entire construction of the dam and to send all the technicians and equipment necessary to ensure that work on the project started by New Year's Day 1961. Conakry was perplexed to no end by the U.S. proposal. As Toure put it, "If the USSR, which is not acquainted with this project, had replied that it would have to undertake a new survey, the Guineans would have some understanding of the necessity for such a delay; they find it more difficult to understand why the U.S., which already has the French plans for this dam, should propose another survey." Nevertheless, he did challenge Satterthwaite in October 1960: "If the U.S. should make an offer equivalent to that of the Soviets', there would be no question that Guinea

mankind." See letter from Sekou Toure to Eisenhower, 19 July 1960, AWF, International Series, Box 25 (DDEL). Eisenhower's reply, which followed a month later, stated that the U.S. was prepared to proceed with the updating survey, if it was acceptable to Guinea. See letter from Eisenhower to Sekou Toure, 15 August 1960, AWF, International Series, Box 25 (DDEL).

¹¹ Memorandum of Conversation, "U.S.-Guinea Relations (One of two)," 12 October 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 720.

would accept the U.S. offer instead."⁴ This challenge was never taken up.

In a large measure, Washington's offer on the Konkoure dam was symptomatic of its general attitude towards Guinea. By routinely deferring to France and offering too little too late, it missed out in Guinea and thus created openings for the "Communists". Put differently, it is possible -- in virtually every single case -- to match a "Communist" gain against a prior "tactical withdrawal" by the U.S. This pattern was evident in the delivery of Czech arms to Conakry in March 1959. Satterthwaite told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee that the arms delivery was a signal that the "Communist offensive" had emerged in Africa with "startling rapidity."⁵ Amidst the furor in Washington, Toure revealed his efforts in November 1958 to get arms from the U.S. through the intermediation of Liberia's President William Tubman and that it was only after waiting long enough for American response that he accepted the Czech offer.⁶

⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, "Konkoure Dam," 6 October 1960, *ibid.*, 717. Six days after the Toure/Satterthwaite meeting, Herter met Diallo and reiterated the offer to update the hydroelectric survey, and declared that Washington could not promise action without adequate analysis of all the problems involved. Memorandum of Conversation, "U.S.-Guinea Relations (One of two)," 12 October 1960, *ibid.*, 718-721, but especially, 719, n. 4.

⁵ "U.S. Views on Arms Shipments," *ibid.*, 2 May 1959, 429.

⁶ *The New York Times*, 30 April 1959. Toure repeated this in private before Satterthwaite (in June 1959) and before Eisenhower (in October 1959), and neither contradicted him. See 611.70B/6-2459, Incoming Telegram from Conakry to the secretary of state, 24 June 1959 (NA); Memorandum of Conversation, "Guinea," *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 698-702. The State Department confirmed that Guinea did actually make the request through Tubman. "However, the request was not acted upon." See 611.70B/8-2159, Office Memorandum from G.R. Kenny and W.H. Price to Mr Stephen

In spite of this disappointment, Toure still believed in the possibility of a warm U.S./Guinea relationship. In a telegram to Eisenhower, he hoped that the U.S. would "analyze the necessity of pursuing a genuine policy of friendship devoid of any ulterior motives or disloyal intentions, and establish direct contacts with the Guinean Government in order to evaluate correctly the facts exploited by French diplomacy." Washington did not seek any such "direct contacts," inducing Toure to observe:

there is incontestably a sort of hiatus in these relations, conditioned, I think, on the side of the United States by French-American relations. If you prefer, we have a feeling the evolution of our relations with the United States is closely dependent on the evolution of relations between France and Guinea. There is a sort of subordination of our interests which has been particularly marked recently.

Without doubt, Washington's attitude towards Guinea did not endear it to West Africans. Even thoroughly pro-West elements such as Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria were in sympathy with Toure "since [the] French, Britain and [the] U.S. had turned [their] backs on him." In October 1958, the U.S. embassy in Monrovia had advised that even while respecting French opposition to any relationship by the U.S. with Guinea, Washington should issue a public statement of "sympathy and interest in Guinea's development and many current problems as well as a declaration of intention to extend formal recognition." It warned that "a

Brown, "Guinea," 21 August 1959 (NA).

Telegram-letter from Sekou Toure to Eisenhower, 8 April 1959, White House Office, International Series, Box 7 (DDEL).

The New York Times, 30 April 1959.

Telegram from the consulate general at Lagos to the Department of State, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 221.

definite and positive U.S. response on Guinea could not be long deferred without considerable damage [to] U.S. prestige [in] West Africa."

Minimalism as Policy

Although Guinea's experience had its unique dimensions, it exemplifies a more general pattern: Washington's reliance on the European position as the governing basis of its dealings with (West) Africa. This strategy was quite pronounced in U.S. "aid" policy. In 1954, the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) mission in London explicitly stated that "The primary external responsibility for assisting development [of British African territories] lies with the British," and that "U.S. aid is essentially a specialized marginal adjunct to UK aid and is channelled via the UK." In March 1960, Assistant Secretary Satterthwaite warned that "Complete dependence on metropolises or former metropolises is dangerously unrealistic if we are determined

611.70B/10-2158, Incoming Telegram from Monrovia to the secretary of state, 21 October 1958 (NA).

The Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) was the successor to a number of U.S. foreign aid agencies. The first was the ECA, created in April 1948 to administer the Marshall Plan. At the end of 1951, the ECA was replaced by the Mutual Security Agency (MSA). In June 1953, the FOA centralized in a single organization the foreign aid and related programs which had been administered by the MSA, the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, the Technical Cooperation Administration, the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, and the Yugoslav Emergency Relief Assistance. In 1955, the FOA gave way to the International Cooperation Administration (ICA). See Brown, Jr., and Opie, *American Foreign Assistance, passim*.

Airgram from FOA/USOM London, "FY1956 BOB (Bureau of Budget) Presentation -- UK African OTs," 21 October 1954, RG 469, N. Euro/Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

to retain a Western-oriented African continent." Under Secretary of State Dillon could only assure him that the U.S. would "fill the gap" if the "European countries did not supply their [Africans'] needs or if the African territories were unwilling to accept aid from the former metropolises, and if additional aid were needed."⁴

By its very logic, Washington's option for what John Montgomery has called "a junior partner's role" in relation to the former metropolitan powers⁵ meant that the financial level of its aid to Africa was rather miserly. In 1956, a State Department Intelligence Report noted that the U.S. "has thus far devoted few of its resources to Africa." It calculated that "Direct official U.S. aid to Africa since World War II has amounted to about \$650,000,000 or less than two percent of total U.S. economic abroad during this period."⁶ Three years later, Melville Herskovits and his colleagues at the African Studies Program of Northwestern University reported that Africa received only 0.15 percent of the total [global] U.S. grants from 1945 to 1956; and 2.12 percent of all its loans, of which "over two-thirds" went to South Africa and the Federation of Rhodesia and

⁴ Memorandum from the assistant secretary of state for African Affairs (Satterthwaite) to the under secretary of state (Dillon), "United States Assistance to Sub-Sahara Africa," 30 March 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 99.

⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, "Meeting with Under Secretary Dillon to discuss U.S. Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly U.S. Assistance," 7 April 1960, *ibid.*, 111.

⁶ Montgomery, *Aid to Africa: New Test for U.S. Policy*, 37.

⁷ Department of State Intelligence Report 7103, "Africa: A Special Assessment," 3 January 1956 (NA).

Nyasaland." In 1956-60, the total U.S. aid to the UDCs was \$11.5 billions. Out of this figure, the Near East and South Asia received \$4.6 billions, East Asia got \$4.1 billions, \$2.2 billions went to Latin America, but Africa received only \$0.5 billion." There was thus sufficient statistical justification for this NSC confession in July 1960, that U.S. aid to Africa was "very modest compared with our [U.S.] assistance to other parts of the world and, of course, compared with the assistance of the European powers."

Eisenhower's policy of minimalism was hardly disguised. Thus *The New York Times* was able to report that the U.S. recognized the preponderant role of the European powers in providing foreign assistance to African territories, even after they had achieved independence them." By 1959/60, a recurring African complaint was that Washington was too given to waiting for the green light from the West European capitals. In August 1959, John Emerson, the American consul general in Nigeria, visited Claudius Akran, the Western Nigerian deputy premier and minister of economic

Africa: A Study Prepared at the Request of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 47.

Kenneth M. Kauffman and Helena Stalson, "U.S. Assistance to Less Developed Countries, 1956-65," *Foreign Affairs*, 45, 4 (July 1967), 719-720. Also see Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations and Loan Authorization, July 1, 1945-September 30, 1960* (Washington, DC., n.d.).

Memorandum for the NSC, "National Security Implications of Future Developments Regarding Africa," 12 July 1960, NSC Meeting Minutes, 456th Meeting, Tab A (RG 273, NA).

Dana Adams Schmidt, "U.S. Studies Role of Reds in Africa: Experts Find Soviet Bloc's Economic Aid to Guinea is Pattern for Congo," *The New York Times*, 21 July 1960.

planning. While anticipating an increase in U.S. assistance to the region, Akran talked of a widespread impression that the U.S. "has a tendency to hold back in matters of economic aid out of deference to the position and interest of the UK in this area."⁶¹ In July 1960, Kenyan nationalist Tom Mboya publicly insisted that U.S. assistance for Africa should be channelled directly to African governments and not through London, Paris, and Brussels.⁶²

It is seems profitable explore why Eisenhower presided over what International Cooperation Administration (ICA)⁶³ mission in London called "a small aid program of marginal effect"⁶⁴ for Africa. In general, foreign aid provides an obvious yardstick for the appraisal of the nuances of U.S. post-World War II diplomacy. According to Robert Pollard, "American leaders used foreign economic policy as the main instrument of U.S. security from 1945 to the eve of the Korean War"⁶⁵ in 1950. Even after 1950, Washington continued to rely on economic aid to safeguard its "national security" interests around the world. As Dean Rusk,

⁶¹ In his response, the consul general pointed out that "under the present (political?) circumstances we are obliged to go through the UK Colonial Office which passes upon Nigerian requests for external aid." See 745H.5-MSP/8-1059, Desp. from AmCongen, Lagos to the Department of State, "Call on Acting Prime Minister of Western Region," 10 August 1959 (NA).

⁶² *The New York Times*, 28 July 1960.

⁶³ See n. 61 above.

⁶⁴ Airgram from ICA/USOM, London, "FY56 UK DOT Program," 27 September 1956, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

⁶⁵ Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War*, 3.

secretary of state under presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, told a congressional committee in 1965:

Foreign aid is basic to U.S. security. Without it, many countries undoubtedly would have been subverted or overrun in the past two decades....I am convinced that our foreign assistance programs have served us well. In fact, foreign assistance has been our primary means of helping to guide the economic, social, and political evolution of most of the countries of the non-Communist world."

Viewed in this light, a discussion of U.S. foreign aid to a particular geographical region is at the same time a discussion of the nature and scope of its interests, policy and involvement in that region.

As shown in chapter 3, Washington's economic involvement in Africa during the Truman administration was rather modest both in terms of its scope and financial investment. In large measure, this had to do with the fact that its basic essence was not to prime the pump development, but to invest as little as was possible to extract the required raw materials. In spite of their obvious shortcomings, there was a substantial residue of the method and objectives of Truman's economic "assistance" program in the Eisenhower era. Thus as under Truman, U.S. "aid" program in Africa was essentially in the form of "technical assistance." This assistance was restricted to demonstration projects. The objective was to develop -- jointly with the participating country -- new or improved methods of tackling a given problem on the assumption that if the demonstrated method proved to be a solution, the country itself would continue to apply it to the

Testimony of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Foreign Assistance and Related Appropriations for FY 1966: Hearings...89th Cong., 2d sess., 1965* (Washington, DC.: Government Printer, 1965), 94.

same and similar problems. Such projects were, for the most part, in the general fields of agriculture, natural resources, vocational and technical training, public health and transportation. U.S. participation in any given project involved the provision of equipment and American technicians (along with their dollars needs). The recipient country was obliged to put up (counterpart) funds (in its own currency) equal to, but usually greater than, that contributed by the U.S. Apart from the centrality of technical assistance, Eisenhower's economic assistance program in Africa was hinged upon the paramountcy of Western European interests and a focus on raw materials extraction.

Ordinarily, investment, trade, and monetary ties all combine to orient colonial economies toward their respective metropolises. In the circumstance, colonies are -- by definition -- sheltered markets for the metropolises. It is thus understandable that there were occasional complaints in Washington that the European colonial presence constrained U.S. policy, especially in the economic sphere. In March 1954, the U.S. Defense Department complained that the "orderly development" of Africa's agricultural and mineral resources for the "mutual benefit of non-African free world countries" and of the Africans themselves,

From FOA/W, "Instructions Concerning Use of FY '54 African DOT Fund," (n.d.), RG 469, N. Euro/Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland). Also see the draft of the U.S.-Ghana technical cooperation agreement, 845J.00TA/3-1557, Department of State Instruction A-58, "Technical Cooperation Agreement with Ghana," 1 April 1957 (NA). The draft was a standard State Department document. Ghana adhered to the agreement on 3 June 1957. Similarly, each West African country adhered to the agreement shortly after its independence.

was being inhibited because of the fragmentation of the region into "economic spheres of influence," controlled by the European colonial powers. Thus while there were "development" programs in existence, such programs were aligned to the "narrow economic policy of the colonial powers involved, inhibit private investment from other nations, and are 'paternalistic' rather than designed to develop minor industry locally or in other ways to create slowly expanding markets." In the same vein, the 1959 study prepared by the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University attributed the thin scope of official U.S. economic involvement in Africa to the colonial powers who "have showed preference for financing their African needs themselves, so that outside participation on the governmental level has not been sought." On both accounts, the French were singled out as the most culpable. As late as August 1960, Secretary of State Christian Herter complained that the "basic problems" of U.S. policy in the francophone countries stemmed from "the extreme reluctance of the French to let the United States or any other country operate aid programs."

Paris was not entirely unwilling to allow foreign capital into its colonies. In June 1954, the French government and the

Paper prepared in the Department of Defense, "Some Basic U.S. Interests in Africa," 22 March 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, xi (1983), 106.

Africa: A Study Prepared at the Request of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 43.

Memorandum for the president from Christian A. Herter, "Aid to the Ivory Coast," 5 August 1960, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary, International Series, Box 1 (DDEL).

FOA concluded an agreement for a loan of 500 million francs. The loan was to enable the French to undertake a public works program in support of the mining activities of *La Société des Mines de Cuivre de Mauritanie*.⁷¹ In January 1958, the U.S. embassy in Paris observed that the French were becoming increasingly conscious of the need to develop their colonies and were therefore becoming more interested in attracting external capital into the territories.⁷² However, as shown in chapter 3, even in the period 1950-52, the French had been adept at soliciting and simultaneously fending off American capital. Thus those signals coming from Paris in 1954 and 1958 need to be evaluated with care. In April 1958, the U.S. embassy in Paris undertook an elaborate analysis of the prospects for U.S. capital in French Africa. It was readily recognized that the French government had come to the realization that the financial and technical investments required for the development of its African territories were beyond its financial capacity, as well as those of private French circles. But it was also quickly acknowledged that this awareness "in many liberal quarters...runs into severe nationalist opposition in Paris." The embassy observed that it was axiomatic for the French that their African territories should retain their purely French character, especially in the

⁷¹ Letter (and encl.) from B.E.L. Timmons, acting director, USOM/Paris to C. Vaughan Ferguson, Jr., American consul, Dakar, 9 July 1954, File 523.5 in 500 FOA, Dakar consulate general, General Records, 1951-55, Box 8 (Suitland).

⁷² 851T.2614/1-1058, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Paris to the Department of State and Other Interested Agencies, "French African Development Projects Looking Toward IBRD Financing," 10 January 1958 (NA).

economic sphere. In the context, Paris regarded the entrance of a foreign country (read the U.S.) or multilateral agencies into the area as "tantamount to driving a wedge to separate these territories from France. As a consequence, France has taken almost no advantage of the United Nations Technical Assistance Program and relatively little advantage of bilateral U.S. French technical assistance save for a few exceptional cases where administrative control remained largely in French hands." The same underlying consideration, the embassy believed, informed the French insistence upon the overseas territories provisions included in the 1957 Rome Treaty which established the European Economic Community (EEC). As explained by the embassy, those provisions were designed to ensure the extension of French rights and privileges in French colonies to the other members of the EEC "as a concession to retain as much economic domination in the territories" as was possible." It therefore expected that France "will try to maintain a sort of economic Monroe Doctrine,

The treaty provisions called for the gradual opening of the markets of the members of the Community to the overseas territories (OTs) on the same terms as those then accorded them by their metropolitan countries. Conversely, the other members of the Community were to gradually receive the same rights accorded the metropolitan countries in the OTs in terms of goods, capital and movement of labor. Reciprocal tariff reduction was also scheduled. Of more significance in the context of Franco-African relations was the establishment of an Overseas Territories Development Fund. The resources of the fund in the first five years was to be (about) \$581 million, the bulk of which (some \$511 million) was to be spent in the French Overseas Territories. This alone, when added to French expenditures in its colonies, was bound to make a significant impact in the territories without reference to any other external official or private investment. See Arnold Rivkin, "Africa and the European Common Market: A Perspective," Monograph No. 2, 1963-64, The Social Science Foundation and Department of International Relations, University of Denver.

particularly in the undeveloped Middle African territories, with the idea of retaining Africa as the natural economic hinterland of Western Europe. They will consequently probably try to discourage large-scale economic penetration of the area by other countries, particularly the United States."¹¹

By contrast, the British were very receptive to American economic participation in their colonies. This willingness was manifested in a 1955 ICA announcement that fiscal 1956 dependent overseas territories' (DOTs) program was to be focused on the British territories because "UK OT's wish an association of their territorial development and U.S. technical assistance."¹² A year later, ICA/London reported that the British government was increasingly favoring a larger U.S. official and private participation in the development of Africa.¹³ There were, indeed, clear and persistent signals from British officials on the need for U.S. assistance in their colonies. In March 1957, Lord Perth, minister of state for the colonies, stated that London "warmly welcomed U.S. interest in assisting African territories via FY '58 programs." He pointed out that having long recognized that

¹¹ 611.70/4-3058, "Briefing for Mr Clarence B. Randall on United States Foreign Economic Policy in Africa by the Staff of Amory Houghton, U.S. ambassador, Paris, March 21, 1958, Paris," Tab W of C.B. Randall, Report to Council on Foreign Economic Policy on U.S. Foreign Economic Policy in Africa, south of the Sahara, vol. ii, April 1958, (NA).

¹² Airgram from ICA/W to London, Accra, Lagos, Nairobi, Salisbury, Monrovia, "FY 1956 UK DOT Program," 23 September 1955, RG 469, N. Euro/Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

¹³ Airgram from USOM/London, "DOT Program -- British African Territories," 31 October 1956, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

the resources required for Africa's development were far beyond its resources, Britain would welcome any contributions that the U.S. could make. Lord Perth added that the Colonial Office was willing to make available its own experiences and territorial development plans which might help the U.S. in preparing well coordinated programs for territories." A month later, Secretary of State Alan Lennox-Boyd "expressed pleasure with [the] growing interest U.S. [was] taking in Tropical Africa."

Perhaps, because they expected so much from the U.S., the British were very disappointed with the U.S. program in Africa. London faulted the program on two grounds. One reason was the high cost of American technical assistance. According to the Colonial Office, the UN offered technical assistance (including American technicians) on a more advantageous basis than the ICA. Specifically, the UN paid the full salaries of the technicians it provided, as well as their international transportation expenses and half of the local "sterling costs." It was clear that the Colonial Office would have preferred advising the colonies to request technicians from the UN rather than the ICA when non-British technicians were required. The snag was the UN's inability to supply any equipment or supplies along with its technicians. Lending credence to this complaint, the U.S. embassy in London conceded that American technicians supplied by the ICA received allowances and other perquisites, paid for by the

" Incoming Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 14 March 1957, RG 469, N.Euro/Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-1957, Box 8 (Suitland).

" 745J.00/4-257, Incoming Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 2 April 1957 (NA).

territorial governments, at levels which exceeded the total salary and allowances of their British counterparts. This, it pointed out, was harmful to the U.S. public image as "African politicians are already attacking the munificence of 'expatriate' emoluments and are demanding equal pay for African Government employees." But the major British complaint had to do with the ineffectiveness of the U.S. program. London insisted that by being confined to pilot and demonstration schemes, the program necessarily precluded America's meaningful financial participation in the economic development of Africa."

Britain's disenchantment induced ICA/London to call for a more aggressive U.S. involvement in the British territories. The U.S. embassy in London joined the ICA to press that if the objective of U.S. economic assistance was to obtain the goodwill of Africans and to demonstrate American interest in their future:

it would logically follow that our aid criteria should be sufficiently flexible and generous to gain goodwill. It has been our experience that, if anything, our aid criteria have often proven frustrating to territorial governments and may very likely have appeared to local Africans as being the insurmountable obstacle denying them the assistance proffered. It is hard to explain to an African official that, although his Government really requires funds for a road, a hospital or a vocational training school, we can help only by granting limited amounts of demonstration equipment and never without providing American technicians."

The petition yielded no policy change. Worse, all the signs pointed towards a cut-back in the scale of the U.S. program. Complaining of "limited technical cooperation funds available,"

" Airgram from ICA/USOM London, "FY56 UK DOT Aid Program," 27 September 1956, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

" *Ibid.*

the ICA notified the U.S. Operations Mission, London that it should plan in terms of a \$1.3-\$1.5 million program for fiscal 1956.¹⁰ This ominous news prompted a sharp protest from ICA/London. With the embassy's blessings, the mission called for a fundamental policy shift, "if appreciable progress in forwarding U.S. interests in the area [British African territories] is to be made." It took pains to outline U.S. interests in Africa. The U.S. stake in Africa, according to the mission, was "primarily political" and "dependent on continuing control of metropolitan powers on the Continent and their ability to maintain stability in the territories." But it warned that powerful pressures inimical to this control and stability were building up, adding:

So long as the African territories largely remain stable and under the control of the metropolitan powers, U.S. interests are not likely to be adversely affected. If, however, certain territories were to come under Soviet or Egyptian control, or under the control of forces allied to these countries, U.S. interests would be seriously impaired. Moreover, if -- as seems more likely -- the growth of nationalism should lead to the creation of a number of small, weak states, or if the increase of centrifugal forces, the weakness of the metropolitan powers and racial tensions should produce instability and turmoil in many territories, U.S. interests would also be adversely affected.

The mission observed that African peoples "are politically `uncommitted'" and urged that "It would be prudent to do what we reasonably can to see to it that they become favorably disposed to the West in general and specifically to the U.S. and to U.S. leadership in the free world." The U.S. strategic interest in

¹⁰ Airgram from ICA/W to London, Accra, Lagos, Nairobi, Salisbury, Monrovia, "FY 1956 UK DOT Program," 23 September 1955, RG 469, N. Euro/Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

tropical Africa was also considered "secondary so long as the metropolitan powers are firmly in the saddle" and the U.S. had access to military facilities in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. But once the facilities fell into anti-Western elements, the sub-Saharan territories "would take on a far greater significance." The mission held that the U.S. had "important economic interest in continuing availability of Africa's strategic and essential materials (copper, uranium, columbine, industrial diamonds, cobalt, manganese, chrome, tin, cadmium, asbestos, and graphite), and its agricultural commodities such as coca and sisal."

Based on this appraisal, ICA/London suggested that U.S. objectives could be formulated as follows: (1) to prevent the spread in Africa of influences inimical to the U.S. -- "notably Communism and Pan-Islamism of the type now being propagated by Egypt"; (2) to forestall developments which would jeopardize U.S. strategic and military interests in tropical Africa; (3) to insure that independent territories and those soon to become independent cooperate with the U.S. or, at worst, do not actively oppose U.S. policies; (4) to support economic development as a necessary concomitant to the maintenance of political and social stability; (5) to promote racial harmony; (6) to maintain and develop exports of primary African commodities to American producers; (7) to foster the development of, and receptivity to, private enterprise; and (8) to reconcile U.S. obligations to its

" Airgram from USOM/London, "DOT Program -- British African Territories," 31 October 1956, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

European allies with African aspirations for self-determination. While acknowledging that no aid program could of itself accomplish all, or even any one of these objectives, the mission insisted that some progress could be made. But it emphasized that any accomplishment in this direction "would require an effort commensurate in terms of money and scope with U.S. efforts devoted to similar purposes in other areas of comparable size and stage of economic development. Continuation of a program of the restricted character of that now in effect cannot have the necessary impact."

ICA/London further insisted that even with optimum results, a U.S. program limited to technical assistance and at the "prevailing scale" was "quite inadequate in the light of the objectives set forth above, however useful some of the individual projects may turn out to be." The technical assistance program, it recalled, had been characterized by: (1) narrow criteria in the choice of projects; (2) serious delays in recruitment of technicians; (3) difficulties in negotiating the terms of contracts; and (4) a fairly evident lack of interest on the part of officials, both in London and in the colonies, "in a program of this sort, except when, as in the case of Kenya, technical assistance has been combined with substantial amounts of development capital." In the mission's view, a considerably larger and less restricted program was required "To provide tangible and lasting evidence to as many Africans as possible of U.S. interest in and ability to contribute to their welfare." It

¹¹ *Ibid.*

recommended that such a program should include "a substantial proportion of projects which will be enduring and which will be helpful over as wide an area as possible." The mission felt that for any significant progress in this direction, the U.S. would have to be prepared to supplement the efforts of the British and its colonies in "basic fields" of long term economic development such as highways, irrigation, agriculture and public health. It also believed that assistance would be required in key situations where their resources were inadequate and other sources of financing, such as the World Bank's, were unavailable. The mission suggested that \$5 million be included in the FY1958 budget submission to "provide for launching activity pending decision as to whether we are prepared to enter upon a more comprehensive economic program and the development of such a program with the British and territorial authorities if the decision is affirmative."⁴

On the basis of these petitions from the ICA and the U.S. embassy in London, it is clear that there was room for a substantial expansion of the U.S. program in British territories. It is worthy of note that Washington never bothered to engage the ICA and embassy in the debate over aid for British African territories. Perhaps, more pertinent is that from the foregoing, the modest level of official U.S. program in British African territories in particular cannot be explained in terms of any constraints imposed by the British colonial presence. Even at a general level, the notion that the colonial presence hindered the

⁴ *Ibid.*

U.S. program has limited explanatory power, and can -- to some extent -- be regarded as an alibi. The program was circumscribed less by the European colonial presence than by its institutional nature and objective. In 1956, the State Department observed that "we are handicapped by certain regulations or provisions of the law which narrow the field of technical assistance and make our program less flexible. For example, we cannot go much beyond providing persons to give demonstrations in teaching, when facilities and supplies may be badly needed." Consequently, the department recommended that "If we are to make our program useful -- and the African is avid for help of this nature --- we have to restudy technical assistance as an instrument of foreign policy in order to make it fit in a more realistic fashion the situation in Africa." The program could not be adjusted to fit "the situation in Africa," largely because it subserved a larger interest in Europe. In 1955, the department explained that the U.S. economic program in Africa was still placed "in the context of European recovery and the need for strategic materials"; it was therefore not, to quote the department again, a U.S. "policy towards Africa itself." There is nothing to suggest that any substantial change occurred in this regard all through Eisenhower's tenure.

"Africa: Problems of United States Policy," encl. in 611.70/2-1755, Department of State Instruction CA-6309, "Paper on United States Problems in Africa," 17 February 1956 (NA).

Department of State Instruction, (Joint State-ICA Message), "Establishment of ICA Administrative Positions in Kenya, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast," 8 August 1955, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

Eisenhower recalls that "In early 1960, when the independence movement [in Africa] really began to snowball, it became obvious that our traditional policy of refraining from involvement in areas considered to be under the hegemony of other nations had to be re-examined." The result, according to him, was that "in early April [1960]," he approved that "the United States would be prepared on the basis of a case-by-case appraisal of a country or project to extend economic development assistance where needed to the nations of Africa." "Certainly, Washington was willing to adapt to Africa's independence. But this adaptation had a symbolic as opposed to a substantive content. NSC 6005 -- which was adopted as a statement of policy on 9 April 1960 -- urged that the U.S. should impress on Western European countries, "the continuing importance to them of a stable and prosperous West Africa and conduct all U.S. activities with a realization that a continued close Eur-African relationship is important to the United States itself." In turn, West Africans were to be impressed with the "fact that their national well-being depends in large part on a continued close economic and cultural relationship with Western Europe." It was therefore recommended that the Western Europeans be urged "to expand their efforts to influence and support their respective dependent and recently independent areas."

" Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 572-573., n. 13.

" NSC 6005, "U.S. Policy Toward West Africa," 29 February 1960 (RG 273, NA). Its amended and final version, NSC 6005/1 contained the portions of NSC 6005 quoted here. See NSC 6005/1, "Statement of U.S. Policy Toward West Africa," 9 April 1960, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, xiv (1992), 117-126.

Overall, there is every indication that the Eisenhower administration never considered itself a major player on the African turf. At a meeting of the NSC on 18 August 1960, Acting Secretary of State Douglas Dillon insisted that the U.S. policy of relying on Western European nations to "influence and support their respective dependent and recently independent areas so long as such encouragement and reliance are consistent with U.S. national interest" was "adequate and realistic." He observed that France believed that it could take care of its ex-colonies, and that the U.S. "was working with the French, trying to keep them in a position of supporting their ex-colonies." For Dillon, the "position with respect to the British areas" was "at present satisfactory," as Ghana and Nigeria had remained friendly with Britain. But pointing out that "there was a sense of urgency about the problem of eventual Communist infiltration," Defense Secretary Thomas Gates, Jr. stated that he was disturbed by the policy of relying upon the European metropolises to safeguard Western interests in Africa; first, because African states might not continue to welcome the Europeans; and second, because the Europeans might not be very willing to continue their assistance. Eisenhower's response was that the underlying principle of the French Community "was to keep the ex-colonies of France closely bound to France economically and culturally." In order not to disrupt the French scheme, he ruled that in the case of the French Community (except Guinea), "we should get the countries go first to Paris." In the end, Dillon explained the basis of the policy of relying on the Western Europeans to bear Africa's foreign aid burden. "Our thinking," he told the meeting later,

was that, so far as any major effort was concerned, black Africa should have a relatively low priority. This did not mean that we should not make an effort but rather that our efforts should be limited to technical assistance and some individual projects like Volta Dam. Latin America, where U.S. responsibility is greater and the possibility of success is also greater, should have a higher priority. The same thing was true of India where the prospects of success were also greater and where the country was willing to contribute to its own development. We could not get ourselves into a position where we were committed to vast contributions to Africa."

It is quite clear that this conscious effort to avoid "vast contributions to Africa" derived from the region's "relatively low priority" in U.S. strategic terms. Burton Kaufman shows that the Eisenhower administration started with a "trade not aid" policy, which meant that it put its faith in the efficacy of the American private sector along with public sector loans, rather than grants, to alleviate underdevelopment. By implication, this focus implied drastically "reducing and even eliminating foreign economic assistance." Meanwhile, Washington's retrenchment was occurring at a time when Moscow was aggressively expanding its economic assistance to the UDCs. This Soviet initiative compelled a shift "within two years" from the original policy of "trade not aid." The new emphasis was to ensure "greater public assistance to less developed countries." In the event, Kaufman's stress is on Eisenhower's "own virulent anticommunism" and how it led to a dangerously expanded and ill-defined concept of national security which determined the formulation of foreign economic policy. As a result, the administration, according to Kaufman, "justified the

Memorandum, "Discussion at the 456th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, August 18, 1960," 25 August 1960, AWF, NSC Series, Box 13 (DDEL); also in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 147-159.

entire program of economic assistance to Third World nations, whether on a short-term or long-term basis, as serving the national security because it was expected to contain the spread of communism."¹⁰⁰

There is no doubt that Soviet economic penetration of the UDCs was clearly causing great discomfort in Washington in the period, 1956-1960, and that it provided the basis for a more aggressive infusion of American public capital into the UDCs.¹⁰¹ In 1958, the State Department rationalized U.S. aid to India solely in this context. It pointed out that "In the apportionment of U.S. aid, one consideration must take priority over all others, and that is that U.S. aid must be directed toward those

¹⁰⁰ Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy*, *passim*, esp. pp. 9, 73, 208.

¹⁰¹ This mood was depicted in a major study, "The Nature and Problems of Soviet Economic Penetration in Underdeveloped Areas," AWF, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 6 (DDEL). This paper was neither dated nor signed. But it must have been prepared in 1956 -- on its last page, there is a tabulation of "Credits Extended and Under Serious Consideration by the Sino-Soviet Bloc to non-Bloc Countries, January 1956." It was also the subject of a long telegram which the U.S. embassy in Moscow sent to Washington in January 1956, see Incoming Telegram from Moscow to the secretary of state, 27 January 1956, AWF, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 6 (DDEL); and Dulles made it a focal point in a speech he gave in Philadelphia a month, see "Address by John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State before the Philadelphia Bulletin Forum, February 26, 1956," Press Release No. 92, (State Department) Public Service Division Series 5 No. 43 (NA). By 1960, the "Bloc economic offensive" in the UDCs had become a major concern for NATO as well: see Memorandum on NATO's Competence and Objectives in the Economic Field, 4 November 1960, Papers of Dean Acheson (Post-Administration Files), 1960-62, Box 85 (HSTL). Also see Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, chap. 4. Burton I. Kaufman, "The United States Response to the Soviet Economic Offensive of the 1950s," *Diplomatic History*, 2, 2 (Spring 1978). For contemporary analyses, see Stanley J. Zyzniewski, "The Soviet Bloc and the Underdeveloped Countries. Some Economic Factors," *World Politics*, xi (1958-59); Hans Heymann, Jr., "Soviet Foreign Aid as a Problem for U.S. Policy," *ibid.*, xii, 4 (July 1960).

who need it most in order to remain free -- this for the greater good of the Free World." The U.S., it was further stressed, "is resolved to extend all possible, necessary support to the countries on the perimeter of the Soviet Union and Red China as well as to vulnerable areas further removed geographically from the Communist bloc." This resolve was, however, constrained by two factors: the fact that U.S. resources were necessarily finite, and the "conviction that the greatest aid must be extended at the points where the danger is greatest at any time." It was explained that the size of India's aid, in particular, was informed by the country's population of nearly 400 million, and "Its enormous political and psychological importance in Asia." Other considerations were that India, "the largest democracy in the Free World," had to develop economically if political and social stability were to be maintained, "and it urgently needs economic assistance for such development." Besides, Washington held that the security and wellbeing of South Asia and the Middle East were all are predicated on India's stability and independence (from "Communist" control). Above all, it was believed that if India failed to obtain the external assistance it desperately needed from the countries of the "Free World, it may by force of circumstances make some arrangement for help from the Soviet Union which could eventually compromise its independence (and consequently that of the whole area)."

511.00/1-758, Department of State Instruction to U.S. diplomatic missions, "Economic Aid to India," 7 January 1958 (NA).

It is striking that this global strategic dimension did not rub off on Africa. The authorized Mutual Security Funds for the entire continent (excluding South Africa and Egypt) actually dropped from \$209 million in fiscal 1960 to "less than" about \$140 million in fiscal year 1961. PL 480 programs projected for West Africa through 1963 added up to \$8 million, and that was " (mostly for Guinea)." The allocation pattern of the 1961 Mutual Security Funds was a revelation in itself. Of the "less than" about \$140 million which was allocated to Africa, \$50 million was allocated to Africa, \$37 million to Africa, and \$37 million to Africa.

Through farm subsidies and support prices by the government, U.S. farmers were (and are still) encouraged to over-produce many commodities. This surplus is acquired and held by the government at enormous cost. By February 1956, the government stock of the surplus was over \$9 billion. In order to solve this domestic agricultural crisis, Congress passed Public Law 480, the Agricultural Trade and Development Assistance Act, in 1954. PL 480, as the act was better known, authorized the overseas transfer of U.S. surplus agricultural products through various means -- by sale, by barter, and as gifts. Title II which provided for grants for emergency relief, authorized the release of surplus commodities for free distribution by private American voluntary agencies engaged in overseas relief programs. Title I -- the most important in the foreign aid setting -- authorized the sale of the commodities in the local currency of the purchasing country. The currency thus realized could be used in various ways: to help develop new markets for U.S. agricultural products, to procure materials for the U.S. strategic stockpile, to pay for U.S. overseas obligations, and to promote the economic development of the purchasing country. For the latter purpose, three quarters of such currency was given or loaned back to the country; any currency which could not be disposed of was held by the U.S. By the late 1950s, one-third of all U.S. foreign aid to the UDCs was in the form of such local currency sales. See Bruce F. Johnston, "Farm Surpluses and Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, x, 1 (October 1957); David A. Baldwin, *Foreign Aid and American Foreign Policy and American Policy: A Documentary Analysis* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 40; Jacob J. Kaplan, *The Challenge of Foreign Aid: Policies, Problems, and Possibilities* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 52.

Memorandum for the NSC, "National Security Implications of Future Developments Regarding Africa," 12 July 1960, NSC Meeting Minutes, 456th Meeting, Tab A (RG 273, NA).

million went to Morocco, \$20 million to Tunisia, Libya got \$18 million, and \$2 million went to Ethiopia. That left only \$60 million for the rest of the continent. The allocations to the North African countries were justified as "special assistance...furnished to advance special U.S. military and political interests." The same preference was reflected by official U.S. lending institutions. The total Development Loan Fund (DLF) lending to Africa as at 1960 was \$57 million. Out of this, Morocco, the Sudan, and Tunisia were allocated \$23 million, \$10 million, and \$8.7 million respectively, "with smaller loans for Liberia, Somalia, Nigeria, Libya and Ethiopia."

In October 1960, the Joint Chiefs of Staff drew attention to the strategic importance of the western bulge of Africa and warned that the air and maritime facilities there, "both actual and potential, would constitute a serious threat to U.S. interests in the South Atlantic and in South America, as well as in Africa itself, if they were to fall under the political influence of the Sino-Soviet Bloc." But it is worth pointing out that it was only in August 1960 -- against the background of the Congo crisis -- that anyone in Washington first spoke of Africa in these terms. The truth, therefore, was that in a

Ibid.

Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense Gates, "U.S. Interest in Ghana and Guinea," 17 October 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 161.

In mid-August 1960, in the heat of the Congo crisis, the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered that "The continued availability" of Congo's Kitona airfield and the port of Banana "to the Free World is strategically important as a base for maritime patrol aircraft in support" of operations in the South Atlantic as well as "for the control of ocean shipping, and as a

setting in which strategic considerations counted for so much, that of black Africa to the U.S. was very minimal. In 1959, a strategic contrast was drawn between North and sub-Saharan Africa, and the latter came out poorer. By its very geographical location -- immediately south of Europe -- it was obvious that the "loss of North Africa to Soviet control would outflank Europe and it was doubtful whether the free world would survive such a disaster." In addition, both Britain and France had military bases in North Africa, while the U.S. had Strategic Air Force bases in Libya and Morocco. North Africa was therefore so strategically important that the U.S. was explicitly committed to maintain its base rights there "by all feasible means, being prepared, if necessary, to offer reasonable quid pro quos therefor."¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, Africa south of the Sahara was said to be "of less immediate strategic importance," except that "its vast [primary] resources could make a major contribution to the free world."¹⁰¹ NSC 5719 and a number of other "high policy"

major point of access to the Congo and Africa south of the Sahara." It is instructive that this prompted Under Secretary of State Douglas Dillon to observe that the memorandum marked the first time, to his knowledge, that the Department of Defense had indicated that the U.S. had "any specific strategic interests in Africa south of the Sahara." See Memorandum from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Twining) to Secretary of Defense Gates, "The Kitona-Banana and Kamina Bases in the Congo," 18 August 1960, *ibid.*, 425-427. For Dillon's response, see *ibid.*, 427, n. 1.

¹⁰⁰ NSC 5614/1, NSC Report, "Statement of Policy on Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, October 3, 1956," *FRUS, 1955-1957*, xviii (1989), 139, 143; Operations Coordinating Board Report, "Progress Report on Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, November 13, 1957," *ibid.*, 145.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum of Conversation, "First Tripartite (U.S., Britain, France) Talks on Africa," 16 April 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 46.

papers of the 1950s also reveal that, for Washington, Africa's real importance derived primarily, if not entirely, from its raw materials.¹⁰³ In 1959, a study for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported that "U.S. strategic interest in SubSaharan, as against North Africa, has been directed toward its value as a source of raw materials."¹⁰⁴ But Washington was convinced that in spite of any "prospective political changes," Western access to the raw materials "will generally be preserved."¹⁰⁵ In effect, this meant that the U.S. had no incentive to worry about Africa.

Of course, the "Communist" specter was often invoked to justify policies in (West) Africa. But there was a wide-ranging consensus, even by mid-1959, that "Despite the socialistic and, in many respects, authoritarian outlook of many of the leaders in the area, communism has not become a strong force in West African

¹⁰³ For example, see CIA, "Major U.S. Interests in Africa," 22 March 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, xi (1983), 107; Draft Policy Statement prepared by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, "Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Policies with respect to Tropical Africa", *ibid.*, esp. 99. (n.d., but suspected to have been written before March 1954: see *ibid.*, 98, n.1).

¹⁰⁴ *Africa: A Study Prepared at the Request of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate*, 40.

¹⁰⁵ National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 72-56, "Conditions and Trends in Tropical Africa," 14 August 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, xviii (1989), 47.

internal politics."¹¹⁴ This kind of assessment invalidated a real "anti-Communist" response as far as Africa was concerned.

The discussion on aid to Mali is a clear pointer as to how policymaking was influenced by the general feeling that West Africa in particular was not under any "Soviet threat." On 1 November 1960, Under Secretary of State Dillon, Director of the Bureau of Budget Maurice Stans, and their assistants, met with Eisenhower to discuss a \$2.5 million mutual security program for Mali. Dillon introduced the subject, stating that "We are at the point where we should give consideration in policy terms to the question of aid for Mali." He estimated that France was still aiding Mali at the rate of \$10 million annually, but stressed "the importance of acting quickly if we are going to do this to avoid the possibility of close ties developing between Mali and Guinea." The aid was to be "in the form of commodities produced in the United States, including cement and POL [petroleum, oil, lubricants] with the counterpart funds thus generated being used to improve a transport route through the Ivory Coast and to Mali." Dillon opposed the idea that such aid should be channelled through the UN on the ground that the Soviets and Czechs "are pressing to give aid which would tie Mali to Guinea." The minutes show that at that stage, Eisenhower asked "whether our giving aid would result in an advantage to us in relation to the Russians

¹¹⁴ National Intelligence Estimate, NIE 70-59, "The Outlook in West Africa Through 1960," 16 June 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 56; NSC 5818, "Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," *ibid.*, 29. Also see NIE 76-59, "The Outlook in East, Central, and South Africa," 20 October 1959, *ibid.*, 67; 611.70/1-1455, State Department Office Memorandum, from Mr Utter to Mr Jernegan, "Internal Security of the AF Area," 14 January 1955 (NA).

and the Czechs. Mr Dillon said that it would, adding that the Mali authorities look to us as the leader of the West. The hazard is that if we do not give aid, we will be closed out of the area, as they have attempted to do in Guinea. The great danger of a Mali-Guinea tie-up is that there would then be a route leading directly into Algeria." In spite of this scenario, Eisenhower still emphasized that he generally preferred "the UN approach" to aid for Africa. He reluctantly endorsed the aid for Mali, acknowledging that the surveys which precede UN and World Bank economic development programs usually take "a long time -- a year or more -- by which time the situation may have gone against us." But Eisenhower did not relent from his position that direct U.S. aid program for Africa should be regarded and planned to be "essentially transitional in nature, over the next twelve to eighteen months, while a UN program [for Africa] is being organized."

Quite clearly, geopolitical considerations -- the strategic value of a region to the U.S. and the perceived degree of the "Communist threat" -- were very central in determining U.S. aid allocations to it; and, the size of the allocation, it needs be said again, was a reflection of the given region's location in U.S. global strategic calculations. West Africa lacked the "special U.S. military and political interests" afforded by the military bases located in the Maghreb. And, unlike Asia, it was removed from the immediacy of more blatant "Communist"

∴∴∴ Memorandum of Conference with the president, 1 November 1960, White House Office, International Series, Box 1 (DDEL).

machinations. In the circumstance, the Eisenhower administration felt no need to make any overture to the region.

There were, of course, other factors which constrained U.S. policy in Africa.¹³² Quite outstanding in this regard was the perennial hostility by Congress to aid-giving. This was manifested by the drastic cuts it increasingly made to foreign aid appropriations from 1952. In that year, Congress slashed twenty-five percent off the amount originally requested by the White House to aid "nations resisting Communist aggression."¹³³ In vain, Eisenhower tried to restrain this tide. For example, sensitive to the congressional mood, the administration sought \$3.5 billion for fiscal 1955, \$1 billion less than what had been appropriated for the preceding year. Yet Congress cut the total to \$2.8 billion, largely at the expense of funds for NATO, but also through a ten percent cut in funds for the UDCs. Above all, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee amended the legislation to put a specific terminal date, 30 June 1955, on the aid agency. According to Andrew Westwood, "Many Congressmen voted for it as a way of expressing their desire that foreign aid be terminated."¹³⁴

For fiscal 1957, Eisenhower cited the Soviet economic "offensive" in requesting a mutual security appropriation of \$4.67 billion. But Congress was unmoved: it approved only \$3.8

¹³² In chapter 2, mention was made of how U.S. foreign aid was hampered in the late 1950s by its balance-of-payments difficulties.

¹³³ "Final Appropriation for Mutual Security Program," 21 July 1952, *FRUS, 1952-1954, i* (1983), 514-516.

¹³⁴ Andrew F. Westwood, *Foreign Aid in a Foreign Policy Framework* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1966), 50.

billion, erased the Asian Economic Development Fund which had been established in 1955, and did not approve the request for a special \$100 million fund for the Middle East and Africa. Furthermore, Congress ruled that eighty percent of the development assistance funds should be made available to recipients as loans not grants. For the rest of his presidency, Eisenhower faced a Congress with an increasing distaste for aid-giving.³³³ In 1959, the Senate directed the White House to submit to Congress programs for phasing out all grant aid, excluding military and technical assistance programs. At the same time, many urged on the UDCs the introduction of disinflationary fiscal and monetary policies and better treatment of private foreign investors.³³⁴

The solidifying congressional disaffection with foreign aid was very important in determining the essential elements of the official U.S. economic involvement in Africa, and by extension, the overall nature of U.S. policy in Africa. In 1957, Assistant Secretary of State William Rountree argued for U.S. support of a "Colombo Plan" for Africa because he believed that such a plan would encourage (a) the West European powers to continue to assist both their colonial territories and former territories, (b) the African peoples to continue to collaborate with and look primarily to the European countries for assistance, and (c) continuation of the "mutual interdependence so vital" to both the Africans and the Europeans. Rountree believed that the

³³³ Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, 68-69, 169-175, chap. 11.

³³⁴ Kaplan, *The Challenge of Foreign Aid*, 49.

achievement of these objectives would "Relieve the growing pressure on the United States to assume a major and expanding role in meeting Africa's need for external aid as our ability to do so is likely to be limited by the growing Congressional sentiment for reducing aid programs."¹³³

But the attitude of Congress, as influential as it was, does not adequately explain the perfunctory nature of the U.S. program in Africa. It is instructive that in spite of its growing aversion to foreign aid, Congress still allowed such programs where there was a perceptible danger to the "national security" of the U.S.¹³⁴ But the focus was on Asia -- the increasing French reverses in Indochina were interpreted as "Communist" gains. India, too, aroused concern. There was a general agreement in Washington that the "loss" of the world's largest democracy (India) to "Communism" was unacceptable. Thus although "Congress was continuing its effort to phase out the development aid program, at the same time it was beginning to appreciate the value of aid as a partial response to the problem of communist

¹³³ Memorandum from the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Rountree) to the secretary of state, "Request for Approval of a United States Policy of Cooperation with other Governments in Organizing a Colombo Plan for Africa," *FRUS, 1955-57*, xvii (1989), 71. In 1957, the Consultative Committee for Technical Assistance in Africa (CCTA) proposed a "Colombo Plan" for Africa. This was intended as a modest variation of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia, which was founded in 1951. Established in 1950, the CCTA was originally composed of Belgium, Britain, France, Portugal, South Africa, and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Central African Federation); Ghana became a member in 1957, and Liberia in 1958. See *ibid.*, n. 3.

¹³⁴ Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, 71.

expansionism in Asia."¹³³ In the final analysis, the geopolitical consideration was thus decisive in determining U.S. aid to the UDCs. This -- in the sense of the absence of the "Soviet threat" coupled with the region's low strategic rating in Washington's calculations -- was the sufficient cause which determined the nature of the U.S. interest and involvement in the region. Any other causal factor was merely a necessary or supporting condition.

Yes for European Neocolonialism

The mounting antagonism to aid-giving was symptomatic of a deeper national mood which wished for America's retreat from some of the global responsibilities it had assumed since after World War II. Of course, such a retreat had to apply to those areas which did not have a tangible bearing on U.S. "national security" concerns. As early as 1950, this calculation was already shaping U.S. policy in Africa. In that year, the State Department enumerated "the basic attitudes" which Americans had and which were influencing U.S. policy toward Africa. One was "a strong desire to assume as few additional world responsibilities as possible."¹³⁴ One can therefore appreciate why in 1955, both ICA and the U.S. embassy in London explicitly acknowledged that U.S. technical assistance to British colonies was "not only marginal

¹³³ James M. Hagen and Vernon W. Ruttan, "Development Policy under Eisenhower and Kennedy," *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 23, 1 (October 1988), 4.

¹³⁴ "United States Policy Toward Africa," Conference Document No. 13, attached to Office Memorandum from Mr Hare to Mrs Hope, "Summary of African Panel," 7 March 1950, Lot 53 D468, Office Files of Assistant Secretary of George C. McGhee, 1945-1953, Box 9 (NA).

but has been deliberately kept so," adding that the program was "in general not likely to be either very large or very effective in the immediate future, in view of the narrow limits established by our criteria." They explained the underlying principle for the U.S. "administering a small aid program of marginal effect for the dependencies": Washington did not intend to increase its global political and financial commitments "by encouraging the peoples of British Africa to depend increasingly upon the U.S. Government for resources."¹¹⁵

Africa was so peripheral to U.S. global interests and so removed from a possible "Communist" threat that Washington had no incentive to establish a direct or active presence in the region. This made it imperative that Washington had to rely upon the Western European powers, which had considerable leverage in Africa, to safeguard Western interests there. This strategy and its broader implications were expressed in April 1956, when Assistant Secretary George Allen reminded the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences that the relationship between Africa and Western Europe was established when the concepts of international relations "were different." As a logical follow-up, he emphasized the "basic advantages" brought to Africa "by this process of opening wider horizons." Allen held that "in the course of this relationship between the metropolitan powers and the African territories, there grew up interlocking economic relations, the violent disruption of which would seriously

¹¹⁵ Airgram from ICA/USOM, London, "FY56 UK DOT Program," 27 September 1956, RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

weaken" both Africa and Europe. Given this assumed mutual relationship between Africa and Europe, he proposed that what was required was "transforming existing relationships into a cooperative endeavor" in which African states "can achieve and maintain their national self-respect....We need friendly and cooperative relations with Europe and Africa, just as their own interests require the maintenance of intimate ties with each other."¹⁴⁷

Allen was in effect saying that the basics of the colonial relationship should still subsist, if "independence" inevitably occurred in Africa. A year later, Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph Palmer 2d expressed the same hope, using words which were essentially identical with Allen's. After noting that Africa and Europe were "fundamentally complementary areas," Palmer held that the "essential problem" which confronted the West was "that of bringing about a new relationship" between the two "in a manner which will assure the most beneficial results for both parties." It was therefore Washington's hope, he said, that "the transition of Africa from a colonial to a national status will take place in a manner which will preserve the fruitful ties which bind the two continents together."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ George V. Allen (assistant secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs), "United States Foreign Policy in Africa," State Department Press Release No. 206, 20 April 1956 (NA); also in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 306 (July 1956).

¹⁴⁸ Joseph Palmer 2d (deputy assistant secretary for African Affairs), "The Problems and Prospects of Sub-Saharan Africa: A United States Point of View," *Department of State Bulletin*, 9 December 1957, 930-933.

Put simply, the U.S. desired a strong European neocolonial presence in postcolonial Africa. More than colonialism, neocolonialism is a collaborative arrangement between the former European colonial rulers and the indigenous political elite. Thus to function at all, neocolonialism requires pliant local mediators. In turn, this requires that no rupture occurs in the transition to independence between the indigenous elite and the "departing" colonial power,¹²⁵ as was the case of Guinea. The overall objective and its enabling conditions received their elaboration in NSC 5719 which was issued in July 1957. Its running theme was that the U.S. was "concerned that Africa South of the Sahara develop in an orderly manner towards self-government and independence in cooperation" with its European colonial powers. "We hope," the paper continued, "that this transition will take place in a manner which will preserve the essential ties which bind Europe and Africa -- which are fundamentally complementary areas....The United States, therefore, believes it to be generally desirable that close ties and mutually advantageous economic relationships between the European powers and Africa should continue after the colonial period has passed."¹²⁶

¹²⁵ See Ronald Robinson, "The Excentric Idea of Imperialism, with or without Empire," in Owen and Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*; idem, "Imperial Theory and the Question of Imperialism after Empire," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xii, 2 (January 1984).

¹²⁶ NSC 5719, "U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," 31 July 1957 (RG 273, NA); also, NSC 5719/1, "Statement of US Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960," 23 August 1957, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, xviii (1989), 76-87.

In a narrow sense, the desire that the European colonial networks in Africa should not be disrupted after independence was informed by the strategic interest that the Europeans should continue as the primary source of external capital assistance for Africa. This division of labor compensated for the thin U.S. participation in Africa's economic development. But the broader implication was that it sustained Western influence in the region. Washington calculated that by virtue of their suzerainty over Africa, the Western European countries were necessarily bearing a large burden of Africa's economic development. But the extent to which they would continue doing so after independence was not clear. NSC 5719 reasoned that factors other than their financial capabilities would influence any decision taken in this regard by the Europeans. "One very important factor," it believed, "will necessarily be a metropolitan power's appraisal of the likelihood that it will be able to maintain close political and economic ties with a particular colonial territory, either through an extension of the colonial relationship itself or through the development of a mutually-satisfactory new relationship." Where the prospects for such a relationship did not exist, "the incentives of the metropolitan powers to provide financial or economic support, either through public or private investment, are likely to suffer rapid deterioration." And in such a circumstance, the U.S. saw itself having to carry the "whiteman's burden" in Africa. The only way to avoid such a burden was to encourage an "orderly," and therefore harmonious, transition which would ensure continued primary European responsibility for Africa. In the words of NSC 5719: "Thus our

success in attaining the previously-stated U.S. objective of preserving the essential ties between Europe and Africa, will probably have an important impact upon the rate of Africa's reliance on U.S. assistance."¹⁰

The singular significance of NSC 5719 is that it tied together what would ordinarily appear as disparate elements of U.S. policy in Africa during Eisenhower's presidency: its option for "a junior partner's role" to the Western Europeans, not just in terms of foreign aid, but in a more general sense; opposition to "radical" nationalism which could rupture the relations between Western Europe and Africa, and the endorsement of European neocolonialism. It needs be stressed that it was not simply that Washington wished to avoid responsibility for Africa's aid burden. The underlying goal was to retain the European influence as the "stabilizing" element in Africa. Foreign aid featured so prominently in the calculations because it was the primary mechanism for sustaining the pro-West orientation of the African political elite.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

FAR more than the Sudan's which preceded it in 1956, Ghana's independence on 6 March 1957 was momentous in modern African political history. Dramatized by the personal charisma of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana at once appeared on the world stage as the one place where Africans were set to recapture their initiative in history. This significance and its long term implication -- in terms of relations with independent African states -- was not lost on Washington. It is instructive that the U.S. delegation to Ghana's independence celebrations was led by Vice President Nixon; and that 2000 stories and 290 photographs were published in 850 American newspapers and magazines on Ghana's independence. In a briefing for Nixon, Secretary of State Dulles acknowledged Ghana's independence as one of the "most significant events of contemporary Africa," adding that the event would be watched with great interest by both colonial and anticolonial powers. More importantly, he also recognized that "The other emergent peoples of Africa will follow with particular attention the degree of interest and sympathy which the United States accords these developments."

As spelt out by the U.S. embassy in Accra in 1959, the U.S. intended to encourage and help Ghana develop and maintain a stable political and economic set-up so that it would neither seek nor accept assistance of "an obligating nature from any

West Africa, 20 April 1957, 382.

745K.02/1-2457, Memorandum for the vice president, "United States Delegation to the Gold Coast Independence Ceremonies, March 3-10, 1957," 24 January 1957 (NA).

countries whose motives are inimicable to the national interests of the United States." It was equally considered important that Ghana stood as "a good example for other areas in Africa which are approaching independent status." In this sense, Washington saw the transfer of power in Ghana as the crossroad which would decide whether Africa's rapport with the West -- a rapport instituted by colonial rule -- could be sustained in the postcolonial era. According to one official paper,

The success of this newly independent African State in establishing an adequate framework of government dedicated to democratic principles and capable of maintaining political stability and progress in improving the productivity and living standards of the people should be a stabilizing influence throughout Africa and other underdeveloped areas. It will provide a concrete demonstration of the benefits of association with the West and an answer to the criticisms of western influence in Africa which are made for political reasons by the Communists and others.

The paper believed that Ghana would need external assistance to help overcome the shortage of skilled labor, capital, and other problems it would encounter in its effort to establish a stable political, social, and economic structure. There was an implicit promise that the U.S. would help tackle the problems for "Ghana will be a testing ground of the willingness and ability of the West to help underdeveloped peoples."ⁱ

In a broad sense, the U.S. objective was to ensure that Ghana's independence did not create a condition in that country

ⁱ 745J.5MSP/10-2059, Telegram for AmEmbassy, Accra to the secretary of state, 20 October 1959 (NA).

ⁱ *Mutual Security Program. Fiscal Year 1958 Estimates -- Near East, South Asia and Africa*, No. 175, p. 189. (Author, publisher and date not indicated). RG 469, N. Euro./Yugo. Division, UK Subject Files, 1948-57, Box 8 (Suitland).

which could harm America's "national security" interests. This goal involved the neutralization of competing sources of influence, especially, the Soviet presence. In a briefing for Nixon, the State Department observed that the "Communist Bloc" had been displaying an increasing interest in the continent of Africa. It was noted that aside from "various efforts at penetration and subversion in northern Africa, the Soviet Union and its allies have seized every opportunity to further their interests South of the Sahara." The 1956 inauguration ceremony of Liberia's President William Tubman was instanced as an example of the latter: the Soviets were said to have sent "a powerful delegation, sought to establish diplomatic relations, and made vague offers of economic assistance." Nixon was alerted that the U.S. expected a more vigorous Soviet effort during Ghana's independence ceremonies. There was thus the fear that the end of British political rule created an opening for the Soviets to seek a bridgehead into sub-Saharan Africa via Ghana. In seeking to forestall such an outcome, the U.S. opted to get directly involved in Ghana. This was made even more compelling by the British policy of ending all financial assistance to any of its colonies which became independent.

645K.60/2-1857, Memorandum for the vice president, "Communist Bloc Activities in West Africa," 18 February 1957 (NA).

See *African Affairs*, 57, 227 (April 1958), 144-145. Clause 3 of the Ghana Independence Bill precluded the Colonial Development Corporation from executing any projects in Ghana after its independence. See "The Lords and Ghana," *West Africa*, 2 February 1957, 106.

Nkrumah Cultivating America's Friendship

A key factor which worked in favor of U.S. policy in Ghana in the period 1957-60 was the ideological orientation of Nkrumah and his government. On the eve of Ghana's independence, Nkrumah pledged that his government would neither be "aligned with any particular group of powers or political bloc" nor did it "intend to follow a neutralist policy in its foreign policy." Ghana, he declared, only intended "to preserve its independence to act as it sees best at any particular time." A foreign policy which is at one and the same time both nonaligned and non-neutral is quite likely to pose conceptual complications, both in its articulation and analysis. Whatever the practical implications of such a policy, what was more evident was a distinctly pro-Western, and especially American, bent in Ghana's foreign policy. In 1958, Douglas Anglin observed that Ghanaian neutralism was different from India's because the former "is more clearly oriented to the West and more dependent on it economically and militarily than is India." This meant that "Despite Ghana's declared intention of seeking friendship with all nations...her relations with the Soviet bloc have not been on the same footing as her relations with the West." Indeed, as shown in the Introduction to Part

Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), 98.

Anglin, "Ghana, the West, and the Soviet Union," 154, 160. Explaining Nkrumah's pro-Western bent, Thompson whose twenty-six year old book remains the standard text on his foreign policy observed that "As with most Marxist-Leninists, he [Nkrumah] could not foresee a long-term power base in a peasant economy and, like Lenin, looked to electrification to lay the basis of Ghana's industrialization. Thus his fascination with the long-laid plans to develop the Volta River, and thus his need to have the support of the West. He wished to consolidate his domestic base as

III, Nkrumah was as anticommunist as the most conservative elements in Africa for most of the period 1957-60. The goodwill manifested in U.S./Ghana relations during the period was in effect made possible by the ideological unity between both parties. In 1957, the U.S. had its opportunity cut out for it in Ghana. So anxious was Nkrumah for a warm relationship with the U.S. that he, for example, went to great lengths to downplay the racial humiliation of Finance Minister Komla Gbedemah in the U.S. The same consideration was at play in the establishment of Ghana/Soviet relations.

Gbedemah and the Orange Juice Palaver

On 7 October 1957, Gbedemah set out from New York by road for a speaking appointment at Maryland State College. He was accompanied by Bill Sutherland, his African American personal assistant, and two other African Americans from the college. On entering Delaware State, one of the African Americans -- according to one account -- pointed to a Howard Johnson restaurant and told Gbedemah that by the state's practice, he

quickly as possible without frightening potential investors...Put differently, the Volta River Project and the industrialization of Ghana were [in the period 1957-60] worth some deference to the West." See his *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 14, 26-27. Similarly, Obed Asamoah wrote that "Nkrumah's commitment to the Volta River Project muted his criticisms of the West, explained his relations with Israel, slowed his approaches to the East and explained his commitment to United Nations operations in the Congo even after it was apparent that the UN was being used to further used to further western interests and to frustrate his ally, Patrice Lumumba, and his objectives of African unity." See his "Nkrumah's Foreign Policy, 1951-1966," in Kwame Arhin (ed), *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah* (Trenton, N.J.,: Africa World Press, 1993), 235.

Philip Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," *Fortune*, November 1961, 131.

would not be served there because of his skin pigmentation. Highly skeptical -- and especially, because they had just been served in New Jersey by a member of the same chain -- Gbedemah suggested that they stop at the next Howard Johnson's. Just outside Dover, Delaware, they ran into one. Gbedemah and Sutherland went in, sat down and ordered two glasses of orange juice. The drinks were packaged for them, to take out. Their declared intention to have the drinks inside the restaurant was turned down, even after Gbedemah had identified himself to the manager. At that stage, he paid for the drinks but did not touch them. The following day, Gbedemah issued a press statement in New York on the incident which was widely attributed to racial discrimination. An embarrassed Eisenhower immediately invited Gbedemah to breakfast with him (Eisenhower) alone at the White House on 10 October.

845J.411/10-957, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 9 October 1957 (NA). Gbedemah's case was not isolated. In November 1960 -- after presenting his credentials to Eisenhower -- the Central African Republic ambassador to the U.S., Gallin Douathe, left Washington for New York. On the way, he, his wife, and his secretary stopped at a restaurant managed by one George James at Pulaski Highway, near Baltimore. (The restaurant was believed to be part of the Curb Restaurants chain). The three sat at a table but were told that dinner was no longer being served, which was not true as they saw others being served at the same time. On learning of the situation, and even when their identities were revealed, the proprietor still insisted that they could not be served and instead suggested that they could buy sandwiches to eat on the road. At that point, Douathe ordered four orange juices. These were served without glasses, with the waitress refusing them from drinking inside the restaurant. Like Gbedemah, the Douathe group paid for the drinks which they did not touch, and left. The Cameroonian representative at the UN, Ferdinand Oyono, had a similar experience in New York. See Telegram from (U.S. mission) New York to the secretary of state, 9 November 1960, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary, International Series, Box 1 (DDEL).

Meanwhile in Accra, Ghana's External Affairs Ministry had formally drawn the attention of the U.S. embassy to the incident and requested that "such action as appropriate" be taken as a redress.¹¹ Before receiving the note, Wilson Flake, the U.S. ambassador there, had issued a statement expressing his personal regret, "assuming Gbedemah was quoted correctly."¹² The following day, Flake reported to Washington that Nkrumah had been annoyed with Gbedemah for creating a fuss over the incident. Nkrumah who was personally acquainted with racial discrimination in U.S.,¹³ was reported to have said that he personally "understood these things" and emphasized that he would have kept quiet if he had been in Gbedemah's place. He believed that some day "everything will be all right" in the U.S. and counselled that meanwhile, "Africans had to be understanding." In addition, Nkrumah was said to have made a "guarded but nevertheless uncomplimentary" reference to Sutherland. He held that Sutherland should have known better than let Gbedemah stop at the particular restaurant in question.¹⁴ In Flake's presence, Nkrumah ordered the Information Ministry to "kill any further publicity" over the incident in government-owned media; he telephoned the same order to the editor of his party's newspaper, the *Evening News*, and

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² 845J.411/10-957, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 9 October 1957 (NA).

¹³ He was in the U.S. in 1935-44 and did his undergraduate and graduate studies at Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania respectively. See Nkrumah, *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*.

¹⁴ 845J.411/10-1057, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 10 October 1957 (NA).

telephoned the *Daily Graphic* for "cooperation." Finally, he requested Flake to assure Washington that "this incident will not have the slightest effect on the happy relations between our two countries."¹⁰ The following day, Flake reported the silence of the Ghanaian media on the "Gbedemah story." The day's issue of the *Graphic*, he said, "has not one word" on the incident.¹¹

Before Flake's despatch arrived in Washington, the State Department had sent a telegram narrating the incident and Eisenhower's breakfast appointment with Gbedemah to the U.S. embassy in Accra. He was asked to personally communicate the information and the regrets of the U.S. government to Nkrumah.¹² The telegram reached Flake after his meeting with Nkrumah. He went back to Nkrumah, conveying its substance. Nkrumah opted not to release the telegram to the press. He told Flake that he had ordered that Radio Ghana was not to even mention the incident in its local languages programs, and that he had sent telegrams to Gbedemah and the Ghana high commissioner in London advising them to rest the matter.¹³

Soviet Diplomatic Representation

While the establishment of diplomatic relations between Washington and Accra came on the eve of Ghana's independence and

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ 845J.411/10-1157, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 11 October 1957 (NA).

¹² 845J.411/10-957, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 9 October 1957 (NA).

¹³ 845J.411/10-1057, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 10 October 1957 (NA).

more as a matter of course¹³, Accra/Moscow relations came almost a year later and was preceded by considerable foot-dragging and deference for American opinion by Accra. It was as if Ghana was getting involved with the Soviets in spite of itself.

Shortly after Ghana's independence, A.L. Adu, the permanent secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and Defense, informed the U.S. consulate general in Accra that the Soviets had requested the establishment of diplomatic relations and that Ghana would accede to the request.¹⁴ But on 13 March 1957, the cabinet agreed that only those countries which already had consular representation in Accra would be allowed to establish embassies. This formula technically ruled out the Soviet Union and the East European countries and was therefore considered a "victory" by the State Department.¹⁵ There is little doubt that Accra's sensitivity to U.S. opposition to its diplomatic relations with Moscow was an important consideration in the formulation of this formula. The American consulate general in Accra had, in its despatch of 23 January 1956, alerted the State Department that the Soviet Union was most likely to be invited to the Gold Coast

¹³ In a telegram issued on 5 March (but for release on the following day) to the American consul, the State Department announced that the U.S. had officially recognized Ghana, and that -- with the permission of the Ghanaian government -- the American consulate general in Accra was being raised to the status of embassy. The telegram also announced that the Ghanaian government had been informed that it was welcome to establish an Embassy in Washington "as soon as practicable." See 745K.02/3-557, Telegram from the Department of State to AmConsul, Accra, 5 March 1957 (NA).

¹⁴ 645J.61/3-957, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 9 March 1957 (NA).

¹⁵ 645J.60/3-1857, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, and AmEmbassy, London, 18 March 1957 (NA).

independence celebrations.⁴² The department responded that the "recent and current diplomatic efforts of the Soviet Union to interest itself much more directly" in Africa was a matter of serious concern in Washington. It was its conviction that the establishment of diplomatic relations between African states and the Soviet Union was a Soviet device to pave the way for the "communist penetration" of Africa because "Once a Soviet mission is established in an African state it becomes only a matter of time before Russian blandishments and enticements of economic aid and technical assistance are likely to be accepted." Under these circumstances, the prospect of a Ghana/Soviet diplomatic relationship was viewed with grave "concern."

In a separate note, the department notified the U.S. embassy in Monrovia that it remained "vitaly interested in the problems" posed by possible establishment of Ghana/Soviet diplomatic relations, and would therefore appreciate the embassy's reports on the subject. This prompted the embassy to contact Liberian officials, urging them to use their good offices to dissuade Ghana from entering into diplomatic relations with the Soviets.⁴³

⁴² 645K.61/1-2356, Desp. from American consulate general, Accra to the Department of State, "USSR Likely to Receive Invitation to Gold Coast Independence Celebrations," 23 January 1956 (NA).

⁴³ 645K.61/2-2056, Department of State Instruction CA-6355 to the American consulate general, Accra, "Department's Views on Prospect of USSR Establishing Diplomatic Relations with the Gold Coast," 20 February 1956 (NA).

⁴⁴ 645K.61/2-2157, Department of State Instruction A-50 to AmEmbassy, Monrovia, "Possible Liberian Talk with Ghana Officials on Soviet Mission," 21 February 1957 (NA).

⁴⁵ 645K.61/2-2757, Telegram from Monrovia to the secretary of state, 27 February 1957 (NA).

President Tubman of Liberia was very willing to be of assistance. He sent a personal note to Nkrumah. In the note which was shown in advance to the U.S. embassy in Monrovia, Tubman "earnestly" prayed Nkrumah to employ all means possible to forestall the "introduction in West Africa of any harmful ideology, i.e. Communism."

On 4 March 1957, William Tolbert, Liberia's vice president and head of the country's delegation to Ghana's independence celebrations, showed Nixon a copy of Tubman's letter to Nkrumah. Nixon told Tolbert that he had discussed Ghana's foreign policy with Nkrumah and was informed that it would be "nationalist rather than neutralist," that Ghana would pursue a policy of non-involvement and nonalignment in the East/West confrontation, would protect its independence and resist domination from any quarter. Nixon also learned that Ghana might find it necessary to establish relations with the Soviet bloc, but that in the meantime firm decisions for diplomatic relations had only been made for Britain, France, Liberia, and the U.S. Nine days later, the U.S. embassy in London confirmed that during Ghana's independence celebrations, Nkrumah met with the Soviet representative and agreed to the establishment of a Soviet

645K.61/2-2857, Telegram from Monrovia to the secretary of state, 28 February 1957 (NA).

645J.61/3-657, Telegram from Accra to the Department of State, 6 March 1957 (NA). For Nixon's discussions with Nkrumah, see Memorandum of Conversation, "Visit of Vice President Richard M. Nixon," 4 March 1957. This TAB B in "Report to the President on the Vice President's Visit to Africa, February 28-March 21, 1957 -- Detailed Conclusions and Recommendations," 5 April 1957, White House Central Files (Confidential File), Subject Series, Box 100 (DDEL).

diplomatic mission in Accra. The British Foreign Office had shown the embassy a telegram to that effect from its high commission in Accra. On 21 March, the embassy warned that "danger may already be upon us" as there were reports that the Soviets had already purchased 40,000 tons of Ghana's cocoa. "In this event British representatives would consider Nkrumah already following in Nasser's steps and danger exists Volta River could become another Aswan Dam."

At the end of October 1957, the British Foreign Office informed the U.S. embassy in London that it understood that Ghana and USSR were again in touch over the establishment of diplomatic relations "and decision possible in next few weeks." At that point, Washington still believed that Ghana could be persuaded out of any Soviet "representation at all." The U.S. embassy in Accra was reminded that the State Department had long held that the establishment of a Soviet embassy in West Africa constituted a serious political threat to the stability of both the host country and its neighbors. In particular, it was felt that a Soviet diplomatic mission in Ghana harbored a "real danger [of] subversive activity which could be injurious [to the] internal security" of Nkrumah's government. Above all, the department did not wish to lose the gains the U.S. had achieved in "establishing friendly relationship with Nkrumah." It was considered "highly

645J.61/3-1357, Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 13 March 1957 (NA).

645J.60/3-2157, Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 21 March 1957 (NA).

645J.61/10-3057, Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 30 October 1957 (NA).

desirable" that Flake should explore the matter "along above lines at some length with him [Nkrumah] now" through a "personal approach rather than give impression you are acting strictly on instructions." In return, Flake informed the department that the "basic question" had been settled during the independence celebrations, when Nkrumah "was pressured by USSR delegate and formally promised to exchange diplomatic mission with USSR. Timing was indefinite and now USSR wants action." He therefore held that it was futile trying to get Nkrumah to abort the deal. Flake preferred that the focus should instead be directed at delaying the exchange of diplomats between Accra and Moscow for as long as possible, using the interlude to give Ghana a "series of inoculations to make it resistant to activities of USSR mission when it eventually arrives." He agreed with the "wisdom of approach suggested by Department" and hinted that Nkrumah had invited him and the heads of five other diplomatic missions to see him on November 6. Flake undertook to stay on after the meeting and "express as my own views the points covered" in the department's telegram.

The meeting mentioned by Flake was held on 6 November 1957 between Nkrumah and the diplomatic representatives of Britain, Canada, India, France, Liberia, and the U.S. The meeting revealed that Nkrumah was still trying very hard to walk the tight rope of accommodating the Soviets without offending the West. Before the

¹ 645J.61/10-3057, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 1 November 1957 (NA).

² 645J.61/11-457, Telegram from Accra to the Department of State, 4 November 1957 (NA).

meeting, Flake sent word to Nkrumah that he should not tell the group that the exchange of diplomatic representatives with the Soviet Union was imminent or even imply that he would turn to Moscow if the West failed his expectations of economic assistance, but that he should keep his options open until he heard from the group and "especially until I could talk to him privately." Nkrumah opened the meeting by emphasizing that although the Soviets were pressuring the Ghanaian high commissioner in London, he was yet to take a final decision on diplomatic relations with the USSR. But he also made it clear that he could not hold the Soviets off for much longer. He then inquired if the diplomats would accept a quantitative limitation on their staffs in Ghana so that he could have a cover to set a ceiling on the numerical strength of the Soviet diplomatic staff. But they insisted on consulting their governments first before giving him an answer. Nkrumah made it clear that he would have preferred not have the Soviets at all, except that he had found himself in a tight corner on the issue. From Monrovia, the U.S. ambassador reported Tubman's account of the meeting. Nkrumah was said to have explained that the Soviets discussed the establishment of diplomatic relations with him during the independence celebrations and had pressured him ever since; he

645J.61/11-657, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 6 November 1957 (NA). The U.S. did not agree to any limitation on its diplomatic staff in Accra. See 645J.61/11-1857, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 18 November 1957 (NA).

was uncertain how to handle the mounting pressure and therefore requested counsel from the diplomats.¹⁴

The establishment of Ghana/Soviet diplomatic relations was announced on 15 January 1958, with the exchange of representatives to follow in "due course."¹⁵ But Ghana remained anxious to ensure that this development did not damage its relations with the U.S. In July 1958, Adu found it necessary to explain to the African Bureau of the State Department that Ghana had been "bulldozed" into relations with the USSR at the time of independence; that Ghana had since then used every device to delay the actualization of such relations; but that in the end, the exchange of diplomatic missions with the Soviets had to be made; still Ghana wanted the Soviet mission to be as small as possible and was therefore insisting that the embassy staff be limited in total numbers.¹⁶ It is of significance that Ghana still had no agreement for a Soviet ambassador until 10 April 1959. The first Soviet ambassador, Mikhail Sytenko, arrived in August 1959. On the other hand, it was only in early 1960 that Ghana sent "an advance party" to open an embassy in Moscow.¹⁷

¹⁴ 645J.61/11-1557, Telegram from Monrovia to the Secretary of State, 16 November 1957 (NA).

¹⁵ 645J.61/1-1558, Telegram from London to the secretary of state, 15 January 1958 (NA).

¹⁶ 745J.00/7-2458, Memorandum of Conversation, "Discussion of Ghana's Various Diplomatic Problems, including Exchange of Missions with USSR and Recognition of Communist China," 24 July 1958 (NA).

¹⁷ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 100, 102.

U.S. Cultivating Ghana's Friendship

As already indicated, the underlying element of U.S. involvement in Ghana was to use it as springboard for retaining Western -- and therefore U.S. -- hegemony in postcolonial Africa. To achieve this objective, Washington strove to create goodwill for itself in Accra from the onset. It is therefore not surprising that from April 1957, the U.S. went to great lengths in urging its aid upon Ghana.

In the week of 15 April 1957, officials of the U.S. embassy, the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), and Ford Milam, the U.S. regional agricultural attache in Accra, held discussions with Ghanaian officials on "the subject of possible American aid to Ghana." In his meeting with Minister of Trade and Labor Kojo Botsio and Finance Minister Gbedemah, Milam outlined the general provisions of PL 480⁴ and listed the various commodities declared as surplus by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The U.S. embassy later reported that following the discussions, both ministers "gave the impression that their government is interested in receiving commodity aid assistance." On 28 June 1957, Flake called on Gbedemah and conveyed to him "the sense of the [State] Department's [Instruction] A-87 of June 14, 1957, which had to do with possible United States assistance to Ghana on the latter's five-year industrial development program." Gbedemah was told that he

⁴ For background information on PL 480, see n. 104, chapter 4.

⁵ 745J.5MSP/4-1957, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Aid Discussion with Ghanaian Officials," 19 April 1957 (NA).

"could take it for granted that the United States would consider carefully and sympathetically any specific request which Ghana might make for assistance under the Development Loan Fund if and when the Development Loan Fund should become a reality in the Fiscal Year 1958."¹⁷

In September 1957, Gbedemah was in Washington for a World Bank meeting. The occasion afforded ICA officials the opportunity to arrange a series of meetings with him, all on possible U.S. aid to Ghana. From Stuart Van Dyke, director of the ICA Office of African and European Operations, he received assurances that the U.S. was interested in assisting Ghana and was therefore prepared to receive requests for specific forms of aid, and that Ghanaian officials had been encouraged to talk to "our representatives." In turn, Gbedemah explained that his government was taking its time in studying its needs for assistance and would communicate them to the appropriate U.S. agencies "as soon as they were crystallized."¹⁸ Earlier, when he paid a courtesy call on Assistant Secretary of Commerce Henry Kearns, Gbedemah was briefed on PL 480 and expressed interest in Ghana's participation in the program. He was equally enthusiastic with Kearns' proposals for an American trade mission to Ghana and an

¹⁷ 745J.5MSP/6-2857, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Possible Loan to Ghana under the Mutual Security Program," 28 June 1957 (NA).

¹⁸ 845J.00-TA/9-2657, Memorandum of Conversation, "Visit of Ghana's Finance Minister Gbedemah to ICA," 26 September 1957 (NA).

investment study of Ghana -- by the department -- on behalf of American business interests.⁴²

During Nkrumah's visit to the U.S. in 1958, the issue of U.S. assistance to Ghana featured prominently in meetings between American and Ghanaian officials. Under Secretary of State Dillon opened one of the meetings, stating that the U.S. was deeply interested in the improvement of the welfare of the peoples of the UDCs and "is always desirous of lending assistance." He pointed out that Ghana's requirements for technical assistance in education, agriculture, and related fields could be examined by the ICA, and added: "We are, moreover, willing in principle to help in Ghana's industrialization if we receive specific requests." Gbedemah focussed the discussion on Ghana's Second Development Plan and the Volta River Project. Dillon returned with the suggestion that the U.S. could assist in the plan by adopting the procedure it employed in the case of India: once the plan was ready, U.S. officials, including DLF staff, would look it over and indicate the general fields where the DLF could entertain applications; Ghana could then make an application for assistance for specific projects in those fields. This suggestion was agreeable to the Ghanaians.⁴³

In spite of these efforts, the level of U.S. assistance to Ghana remained rather modest. It was not so much that Ghana did

⁴² 811.05145J/9-2557, Memorandum of Conversation, "Discussion of Commercial and Investment Relations between the United States and Ghana," 25 September 1957 (NA).

⁴³ 845J.00TA/7-2558, Memorandum of Conversation, "U.S. Technical Assistance and Ghana's Five Year Plan," 25 July 1958 (NA).

not desire such assistance as that the U.S. package were not attractive enough. In practice, U.S. "economic assistance" essentially meant technical assistance. Ghana certainly had some need for technical assistance: its request for a ICA survey team in October 1957¹¹ led to the conclusion of an agreement for the staffing of an ICA mission -- as well as technical assistance in geophysical survey and agricultural development -- in Ghana.¹² However, Ghanaian officials never hesitated in emphasizing that they seriously desired external assistance, not for "frivolous" projects, but for those which were clearly beyond their country's financial resources. In this regard, the Volta River project came up for specific mention at every turn in their discussions with the Americans.¹³ As the next chapter reveals, for quite some time, the U.S. tried very hard to avoid getting seriously involved with the project.

¹¹ See letter from A.L. Adu, permanent secretary, Ghana's Ministry of External Affairs, to the ambassador of the United States of America, Accra, 30 October 1957. This is an enclosure in 745J.5MSP/11-1-57, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State and ICA, "Technical Assistance Program in Ghana: Government of Ghana Requests an ICA Survey Team as a Preliminary to the Possible Establishment of a United States Operation Mission," 1 November 1957 (NA).

¹² 845J.00-TA/3-2658, Memorandum of Conversation, "ICA Survey Team's Views on Technical Cooperation Program in Ghana," 26 March 1958 (NA).

¹³ For example, see 745J.5MSP/8-1357, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "American Economic Aid to Ghana," 13 August 1957; 745J.5MSP/1-859, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Ghana's Possible Need for Loan Funds: Conversation with the Minister of Finance," 8 January 1959 (both at NA); Memorandum of Conversation, "Prime Minister Nkrumah's Talk (Second) with the President," 24 July 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

For clarity, the point being emphasized at this stage is that while Nkrumah was trying hard to achieve the best possible relationship with Washington, the Eisenhower administration was similarly cultivating Accra's friendship. Besides pressing aid, the administration employed other subtle means for this purpose. On the first anniversary of Ghana's independence, Eisenhower sent a congratulatory message to Nkrumah. "It is gratifying to note," the message said, "the developing ties between Ghana and the United States, many of which reach back into the history of our two countries." On a personal level which must have touched a sensitive chord in Nkrumah, Eisenhower noted with pride that "hundreds of your young people, including yourself, have chosen to come to America to study in our schools, to establish friendships...." He used the opportunity to invite Nkrumah to pay an official visit to the U.S. in July of that year.⁴⁷ In his reply, Nkrumah talked of the "deep impression" which Eisenhower's letter had made on him and his colleagues in government, adding that the message would be accepted by all Ghanaians as "an expression of the very great interest which Your Excellency, your Government and the people of the United States of America have always taken in the affairs and aspirations of the people of Ghana." He accepted Eisenhower's invitation to visit the U.S.⁴⁸ It is also worthy of note that Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter sent Nkrumah a congratulatory message on his

⁴⁷ Letter from Eisenhower to Nkrumah, 4 March 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

⁴⁸ Letter from Nkrumah to Eisenhower, 7 March 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

49th birthday, 9 September 1958,¹³ and another on the second anniversary of Ghana's independence.¹⁴

Just as Nkrumah overlooked the treatment meted out to Gbedemah in the Dover restaurant, Washington was equally willing to accommodate and rationalize complaints against Nkrumah's internal politics. In March 1958, Tom Mboya, African Elected Member of the Kenya Legislative Council, was in Ghana -- on Nkrumah's invitation -- to attend the first anniversary celebrations of Ghana's independence. Mboya had positive impressions of Ghana, which he published in the *East African Standard*. He regarded Ghana "as yet another success in the struggle of the colonial peoples against imperialist colonial regimes." Mboya held that Ghana "stood out as the first and real challenge to those who believe in the myth of the White man's supremacy, or superiority, over the Black." He noted that the Africanization of the public services had not led to an exodus of expatriate civil servants or businessmen; on the contrary, many were renewing their contracts, business was expanding and the economic prospects were very bright. He also noted the absence of racial discrimination, that primary schools were being opened at the rate of one every other day with attendance up from twenty-five to eighty-five percent in five years, that the cabinet enjoyed the full confidence of the country and the civil service, and that Finance Minister Gbedemah was highly regarded in Western

¹³ 745J.13/9-558, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 5 September 1958 (NA).

¹⁴ 845J.4711/3-459, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 4 March 1959 (NA).

capital markets. Mboya dismissed foreign media reports of Ghana's slide into dictatorship and economic chaos. Comparing South Africa to Ghana, he contended that the latter was a democracy. "Ghana," he concluded, "was a land of hope. In this experiment, Africa's White settlers have the challenge of their times. This is not Black racialism but democracy."¹¹

The U.S. consulate general in Nairobi passed Mboya's article on to the State Department and requested that the U.S. embassy in Accra be invited to comment on it. The consulate general was skeptical of Mboya's observations stressing that they were made against the "background of local criticism of conditions in independent Ghana, suggesting economic chaos, tribal (sic) fragmentation, and dictatorial administration -- conditions bordering on civil war." In essence, the consulate general wanted to test the validity of Mboya's write-up, but even more importantly, to assess "his sincerity and the trend of his political and economic philosophies."¹²

At a time when Nkrumah's regime was under a barrage of criticisms for deporting two Muslim leaders in Kumasi to Nigeria (in July 1957) and there were serious talks in Accra of a "preventive detention" law under which political opponents were to be incarcerated without trial, the State Department showed a

¹¹ Tom Mboya, "Impressions of a Visitor to Ghana: European Civil Servants Stay On," *East African Standard*, 2 April 1958. The article is an enclosure in 745J.00/4-258, Desp. from AmConsul, Nairobi to the Department of State, "Mboya Article on Ghana," 2 April 1958 (NA).

¹² 745J.00/4-258, Desp. from AmConsul, Nairobi to the Department of State, "Mboya's Article on Ghana," 2 April 1958 (NA).

surprising degree of appreciation for the Nkrumah perspective on the situation in Ghana. It pointed out that in general, most of the reports on internal conditions in Ghana, "particularly those reports of late 1957, were, and to a lesser extent still are, unduly pessimistic and biased. Those comments have placed undue emphasis upon the problems of Ghana rather than pointing up the very real accomplishments in that country." The department (and the embassy in Accra) dismissed the "impressions of near-chaos and dictatorial excesses" as incorrect, adding "There appears to be little danger of serious deterioration of the Ghanaian economy or of any successful challenge to Prime Minister Nkrumah's strong support by the majority of the people of Ghana. In almost every recent test the Convention People's Party has severely beaten the Opposition in polling for governmental representation in generally free and fair elections."

The department was also impressed by the fact that Nkrumah's government was consciously and gradually undermining the force of ethnicity as a factor in Ghana's internal politics. While stating that Washington would have preferred that the government of Ghana be more tolerant of political opposition, it was observed that "those in conflict with the CPP and the Government have not hesitated to use strong-arm or other violent tactics against the Administration." Picking another line in its defense of Nkrumah, the department held that "In a country where passion, superstition, and rumor play such a large part in political activities, it is most difficult for a new Government faced with

745J.00/5-1959, Department of State Instruction CA-10091, "Ghana and its Influence in Africa," 19 May 1958 (NA).

the problem of modernization of a backward state to allow complete freedom of action to dissident elements. The Department does not foresee a critical danger in these Government activities, and, though they are certainly not to be condoned, the overall tenor of Nkrumah's regime thus far definitely appears to be moderate."³³

High Noon of the Honeymoon

Nkrumah's official visit to the U.S. in July 1958 was a boost to U.S./Ghana relations. In a very elaborate manner, Washington rolled out the red carpet for him. As *Time* observed, "seldom was a guest from a small country more welcome. The State Department saw the nationalism of his year-old country and the promise of his African leadership as a possible future counter-balance to rampant nationalism spreading from the Mideast."³⁴ In a briefing for Eisenhower on the visit, the department observed that Ghana had "received flattering attention from many nations, particularly the Soviet Union" and Egypt and that Nkrumah was "the inspiration" of all nationalists. U.S. relations with Ghana were assessed as "good" in spite of the latter's policy of "non-involvement in the East-West struggle." According to the department, America's "primary objective" was to use the visit as a demonstration of its "recognition of the importance of Ghana's

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Time*, 4 August 1958, quoted in Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 44.

independence and acceptance of that nation as a full-fledged member of the community of nations."⁶⁶

The Nkrumah party arrived in Washington from Ottawa 23 July.⁶⁷ The official visit lasted three days, after which they left Washington for Pennsylvania, New York, and Chicago. Nkrumah and his entourage headed home on 1 August. In New York, the reception was tumultuous: more than 10,000 people filled Harlem's National Guard Armory to hear Nkrumah, and they rose and cheered as he spoke. To them, he explained that "Ghana's freedom is meaningless without the total freedom of the African continent." He invited them to Africa -- as doctors, technicians, and teachers. For Nkrumah, the visit to New York was a triumphal return: in his early student days in the U.S., he had spent his summer holidays in the city. To survive, he peddled fish on a Harlem street-corner and once slept on the city's subway. In Chicago, where he was accorded a City Hall reception with full military honors, similarly enthusiastic crowds greeted his motorcade. The welcome was no less boisterous in Philadelphia where confetti was strewn over the motorcade.⁶⁸

Remarkably, Nkrumah was very moderate in his public utterances, saying only things which were pleasing to his hosts.

⁶⁶ Memorandum for the president, "Official Visit by Prime Minister Nkrumah of Ghana," 19 July 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

⁶⁷ The party included Finance Minister Gbedemah; Minister of Trade and Industries Kojo Botsio; Information Minister Kofi Baako; Permanent Secretary Adu; Acting Secretary to the Cabinet Enoch Okoh; Advisor on Economic Development Robert Jackson; and Chief of Information James Moxon.

⁶⁸ Robert C. Keith, "The Nkrumah Visit -- A Triumphant Return," *Africa Special Report*, August 1958.

At a press conference, he assured his hosts that "Communism" had made no mark and indeed posed no danger in Ghana because "our better institutions and the like...do not allow the ideology to have any fruitful set-up in our country." He asserted that the issue of racial discrimination against blacks in the U.S. "had often been exaggerated deliberately by those who hoped to bring the country into disrepute." On the Middle East, where the U.S. had a special interest and had just landed its marines in Lebanon, Nkrumah intended no harm: he proposed a "quarantine" for the whole region, with the sovereignty of every state there "guaranteed by the Great Powers," and the oil resources "brought under international control, and used for the benefit of the local people." In his joint communique with Eisenhower, Nkrumah agreed that a solution for the problems of the Middle East should be found within the UN framework, and expressed his concurrence with the U.S. plan to withdraw its troops "as soon as the UN can act effectively" to assure Lebanon's independence and integrity.

Speaking to the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, Nkrumah envisaged a dominant place for the West in postcolonial Africa. He observed that colonialism had ensured that most of Africa's ties were with Europe. Africans, he asserted, welcomed such links, stressing: "You cannot cancel 100 years of history, and history has brought Africa and Europe into close community."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, 139-142; Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 43.

¹¹ 611.45J/7-2558, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 25 July 1958 (NA).

In large part, the speech was a call for more Western involvement in Africa's economic development: "the Western Powers," he emphasized, "have the opportunity to play a new and vital role in Africa. The colonial phase is dead or dying. But a new phase is opening in which the whole of this continent will struggle to achieve the institutions and opportunities of modern life." For Nkrumah, the Western impact on Africa was very deep-seated: he equated "modern life" with "Western life," a culture which had been adopted by Africans. In his words, "The hopes and ambitions of their peoples [Africans] have been planted and brought to maturity by the impact of Western civilization. The West has set the pattern of our hopes, and by entering Africa in strength it has forced the pattern upon us."¹

On 28 July 1958, at a lunch with the National Foreign Trade Council, Nkrumah announced Ghana's willingness to enter into an Investment Guarantee Agreement to insure American private investments in Ghana.² Two days before this announcement, Ghana's External Affairs Ministry had submitted an *aide-memoire* to the U.S. embassy in Accra expressing Ghana's willingness to enter into an agreement with the U.S. "which would bring investment in Ghana by United States Government citizens or corporations under the protection of the United States Investment Guaranty Program." The note explained that Ghana was willing to enter into agreement on guaranties "against expropriation and

¹ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, 141-145. The speech was published as "African Prospect," *Foreign Affairs*, 37, 1 (October 1958).

² Keith, "The Nkrumah Visit -- A Triumphant Return."

refusal of permission to permit conversion of capital and profits into United States currency."¹¹ On 30 September 1958, Ghana adhered to the U.S. Investment Guaranty Agreement.¹²

The most Nkrumah got from Eisenhower was a "mutual interest" -- not a commitment -- in developing the Volta River project.¹³ Yet, beyond normal diplomatic niceties, Nkrumah and his associates did not disguise the fact that they were highly pleased with their U.S. trip.¹⁴ Nkrumah himself personally believed that the visit strengthened "Ghana-America friendship."¹⁵ That Washington must have shared this feeling was evidenced by its response to the food crisis in Northern Ghana. In July 1958, the ICA mission in Accra alerted its Washington headquarters to the possible development of a serious food crisis in the areas of South Mamprusi, Nanumba, Dagomba, and Gonja. The crisis was a result of extremely dry weather conditions in the areas. By the beginning of August, the Ghana government had started to confront the crisis: it appointed a food commissioner, embargoed the export of foodstuffs from Ghana, and set up a

¹¹ 811.05145J/7-2958, Cablegram from ICA Accra, 29 July 1958; also 811.05145J/7-2658, Cablegram from ICA Accra, 26 July 1958 (both at NA).

¹² 811.05145J/9-3058, Desp. from AmEmbassy to the Department of State, "Signature of Investment Guaranty Agreement with Ghana," 30 September 1958 (NA).

¹³ 611.45J/7-2558, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 25 July 1958 (NA).

¹⁴ 745J.13/8-858, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 8 August 1958; 645J.00/8-1358, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 13 August 1958 (both at NA).

¹⁵ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, 150.

central committee to follow the situation closely." The Ministry of Agriculture later calculated the total crop loss in the affected areas as fifty percent. On 4 September, the ICA mission in Accra reported to Washington that the Ministry of External Affairs had requested U.S. assistance in the form of 10,000 tons of maize under Title II of PL 480 for famine relief in Northern Ghana, and that Ghana was prepared to pay for the ocean freight charges. It acknowledged the political capital to be reaped from Ghana acquiring the maize "at earliest practicable date." But the mission was also quick in drawing attention to the standard ICA practice, that Title II assistance could only be provided in cases where the recipient lacked the resources to grapple with a disaster. The exception to this rule, it added, was when -- for political reasons -- the State Department made a request on behalf of the recipient country. Based on this technicality, the mission held that Ghana's food crisis did not constitute a famine situation as defined by law. It further held that food could not be given to a country under Title II for the purpose of stabilizing prices during a food shortage since such assistance was intended to be distributed free to disaster victims. The mission did concede that Ghana would benefit from Title II if weather and crop reports indicated the failure of "current maize crops" in Northern Ghana.

845J.49/8-3058, Airgram from ICA, Accra, "Food Situation in Northern Ghana," 30 August 1958 (NA).

845J.49/9-458, Cablegram from ICA Accra, 4 September 1958 (NA).

The U.S. embassy in Accra disagreed with the ICA, emphasizing that there were "reasonably good economic" as well as psychological and political justifications for Title II assistance to Ghana. It argued that by its own understanding, the principal criteria for Title II assistance were crop failure "or similar problem and inability of final consumers [to] pay for food both of which apply here." While maintaining that the situation had not yet attained the proportions of a famine, the embassy referred to the measures already put in place by the government to cope with the crisis and insisted that it "is certainly urgent." It also noted that Ghana was clearly prepared to pay for the maize and "excluding other considerations government would have started procurement through Crown Agents three weeks ago." The embassy cautioned that notwithstanding the technicalities, a negative response would immediately result in an unfavorable official and public reaction in Ghana and that such a reaction would impair U.S. diplomatic position in the country. In "this underdeveloped country," it continued, "tangible and easily identifiable aid like food" was bound to have "maximum impact on government and public" particularly in the Northern part of the country where Egypt was eager to play on Muslim ties. The embassy recalled that Nkrumah and his cabinet were delighted with their visit to the U.S. "but now looking for concrete aid." It believed that no such aid was coming to Ghana in any meaningful sense: there were "no assurances of significant U.S. contribution" to the Volta Project, and DLF assistance for Ghana was "most unlikely even if excellent projects [were] available;" in the "foreseeable future," Ghana "will receive only

technical assistance which for all its virtue is viewed by government as marginal contribution." It therefore argued that a generous and prompt Title II aid "could do much to remove impression of U.S. stinginess or indifference" to Ghana.⁷⁷

The embassy also emphasized that Nkrumah had been cooperative and understanding of the U.S. position on diplomatic issues involving the Middle East and Chinese representation in the UN. It was emphasized that he also had been "sensible on racial issue and more cautious on Pan-Africanism than many of his colleagues would like him to be. He has thus far remained aloof from formal relations with Communists." As a consequence, it argued that Nkrumah needed to be compensated for his "positive neutralism" which "has on the whole been helpful to U.S." The embassy believed that given the time constraint, Ghana would not turn "elsewhere" for food supplies, but a negative response "would offer incentive and of course opportunity for Communists far more attractive than Volta," adding that in any event, a negative response would signal to Ghana that its pro-U.S. orientation was not paying off.⁷⁸ Swayed by the political arguments, Washington brushed the legal imperatives aside and offered 5,000 tons of yellow dent corn valued at \$650,000 under Title II. The agreement was signed in Washington on 8 October.⁷⁹

Some Trying Moments

⁷⁷ 845J.49/9-1758, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 17 September 1958 (NA).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ 845J.49/10-858, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 8 October 1958 (NA).

The U.S./Ghana relationship was not altogether a fairy tale; it had its bumpy side. There was, for example, Ghana's refusal to increase Pan American Airways (PAA) service frequencies to Accra. This was in spite of direct intervention by the State Department, through the embassy in Accra. On 11 September 1958, PAA notified the Ghana Ministry of Communications that it wished to increase by one the frequency of its services between New York and Accra by extending (effective 26 October 1958) a flight which normally turned around in Liberia. Twelve days later, the U.S. embassy in Accra gave a similar notification to the Ministry of External Affairs. Like the PAA, the embassy believed that since Ghana had recognized the U.S./Britain Air Services Agreement of 11 February 1946 as applying to U.S./Ghana civil air relations, Ghana's approval of the new service was a formality. But the ministry denied permission for the new service and made reference to an earlier letter (of 19 June 1957) to the embassy in which it (the ministry) had asked that existing "arrangements" remain unchanged until a direct U.S./Ghana bilateral agreement was negotiated. The embassy interpreted "existing arrangements" to mean the U.S./Britain agreement, but the letter -- which was sent to all diplomatic missions in Accra -- was actually designed to freeze the frequencies and routes operated by all foreign airlines in Ghana. At the Ministry of Communications, the embassy learned that whatever the legalities, Ghana desired discussions with the U.S. on the frequency and routing of PAA services affecting Accra. The ministry felt that such a discussion, leading to an

exchange of notes on PAA's frequencies and routes, would ensure that the interests of Ghana Airways was adequately protected.⁷³

In late March 1959, PAA Accra informally sounded out the ministry (of Communications) on a tentative proposal to extend to Leopoldville PAA flight number 152-153, which at that time turned around in Accra. The ministry made it clear that any formal proposal would be denied on the ground that such a change would constitute an alteration in the status quo which Ghana wanted to freeze until the time was deemed opportune for a general discussion with the U.S. on PAA and Ghana Airways services in West Africa.⁷⁴ A few days later, the Department of State informed the U.S. embassy in Accra that PAA "has for the time being dropped its plans to increase the frequency of services to Accra," although it "may wish to do this at a later date."⁷⁵

On its own side, the U.S. refused to endorse Ghana's bid for a seat on the UN Trusteeship Council (TC). In a note dated 11 March 1958, Ghana had requested U.S. support for its candidacy for election to the Council --- in succession to Egypt -- for

⁷³ 611.45J94/10-1758, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Ghana Government Desires Exchange of Notes Regularizing PAA Services to Accra," 17 October 1958 (NA). The embassy's notification of 23 September 1958 and the External Affairs Ministry's reply of 7 October 1958 are enclosures attached to *ibid*.

⁷⁴ 611.45J94/3-2659, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Ghana Government Continues Negative on Pan American Airways Route Changes," 26 March 1959 (NA).

⁷⁵ 611.45J49/4-159, Department of State Instruction A-113, "Civil Aviation: PAA Services to Accra," 1 April 1959; 611.45J94/4-859, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 4 May 1959 (both at NA).

what was informally regarded as the Afro-Asian seat. Egypt and Liberia were also interested in the same seat and each solicited U.S. support. The U.S. decided to back Liberia. Officially, Ghana was informed that the decision was based on Liberia's seniority in the UN. But there was, at least, one other factor at play. The U.S. believed that its relations with Liberia had deteriorated since the emergence of Ghana; support for Liberia's candidacy was thus considered an "essential corrective measure" in this regard. On 16 September 1958, Ghana withdrew its candidacy in favor of Liberia.

It is thus certain that Washington disapproved of some elements of Ghana's foreign policy. Indeed, even with the PAA affair and Ghana's ambitions over Togo, Washington had a more serious complaint against Accra by 1958. To fully put this into perspective, it can be said that by 1958, Nkrumah's foreign policy was beginning to take its distinctive shape, with its

The note is enclosed in 350/3-1758, Desp. from USUN, New York to the Department of State, "Ghana's Candidacy for Election to Trusteeship Council," 17 March 1958 (NA).

For Liberia's note to the U.S., see 350/5-258, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Monrovia to the Department of State, "Liberia Seeks Election to UN Trusteeship Council; Asks U.S. Support," 2 May 1958; and for Egypt's see 350/9-2558, Desp. from U.S. mission to the UN to the Department of State, "League of Arab States Support of United Arab Republic for Re-election to Trusteeship Council," 25 September 1958 (both at NA).

350/8-2758, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Monrovia, 27 August 1958 (NA).

350/8-2758, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 27 August 1958 (NA).

350/9-1758, Desp. from USUN, New York to the Department of State, "Withdrawal of Ghana's Candidacy for TC," 17 September 1958 (NA).

emphasis on "positive neutralism," the termination of colonialism and neocolonialism in Africa, African unity, and the projection of the "African Personality" in international diplomacy. These were the benchmarks of the speech on foreign policy which he gave in the National Assembly on 15 July 1958. Hitherto, Ghana had only paid lip-service to nonalignment as Nkrumah's public disposition tipped the scales in favor of the West and especially gave the U.S. a clear headstart in Accra. Even in policy pronouncements, there had been no clear-cut statement of Ghana's adherence to nonalignment: Nkrumah -- as noted earlier -- preferred to describe his foreign policy as both nonaligned and non-neutral. But in the July 1958 speech, he now stressed Ghana's adherence to "an independent foreign policy," a policy of "positive neutralism and nonalignment" with ideological or political blocs. This policy, he explained, implied that Ghana would act "as it sees best at any particular time in the light of the country's obligations under the United Nations Charter, our position in relation to the African continent, our adherence to the principles enunciated at the Accra and the Bandung Conferences, and our desire to safeguard our independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity."

The speech was significant in another respect. Not only did it highlight the increasing emphasis which Nkrumah placed on Ghana's policy in Africa, it also served notice that he was

(Ghana) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Prime Minister's Speech on Foreign Policy," Press Release No. 632/58, 15 July 1958. The speech is enclosed in 645J.00/7-1958, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Prime Minister Makes Foreign Policy Speech," 19 July 1958 (NA).

backing off from his embrace of racist South Africa.¹² Ghana, he said, accepted the principle of equality of all races in Africa and condemned "unreservedly racialism in all its forms and shapes anywhere it occurs in Africa." There was also an unequivocal commitment to the liberation of colonial Africa. Nkrumah promised that it was the intention of his government "to do everything within its power" to encourage all nationalist movements "in any part of Africa that are dedicated to the emancipation of colonial peoples and to the welfare and prosperity of their peoples." To this end, he announced that Ghana was set to host a conference of the nationalist movements in all the dependent territories of Africa. It was hoped that "a blue-print for the total liberation of other dependent territories in Africa" would emerge from the conference. He assured the colonial powers that if they were prepared to cooperate with the "newly invigorated spirit of nationalism" sweeping through Africa, "the result might well be beneficial to them as it will be to us in Africa." This was followed with the warning that the struggle for freedom and independence in Africa "cannot be stayed." Nkrumah clearly envisaged Ghana playing a leadership role in and for Africa. He talked of the "fundamental unity of outlook on foreign policy" which was emerging among independent African states and pledged that Ghana would promote this "distinctive African personality" in international affairs, and also work for African cooperation

¹² See Introduction to Part III.

in the economic, social and cultural fields."⁷⁷ The increasing African focus of Ghana's foreign policy and Nkrumah's bid for the leadership of Africa were already in evidence before the July 1958 speech. Accra had hosted the meeting of independent African states in April 1958.⁷⁸ Nkrumah followed that up with a tour of the participating states. And in December of the same year, he hosted the All-African Peoples Conference.⁷⁹

Washington was uncomfortable with the increasing self-assertiveness of Nkrumah's foreign policy rhetoric. A memorandum circulated in the State Department in June 1958 observed that at a state banquet during his visit to Cairo, Nkrumah had stressed the importance of liberating Africans still under colonial rule, and the need for independent African states to unite in order to consolidate their independence. Concern was particularly expressed over his rhetoric that the acquisition of independence undermines "forces of reaction, forces of imperialism, and forces of intrigue." The memorandum also noted that in October 1958, the organizing secretariat of the All-African Peoples' Conference issued an advance leaflet which adopted the "following Communist-type cliches": "Peoples of Africa, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a continent to regain! You have Freedom and Human Dignity to attain! And to our oppressors we

⁷⁷ (Ghana) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Prime Minister's Speech on Foreign Policy," Press Release No. 632/58, 15 July 1958.

⁷⁸ The states involved were Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Liberia, Ghana. See Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 31-38.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 39-41, 58-67.

say: "Hands off Africa! Africa must be free!" It was pointed out that the leaflet listed colonialism, imperialism and racialism as the chief items of the agenda. The department worried that the conference would

evolve into an emotionally-charged, intemperate and leftist-dominated circus along the lines of the Cairo Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference of last December. The net result would be to further encourage neutralist and anti-Western tendencies in Africa and increase tensions in dependent areas and particularly pressures for premature independence while at the same time hardening the attitudes of the metropolises. Outbreaks of violence could result."

It was more than a coincidence that when they met on 30 June 1958, a few days after Nkrumah's visit to Egypt, Tubman told Nkrumah that he did not like his foreign policy rhetoric because it was "too provocative, warlike, and antagonistic." Quoting the biblical exhortation that a mellow voice extinguishes anger while a grievous word stirs up anger, Tubman advised him to tone down his public statements and moderate his attitude towards the British. The voice was certainly Tubman's, but the message seemed like an echo from Washington.

The bond of the U.S./Ghana relationship was sufficiently resilient to withstand these rufflings. By 1958, neither of the two partners wished for a strain in the relationship, which was why the U.S. hid its exasperation with Accra's rhetoric from the public. Washington had viable channels, directly (through its

" 870-46/6-2158, Memorandum from Joseph Palmer 2nd to Mr Rountree, "Prime Minister Nkrumah and Pan-Africanism," 21 June 1958 (NA). For the leaflet, see Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 60. The conference was held in December 1958; for details on it, see *ibid.*, 58-63.

" 645J.76/6-3058, Telegram from Monrovia to the secretary of state, 1 July 1958 (NA).

embassy in Accra) and through third parties such as Liberia, through which it could privately express its worries and even exercise considerable restraining influence on Nkrumah. Above all, it must have been satisfying to the U.S. that for Nkrumah, a more activist, African-centered, nonaligned foreign policy spiced with strident rhetoric did not actually imply a shift away from the West, definitely not by any significant measure. After his 1958 tour of independent African states, Nkrumah confided in Flake that he was impressed by what Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt had achieved in economic development with Soviet assistance. But he had also noticed that Nasser was not happy with Egypt's dependence on Moscow for assistance because none was forthcoming from West. Nkrumah also mentioned how he had advised Nasser to visit Yugoslavia's President Josip Broz Tito -- who was in the vanguard of the nonalignment movement -- to demonstrate his independence of Moscow. More significantly, he believed that the countries he visited saw Ghana as the vanguard of progress in Africa, and that if he could industrialize Ghana with U.S. assistance, other African countries would be encouraged to hitch their stars to the U.S. and the West instead of the USSR.¹¹ It is equally instructive that Nkrumah used his July 1958 speech as a platform to reiterate the importance Ghana placed not only on the UN and its specialized agencies, but also on its Commonwealth relations, noting that -- for small countries such as Ghana -- international organizations were the only hope for a peaceful world. In addition, he reiterated his desire to improve Ghana's

¹¹ 645J.00/7-1159, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 11 July 1958 (NA).

economy as a means of improving the people's quality of life. To achieve this goal, he said that his government had sought to create "stable internal conditions" in which foreign (read Western) capital could flourish, and had entered into technical aid arrangements with the UN and some of its specialized agencies as well as with the U.S., Britain, Israel, and Canada."

1959: "Close and Trusting Friends"?

By 1959, there was no denying that the "Communists" were enjoying an increasing visibility in Ghana. In January, Ghana hosted a Polish trade mission led by that country's deputy minister of foreign trade. Shortly after came the announcement that Poland would assign a trade commissioner to Ghana and that both countries would later establish diplomatic relations. A similar mission from East Germany, headed by its deputy minister of trade had preceded the Poles to Ghana by a few days. A member of the East German mission stayed behind as acting commercial counsellor, to foster trade relations between Ghana and East Germany. In the following month, East Germany announced that it was about to establish a diplomatic mission with Ghana." In the second half of 1959, a total of eighteen Polish engineers were in Ghana. By October, all but three had returned to Poland. The engineers were involved with the preliminary phases of an iron mining and foundry project. A party of three Czech businessmen

" (Ghana) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Prime Minister's Speech on Foreign Policy," Press Release No. 632/58, 15 July 1958.

" 645J.48/2-1959, Desp. from American Embassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Polish and East German Officials Announce Plans to Establish Ties with Ghana," 19 February 1959 (NA).

was in Ghana in September, doing feasibility surveys on small industries. By the end of the year, the Polish shipping line to West Africa was calling at Takoradi twice monthly.¹⁰ In October too, Ghana announced that it was discussing with the Soviets the possibility of establishing a steel industry in Ghana, and that two Soviet experts would arrive by the end of the year to do feasibility studies.¹¹ In the same month, Ghana congratulated the People's Republic of China on its tenth anniversary. The message expressed the "earnest hope that succeeding anniversaries will bring continued prosperity" to China and "a strengthening of the ties of friendship" between Ghana and China.¹²

In spite of the widening "Communist" presence, the Western position in Ghana was not being eclipsed, certainly not to the advantage of the USSR. In fact, there is nothing to suggest that Washington was disturbed by the trend. Apparently, it saw the "Communist" presence as a symbolic manifestation of a balanced non-aligned posture. This was borne out by the fact that Accra still used a long spoon in its dealings with the "Communists." For example, in September 1959, Ghana granted "limited consular rights" to the East German trade representative, the essence being to bestow certain privileges such as the free entry of

¹⁰ 845J.0060/10-659, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Recent Developments in Ghana-Soviet Bloc Economic Relations," 6 October 1959 (NA).

¹¹ 845J.33/10-2759, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 27 October 1959 (NA).

¹² 645J.93/10-259, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Congratulatory Message to Communist China is Another Indication Ghana May Extend Formal Recognition," 2 October 1959 (NA).

specified personal effects. The representative was not allowed to perform any consular function. It was understood that Ghana was highly sensitive to its cocoa trade with West Germany and therefore had no plans to establish even a trade mission in East Germany.⁴⁴ And as earlier noted, Ghana was yet to have an embassy with even the Soviet Union.

Above all, Washington must have found comfort in the fact that Israel was actually Ghana's best friend. By 1959, Israel was assisting Ghana in several key spheres: in establishing and running a Flying Training School which was to train officer pilots for the Ghana Air Force; in the operation of a Nautical Training College; and in providing both capital and management for the Black Star Line (Ghana's official shipping line) and the Ghana National Construction Company. According to the U.S. embassy in Accra, Israel also had "a profound influence" on the Ghana labor movement, the United Ghana Farmers Council, and on the development and expansion of cooperatives in Ghana. Besides, Israeli technicians were reported to have "given advice on such matters as rural water development and the establishment of a textile industry."⁴⁵ The visible, and definitely influential, Israeli presence in Ghana certainly worked to America's advantage. In November 1957, the U.S. embassy in Accra proposed

⁴⁴ 645J.62B/9-2259, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 22 September 1959 (NA).

⁴⁵ 745J.5/3-2059, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Israeli Government to Train Ghana Air Force Personnel," 20 March 1959. Also see 845J.0084A/3-2059, Desp. from Embassy, Conakry to the Department of State, "Israeli-Ghana Economic Cooperation: Guinea-Ghana Relations," 20 March 1959 (both at NA).

that the U.S. should exploit the "present high favor of Israel" with Accra "to neutralize influence of Egyptian Embassy when established" (in Accra).²²

It took what potentially posed a threat to reveal the strength of U.S./Ghana relations by 1959. The background was Foreign Minister Ajo Adjei's meeting of 2 October 1959 with Fred Hadsel of the U.S. mission to the UN. It was later reported that in the course of their conversations, Adjei sharply criticized the U.S. position on African questions in the UN, asserting that the U.S. was in the habit of supporting the colonial powers. This caused Washington to explain the motivating principle of its UN votes on African issues, noting that the metropolitan powers had also frequently protested that the U.S. was siding with the Africans against them in the UN. In a memorandum intended for Accra, the State Department stressed that rather than taking positions on African questions "on purely political grounds," the U.S. had usually sought to deal "honestly with each problem on its merits." The objective, it was stated, had been to fashion out "constructive compromises between the two [African and European] positions," within the confines of the UN Charter. While regretting that achieving such compromises had not been easy and had in fact "often led to criticism from both sides," the department insisted that the efforts were in accordance with the U.S. view of the UN as a forum for solving international problems and the "role of the United States as a leading member of the United Nations." Ghana was reminded that "cooperation in

²² 611.45J/11-2357, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 23 November 1957 (NA).

the United Nations is a two-way street," which the U.S. itself had not been receiving from the authorities in Accra. As the department put, "On some of the major political issues before the General Assembly, many of the African delegations, especially Ghana, have voted with the Soviet Bloc and against the United States and other Members of the Free World." Washington's checklist of seventy-nine votes in the General Assembly in 1958 showed that Ghana voted eight times with the U.S., forty-eight with the Soviets, and abstained or was absent in twenty-three votes."

The protest note to Ghana was not passed on to Accra as the State Department had originally framed it. The U.S. delegation to the UN had some serious reservations to the tone of the memorandum. It emphasized that in spite of its "exaggerated nature," Adjei's criticism was in fact made in a "most friendly manner...which should not be destroyed by unnecessarily contentious reply." The delegation held that while cooperation is usually a two-way street, the U.S. should not give the impression that it abandons either its principles or its friends simply to obtain votes. The department's attention was also drawn to the

611.45J/10-2659, Department of State Instruction CA-3588, "Criticism of the United States by the Foreign Minister of Ghana," 26 October 1959 (NA). According to Thompson, the original brief for the Ghanaian mission to the UN was that it follow Canada on Western and India on Eastern questions, "but from the first a tradition of independence developed in the delegation which resulted in a better balanced nonalignment than was evident in Accra during the same period." He found that the mission could exercise this independence because Nkrumah did not follow UN affairs, thus "the delegation became a virtually independent subsystem of Ghana's foreign policy, seldom worrying about Accra's reaction to particular votes." See his *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 52-53.

"real danger in citing exact statistics of voting record, since without careful analysis such statistics may be unintentionally misleading." It was explained that some of the votes were "procedural" while others were on issues which Ghana considered "as dividing along East-West lines." While conceding that Ghana was very emotional on African issues (especially Algeria and on France's atomic tests in the Sahara), the delegation emphasized the cordial relations which existed between the U.S. and Ghana missions at the UN, and particularly in the Fourth Committee where, according the delegation, "African matters are holding center of stage" and the two delegations were engaged in "constructive give-and-take discussions and real cooperation." On these grounds, the department was advised that the memorandum should not be passed on to Ghana and that a "carefully planned oral presentation [on the] essential points" would be more appropriate. The delegation had a restraining impact on the State Department. A fresh directive went to the U.S. embassy in Accra: the cordial relations between the U.S. and Ghana at the UN were noted, and the embassy was advised that in discussing the earlier memorandum with the appropriate officials in Accra, it should stress U.S. "appreciation" and desire to continue "frank discussions [on] all UN problems" with Ghana.

On 3 December, Flake -- who had been away on leave since the beginning of November -- called on Adjei. Flake later reported to

" 611.45J/10-3059, Telegram from New York to the secretary of state, 30 October 1959 (NA).

" 611.45J/11-759, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 27 November 1959 (NA).

Washington that, "Even by digging almost to the point of gouging, I was unable to bring forth any remarks as strong as those he had expressed to Mr Hadsel in New York." He observed that although he (Adjei) regretted that the U.S. could not more openly and more forcefully support Africa on certain issues, Adjei was equally understanding of the fact that the U.S. was torn because of the loyalty to its NATO allies and assured Flake that such loyalty would not strain Ghana's relations with the U.S. On independence for Algeria, Adjei was reported to have urged the U.S. to continue to exert such pressure as possible on De Gaulle, "short of wrecking the NATO" alliance. Adjei defended Ghana's voting record at the UN, emphasizing that there was no commitment to side with the Soviets as Accra treated each case on its own intrinsic merits. According to Flake, "The Foreign Minister seemed relieved to have me imply that a Ghana vote with the Soviet Union on some specific issue had no wider meaning than a United States vote on some specific issue that did not agree with Ghana's vote on the same issue." Adjei was said to have rounded off by noting that Ghana and the U.S. "are and must remain close and trusting friends," even though they may occasionally differ or be disappointed with each other's response to a given matter. While recognizing that Adjei could have been more cautious with him than he did with Hadsel, Flake took pains to assure Washington that he had no reason to doubt that Adjei had been quite sincere in their conversation, "and his actions generally have supported what he has said to me in the past." The State

Department was therefore advised that the matter should no longer be pursued.¹⁰⁰

Flake's assessment was confirmed a week a later. During the National Assembly debate on Nkrumah's annual foreign policy statement on 16 December, there were suggestions that Ghana should strongly protest the U.S./British abstentions on the UN vote on French atomic tests in the Sahara.¹⁰¹ Adjei rejected any such protest, explaining that Ghana too had on several occasions voted against the U.S. and Britain, "So that if on this particular occasion they did not see eye to eye with us we should not quarrel with them; we have exercised our sovereign rights and they too have exercised their sovereign rights."¹⁰²

Overall, there is no doubt that the declared U.S. objective of getting Ghana "associated with the West"¹⁰³ was clearly on course at various levels by the end of 1959. In October 1959, the U.S. embassy in Accra was able to conclude that "Our trade relations with Ghana, including access to raw materials produced in Ghana, are good. Our political relations with Ghana are

¹⁰⁰ 611.45J/12-759, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Criticism of the United States by the Foreign Minister of Ghana," 7 December 1959 (NA).

¹⁰¹ In July 1959, Ghana had protested France's decision to test atomic weapons in the Sahara; and in November 1959, sponsored a UN resolution which condemned the decision. Nonetheless, France carried out the test in February 1960. See Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 98-99.

¹⁰² The relevant portion of the proceedings is cited in 611.45J/12-2159, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Foreign Minister Discusses U.S. Voting in UN During Foreign Policy Debate," 21 December 1959 (NA).

¹⁰³ 745J.5MSP/3-1659, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "USIS-USOM Coordination Agreement/Joint Embassy-USIS-USOM Message," 16 March 1959 (NA).

friendly and fruitful."¹⁰⁴ If any evidence was required for the second segment of that assessment, it was provided by the Ghana National Assembly when, on 5 August 1959, it unanimously adopted the resolution: "That this House records its appreciation of the work being done by the International Cooperation Administration and the International Development Service teams in partnership with the Ghana Government." The U.S. embassy in Accra later reported: "Although it was obvious that the Government had prompted the introduction of this resolution, the spontaneity and warmth of the Debate indicated the genuine gratitude of the Ghana Parliament for the activities of the ICA."¹⁰⁵

1960: Things Fall Apart

1960 began with no apparent strain on U.S./Ghana relations; the "Communists" still seemed hard put to place a firm foot in Ghana. NSC 6005, dated 29 February 1960, contended that in spite of the overtures of the Soviet bloc, "Ghana remains basically Western in orientation."¹⁰⁶ But as the year wore on, Washington's assessment changed dramatically. The U.S. Senate study mission which toured some African countries in November/December 1960 found that "Something has gone sour in our relationship" with Ghana. "The extreme symptom of this condition," the mission said,

¹⁰⁴ 745J.5MSP/10-2059, Telegram for AmEmbassy, Accra to the secretary of state, 20 October 1959 (NA).

¹⁰⁵ 745J.5MSP/8-1259, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Ghana Parliament Expresses Appreciation for ICA and IDS," 12 August 1959 (NA). IDS was one of the American agencies which had an ICA contract for technical assistance in Ghana.

¹⁰⁶ NSC 6005, "U.S. Policy Toward West Africa," 29 February 1960 (RG 273, (NA)).

"is Ghana's angry opposition to U.S. policies, primarily toward the Congo, and secondarily toward Algeria and colonial issues raised at the UN. On our side, conjectures in the press about Ghana slipping into the Communist bloc have materially affected our official relations."¹²⁷

The breach in U.S./Ghana relations was first brought into the open by Secretary of State Christian Herter on 23 September 1960. He charged that by his speech before the UN General Assembly earlier that day, Nkrumah "has marked himself as very definitely leaning toward the Soviet bloc."¹²⁸ Before then, the State Department had privately expressed concern that the "Communists" were gaining ground in Ghana. In its telegram of 12 August 1960 to the U.S. embassy in Accra, the department cited China's opening of an embassy in Accra, alleged Soviet interest in the Volta Project and steel industry, alleged purchase of Soviet aircraft by Ghana, and the use of Soviet aircraft by Nkrumah as evidence of "apparent increase [of] Bloc influence [in] Ghana." It asked the embassy for an "appraisal of [the] seriousness [of] this apparent drift toward Soviets."¹²⁹

Flake assured Washington that what seemed to be an apparent drift towards the Soviets was only a reflection of Ghana's "determination to pursue more actively its policy of positive neutralism (like India, it now seeks political support and

¹²⁷ Study Mission to Africa, November-December 1960, Report of Senators Frank Church, Gale W. McGhee, and Frank E. Moss, 31.

¹²⁸ *The New York Times*, 24 September 1960.

¹²⁹ 745J.11/8-1260, Telegram to Accra, 12 August 1960, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, xiv (1992), 658, n. 1.

material benefits from any source as long as it feels this can be done without dangerous involvement). It is not a turning away from the West....It is what Ghana regards as the final breaking of chains that before independence kept Ghana confined entirely to the West." He explained that the U.S. could not stem this development and advised that "we must expect some more manifestations of closer relations with Soviets." On the specifics, Flake recalled that Ghana had always recognized China, but had never taken the initiative to exchange diplomatic missions. He believed that Ghana must have accepted the opening of an embassy by the Chinese as "a routine process." The alleged Soviet interest in the Volta Project, he said, "does not attract Nkrumah so long as he has faith in effective support from U.S. as he now has." But at the same time, Nkrumah "sees no reason to turn down USSR offer to build steel mill if it proves feasible," and especially since U.S. public and private agencies were not interested in the project or competitive with the Soviet proposals. Ghana's purchase of four Soviet aircraft was explained as part of an expansion scheme which also involved the simultaneous purchase of five new British aircraft and three second-hand ones from the U.S. Flake made the point of adding that the Soviet terms were more favorable than the others, and that the Soviet aircraft had already been delivered and were therefore being used "pending the delivery of the new aircraft."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Telegram from the Embassy in Ghana to the Department of State, 25 August 1960, *ibid.*, 658-660.

On the whole, Flake was emphatic that "In my opinion Ghana is not communist and I detect no desire here that it become so." While he would not minimize the dangers inherent in the increasing contact with the "Soviet Bloc," he urged that "we must be careful not to attribute motives to G[overnment] O[f] Ghana that do not exist." Flake assured the department that "The West has always had a dominant position in Ghana and in my opinion this will continue." He advised that to match the Soviets fully in cultivating Ghana's friendship, the U.S. needed to be "more positive in supporting Africa against European NATO powers. We would also have to oppose 'neo-Colonialism' in Africa and encourage Ghana's desire to create (in the words of Nkrumah) 'a socialist New Jerusalem' in Ghana."¹¹¹

The compelling and unambiguous tone of Flake's response must have reassured the department that Ghana was not yet lost. And there is no evidence of a sudden accretion in the "Communist" strength in Ghana in the month which followed. Indeed, down to the end of 1960 at the least, Ghana still put its faith on the West and especially, the U.S.¹¹² A clear pointer in this direction was Accra's handling of an unsolicited, generous aid package from Moscow. In August 1960, trade union leader John Tettegah, and Tawia Adamafia -- both board members of the Bureau of African Affairs -- went to Moscow and met with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The Kremlin and its guests easily concluded

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² See Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, esp. pp. 164-169; as well as Introduction to Part III above and the earlier sections of this chapter.

agreements on trade and economic and technical cooperation. The technical agreement provided for Soviet aid in geographical prospecting for Ghana's mineral resources, in building industrial plants and power dams, and in the organization of model state farms. There was also to be cooperation in training Ghanaian workers. The two countries agreed to give each other most-favored-nation treatment in all trade and shipping matters. The agreement also provided for a clearing system of payments. The Soviets undertook to send to Ghana machinery and equipment, rolled steel, petroleum products, and building materials. In return, Ghana was to send to the Soviet Union cocoa beans, coffee, copra, and rubber.¹³³ For the projects, Moscow instantly extended a long-term credit of 160 million rubles (£G14.7 million). "In its three years of independence," W. Scott Thompson writes, "Ghana had sought aid for only one major project, the Volta scheme, and had spent two full years in negotiations with the Americans for it. Suddenly, £G14,700,000 was offered to develop Ghana, almost without asking for it and apparently with no strings attached." The Soviet gesture was definitely tempting. But according to Thompson, "Caution could still be detected in Accra. There was a significant period of delay before the government made public the communique (containing the agreements with the Soviets) of 4 August 1960." It was not until the end of April 1961 that Accra approved the Soviet credit.¹³⁴

¹³³ "Ghana-Soviet Trade Pact," *West Africa*, 3 September 1960, 1005.

¹³⁴ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 164, 166.

From the foregoing, it is safe to conclude that by September 1960, Nkrumah was not, "leaning toward the Soviet bloc," and that the state of "Communism" in Ghana at the time was not strong enough to strain U.S./Ghana relations. The clear point of departure was the Congo crisis in which Ghana and the U.S. had opposing objectives and pursued parallel policies. It is, however, worth adding that both the U.S. and Ghana -- especially the former -- started from the assumption that they could mutually develop common a ground robust enough to accommodate their differences and even end the crisis.¹³³ By the end of August 1960, this expectation and all the efforts built on it had foundered because the differences between the two parties were quite substantial. It remains to be said that it was Washington, not Accra, which felt that it was time to chill the relationship. In this sense, the crisis saw to Washington's redefinition of the content of its dealings with Accra.

The U.S., Ghana and the Congo Crisis

By the end of 1958, Belgium still did not envisage independence for the Congo. There was as yet no shift in the essence of its colonial policy, which was to ensure that Africans remained as hewers of wood and drawers of water. It was only in 1952 that a Congolese -- Thomas Kanza -- first entered the university. And by 1960, only thirty Congolese had university degrees. African political parties were not allowed until

¹³³ Thus on 6 August 1960, Flake and the U.S. ambassador to the Congo, Clare Timberlake, met with Nkrumah and secured his agreement that all technical and financial assistance to the Congo should be provided through the UN. See 770G.00/8-660, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 6 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), n. 1.

December 1957. As with the civil service, the upper cadres of the military were also blocked to Africans.¹⁰⁰ The riots of 4-7 January 1959 in Leopoldville forced Belgium to hastily open negotiations on independence with African political leaders. Thereafter, events moved so fast that the Congo was hurried into independence on 30 June 1960 with Joseph Kasavubu as the president, and Patrice Lumumba, the prime minister. Six days later, African troops mutinied because General Emile Janssens, their Belgian commander, had told his African non-commissioned officers that independence had no bearing on the military and their service conditions. The mutiny against Belgian officers and the disorder which followed provided the excuse for a large-scale Belgian military intervention on 10 July. The following day, Moise Tshombe complicated the crisis by announcing the secession of Katanga, Congo's richest province.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ See Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence* (Princeton University Press, 1965), esp. 94, 296, 312-315.

¹⁰¹ The literature on the Congo crisis is vast. But see *ibid.*, chap. xiii; Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis*; Catherine Hoskyns, *The Congo since Independence: January 1960-December 1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa -- from Eisenhower to Kennedy* (New York: Macmillan, 1982); Thomas Kanza, *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba. Conflict in the Congo* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979); Michael G. Schatzberg, *Mobutu or Chaos? The United States and Zaire, 1960-1990* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1991); Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974). For Nkrumah's account, see Kwame Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo* (New York: International Publishers, 1967). Of relevance in here will also be Jitendra Mohan, "Ghana, the Congo, and the United Nations," *JMAS*, 7, 3 (1969).

Metropolitan Belgian troops had been introduced into the crisis without consulting the Congolese government, ostensibly to secure European lives and property. But the fact that more Belgian troops were arriving and the fact that they were actively supporting the Katanga rebels led to a widespread suspicion among the Congolese that Belgium was indeed embarking on a reconquest of its former colony.¹⁴² On 14 July -- after they had been denied landing rights at Elisabethville which was under the control of Belgian troops -- Kasavubu and Lumumba broke off relations with Belgium. At the same time, they appealed to Soviet Premier Khrushchev to "watch hourly over the development of the situation" as "we may have to ask for the Soviet Union's intervention should the Western camp not stop its aggression." Moscow pledged "resolute measures" if the West did not stop its "criminal actions."¹⁴³

On 13 July, the Security Council approved a UN peacekeeping operation in the Congo. By then, the objectives of the Congolese government were to expel the Belgian troops and end Katanga's rebellion. For these, Lumumba first appealed to the U.S., without success, for assistance. Nor would the UN accede to his request to put down the Katanga rebellion.¹⁴⁴ In desperation, and especially as the Belgians had supplied planes to the Katanga rebels, he turned to the Soviets. The U.S. immediately labelled

¹⁴² See Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, 83-89.

¹⁴³ Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, 64.

¹⁴⁴ Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, 92-95; Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, 38; Schatzberg, *Mobutu or Chaos?*, 38.

him a "Communist" stooge and the author of Congo's crisis.¹²² The arrival of ten Soviet planes, sixty trucks, weapons, and military advisers to help Lumumba "confirmed the worst fears of the Eisenhower Administration. The President and his advisers realized that the Soviet leader was taking an unprecedented step, one which threatened to alter the balance between the two superpowers. It was the first time the Russians had ever intervened militarily in a conflict thousands of miles from their borders."¹²³ At that stage, the White House decided on the elimination of Lumumba, a task which was entrusted to the CIA.¹²⁴

On 5 September 1960, Kasavubu -- who had been converted to the U.S. cause -- announced Lumumba's dismissal. Lumumba was in a strong position to turn the tables: he had a majority support in the Parliament and in the army. But the UN hobbled him. UN representative Andrew Cordier, an American, shut down the airports to all but UN flights. That measure blocked Lumumba from shifting his troops from their operations in Katanga to Leopoldville. The UN also disallowed him access to the radio station to counter Kasavubu's anti-Lumumba speeches. Indeed, the UN was anything but a disinterested arbiter in the Congo. There is now evidence that between Kasavubu and Lumumba, UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold clearly rooted for the former.¹²⁵ In

¹²² Schatzberg, *Mobutu or Chaos?*, 38, 44-45. Incidentally, on 21 February 1961, the UN Security Council authorized the use of its forces to dislodge the Katanga secession.

¹²³ Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, xiii.

¹²⁴ Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, 40-41, 44-49.

¹²⁵ Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, 80-82.

August 1960, he asserted that the Congo situation "must come to crisis shortly and that Lumumba must be broken."¹¹⁵ A few days later, he confided in the U.S. mission at the UN that all "he was trying to do was to get rid of Lumumba without compromising UN position."¹¹⁶ In part, this bias derived from the considerable influence which the U.S. wielded over the UN Congo operations.¹¹⁷ Lumumba's difficulties were compounded by Washington's direct involvement. On 12 September, Joseph Mobutu, a Congolese army colonel who had also been won over by the CIA, announced that he was "neutralizing" the civilian government and sacked the Soviets.¹¹⁸ In the ensuing power struggle, the U.S. sided with the Kasavubu/Mobutu camp.¹¹⁹

The standard explanation is that U.S. objective in the Congo was to hold the line against Soviet incursion¹²⁰ and that the UN

¹¹⁵ Telegram from the mission at the United Nations to the Department of State, 26 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 444, 446.

¹¹⁶ Telegram from the mission at the UN to the Department of State, 7 September 1960, *ibid.*, 465.

¹¹⁷ Hoskyns, *The Congo Since Independence*, 472-473.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 46-48; Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, 96.

¹¹⁹ On 26 September 1960, Timberlake informed Kasavubu that the U.S. diplomatic personnel in the Congo were at his (Kasavubu's) absolute disposal, adding that he had not been able to see Kasavubu and his entourage as frequently as he wished in order not to "give impression to their opponents that we were working too closely with them." See Telegram from the embassy in the Congo to the Department of State, Leopoldville, 26 September 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 505.

¹²⁰ This interpretation is evident in virtually all the references cited in n. 118 above. In addition, see Nzongola-Ntalaja, "United States Policy toward Zaire;" and Crawford Young, "The Zairean Crisis and American Foreign Policy," both in Gerald J. Bender, James Coleman, and Richard L. Sklar (eds), *African*

shared this objective and was thus the "transmission belt for American policy."¹¹¹ In the circumstance, "Both the UN intervention and U.S. policy," according to Michael Schatzberg, "were more a consequence of the fear of Soviet expansion" than a response to Congo's territorial integrity and security needs.¹¹² David Gibbs has recently dissented from this interpretation. Arguing that Katanga holds the key to understanding U.S. conduct in the crisis, he insists that Washington supported Tshombe's secession, not because of Cold War dictates, but to defend American corporate interests. In Gibbs' words, "the Eisenhower administration supported Katanga because it had a financial interest in doing so. Several administration officials had investments in Central Africa." In this context,

American interests were synonymous with Belgian interests, and the USA accordingly supported Belgian policy....Belgian interests organized the Katanga secession, and the United States, in turn, supported the secession. Patrice Lumumba opposed the Belgians, and the USA sought to overthrow him. Officials justified these policies in terms of national security because American foreign policy is always justified that way. The economic perspective explains the Eisenhower policy quite well.¹¹³

The emphasis on the economic factor is quite attractive. But there seems to be more plausibility in arguing that there was a fusion of economic interests, anti-Sovietism, and what Weissman

Crisis Areas and U.S. Foreign Policy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).

¹¹¹ Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, 77; Ilungo Kabongo, "The Catastrophe of Belgian Decolonization," in Gifford and Louis (eds), *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfer of Power*, 383.

¹¹² Schatzberg, *Mobutu or Chaos?*, 14.

¹¹³ Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, 100-101.

calls the "NATO reflex"¹³⁴ in U.S. policy in the Congo. The weighting of each of these factors is an entirely different matter. But whatever the motives, there is now much evidence that with Eisenhower's personal knowledge and approval, U.S. agencies and agents masterminded the deposition, arrest and murder of Lumumba, and also Mobutu's coup.¹³⁵ A U.S. Senate report issued in 1975 held that "The chain of events and testimony is strong enough to permit a reasonable inference that the plot to assassinate Lumumba was authorized by President Eisenhower."¹³⁶ Indeed, Eisenhower hardly disguised his antipathy for Lumumba. On one occasion, he wished that "Lumumba would fall into a river full of crocodiles."¹³⁷

At the other extreme was Ghana. Its involvement in the Congo crisis has been aptly described as "deep."¹³⁸ Ghana had assisted the Congolese in their preparation for independence and helped arrange the power structure between Kasavubu (president) and

¹³⁴ This reflex, it is contended, predisposed the U.S. to act in deference to Belgium. See Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, 74, n. 20.

¹³⁵ For example, see Kalb, *The Congo Cables*; Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*; Schatzberg, *Mobutu or Chaos?*; Andrew Tully, *CIA: The Inside Story* (New York: William Morrow, 1962); Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, esp. chaps. ii and iii; idem, "CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences," *Political Science Quarterly*, 94, 2 (Summer 1979).

¹³⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 20 November 1975, 51.

¹³⁷ Editorial Note, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 495.

¹³⁸ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 119.

Lumumba (prime minister).¹⁴³ Before the crisis, Ghana sent doctors, engineers, and civil servants; provided Lumumba with a flying secretariat during his tour of Africa and North America in July/August 1960. It was therefore natural for the Congo to turn to Ghana when it made its first request for bilateral military aid on 13 July 1960. The first set of Ghanaian troops landed two days later.¹⁴⁴ Within a week of the request, 1193 Ghanaian troops -- almost the entire Ghana army -- were in Leopoldville, although as part of the UN force.¹⁴⁵

The U.S. was well aware of Nkrumah's influence over the Congolese government. This led to the belief -- at least, down to August 1960 -- that Nkrumah could be enlisted to serve U.S. ends in the Congo. As early as April 1960, Washington was already disturbed by what it regarded as the "extent of Communist penetration [of the] Congo in the period prior to independence." It was considered that Nkrumah's influence could be quite helpful in countering the anticipated "Communist" threat "as seen by his urging [the] Congolese [to] keep Belgian Civil Servants and avoid outside influence." In the circumstance, the State Department chose to encourage Nkrumah to increase his influence on the Congolese, although it was recognized that "this may mean expansion Nkrumah-type extreme anti-colonialism and Pan Africanism should his influence increase in the Congo."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 119, 122-123.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 123-124; Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo*, 21.

¹⁴⁵ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 124.

¹⁴⁶ Telegram from the Department of State to the embassy in Ghana, 28 April 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 271.

Following this policy option, Flake met with Nkrumah on 30 April 1960 and inquired whether he shared Washington's concern that the Congo might become susceptible to Soviet designs. Nkrumah assured him that he was doing all he could to prevent such an outcome.¹⁴³

Early in August 1960 -- after the Congo had exploded -- Eisenhower sent a "personal and confidential" message to Nkrumah, emphasizing that the crisis presented "grave dangers to world peace." According to the message, the U.S. "agreed that the immediate problem is the speedy resolution of the Belgian troop and Katanga questions." Eisenhower believed that Hammarskjold was "doing his best to carry out his S[ecurity] C[ouncil] mandate," and stressed that the U.S. was "backing and supporting him to the hilt" because of the conviction that the Council's resolution "is the right one" and that "if the UN were unsuccessful or discredited in the Congo, the results for world peace and cooperation would be disastrously tragic." However, the essence of the message was to invite Nkrumah to look beyond "these immediate problems" to the state of a post-crisis Congo. Eisenhower contended that since it would have "almost no trained experienced personnel to administer the country and operate the economy," the Congo "will be forced for a period of a few years at least, to entrust the country's essential services to outsiders." Anxious that in this context, the Congo "be effectively protected against conflicting power politics," Washington sought Nkrumah's support for its proposal that "this protection might be provided by means of a contract between the

¹⁴³ 755A.00/5-160, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 1 May 1960, *ibid.*, 271, n. 2.

UN and the Congolese Government under which the former would be the exclusive agent for the supply of administrative, technical and financial assistance to the latter."⁴⁴

In his turn, Nkrumah agreed with Eisenhower's view that the crisis constituted a serious danger to world peace and stressed that the "immediate problem" was the speedy withdrawal of Belgian troops from all of the Congo, including Katanga. He regarded Katanga's secession as the "product of Belgian manoeuvres" and held that it would have "the most disastrous consequences not only upon African opinion, but upon the whole balance of political forces in the world." Nkrumah acknowledged that although it was important to shield the Congo from "conflicting power politics and other pressures," the "first task before any other issue can be considered is the withdrawal of Belgian troops." Set in this context, his major disappointment was "the failure to act quickly in the implementation of the United Nations resolution." He therefore urged that the first step towards a resolution of the crisis was to "establish the authority of the United Nations." Nkrumah hinted at his distrust of Western intentions, mentioning the widespread African suspicion that the U.S., France, and Britain were "not giving their full support to the United Nations decision that all Belgian troops should be withdrawn from the whole of the Congo. The view which is being taken by some African states is that these powers are deliberately delaying on this issue in the hope that a Katanga state can be created and that the Belgian military

⁴⁴ Telegram from the Department of State to the embassy in Ghana, 2 August 1960, *ibid.*, 379-380.

occupation can continue and be ultimately justified on a de facto basis."¹⁴³

Nkrumah had cause to feel disappointed with the West. At the onset of the crisis, "He was determined to have the first troops in Leopoldville, but was totally dependent on the great powers to get them there." While the U.S. and Britain, whom he had approached for help were taking their time, the Soviets promptly volunteered two Ilyushin 18's. The tardiness of the West was not helped when Hammarskjold chided Nkrumah for his hastiness in demonstrating Ghana's nonalignment by accepting the Soviet offer.¹⁴⁴ The lines were thus drawn early in the crisis. But the tension smoldered until 23 September 1960, when Nkrumah addressed the General Assembly. Hardly had he stepped off the podium than the U.S. took the speech as a signal that he had crossed over to the Soviet side. Herter had called a hasty press conference to denounce Khrushchev's address before the General Assembly. And he did so in the strongest possible language. When asked to comment on Nkrumah's speech, he responded:

There again, very strongly. I would want to read the speech over, as I didn't hear all of it. As much as I heard of it, it sounded to me as though he were very definitely making a bid for the leadership of what you would call a Left-wing group of African states. He, I think, went out of his way from the point of view of showing a very close relationship to what Mr Khrushchev said....I think he has marked himself as very definitely leaning toward the Soviet bloc.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Telegram from the embassy in Ghana to the Department of State, 6 August 1960, *ibid.*, 319.

¹⁴⁴ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 131-132.

¹⁴⁵ *The New York Times*, 24 September 1960.

Nkrumah promptly issued a statement professing surprise since, as he put it, Herter "was, in fact, the last person from whom I would expect such a remark." He recalled that he had been saying much the same thing for ten years.¹⁴⁴ Herter's umbrage was indeed ironical. Nkrumah had been particularly anxious to keep the crisis from assuming a Cold War character and therefore desired as minimal a role for the superpowers and their major satellites as possible. For the same reason, he was very "disturbed by Lumumba's use of Soviet military aid" and told Flake so on 5 September 1960.¹⁴⁵ He had actually sought to restrain Lumumba from seeking Soviet aid as he knew that would automatically invite Western aid for the opposing side.¹⁴⁶

Much later, Eisenhower -- in agreement with Herter -- wrote in his memoir of how "Mr Nkrumah went directly from my room to the United Nations General Assembly and within forty-five minutes cut loose with a speech following the Khrushchev line in strong criticism of Secretary-General Hammarskjold."¹⁴⁷ Eisenhower could not have meant this as a fair assessment. Using the Congo as an illustration, Khrushchev had spoken very harshly of Hammarskjold for manipulating the UN machinery to further Western interests. For an impartial UN, the Soviet premier called for the substitution of a three-person committee (representing the West, the Eastern bloc, and the neutral nations) for the office of the

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, 86.

¹⁴⁶ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 130.

¹⁴⁷ Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 583.

secretary general.¹⁵² Nkrumah did not subscribe to the Soviet proposal to efface the office of the secretary general, even after he met with Khrushchev at the Soviet villa at Glen Cove, Long Island on 25 September.¹⁵³ Indeed, Nkrumah went out of his way to canvass support among other leaders for Hammarskjold.¹⁵⁴

In his speech -- which immediately preceded Khrushchev's -- Nkrumah expressed his "personal appreciation" of the way Hammarskjold had "handled a most difficult task" in the Congo. His complaint against the UN in the Congo was that it had attempted to restore order without distinguishing between legal and illegal authorities. But he was willing to accept such lapses as "in essence growing pains of the United Nations, and it would be entirely wrong to blame either the Security Council or any senior officials of the United Nations for what has taken place."¹⁵⁵ Nkrumah's compliment to Hammarskjold reflected a remarkable consistency (and independence from the Soviets) in Ghana's policy. At the General Assembly on 17 September, the U.S. castigated the Soviet Union for unilaterally sending "hundreds of so-called technicians" as well as planes and trucks to the Congo. The Soviets defended their action, insisting that they had acted not only in full compliance with Security Council resolutions but also at the request of the Congolese government. In addition, the Soviets charged that the U.S. had used the UN secretary general

¹⁵² *The New York Times*, 24 September 1960.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 26 September 1960.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 27 September 1960.

¹⁵⁵ For the speech, see Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, 262-280; *The New York Times*, 24 September 1960.

to oust Lumumba because he represented a threat to Western interests. Following this, Hammarskjold protested his impartiality and asked for a vote of confidence.¹⁴⁶ The next day, Alex Quaison-Sackey, Ghana's UN representative -- on behalf of seventeen African and Asian countries -- introduced a draft resolution which endorsed Hammarskjold's Congo policy; asked him to continue to take "vigorous action" toward the restoration of peace and order in the Congo; and urged all UN member states to "refrain from any action which might tend to impede" the restoration of peace and security and to work only through the UN in attending to the crisis. The resolution was adopted 70-0, with eleven abstentions (including the Soviet bloc).¹⁴⁷ There is thus hardly anything in Ghana's record to suggest an acquiescence in Soviet scepticism of Hammarskjold's performance in the Congo.

Nonetheless, Washington's anger can be easily situated. Nkrumah's speech had ranged widely over the world's problems and offered solutions for each. He demanded that Security Council permanent seats be created for Africa, Asia and the Middle East; that China be admitted into the UN to make it "more realistic and more effective and useful;" that South Africa surrender its mandate over South West Africa; that NATO countries should pressure Portugal to grant independence to its African colonies; and that France should enter into negotiations with the Algerian

¹⁴⁶ Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, 103-104; *The New York Times*, 21 September 1960.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Nationalist Government.¹¹⁴ In case after case, these remedial measures approximated the Soviet's and conflicted with America's. On the Congo, which was the primary focus of his speech, Nkrumah amplified positions which had typified Ghana's perspective on the crisis. Incidentally, that was a perspective which immeasurably offended Washington as it was antithetical to the Western interpretation, objective and approach on the Congo. In detail, he reviewed the origins of the crisis, criticizing Belgium at every step for employing "a system of calculated political castration in the hope that it would be completely impossible for African nationalists to fight for emancipation." He accused Belgium of inciting the riots in the Congo to create a pretext to re-colonize the country. He emphasized that the Congo crisis "has more than justified my continuous outcry against the threat of balkanization in Africa and my daily condemnation of neocolonialism, the process of handing independence over to the African people with one hand only to take it away with the other." He upheld the Kasavubu/Lumumba coalition as the legitimate government of the Congo and therefore insisted on Lumumba's reinstatement as prime minister, denounced Katanga's secession, dismissed Mobutu as a "fake," and blamed "imperialist intrigue" as the reason why a document of reconciliation "drafted in the presence of my Ambassador in Leopoldville" had not been signed by Lumumba and Kasavubu. He declared the Congo "an acute African problem which can be solved by Africans only," and therefore proposed that the UN should "delegate its functions in

¹¹⁴ See Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, 262-280; *The New York Times*, 24 September 1960.

the Congo to independent African states," especially those who had contributed most to the UN Congo operations; such forces, he said, should be under a unified African command with responsibility to the Security Council.¹³³ On account of its apparent anti-American tone, Nkrumah's hour long speech drew a very enthusiastic response from the Soviet bloc. To cap it, Khrushchev stood up and shook Nkrumah's hand as the latter returned to his seat.¹³⁴ This spectacle must have been offensive to Washington.

On 24 September, Joseph Satterthwaite, the assistant secretary for African Affairs, attempted -- on Herter's instruction -- to meet Nkrumah and formally protest against the latter's General Assembly speech. Nkrumah refused to see him.¹³⁵ Satterthwaite was able to secure a telephone conversation with Quaison-Sackey. He used the opportunity to indicate that the U.S. was offended, less by Nkrumah's speech *per se*, as by an apparent communality with the "Communists." Satterthwaite noted that although Nkrumah was in New York, he was absent when Eisenhower delivered his speech; on the other hand, Nkrumah "with great display, took his seat at the head of his delegation to listen to the 2 hour and 20 minute speech of Premier Khrushchev." On the contents of Nkrumah's speech, Satterthwaite observed that "except for Nkrumah's personal praise of Secretary Hammarskjold, it was difficult to find a word in the speech showing any understanding

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *The New York Times*, 24 September 1960.

¹³⁵ Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, 51.

of the position of the West in the East-West conflict." Besides, Nkrumah made no allusion to the unilateral intervention of the Soviets (in responding to Lumumba's request for assistance) outside UN channels, an intervention the U.S. held as the cause of the Congo crisis. "Certainly, therefore," Satterthwaite concluded, "the content of the Nkrumah and Khrushchev speeches and the display attached to the reception by the eastern bloc delegates of the Nkrumah speech gave us every reason to believe there had been collusion between the two."¹⁰

In spite of the relevance of Satterthwaite's explanation, Nkrumah's speech -- along with all its supporting scenes -- was a minor sub-text in the U.S./Ghana divide. There seems to have been an underlying anti-Ghana resentment in Washington, with the events of 23 September 1960 merely providing the alibi for its ventilation. It is, for example, significant that Herter passed judgement on the speech without even hearing or reading all of it.

Nkrumah had decided to attend the 15th session of the UN General Assembly because he expected that "the Congo crisis would loom large in the discussions."¹¹ And with heads of state such as Eisenhower, Khrushchev, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of

¹⁰ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between the assistant secretary of state for African Affairs (Satterthwaite) and the Ghanaian representative at the United Nations (Quaison-Sackey), "Appointment to Call on President Nkrumah," 24 September 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 663-665. In the course of the conversation, Quaison-Sackey first expressed surprise at Herter's reaction to Nkrumah's speech. He denied any Khrushchev/Nkrumah collusion, saying that he had fixed the time for Nkrumah's speech "several weeks ago." He attributed the Eastern bloc's applause to the fact that the speech was anticolonial in tone. See *ibid.*

¹¹ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, 260-261.

Britain, Tito of Yugoslavia, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Nasser of Egypt, and Fidel Castro of Cuba attending, he must have also felt that the session afforded a good opportunity to resolve the crisis. In this respect, Nkrumah hoped that he could, with Eisenhower, forge a strategy to be put before the UN for the resolution of the crisis. This hope stemmed from Nkrumah's belief that U.S./Ghana relations still had its old flame. Nkrumah and Eisenhower met on 22 September 1960. For the latter, the meeting went very well. "Mr Nkrumah," Eisenhower later wrote, "professed, to my surprise, considerable optimism regarding the situation in the Congo. He said the situation was not insoluble, and said that the solution had to be worked out through the United Nations. Indicating his respect for the United States, he said he had taken special steps to arrange a visit to me before going to see Mr Khrushchev, upon whom he had been invited to call."¹⁴ On the other hand, W.M.Q. Halm -- Ghana's ambassador to the U.S. -- who was at the meeting, noted that Nkrumah left Eisenhower "heartily dissatisfied,"¹⁵ as he found that the Americans did not share his sense of urgency and concern about the Congo.

At their meeting, both Eisenhower and Nkrumah agreed that the UN provided the best forum for a solution of the crisis; both also spoke highly of Hammarskjold's handling of the crisis. From there, Eisenhower launched into a reminiscence of his military exploits during World War II. Nkrumah raised the Congo again. But Herter, who was in attendance, could only say that the U.S. was

¹⁴ Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 583.

¹⁵ Quoted in Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, 50.

opposed to a Soviet effort to place the crisis before the General Assembly.¹⁰⁰ Of course, Eisenhower and his secretary of state had no need to be bothered. They were satisfied with the turn of events in the Congo -- that is, the ascendancy of the Mobutu-Kasavubu faction. But Washington's celebration was Accra's agony. In essence, Eisenhower and Nkrumah were separated by their allegiance to different causes, and therefore personalities, in the Congo.

Well before 23 September, Washington knew that Lumumba was receiving very strong backing from Nkrumah. On 17 August 1960, Clare Timberlake, the U.S. ambassador to the Congo, cabled Washington that "Ghana is at least giving aid and comfort to Lumumba and the Communists." He added that Washington should "count on the strong possibility" that Ghana, along with Guinea, "would oppose any change in the Government of the Congo and any action of the UN which would reduce Lumumba's power or change his political course."¹⁰¹ A month later, he reported that Lumumba was "reportedly hiding out somewhere under Ghanaian protection."¹⁰² At the same time, the U.S. mission at the UN regarded Nkrumah as the "man who is steering Lumumba."¹⁰³ Reports such as these and their

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, "President Nkrumah's Call on the President", 22 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DEEL); reproduced in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 661-662.

¹⁰¹ Telegram from the embassy in the Congo to the Department of State, Leopoldville, 17 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 419.

¹⁰² Telegram from the embassy in the Congo to the Department of State, Leopoldville, 18 September 1960, *ibid.*, 494.

¹⁰³ Telegram from the mission at the United Nations to the Department of State, 19 August 1960, *ibid.*, 433.

broader implications could not have endeared Nkrumah to Washington.

Washington's overriding objective was to ensure that, at the minimum, Lumumba was permanently excluded from political office in the Congo. A telegram of 24 September 1960 from Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles to the CIA representative in Leopoldville was explicit that "We wish to give every possible support in eliminating Lumumba from any possibility resuming governmental position or if he fails in Leopoldville, setting himself up in Stanleyville or elsewhere."¹⁰⁰ By contrast, Ghana, Guinea, and Egypt were working tirelessly to rehabilitate Lumumba and thus negate the accomplishment of Washington's goal. Their effort involved reconciling him with Kasavubu and restoring the legitimate balance of power in the country. At one point, Timberlake informed Washington that

Evidence has steadily accumulated that Ghana, Guinea and the UAR have been putting continuous and mounting pressures on Kasavubu and [Joseph] Ileo to reach a compromise with Lumumba. Their maximum goal is reestablishment of status quo ante dismissal Lumumba; failing that, at least his inclusion as one of ministers. I believe this move is sparkplugged by Nkrumah who clings to dream of Ghana-Guinea-Congo union as stepping stone to Nkrumization of Africa. If Lumumba is out of Congo, so is that part of dream....I can think of no greater disservice to the realization of the aspirations of the Congolese people and to our own for them than to stand aside and let these three countries have the field to themselves in such pressure play.¹⁰¹

Washington shared Timberlake's apprehensions of the efforts to restore Lumumba to power, and it must have been thoroughly

¹⁰⁰ Editorial Note, *ibid.*, 503.

¹⁰¹ Telegram from the embassy in the Congo to the Department of State, Lepoldville, 22 September 1960, *ibid.*, 501. (Joseph Ileo was the President of the Congolese Senate).

displeased with Ghana for spearheading this counter move. On 23 September 1960 -- the day Nkrumah addressed the General Assembly -- the State Department claimed that "It has unfortunately become clear" that Guinea, Ghana and Egypt were "deliberately intervening in internal affairs of Congo in violation [of] repeated S[ecurity] C[ouncil] and G[eneral] A[ssembly] resolutions." The interference, according to the department was in the form "of refusal [to] permit arrest of Lumumba" and the attempts to persuade Kasavubu and his camp to embrace a power-sharing formula which accommodated Lumumba.¹²⁴ By then, Washington was very hard at work to frustrate any attempt to reconcile the Congolese factions. On 24 September 1960, the State Department instructed the U.S. mission at the UN to approach the Ghanaian, Guinean, and Egyptian delegations to make a case against their support of Lumumba.¹²⁵ In Leopoldville, Timberlake notified Kasavubu that Washington was fully aware of the efforts of Guinea, Ghana, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia to "effect a reconciliation between Kasavubu and Lumumba," and emphasized that "it would not be profitable to come to an understanding with Lumumba." To drive his point home, Timberlake reminded Kasavubu that "During the two months he [Lumumba] was in power, he created anarchy throughout country, he fought with his collaborators, the UN and the UN Secretary General, helped bring cold war to Congo by accepting direct assistance [of] military nature from

¹²⁴ Telegram from the Department to the mission at the United Nations, 23 September, 1960, *ibid.*, 502.

¹²⁵ 770G.00/9-2260, Telegram from the Department of State to USUN, New York, 24 September 1960, *ibid.*, 503, n. 3.

Soviets, he fanned fires of civil war in [the] country and in summary constituted a centrifugal rather than centripetal force." Timberlake strongly impressed it on Kasavubu that for these reasons, the U.S. was "squarely against" Lumumba, "an evil influence who would be bad for the Congo." Besides, he pointed out the absurdity of Lumumba's continued use of the prime minister's official residence; this, Timberlake believed, "constituted psychological advantage for Lumumba."¹¹³

At the root of the differences between Washington and Accra was that both were diametrically opposed in their interpretation and perception of the Congo crisis. This fundamental cleavage emerged with the crisis, and since it remained irreconcilable, there was no possibility of Ghana and the U.S. reaching any agreement on the Congo. Thus the more the crisis deepened, the more the gulf between Ghana and the West, and especially the U.S., deepened as well. For the U.S., the crisis was an irreconcilable cosmic encounter between evil (represented by Lumumba and "Communism") and good (represented by Mobutu and Kasavubu). For Nkrumah, Lumumba was simply a nationalist striving to safeguard his country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The U.S. objective was to vanquish the evil. It is true that as the crisis deepened, Nkrumah became Lumumba's chief patron and adopted Lumumba's cause as his own. But he allowed for a middle ground which could accommodate all, provided the nationalist goals were upheld. Nkrumah held to the legitimacy of the

¹¹³ Telegram from the embassy in the Congo to the Department of State, Leopoldville, 26 September 1960, *ibid.*, 504-505.

Kasavubu/Lumumba government and thus hoped for the restoration of the status quo: the expulsion of Belgian troops, the re-integration of Katanga into the Congo, and the reinstatement of the central government with Kasavubu and Lumumba as president and prime minister respectively.¹⁷⁵ Thus at every turn, he readily endorsed the legitimacy of Lumumba's claims to power. When he arrived New York on 21 September 1960 for the UN General Assembly, Nkrumah did not hesitate to declare Lumumba the head of the "legitimate government" of the Congo.¹⁷⁶ By insisting on Lumumba's restoration, Nkrumah put himself at sharp odds with the U.S. And by the logic of guilt by association, Washington categorized him a "Communist," the label assigned to Lumumba.

Friday, 23 September 1960 must have given Nkrumah sufficient cause to rethink on U.S./Ghana relations. After Herter's outburst, he spent one hour with Khrushchev at the residence of the Soviet mission to the UN at 608 Park Avenue, Manhattan.¹⁷⁷ Ghanaian sources contrast the "frosty" forty-five minute Eisenhower/Nkrumah meeting with the geniality of the Soviet.¹⁷⁸ It is therefore not surprising that Nkrumah accepted Khrushchev's invitation to spend part of the weekend at the Soviet estate on Long Island.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, chaps. 31-32.

¹⁷⁶ *The New York Times*, 22 September 1960.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23 September 1960.

¹⁷⁸ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 166.

¹⁷⁹ Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, 51.

But back in Accra, Nkrumah tried to piece the relationship together. A few hours after his return, he invited Flake to his office. Their discussion covered a number of issues touching on U.S./Ghana relations. But inevitably, Nkrumah referred to Herter's comments on his speech and regretted that he was misunderstood.¹⁴³ The State Department's response to the Nkrumah/Flake discussion suggested that Washington wished for some distance with Accra. The department noted that Nkrumah's performance at the UN "made most unfortunate impression in this country because it reflected a complete lack of appreciation of Western position on almost every issue and, while consistently critical of the West, failed to find fault with flagrant unilateral Soviet intervention in Congo." It believed that by his actions and deeds, Nkrumah seemed determined to abet the Soviet cause. In addition, many other African states -- according to the department -- were averse to Nkrumah's performance at the UN. "Under these circumstances," the department continued, the U.S. was disinclined to take any action which would "encourage Nkrumah's role in Africa unless and until he shows greater signs of stability and that his actions are not furthering Soviet objectives in such matters as Congo and UN machinery." "Nkrumah," it was stressed, "has grandiose view [of the] part he is to play in future Africa," a view the department definitely loathed. Washington was therefore eager to note that resistance and resentment of Nkrumah's leadership were being expressed in Africa, and especially hoped that a "counter force such as

¹⁴³ Telegram from the embassy to the Department of State, 7 October 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960, xiv*, (1992), 665-667.

Nigeria will now begin to assert strong moderating influence" on the continent.¹⁰¹

Reflecting Washington's changed perception, *The New York Times* of 17 October 1960 ran a front page news analysis titled "Nkrumah Brands All Of Ghana With The Stamp Of His Authority." Essentially, the piece detailed how Nkrumah had transformed Ghana into his "personal political kingdom": "The state of Ghana is authoritarian and the authority is Mr Nkrumah. He has followed the classic modern pattern -- the creation of a personally controlled party that reaches into every village and directs every aspect of social and political life."

Conclusion

Nkrumah had very deep convictions on the Congo and would possibly not have compromised them for anything. At the same time, it is quite doubtful whether he would have consciously confronted the U.S. to the point of impairing his relationship with Washington. A structural transformation of the colonial economy -- as a means of expanding Ghana's national income -- was Nkrumah's oft-repeated priority. Such a transformation involved a radical alteration of the pattern of trade under which Ghana exported primary produce and imported manufactures. It implied the diversification of the economy through the modernization of agriculture, and the substitution of locally-produced goods for imports. The key for this diversification or industrialization, Nkrumah thought, was power generated from the Volta. As the next chapter shows, he had initially banked on the British for funding

¹⁰¹ Telegram from the Department of State to the embassy in Ghana, 13 October 1960, *ibid.*, 667-668.

the Volta Project. But by 1957, it was clear to him that Britain would not be forthcoming. From then, he turned to the U.S. By 1960, he was at last beginning to see the possibility of the Volta project materializing, with U.S. support. In other words, Nkrumah required no tutorial on the need for a very cordial relationship with Washington, at least, for the sake of the Volta.

By contrast, it can be argued that the U.S. had little need for Ghana by 1960 and could indeed conveniently afford a break in the romance. On its own, Ghana had very little international significance. Its only value was as the world's leading cocoa supplier, a status which made it extremely dependent on the goodwill of cocoa consumers, invariably the West. As with most other commodity exporters, Ghana was a price-taker for cocoa in the sense that it could not fix or even influence the prices of the produce. And since Ghana was very extensively dependent on cocoa exports for its money income, it certainly could ill-afford to cut supplies: a serious falling-off in the value of exports would have had deep repercussions throughout the economy, the general level of incomes, expenditure on imports, and the yield of taxes (especially import duties) falling in a cumulative process.

The U.S. interest in Ghana was political. By the late 1950s, the U.S. clearly needed to demonstrate that it had an enlightened African policy. And there was only Ghana as the stage for this purpose. Thus Ghana had to be more or less wooed. This kind of relationship could last only as long as Ghana was alone on the African stage. However, in September 1960, eleven francophone

African states were admitted into the UN. Of more significance -- because of its size and population of thirty million -- was Nigeria's independence, which was to come on 1 October 1960. The emergence of these states meant that Ghana was immediately crowded out on the international arena. In other words, Ghana dramatically lost its political significance as the lone African bride it had been since March 1957. More complicating yet for Ghana was the fact that the francophone states and Nigeria showed clear signs of eschewing Nkrumah's strictures on Western neocolonialism in Africa. They were inclined to be distinctively pro-Western without veering off to "positive neutralism;" to be conservative on issues such as African unity, the projection of an African "Personality," and the "liberation of Africa": issues which Nkrumah held close to his chest.¹²² Given this sequence, the U.S. had sufficient incentive to redefine, though not necessarily to chill, its relationship with Ghana by 1960. The Congo provided the convenient excuse to do so, although in a more acrimonious manner.

"Redefinition of relationship" is a phrase that appropriately puts the matter into perspective. This redefinition was well in place months before September 1960. For example, it was a declared U.S. policy -- by February 1960 -- to "Discourage, whenever possible, Ghana's current tendency to support extremist elements in neighboring African countries."¹²³ In other words, by

¹²² For example, see the coverage by *The New York Times*, 26 September 1960, of the luncheon Herter gave in honor of the chief UN delegates of the 12 African states newly admitted into the UN.

¹²³ NSC 6005, "US Policy Toward West Africa", 29 February 1960 (RG 273, NA).

early 1960, Washington was prepared to checkmate Nkrumah's ambitions in Africa. But even this irritation with Ghana had its definite limits. It was feared that pushing Nkrumah too hard might push him over to the Soviets. Thus, although committed to checking Nkrumah's excesses in Africa, the U.S. also desired to encourage Ghana "in its political development and economic growth and to support the preservation of its basically Western orientation."¹⁴⁴ This desire ensured that by 1960, the U.S. had developed a strong interest in the accomplishment of the Volta project. Nkrumah's fixation with the project was well-known in Washington, and there was a continuing fear that Ghana would turn to the Soviets if "Western sources fail to assist in the Volta River Project." This fear was contrasted by the belief that "The success of this major project (with Western assistance) will reinforce Western and U.S. interests in Ghana."¹⁴⁵ In this context, it would appear that by 1960 -- before the bickering over the Congo -- Washington had fashioned a stick and carrot policy for Ghana: oppose its activism in Africa, but support its economic development.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

"THE first essential thing," Nkrumah told a press conference in Accra after his visit to the U.S. in July 1958, "is to build a dam and get the hydroelectric power. Exploitation of the bauxite deposits and production of aluminium would follow." He emphasized that "Ghana needs new industries, and new industries need power. Aluminium could be dealt as an industry after the power supply was established." Nkrumah was talking about the Volta River Project (VRP), intended to establish large-scale aluminium production in Ghana by harnessing its considerable bauxite deposits and the Volta's potential for producing sufficient hydro-power to make possible the conversion of bauxite into aluminium.

As far as Nkrumah was concerned, the VRP had easily demonstrable justifications. To begin with, colonial rule ensured Africa's entrenchment into an international division of labor which consigned it to primary production. Ghana's particular inheritance was an economy precariously balanced on the export of cocoa. Thus by March 1957, when it achieved independence, the price of cocoa -- on which it was (and remains) dependent for a very large part of its revenue -- was under £180 per ton, having fallen almost continuously from a peak of £560 in July 1954. Prices did move somewhat in the opposite direction thereafter,

¹ *West Africa*, 16 August 1958, 770.

² See Horward, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in Ghana*.

³ "Commercial Sense in Ghana," *West Africa*, 17 October 1959, 860.

settling at £260 per ton in 1958/59.⁴ "Fragility" is the term suggested by Tony Killick to draw attention to this general and inherent tendency of the economy "towards instability" on account of its excessive dependence on cocoa. "First and foremost," he says, "there is the large fluctuations in the earnings that Ghana derives from her cocoa exports....Partly as a result of the unreliability of cocoa tax revenues, the general government budgetary balance is unpredictable."⁵ In the circumstance, the Nkrumah government was confronted with the task of devising a fiscal strategy for capital mobilization in an economy constrained by the combination of a weak productive base and very limited private capital formation.⁶ Phrased differently, it had to boost its income, either by expanding existing sources of

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Tony Killick, "The Possibilities of Economic Control," in Walter Birmingham, I. Neustadt, E.N. Omaboe (eds), *A Study of Contemporary Ghana, i: The Economy of Ghana* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 412.

⁶ On 5 June 1954, Roy Wise of the FOA arrived in Accra to explore the investment possibilities for U.S. capital in the Gold Coast. From Minister of Finance K.C. Tours, Wise learnt that the Gold Coast was an agricultural economy so that official attention was basically focussed on improving agriculture rather than encouraging industrial development. According to Tours, world cocoa prices at the time were lucrative with the result that the Cocoa Marketing Board had "embarrassingly high reserves, and the farmers had more money than before." However, Tours regretted that the money the farmers had earned "in the recent past" -- which he put at £30 million -- had neither been reflected in consumer spending nor in bank deposits, nor in the sale of government bonds. According to him, the government's conclusion was that the cocoa farmers were hoarding rather than investing or spending their earnings. See 811.05145K/6-3054, Desp. from American consulate general, Accra to the Department of State, "Investment Possibilities in the Gold Coast: Visit to Accra of Mr Roy T. Wise of FOA," 30 June 1954 (NA). This is instructive for those who make much of how Nkrumah heavily taxed the agricultural sector to fund non-agricultural development projects.

revenue or establishing new ones. Theoretically, the former option -- which implied a vigorous expansion of cocoa exports -- had little appeal. The basic market problem with commodities such as cocoa is that they have a very low income-elasticity of demand (changes in income hardly increase their demand). Thus with a generally inelastic demand, an aggressive supply behavior only depresses prices further.

In the event, Nkrumah was anxious to ensure Ghana's escape from the vagaries of the international commodity market -- swings which, Gunner Myrdal taught, increase uncertainty and risk, thereby discouraging investment. Speaking in Accra on 14 January 1957, at the inauguration ceremony of the All African Regional Conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Nkrumah regretted that African countries were excessively dependent on commodity exports. "This situation," he observed, "has rendered us extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices for our dominant crops. These fluctuations have had unsettling effects on long term plans and crippled attempts to raise the standard of living." As a consequence, Ghana considered that "it is necessary to develop heavy industries," and the VRP was "designed for such a purpose." Eight months later, Finance Minister Gbedemah told Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph Palmer 2nd that the Ghanaian government considered that having to rely on cocoa for sixty to seventy percent of its national revenue was unhealthy and that was why the implementation of the VRP meant so

Gunner Myrdal, *An International Economy* (New York: Harpers, 1956), chap. xiii.

Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, 86.

much to Ghana. He believed that the project would have a trigger effect by providing power for new industries and irrigation which would allow for crop diversification.'

More fundamentally, Nkrumah regarded poverty as a self-perpetuating vicious circle which could only be broken by a "big push" for industrial development.¹⁰ "One thing," he insisted, "is certain, unless we plan to lift Africa up out of her poverty, she will remain poor. For there is a vicious circle which keeps the poor in their rut of impoverishment, unless an energetic effort is made to interrupt the circular causation of poverty. Once this has been done, and the essential industrial machine has been set in motion, there is a snowballing effect which increases the momentum of change."¹¹ This deep-seated belief that industrialization held the key for any meaningful transformation of the African economy led him to the observation that "There are, however, imperial specialists and apologists who urge the less developed countries to concentrate on agriculture and leave industrialization for some later time when their populations shall be well fed. The world's economic development, however, shows that it is only with advanced industrialization that it has been possible to raise the nutritional level of the people by

¹⁰ 845J.2614/9-2557, Memorandum of Conversation, "Courtesy Call by Ghana's Finance Minister, K.A. Gbedemah -- Ghana's Economic Development and Assistance Plans Hinge on Decision Regarding Volta Project," 25 September 1957 (NA).

¹¹ See Kenneth W. Grundy, "Nkrumah's Theory of Underdevelopment: An Analysis of Recurrent Themes," *World Politics*, 15, 3 (April 1963).

¹² Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), 167.

raising their levels of income."²² The ordinary Ghanaian would have agreed with this proposition. In 1948, the Watson Commission reported that "At every turn we were pressed with the cry of industrialization." The commission thought that this mass demand could be assuaged by the establishment of small scale industries -- for example, fish canning, furniture, and textiles.²³

Nkrumah and his fellow Ghanaians were not alone in their faith in the efficacy of industrialization to remedy underdevelopment; it was the orthodoxy of the 1950s and 1960s -- whether one talks of Rosenstein-Rodan's model of "balanced growth" through a "big push" for industrialization; or Albert Hirshman's "unbalanced growth" through growth poles; or Arthur Lewis' two-sector growth model; or Walt Rostow's "stages of economic development."²⁴ Of particular dramatic effect was Hans Singer's observation that since the 1870s, "the trend of prices has been heavily against sellers of food and raw materials and in favor of the sellers of manufactured articles."²⁵ These and other development theorists had their ideas of how the UDCs could

²² Kwame Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), 7.

²³ Colonial No. 231, paras. 298-303.

²⁴ P.N. Rosenstein-Rodan, "Problems of Industrialization of Eastern and Southeastern Europe," *Economic Journal* (June-September 1943); Albert Hirshman, *The Strategy of Economic Development* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); W.A. Lewis, "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor," *Manchester School*, (January 1958); idem, *The Theory of Economic Growth* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961); W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

²⁵ Hans Singer, *International Development: Growth and Change* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 165.

achieve what Rostow had called the "take-off" to mass production and mass consumption." But for Nkrumah, and he said so repeatedly, electricity was the ultimate trick. In February 1961, he told the Ghana National Assembly that "All industries of any major significance require, as a basic facility, a large and reliable source of power." After contending that the industrialization of Europe, North America, Russia and anywhere else was the result "of the invention of sources of power of hitherto undreamt of size," Nkrumah emphasized that "Newer nations such as ours, which are determined by every possible means to catch up in industrial strength, must have electricity in abundance before they can expect any large-scale industrial advance. Electricity is the basis for industrialization. That, basically, is the justification for the Volta River Project."

There was, of course, a political justification for the Volta project. In 1958, Nkrumah wrote of the "rising expectations" created by independence. African leaders, he said, "are now expected, simply as a result of having acquired independence, to work miracles. The people look for new schools, new towns, new factories....In this situation, however poor the country, the new government cannot sit and do nothing....There must be something to show for independence." With this mind-

¹ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, esp. pp. 1-3, 145-167.

² Quoted in David Hart, *The Volta River Project: A Case Study in Politics and Technology* (Edinburgh University Press, 1980), 40-41.

³ Nkrumah, "African Prospect," *Foreign Affairs*, 37, 1 (October 1958), 51.

set, the VRP must have been perceived as a dramatic dividend of independence.

In March 1957, Nkrumah described the VRP as "my baby and my ambition."¹¹ He certainly made the project his rendezvous with history; it was to embody his vision of a "modernized" Ghana and edify his own political career, indeed his own life. But he had adopted it. As long ago as 1924, the very large bauxite deposits in the Gold Coast and the Volta's hydroelectric possibilities induced the colonial administration to draw up plans for an integrated aluminium industry. From then, thoughts and plans on the project advanced through various stages. By 1957, much time and money had already been invested in planning and discussing the Volta River that many believed it was a worthwhile scheme.¹²

The British White Paper

Aluminium established itself as a non-ferrous metal of major importance in the aftermath of World War II. It was the aircraft industry that provided aluminium's staple outlet. But it soon invaded new territories: residential construction and home

¹¹ "Foreign Policy for Ghana," *West Africa*, 16 March 1957, 241.

¹² See Robert Jackson, "The Volta River Project," *Progress: The Unilever Project*, 50, 4 (1964); Emil R. Rado, "The Volta River Project -- Retrospect and Prospect," *Economic Bulletin*, 4, 2 (February 1960); the article also appeared in *West Africa*, 20, 27, February; 5 March, 12 March 1960; No author, "Imperialism and the Volta Dam," *West Africa*, 24 March, 31 March, 14 April, 1960; Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," *Fortune* (November 1961), 128-206; David Hart, "The Political Economy of a Development Scheme: The Volta River Project," *International Relations*, 6, 1 (May 1978); idem, *The Volta River Project: A Case Study in Politics and Technology*; Tony Killick, "The Volta River Project," in Birmingham, Neustadt, and Omabode (eds), *A Study of Contemporary Ghana*; James Moxon, *Volta: Man's Greatest Lake* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1969); Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, chap. 12.

improvement, cylinder blocks for cars, cans, railway and bridge carriages, shipbuilding, electric industries (as both a conductor and in associated metallic compounds).⁴² Increased and increasing demand created worries about supply possibilities: every industrialized country wanted an assured source of aluminium. By the late 1940s, Britain, which had to pay scarce dollars for eighty percent of its aluminium supplies from Canada, was anxiously seeking new sources in the sterling area. Aluminium of Canada Limited (ALCAN) and British Aluminium Company (BAC) were willing to help by establishing a smelter in the sterling area. A study by both companies considered the Gold Coast a promising site. Meanwhile, the Gold Coast government had in 1949 appointed William Halcrow and Partners to investigate the potential value of the Volta River to the economy of the Gold Coast. In August 1951, the firm submitted a favorable report on the prospects of developing hydroelectric power for aluminium production. Following these reports, discussions were held in October/November 1951 and in May 1952 in London and in June 1952 in Accra between the British and the Gold Coast governments, as well as the aluminium companies. With these groundworks, the British government was able to issue a White Paper in November 1952 declaring that, in principle, it favored the hydroelectric-bauxite-aluminium development project in the Gold Coast.⁴⁴

⁴² See "Prospect Fair for Aluminum," *West Africa*, 10 November 1960, 1019.

⁴⁴ *Volta River Scheme*, Cmd. 8702 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, November 1952).

The White Paper envisaged the construction of a dam with an area of 2,000 square miles across the Volta River as well as a power station capable of generating about 600,000 kilowatts. Both were to be located at Ajena, seventy miles from the mouth of the river. It was expected that hydroelectric power would become available from five to seven years after the commencement of the construction work. There was also to be an aluminium smelter at Kpong, twelve miles from Ajena, which would use all but about 50,000 kilowatts of the Volta-generated power to manufacture aluminium from the Gold Coast's bauxite deposits. The smelter would have an annual capacity of 80,000 tons and an eventual capacity of 210,000 tons. Along with the construction of the power station, the dam and the smelter, would be an extensive investment in public works, ranging from the provision of new port facilities to the building of new railways, roads and houses.

The financial estimates allowed for an ultimate capital outlay of some £144 million, of which £100.5 million was meant for the initial stage. Of the overall figure, the Gold Coast government would provide the £26 million required for the public works (construction of a port, rail, road and other public service facilities). The power project with a capacity of 564,000 kilowatts was estimated at £54 million, toward which the British government would have provided £46 million as loan financing and the Gold Coast at least £8 million. The smelter was estimated at £64 million, to be shared in the ratio of 1:1:4 between the

Ibid.

British and Gold Coast governments and the aluminium companies. The maximum expenditure of the British government for the entire project was to be around £57 million. In return for the British participation in the scheme, up to seventy-five percent of the aluminium produced would be assured to its domestic market for thirty years.

The White Paper clearly showed that Britain was only interested in securing an assured supply of aluminium from the sterling area. In 1951, British consumption of aluminium was 316,000 tons, and it was calculated this would rise at an average rate of five percent over the period 1950-60. From the published figures and projections, the Gold Coast production would have supplied close to fifty percent of British total requirements by the early 1970s.⁴⁸ For Ghana, the project was a completely integrated aluminium producing operation which promised a broad multiplier effect on the economy and society -- an assured source of electricity which would support industrialization; the generation of aluminium-related secondary industries; the fishery and irrigation possibilities of the lake to be created by the dam; the development of technical skills and the generation of employment opportunities; the broadening of the narrow base on which the economy rested through a very valuable export material; the broadening of the infrastructure of the country with the construction of new transport and communications facilities and

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

other public utilities; and the increase in public revenue through taxes from all these activities.

The Preparatory Commission's Report

After the White Paper was issued, the two governments and the two aluminium companies still considered it necessary to have a Preparatory Commission further examine the project. Unfortunately, the commission established in 1953 and headed by Robert Jackson⁴⁰ became so bogged down with details that it took till December 1955 to complete its work. Its report, published in July 1956, showed that the commission's estimates were substantially higher than those put forward in the 1952 White Paper. The overall cost of the project jumped to £231.3 million (or £309 million if allowance was made for an anticipated forty-five percent increase in costs before the work was completed). The figure for the initial phase was now £162 million instead of the £100.5 million quoted in 1952, and the cost of the smelter shot up by forty-two percent to £91.2 million. In part, these inflations had to do with the fact that the commission was far more ambitious than the White Paper. For example, its public works -- estimated at £72.5 million instead of £26 million -- were much more comprehensive. Similarly, the dam and power project increased by 12.5 percent to £67.6 million because the commission envisaged a ten percent increase in generating capacity. It hoped that it would take seven years to build the dam, behind which

⁴⁰ Robert Jackson, an Australian who had been with the British Treasury, served as assistant secretary-general of the UN, and adviser to the governments of India and Pakistan, was the chairman of Ghana Development Corporation and one of Nkrumah's top advisers. See Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, *passim*, but esp. p. 21.

would be created a 3500 square mile lake, the largest body of dammed water in the world.⁴⁷ In American dollar terms, the revised estimates called for about \$700 million as the cost of the dam and the generating units necessary to produce 100,000 tons of aluminium ingots per annum; eventually this would reach \$900 million (plus a forty-five percent inflationary allowance) when the maximum production target of 210,000 tons had been achieved.⁴⁸

The commission's estimates frightened the British government. Secretary of State Alan Lennon-Boyd wasted no time in declaring that none of the parties was then committed and that "because of the substantial increase in the estimated capital cost of the project, it will be necessary to review both the framework and the method of finance." He stated that "as the next step," the World Bank "is being invited to make a general assessment of the project and to indicate the extent to which it would be willing, in principle, to participate in it if agreement on the framework could be reached between the two governments and the aluminium companies."⁴⁹ For the participating aluminium companies, the commission's estimates made the Gold Coast a high-cost producer and substantially lowered the return on capital.

⁴⁷ The commission's report was in three volumes, but its essential gist was volume i: *Report of the Preparatory Commission* (London: HMSO, 1956).

⁴⁸ These dollar figures were given by Robert Jackson himself when he called on the State Department on 11 December 1956. See 845K.2614/12-1156, Memorandum of Conversation, "Survey of Gold Coast Volta River Project," (NA).

⁴⁹ 845K.2614/7-3156, Desp. from AmCongen, Accra to the Department of State, "Public Statements Regarding the Volta River Project," 31 July 1956 (NA).

First, the estimates were so high that any resulting power rates would have made aluminium smelting uneconomical. Besides, the scale of the project was such that no one company could have desired to handle it alone. As a consequence, the only way the companies could possibly have been induced to invest in the VRP was for the Gold Coast to subsidize the cost of power used by the smelter.

But it is also worthy of note that as far as the British government, ALCAN and BAC were concerned, the VRP had run into serious difficulties well before the commission's report was out. By July 1956, the aluminium companies had committed large financial and technical resources to aluminium projects in many other parts of the world. In Africa alone, the VRP had its rivals in terms of projects combining hydroelectric power with aluminium production -- Konkoure in Guinea; Kouilou in French Congo; Inga in Belgian Congo, and Edea in the Cameroons. By 1957 -- when the VRP was still on the drawing board -- a number of these projects were far advanced.¹⁷ These commitments added to the difficulties of finding capital for the VRP. Besides, the expansion schemes ensured that aluminium supply was more likely to meet demand for as far ahead as the experts cared to forecast. In point of fact, the supply of primary aluminium matched demand in Britain and the U.S. at the end of 1956.¹⁸ This relieved Britain of its stress over aluminium supplies. These factors combined to ensure that as

¹⁷ See "Rivals for the Volta," *West Africa*, 31 August 1957, 827.

¹⁸ See "Production Ahead of Demand," *ibid.*, 30 March 1957, 307.

with ALCAN and BAC, Britain's enthusiasm for the VRP and the readiness to back it financially waned sharply. It was against this background that an informal agreement was subsequently reached between the British and Gold Coast governments as well as the aluminium companies that outside financing would be required and that the World Bank was the only likely source. The parties ruled out any approach for official U.S. participation, the thought being that Washington was unlikely to contribute directly to financing a sterling bloc aluminium project.¹³ It is possible that this supposition had sufficient merit -- except that the U.S. had not taken any stand on the VRP at the time.

Enter Washington, Enter Kaiser

As early as 1950, the VRP was attracting sufficient interest from American firms for the State Department to request the U.S. consulate in Accra to submit a detailed report on developments "to date."¹⁴ This level of private interest was not evident within official circles. The ECA -- the only official U.S. agency which gave it a thought -- cited the long construction span of the project to explain its unwillingness to participate in it.¹⁵ By 1952, however, Washington was beginning to give consideration to some financial participation in the VRP. Secretary of State Acheson personally signed a telegram to the U.S. consul in Accra

¹³ 845K.2614/9-656, Desp. from AmEmbassy, London to the Department of State, "Volta River Scheme," 6 September 1956 (NA).

¹⁴ 845K.2614VOLTA/4-550, Outgoing Airgram from the Department of State to American consul, Accra, 5 April 1950 (NA).

¹⁵ 845K.00R/11-250, Desp. from Accra to the Department of State, "Visit of Enos Curtis, ECA Official," 2 November 1950 (NA).

and the embassy in London informing them that no loan or grant for the project was under consideration by the U.S. government either directly or through its agencies because no request for any such loan or grant had been received. The telegram explained that if it so desired, two avenues for U.S. funds were open to the Gold Coast: the Export-Import Bank, which could consider a loan request within its statutory limits, and the Mutual Security Assistance program. The latter, Acheson explained, could finance some aspects of the project under the Basic Materials Program and would consider a request submitted through the British Colonial Office "where some discussions of Volta project have been carried out." In addition, it was stated that U.S. private concerns would be interested in specific proposals from the Gold Coast government."

Of greater significance was that Nkrumah himself was beginning to open the VRP door to private American interests. In June 1951, he was at Lincoln University, his alma mater, to receive an honorary doctorate degree and deliver the Convocation Address." It seems that Nkrumah used the opportunity to discreetly ask Horace Mann Bond, Lincoln University president, to assist him in developing a plan whereby American companies and the U.S. government could be interested in making available capital, management, engineering, construction and machinery to help develop the economic and mineral resources of the Gold

" 845K.2614/10-252, Outgoing Telegram from the Department of State to AmConsul, Accra and AmEmbassy, London, 7 October 1952 (NA).

" Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, chap. 14.

Coast. Soon, Bond called this matter to the attention of Louis Detwiler, a financial and management consultant. With the help of a very enthusiastic Detwiler, Bond was able to subsequently arrange elaborate discussions on the subject with the heads of a number of engineering, construction, mining and industrial organizations. Top firms such as the Anaconda Corporation and Reynolds Metals were involved. The discussions yielded a plan for the development of the Volta River Project and the Gold Coast's natural resources, for which purpose the American Management Corporation was formed. The corporation, which had Detwiler as president, had its offices in New York.

The plan called for a self-liquidating loan of \$600 million from the U.S. government to the Gold Coast government, with American private management executing the engineering, construction and operation of the project in cooperation with the Gold Coast government. The loan was contingent upon a stipulation that the U.S. government be privileged either to purchase up to two-thirds of the total aluminium production or to delegate others as eligible to purchase various amounts thereof. Primary rights to purchase the remaining one-third or to designate others as eligible to purchase various amounts thereof were reserved for Britain on the same terms and conditions that the Gold Coast government agreed to sell to the U.S. or their designees. While the British White Paper proposed an initial total annual aluminium production of 80,000 tons, with eventual production increase up to 210,000 tons per year, the Bond/Detwiler plan

845R.10/1-2253, Letter from L.E. Detwiler to John Foster Dulles, 22 January 1953 (NA).

contemplated a total annual aluminium production of 600,000 tons."

Some time between December 1952 and early January 1953, Bond and Detwiler travelled to Accra and presented their plan to Nkrumah. Detwiler reported that Nkrumah authorized them to pursue the matter further and to arrange such meetings between officials of both governments as might be necessary to consummate the matter. As a possible follow-up, Detwiler wrote to Secretary of State Dulles, in January 1953. The letter, written on behalf of the United American Management Corporation, stressed the urgent need for the U.S. to step into the VRP in order to secure important natural resources for rearmament and the maintenance of its national economy as the keystone of prosperity in the "free world." "The current annual United States demand," Detwiler recalled, "is now over 1,500,000 tons of aluminium, and it has been forecast that within twenty years the United States will need three times as much, but the free world's needs will, by then, have soared to more than four times its current requirements. Yet the Gold Coast, as stated above, has a high-grade bauxite ore deposit estimated in excess of 225,000,000 tons which is lying idle." The VRP, Detwiler further argued, "offers the additional advantage of being in position to develop a substantial capacity of low cost hydroelectric power for the manufacture of aluminium from its bauxite deposits." On the strength of these arguments, Detwiler urged that the sum of \$600

¹¹ *Ibid.*

million be advanced as a self-liquidating loan by the U.S. to the Gold Coast government, for the execution of their plan."

It is not apparent that Dulles even acknowledged Detwiler's letter. And that letter was the most United American Management Corporation achieved. Its world collapsed quickly. On 21 March 1953, Bond and Detwiler returned to Accra. But a little later, Nkrumah mentioned that he was embarrassed by Detwiler's presence as it created the impression that he was being duplicitous with the British on the VRP.¹² It is worthy of note that Bond and Detwiler were met at the airport by Archie Casely-Hayford, the minister of agriculture and natural resources.¹³ It was highly unlikely that the minister would have done so without Nkrumah's knowledge and consent. It seems that Detwiler created the difficulties for himself: he was too much in the open at a time Nkrumah desired that his dealings with the Americans be kept scrupulously discreet so that he could still have room for the British government, ALCAN and BAC.

There was another -- perhaps, more plausible -- reason why Nkrumah had to cut Detwiler off: he was seeing signals that the U.S. government itself would be willing to help. Earlier in the month, the State Department informed the U.S. consulate in Accra that U.S. interests held "over 50 percent shares" in ALCAN's

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ 845K.2614/3-2553, Desp. from AmConsul to the Department of State, "Interview with Prime Minister Concerning the Volta River Project," 25 March 1953 (NA).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

parent company, Aluminium Limited.⁴² On 24 March 1953 -- the day before Nkrumah disowned Detwiler -- the U.S. consul in Accra, William Cole, Jr., met with Nkrumah and explained to him the American interest in Aluminium Limited and thus in ALCAN. The consul also showed him a memorandum from the State Department bearing upon the possibility of obtaining a grant or loan from U.S. official sources for the VRP. With reference to Detwiler's efforts, Cole explained that official bilateral loans were pursued through government channels. Nkrumah was said to have expressed a lively interest in the U.S. involvement in the aluminium companies, emphasizing that he would like to see American capital in the VRP as that "should help put an end to silly stories to the effect that I'm a communist!" He emphasized that the scale of the project was such that there was room for investment from other sources besides those mentioned in the British White Paper and hinted that he intended to explore the possibilities on the official U.S. end, even though he knew that the British would not take kindly to such probing. Nkrumah derided Detwiler and the Bond/Detwiler plan, saying that the VRP was "much too large for a small man like Detwiler."⁴³

Neither the U.S. nor Ghana pursued the opening created by the Nkrumah/Cole meeting. Indeed, it was more than three years before officials from both countries discussed the VRP together again: in December 1956, when Robert Jackson met in Washington

⁴² 845K.2614/2-2453, Outgoing Telegram from the Department of State to AmConsul, Accra, 6 March 1953 (NA).

⁴³ 845K.2614/3-2253, Desp. from AmConsul, Accra to the Department of State, "Interview with Prime Minister Concerning the Volta River Project," 25 March 1953 (NA).

with State Department officials. For Ghana, the restraining factor all along may have been that Britain was still very much in the picture. But by December 1956, there was every indication that Britain would rather have the U.S. take the lead in generating external assistance for the VRP. It seems that the essence of Jackson's trip to Washington was to build confidence for the project in Washington, especially against the background of the Preparatory Commission's report. He readily admitted that the VRP had two unsettling features -- its staggering cost and the seven years it would take to build the dam. But he placed more emphasis on its redeeming features. One, according to Jackson, was that the project had wide political support in the Gold Coast; from the onset, the British took care to ensure that all important political groups saw the importance of the project. There was thus the assurance that it would continue irrespective of which party was in power. Secondly, Nkrumah was personally very sensitive on capital investments by Western interests in the Gold Coast; this gave confidence in the future security of foreign investments. Jackson finally emphasized that the Gold Coast government would "continue to look primarily to the Atlantic Community," that Nkrumah wanted no help from the Soviets for the VRP, and that if the project did come to fruition, it would "represent a sound political and economic investment in Africa for both Africans and Europeans as a joint partnership."⁴⁴

Ghana's independence celebrations in March 1957 afforded the next opportunity for an exchange of Ghana/U.S. views on the

⁴⁴ 845K.2614/12-1156, Memorandum of Conversation, "Survey of Gold Coast Volta River Project," 11 December 1956 (NA).

matter. Meeting with Nixon, Nkrumah spoke at length and with intense passion on the VRP. "History," he asserted, "has shown that political and economic independence must proceed *pari passu* and that the former cannot be effective without the latter." He returned to his oft-repeated theme, pointing out that Ghana's economy was agricultural and heavily dependent on cocoa exports. "This means," Nixon heard, "that the health of its economy is directly related to the price of cocoa which has fluctuated widely. Only a year ago cocoa brought £500 per ton. Currently the price has dropped to £180." With these figures, Nkrumah dramatized the unhealthy situation created by such heavy reliance on cocoa and declared his commitment to diversify the economy through agricultural development and by exploiting the country's mineral resources -- particularly bauxite. However, he left little doubt that his main focus was on the latter, and that its execution was only being handicapped by lack of funds. Nixon considered the VRP as primarily a matter for exploration with the interested British, Canadian and World Bank parties but assured his host that the U.S. would "continue to watch the situation carefully."¹¹

Some U.S. private interests were not content with simply watching. By March 1957, a group of American businessmen representing Utah Construction Company of San Francisco, Foreign Construction Associates of Houston, and Winslow Cohn & Stetson of

¹¹ Memorandum of Conversation, "Visit of Vice President Richard M. Nixon," Tab B in Report to the president on the vice president's Visit to Africa, February 28 - March 21, 1957, 5 April 1957, White House Central Files, (Confidential File), Subject Series, Box 100 (DDEL).

New York had presented Ghana with a proposal to form an American syndicate to finance the VRP. They planned to complete the project in four years, and thereafter exercise complete control over it, although the returns were to be split equally with Ghana. G. van B. Slagle and Fraser Leith, who led the group, assured the U.S. embassy in Accra that twenty U.S. large corporations and investment houses such as Halsey Stuart, Kuhn Leob, Chase, and Boston First Bank could be counted upon to follow on the plan.⁴⁰ On the basis of the proposal, Nkrumah gave the Slagle/Leith group a written three-month "first refusal," effective 18 April 1957, to negotiate for the financing, construction and operation of the project.⁴¹ In addition to the VRP, the Slagle/Leith group had undertaken to help Ghana raise money for a housing scheme in Tema. The arrangement was that Ghana would contribute half of the £11 million needed for the housing scheme while the syndicate would raise the balance from U.S. and UN agencies.⁴² The real interest of the Slagle/Leith was in the VRP. As Slagle was later to explain, they threw in the housing scheme to convince Ghana of their good faith and ability to raise capital (even from official U.S. sources).⁴³ It would

⁴⁰ 845J.2614/5-357, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 17 April 1957 (NA).

⁴¹ Nkrumah's letter is attached to 845J.2614/5-257, Memorandum of Conversation, "Kaiser Interest in the Volta River Project (Ghana)," 2 May 1957 (NA).

⁴² 845J.2614/5-657, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 6 May 1957 (NA).

⁴³ 845J.2614/5-1557, Memorandum of Conversation, "Ghana -- Volta River Project and Tema Housing Scheme," 15 May 1957 (NA).

also seem that they intended it as *quid pro quo* for the possible extension of their ninety-day option on the Volta project.

With Nkrumah's guarantee in hand, Slagle and Leith scurried around to raise the capital they needed to keep a tab on the project. Although their efforts came to naught, they did signal to other U.S. interests that the VRP was well within their reach. On 1 May, Leith approached Kaiser Industries Corporation with his proposal. The Kaiser people -- who were hearing of the VRP for the first time -- were certainly not attracted to the idea of working under Leith's direction. But they smelled gold in his proposal and immediately arranged for a meeting with the State Department to discuss the matter. The meeting was held the following day, between William Duggan, the international relations officer of Southern African Affairs, and Chad Calhoun, vice president of Kaiser Industries. Essentially, Calhoun -- Kaiser's point man in Washington -- stated that his company "may be interested" in the project if ALCAN and other non-American groups "do not now enjoy a legally-based favorable position." He wanted the department to help him ascertain how things stood in this regard from Accra.⁵⁷ The day after the meeting, the department inquired from the U.S. embassy in Accra on the "existing legal commitments if any," and whether the Ghanaian legislature had taken specific steps to terminate such commitments.⁵⁸ The return message was that ALCAN had a ninety-

⁵⁷ 845J.2614/5-257, Memorandum of Conversation, "Kaiser Interest in the Volta River Project (Ghana)," 2 May 1957 (NA).

⁵⁸ 845J.2614/5-357, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 3 May 1957 (NA).

nine-year concession for the bauxite deposits and that there was as yet no legislative action to cancel the commitment. But the overall thrust of the message was that the way was open for any party interested in the project.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, Slagle was making frantic attempts in Washington to meet Nixon. The latter's office helped him secure an appointment with the State Department instead. At the department on 10 May, he showed Palmer the agreement he and Leith had secured from Nkrumah in which they were given three months to obtain financial backing to execute the VRP. Slagle said that he urgently needed financial support from the U.S. government in order to seal up the deal. He asked for an Export-Import Bank loan of \$100-200 million; confident of raising the rest in the form of equity investments from private interests such as automobile companies: the Sun Life Insurance Company of Canada, aluminium companies, and Petrofina (a Belgian oil company). Slagle was less confident of raising any loan from private sources for the Tema housing scheme; he therefore requested that the U.S. government lend about \$30 million to this project. He worried that he was running out of time to raise funds for the housing scheme, which was why he wanted Nixon's intervention to help secure the government loan without much red tape. Palmer recalled that Leith had earlier agreed, but failed, to submit evidence of his group's financial standing. He advised Slagle to forward his problem to the department in writing. Palmer advised that the ICA was the only official source for the kind of loan

⁵⁴ 845J.2614/5-657, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 6 May 1957 (NA).

they needed, but that ICA funds for the year were virtually exhausted. All the same, he indicated that he would be willing to arrange for Slagle to meet with the ICA. The department's record of the meeting noted that "Mr Slagle did not give the appearance of being either a financier or a wealthy man. He seemed tense and wrapped up in this project to the exclusion of all else."⁵³ This psychoanalysis may partly explain why the Slagle/Leith group were unable to secure official backing in Washington. A more decisive factor would be that the department had instantly taken to Kaiser the moment Calhoun first showed up a few days earlier. On 15 May, Slagle and Leith were told that the ICA had no funds "either for the present or the coming fiscal year" for the Tema housing program and that in any case, "this type of project was not usually undertaken."⁵⁴

Without the necessary funds, the Slagle/Leith group fell out of contention for the VRP. All along, the interest of Reynolds Aluminium in the project had been occasionally mentioned in several quarters. But the exit of the Slagle/Leith group left the Kaiser group as the most visible American presence on the Volta. When he met State Department officials again on 23 May 1957, Calhoun reiterated that Kaiser "might be interested" in the project, especially as part of a syndicate of aluminium and financial companies which specifically had the VRP in focus. Such

⁵³ 845J.2614/5-1057, Memorandum of Conversation, "Conversation of Mr G. van B. Slagle with Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph Palmer 2nd," 10 May 1957 (NA).

⁵⁴ 845J.2614/5-1557, Memorandum of Conversation, "Ghana -- Volta River Project and Tema Housing Scheme," 15 May 1957 (NA).

a syndicate, he stressed, had to be exclusive of Slagle and Leith.⁵⁵

In July 1957, London served notice that it was shifting the primary responsibility for assisting Ghana to realize the VRP to Washington. Meeting with the State Department, the British embassy in Washington explained that not only was Britain intimidated by the cost of the project, but that "the pressure on the British for greater supplies of sterling aluminium has been steadily relieved by developing production elsewhere in the Commonwealth." Apparently, the London had formally conveyed its withdrawal to Nkrumah. The embassy explained that "Against this background of reduced British interest, Prime Minister Nkrumah plans during his visit to the United States in September to investigate the possibilities of assistance from the World Bank, the American banking community, the American aluminium industry, and the U.S. Government." In this regard, the British intended the meeting with the State Department as a reconnaissance of Nkrumah's chances. The prospects seemed hopeless on all fronts. The embassy was informed that the MSA legislation for the 1958 fiscal year and its provision for a development loan fund were still under congressional consideration; but even if the fund was approved and appropriated in the amount requested by the White House, the money would be inadequate for mutual security requirements and would be carefully allocated on the basis of existing priorities, and the VRP was definitely not on the list. In respect of the World Bank, the embassy was reminded that the

⁵⁵ 845J.2614/5-2357, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Scheme," 23 May 1957 (NA).

bank's preliminary survey of the project doubted its economic feasibility and desirability, and therefore that its financial involvement would require a fresh extensive survey not only of the project but the entire economy of Ghana. Several U.S. aluminium companies, the department also noted, had expressed interest in the aluminium component of the project; but the companies, it was added, usually planned their expansion programs years ahead and were already heavily committed. For private enterprises generally, the outlook was further compounded by the steady rise in interest rates, prices, and the cost of loan funds all leading to a more conservative investment pattern."

Another official U.S./Ghana discussion on the VRP occurred in Washington on 25 September 1957, between Gbedemah and Palmer. Gbedemah had come for an World Bank meeting and found time to call on the State Department. The VRP featured quite prominently in the discussions, but only within the wider context of Ghana's economic development and possible areas of U.S. assistance. Gbedemah explained the importance of the VRP in the structural transformation of the Ghanaian economy, indicating that until its financing had been settled, the government saw no point in devoting any attention to technical assistance issues. Like Jackson before him, Gbedemah did not make any requests for any

845J.2614/7-2957, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project and Ghana's Economic Development Needs; Ghana's Relations with Communist Countries," 29 July 1957 (NA).

official U.S. assistance, either for the VRP or any other project.

Enter Eisenhower

A little less than a fortnight later, the VRP was fortuitously put on Washington's center-stage. As discussed in the preceding chapter, a Howard Johnson restaurant just outside Dover, Delaware had refused to serve Gbedemah soft drinks at the counter; as a consequence, Eisenhower invited Gbedemah for breakfast at the White House. In the course of the meal, Eisenhower heard of the VRP for the first time from a Ghanaian source and promised to see how the U.S. could help.¹⁷ It is possible that Eisenhower did not take that pledge as seriously committing him to anything; it might well have been simply part of damage control, to make Gbedemah feel good after his encounter at the restaurant. But that breakfast was, in retrospect, the first serious step in Washington's entanglement with the VRP.

The breakfast pledge encouraged Nkrumah to write Eisenhower. In the letter dated 17 October 1957, Nkrumah set out the basic conception of the VRP. It involved, he said, the development of some 600,000 kilowatts of hydroelectric power from the Volta River, which would enable aluminium to be produced at an economic price from the deposits of bauxite in Ghana. The project was said to involve an overall capital expenditure of some \$865 million "though of this a considerable proportion can be found by Ghana

¹⁷ 845J.2614/9-2557, Memorandum of Conversation, "Courtesy Call by Ghana's Finance Minister, K.A. Gbedemah -- Ghana's Economic Development and Assistance Plans Hinge on Decision Regarding Volta Project," 25 September 1957 (NA).

¹⁸ Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 131.

and in fact is now being provided in the shape of a new port at Tema and of railway and other related facilities." He referred to the work of the Preparatory Commission, and noted that it had pronounced the project technically sound, that it could be carried out successfully, and that it should be competitive in relation to similar projects elsewhere. The letter emphasized that all aspects of the VRP had been examined with unusual thoroughness and that it been "advanced to such a state of preparedness that should adequate financial resources be available work could commence immediately." Nkrumah reiterated that his government regarded the VRP "as being of supreme importance to the future of Ghana and we are determined to do all in our power to implement it." He mentioned that the British government, ALCAN, and BAC had been actively involved in the project and expressed the hope that they would continue their participation, but added that his government "is at present completely free to negotiate with other Governments and/or other prospective commercial partners. Indeed, it is more than probable that a much wider consortium will be needed to finance a project of this size." The letter was accompanied by a copy of the report of the commission, to give Eisenhower "full information."

Eisenhower replied on 8 November, thanking Nkrumah for his letter and the enclosed report. Nkrumah had not made any requests and Eisenhower was non-committal. The letter continued, "As a result of the Vice President's trip to Ghana earlier this year

Letter from Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 17 October 1957, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

and my subsequent talks with him and with Mr Gbedemah, I feel that I have acquired a certain familiarity with your vital new nation. I am sure you know that your country has our best wishes for success in its efforts to solve its problems and to realize its aspirations for a peaceful, stable and prosperous future." Four days later, Nkrumah wrote Eisenhower again, this time specifically requesting U.S. financial support -- through a loan from the Development Loan Fund (DLF) -- in the execution of the VRP. Eisenhower wrote back that there were a number of factors which "we must take into account before making a full reply of your letter." However, Nkrumah was assured that "we shall give your proposal prompt and careful consideration and will communicate with you further as soon as possible."

Washington was indeed treading cautiously, weighing various factors and options. The day before Eisenhower replied to Nkrumah's first letter, the State Department had advised the U.S. ambassador in Accra to avoid giving Ghanaian officials any hint that the U.S. would be forthcoming on the VRP "(even in a reduced

Letter from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, 8 November 1957, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

Letter from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, 21 November 1957, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL). I could not locate Nkrumah's letter, but a feel of what he wrote can be gleaned from State Department papers such as 845J.2614/12-2657, Memorandum from William M. Rountree to the acting secretary, "Proposed Reply by President Eisenhower to Letter of November 12 from Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana," 26 December 1957; 845J.2614/5-658, Memorandum of Conversation, "Status of ICA's Efforts to Determine the Interest of American Aluminium Companies in the Volta River Project," 6 May 1958 (both at NA).

form) at least at this stage."⁴² There is every possibility that the World Bank's conclusions on the VRP considerably influenced the department. The bank had in 1956 sent a small group, not to do a detailed investigation of the VRP per se, but to conduct an economic survey of Ghana. As it tried to fit the Preparatory Commission's findings into its report, the World Bank team concluded that the VRP was too expensive and its size, too gigantic for Ghana's economy to sustain at the time. World Bank President Eugene Black, conveyed the report to Nkrumah in March 1957. At the same time, Black duly made a copy of his letter available to the State Department.⁴³ But even without the World Bank, the department too was scared by the price tag of the project, especially as there was yet no financial commitment from any quarter. In December 1957, an internal memorandum noted that the British and Canadian aluminium interests which held rights to Ghana's bauxite deposits had yet to give firm financial guarantees attesting to their willingness to participate in the VRP, nor were there any such guarantees from the American aluminium companies which had expressed their interest in the project. And it was calculated that at most, Ghana itself could put up only \$150 million out of the total cost of the project. In the circumstance, the department laid down what was to be the U.S. position all through: there had to be concrete assurances of "alternative financing for the major portion of the cost" of the

⁴² 645J.61/11-657, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 7 November 1957 (NA).

⁴³ 845J.2614/4-2457, Department of State Instruction CA-8812 to the American Embassy, Accra, "IBRD Report to Ghana on the Volta River Project," 24 April 1957 (NA).

VRP before the U.S. "can give specific consideration to possible governmental financial assistance."

These apprehensions conditioned Eisenhower's lengthy letter of 3 January 1958, which was a more detailed response to Nkrumah's second letter. He assured Nkrumah that he personally appreciated the importance which Ghana attached to the diversification of its economy, adding "we are not only interested in this vital task of Ghana's economic development and diversification, but desire to help in such ways as are within the limitations of our resources and other heavy commitments throughout the world." He went on to predicate U.S. participation in "a project of the magnitude of the Volta" not only on confirmation of its economic and commercial viability but also when "the total financing which would be required to bring it to fruition is obtainable." To meet the viability test, Eisenhower asked Ghana to secure firm assurances of participation from the aluminium industry along with concrete assurances of financial support from private source, multilateral agencies and other governments. He promised that once Ghana had obtained such assurances, the U.S. would be willing to explore the possibility of financing a part of the project, "such as a portion of the hydroelectric installation."

¹ 845J.2614/12-2657, Memorandum from William M. Rountree to the acting secretary, "Proposed Reply by President Eisenhower to Letter of November 12 from Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana," 26 December 1957 (NA).

² Letter from Eisenhower to Nkrumah, 3 January 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

Nkrumah, it should be said, had turned to Eisenhower, as something of a last resort, precisely because he was meeting with no success from the other quarters. The British had by 1957 become singularly quiet about the project and there was no indication that they were prepared to stand by their original undertaking to contribute to the cost of the dam. And for all practical purposes, ALCAN and BAC too had by then dropped out of the project. Indeed, ALCAN had turned its attention to Guinea's aluminium project at Boke while BAC was engaged in the Fria project also in Guinea. But besides these setbacks, Nkrumah must have taken account of another important development. By 1957, contraction, not expansion, was the prevailing feature of the aluminium world. At the time, some thirty percent of U.S. productive capacity was lying idle largely because of Soviet dumping of cheap aluminium in Europe. But that did not deter the Fria consortium from going ahead with its aluminium production plans in Guinea. The consortium was formed in early 1957 by Péchiney, a French chemical and aluminium manufacturer; Ugine, another French chemical producer; BAC; Aluminium Industrie of Switzerland; and Olin Mathieson, an American firm. In July 1958, a series of agreements were announced for the financing of the Fria alumina plant in Guinea. Total investment was estimated at £48 million, which was to come mainly as loans from the Bank of France, two leading U.S. insurance companies, and the World Bank. Fria was able to get off the ground because the French government had the political will to give it a hand and guaranteed the

loans." In the circumstance, it made sense for Nkrumah to reach the conclusion that "something" more than immediate commercial consideration was needed to get the aluminium companies to construct a smelter in Ghana. And he must have believed that Washington could provide that "something." In February 1958, Nkrumah explained to Ghana's Parliament that the government had run into a "vicious cycle" in its discussions on the VRP. Interested governments said that Ghana should first make a satisfactory arrangement with the aluminium companies; the companies wanted to be assured in advance of certain things, for example, the cost of power, which in turn depended on the conditions under which governments might put up money. He stated that Britain's seven percent bank rate made it impossible for the project to be financed entirely from sterling sources. So in an attempt to break the deadlock, he had written to Eisenhower, who had offered U.S. good offices in examining possible ways of starting the project.

Nkrumah was being generous in his public interpretation of Eisenhower's letter. In reality, the letter was only reinforcing the "vicious cycle." Like everyone else, Eisenhower was saying that Ghana should come to terms with other sources, but especially the aluminium companies, as a precondition for any official U.S. assistance. In effect, Nkrumah was being turned back to the same sources which were either withdrawing or non-committal on the VRP. Having known only a history of frustration

"Prospects for the Volta," *West Africa*, 9 August 1958, 747.

"Volta's Vicious Cycle," *ibid.*, 1 March 1958, 195.

over the project, Nkrumah desperately needed encouragement from someone, anyone. Therefore he easily saw hope not despair in Eisenhower's letter. In his reply, he expressed appreciation for the interest Eisenhower had shown in the project and mentioned that it "has encouraged us in trying to get this great scheme started."

There was, however, a more reassuring development for Nkrumah from other quarters in Washington. On the same day that Eisenhower's letter was prepared, ICA Director James Smith, Jr. wrote to Under Secretary of State Christian Herter and aptly observed that Eisenhower's letter had placed on Ghana the burden of inducing the aluminium industry to "active participation" in the VRP. Smith felt that the ICA, rather than Ghana, was better placed "to serve as the catalyst...in this situation." He made it very clear that in assuming this responsibility, the ICA was not committing itself to finance the project, but only "to use our best efforts toward bringing together the necessary elements of the total project." With a tinge of skepticism of the outcome of such an effort, Herter gave his blessings -- primarily because of the political pay-off: "the ICA," he approved, "should do what it can with regard to the Volta River Project so that in Ghana itself it will be felt that we have given every possible assistance, even though in the end the results prove to be negative."

Letter from Nkrumah to Eisenhower, 17 January 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

For the letters, see Herter Papers, 1957-61 (Letters M-Z Official - Classified), Box 20 (DDEL).

Thus as things stood by early 1958, the U.S. was willing to "explore the possibility" of providing a loan to help finance the power plant "if and when private enterprises wanted to finance and operate the smelter." In addition, the ICA was to act as a "catalyst" to determine the interest of U.S. companies and the possibility of securing financing from any source if Ghana so desired and provided it first cleared up the question of the bauxite concessions held by ALCAN.¹¹ However, the feedback from the U.S. aluminium industry was anything but encouraging. Meeting with State Department officials on 24 February 1958, Thomas Covell, vice president of Aluminium Limited Sales Company, New York and Washington, DC., considered the VRP very costly. He particularly stressed that the size of the loans which would be required for the scheme would involve a high interest burden so that there were serious doubts in the industry as to the feasibility of the project. According to Covell, the VRP was also doomed on another score. Market conditions for aluminium, he contended, were no longer falling, but were "now on a relatively stable plateau," rendering any new investment -- and especially, one of the size of the VRP -- quite unattractive. To drive his point home, he emphasized that plans for the development of the bauxite rights his subsidiary company (ALCAN) held in Ghana were on the shelf.¹² Some three weeks later, ALCAN followed up on Covell's intimations: it conceded that "in the present

¹¹ 845J.2614/1-1558, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 15 January 1958 (NA).

¹² 845J.2614/2-2458, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 24 February 1958 (NA).

circumstances," it was not in "a position to proceed with the scheme immediately, but that the company did not wish to stand in the way of other interested parties."

The exit of ALCAN satisfied the basic condition Kaiser needed to play its cards with more vigor. The moment was seized. Early in May 1958, Kaiser came into the picture again. Richard Ward, assistant to the vice president of Kaiser Aluminium Company, called at the State Department to confirm his company's interest in the VRP. Ward related that following an inquiry by Carroll Flesher of the ICA, he had -- with the authorization of Edgar Kaiser, president of Kaiser Industries (the holding company of the Kaiser conglomerate) -- reaffirmed the company's interest in establishing an aluminium smelter in Ghana if and when bauxite and low cost power were available. But Kaiser, he said, would neither participate in financing the construction of the dam nor conduct, at its own expense, the survey to determine the cost of the smelter.

Kaiser's renewed interest was the bait which started hooking the department to the VRP. On 6 May 1958, the department met with the ICA to appraise the latter's efforts to get American private capital interested in the VRP. The ICA reported that ALCAN was not interested in the project "at this time" and was willing to make appropriate arrangements with respect to its bauxite concessions in Ghana with any other company or companies

845J.2614/3-1858, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 19 March 1958 (NA).

845J.2614/5-558, Memorandum of Convention, "Interest of Kaiser Aluminium Company in Volta Project," 5 May 1958 (NA).

interested in the VRP. Reynolds Metal and Kaiser Aluminium were said to be "definitely interested" if assured of cheap power; but only the former was willing to invest a "substantial amount" in the project. Kaiser's interest was in mining the bauxite and in erecting a smelter; it was not interested in financing the costs of the dam and power and actually preferred to purchase its power requirements. In addition, Kaiser Engineering was reported to be interested in obtaining the entire engineering and construction contract for the VRP. The ICA felt it desirable for an American firm to undertake the engineering and construction of the entire project and was therefore enthused by the latter intention of Kaiser Engineering.¹³ Subsequently updating the U.S. embassies on the ICA's efforts, the department reported that two American aluminium companies appeared to be independently interested in the VRP, and that the companies might finance the mining and smelting components, perhaps with Export-Import Bank support, if they were assured of adequate power at cheap rates. Such an arrangement would leave the financing of the dam and the other facilities to Ghana, and at the same time raised the question of external public finance support.¹⁴

Nkrumah's Visit: Kaiser Wins Round One

More than anything else, Nkrumah's impending July visit put the U.S. on the spot: it was anticipated that the VRP would be the major concern of the Ghanaian visitors and this put

¹³ 845J.2614/5-658, Memorandum of Conversation, "Status of ICA's Efforts to Determine the Interest of American Aluminium Companies in the Volta River Project," 6 May 1958 (NA).

¹⁴ 845J.2614/5-1958, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, London and Accra, 19 May 1958 (NA).

considerable pressure on Washington to shape up its position on the matter. On 27 May 1958, the State Department, the Department of Commerce, and ICA met to firm up the position to be taken on the VRP in discussions with Nkrumah and his aides. The meeting reaffirmed the earlier positions. For example, it was agreed that Nkrumah be informed that appropriate official U.S. agencies would be prepared to consider granting a loan to help finance the cost of the dam and power installation when Ghana was able to show the U.S. that it had "most of the funds in hand necessary for financing the dam and power component of the Project and definite commitments from one or more qualified aluminium companies covering the private sector investments." The major new ground was that Nkrumah be informed of the ICA position that the only way to get the VRP off the ground was to break it up and start with the construction of the dam and power facilities first, with Ghana putting up at least \$75 million; it was believed that this would provide a substantial basis for attracting any firm commitment from Kaiser or any other company. The meeting recommended that if Ghana accepted this proposal, it would then be essential to update the Preparatory Commission's data to determine whether the production of aluminium in Ghana was still economically feasible. Financing of such a study was considered to be Ghana's responsibility; but as an expression of its "continuing interest in Ghana and the Volta River Project," it

was suggested that the U.S. should offer, through the ICA, to cover half the costs of the study."

Five days before Nkrumah's arrival, the ICA asked Kaiser for an estimate of such a study. Anxious to gain a hold on the project, Kaiser was willing to make a quotation, even without a profit margin: they off-handedly quoted "around \$120,000." Assured that Kaiser was interested in doing the updating study under a contract with the U.S. government and/or the government of Ghana, the State Department endorsed the State/Commerce/ICA recommendations. The department stressed that it should be made clear to Nkrumah that no company worth its salt would be willing to invest in a project of the magnitude of the VRP on the basis of a report as old as the 1955 study. The department agreed that the U.S. government should assist in financing the updating study, and should even be prepared to bear the entire cost if Ghana was not enthusiastic about it. As envisaged by Kaiser, the study was to cover all phases of the scheme except the analysis of the bauxite deposits, which it intended to do for its own information and at its own expense. Kaiser was also reported to have indicated its desire to explore the possibilities of forming a consortium or a joint venture with other U.S. firms to build what it called the "production plant" of the VRP." On 23 July, the day Nkrumah arrived in Washington, Kaiser was assured that

845J.2614/5-2758, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project -- U.S. Position to be Taken in the Secretary's Talks with Prime Minister Nkrumah," 27 May 1958 (NA).

Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 199.

845J.2614/7-1858, Memorandum of Conversation, "Kaiser Interest in the Volta River Project," 18 July 1958 (NA).

the State Department would suggest the study to Nkrumah, would offer to split the cost with Ghana and would recommend Kaiser to do the study.

As was expected, the VRP was for Nkrumah the essence of his presence in Washington. Well before his arrival, all interested parties -- the White House, the State Department, and ICA -- were fully aware of the VRP story. Thus to them, there was nothing new in Nkrumah's presentation. For Eisenhower on 24 July, he painted a graphic picture of his government's struggle to raise the quality of life in Ghana. The efforts, he added, were institutionally constrained by Ghana's dependence on cocoa. His conviction, Eisenhower was informed, was that this limitation could only be overcome by diversifying the productive base of the economy, through agricultural modernization and industrialization. Nkrumah returned to his belief that such a structural transformation required power, the possibilities of which had been investigated in connection with the VRP. Eisenhower identified the U.S. with Ghana's objectives of expanding its economy and rising living standards. On the VRP in particular, there was an assurance that the U.S. "always tries to be helpful with respect to projects of this kind." The rider was that private capital provided the best medium for such undertakings. From that point, Eisenhower too, recycled orthodoxies that were well-known in Accra: "If it is possible to get private aluminium companies interested in this project," he stated, "then the remaining financing could be explored" with the

Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 199.

World Bank, the Export-Import Bank, the DLF and other similar sources. He pledged that official U.S. agencies would be delighted to continue their exploration of these possibilities, and that the State Department in particular would continue its efforts to bring the project to fruition. Nkrumah was promised that Washington would not forget his commitment to the VRP. Nkrumah was grateful for the assurances and pledges of support he received from Eisenhower. His government, he said, would appreciate any assistance which could be given in exploring the matter with private aluminium interests. But he hoped that even if such companies were not interested, it would still be possible to press on with the power aspect of the scheme, which would have a lift-pump effect on Ghana's other development requirements and ultimately attract the aluminium interests.

The Eisenhower/Nkrumah meeting was followed the next day by a high-powered meeting exclusively devoted to the VRP. Early in the meeting, Gbedemah emphasized that the Ghanaians regarded the

Memorandum of Conversation, "Prime Minister Nkrumah's Talk (Second) with the President," 24 July 1958, AWF, International Series, Box 15 (DDEL).

On the Ghanaian side were Nkrumah himself; Finance Minister Gbedemah; Trade and Industries Minister Kojo Botsio; A.L. Adu, permanent secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and Defense; Robert Jackson, chairman, Ghana Development Commission; Enoch Okoh, acting secretary to the cabinet; and Amon Nikori, Richard Akwei, and H.R. Amonoo all of the Ghana embassy in Washington. The U.S. was represented by Under Secretary of State Herter; Under Secretary of State Douglas Dillon; Assistant Secretary Palmer; C. Vaughan Ferguson, Jr., director, Office of Southern Africa Affairs; William Duggan, international relations officer of Southern Africa Affairs; Robert Ross, Liberia/Nigeria desk officer; and Stuart Van Dyke and Carl Flesher, both of the ICA. See 845J.00/7-2558, Memorandum of Conversation, "Prime Minister Nkrumah's Discussion of Ghana's General Economic Needs," 25 July 1958 (NA).

Volta as "the most important item for discussion" with the U.S. Nkrumah had started by recalling that the first issue he had raised with Eisenhower the previous day was that of finding ways to raise the quality of life in Ghana. He stressed that he considered the VRP as the springboard for Ghana's economic and industrial development. Observing that "recent" considerations of the project had consistently tied up aluminium to the power project, Nkrumah urged that the two should be de-linked. He emphasized the need for additional electric power to be created in the country.¹⁷ Thus Ghana's position, as Nkrumah put it, was that the power component of the VRP had to be accomplished for uses other than aluminium production. He mentioned £65 million as adequate for the construction of the VRP power plant. But it was Gbedemah who hit the nail on the head. He explained that with Britain and Canada having pulled out, U.S. public and private capital remained the only hope for the project. Herter spoke in general terms of the U.S. willingness to be helpful, after which he and Nkrumah left the meeting.¹⁸

Dillon continued the meeting, stating that the U.S. was "most anxious to see increased interest" by the aluminium companies in the VRP, but that as Nkrumah and his colleagues had observed, the companies wanted assurances of cheap electricity before making any investment. In outlining the ICA efforts to attract U.S. aluminium companies to the project, he harped on the proposal to update the Preparatory Commission's study of the dam

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

and hydroelectric facilities and to translate it into American terms. The U.S., Dillon explained, was willing to bear half the cost of the study, which he proposed should be done by Kaiser. He added that Kaiser had indicated a willingness to take the lead in exploring the possibilities for the formation of a joint company in connection with the aluminium production segment of the VRP. Worried that the VRP seemed ever jinxed, Gbedemah was not satisfied by Dillon's offer and asked for a more explicit statement of what the U.S. government was willing and able to do in helping Ghana to accomplish the VRP. In response, Dillon said that the U.S. could not promise anything without the new data the proposed study would provide. Whether or not Kaiser would be selected for it, he said, was still a matter to be worked out with Ghana. But he left no doubt that, in his view, Kaiser was the best candidate for the job. Citing the quality of the jobs Kaiser had done in Australia, Jackson gave his consent to Kaiser doing the study. Botsio felt strongly that the next step ought to go beyond the updating study because aluminium production was not Ghana's priority. He returned to the point earlier made by Nkrumah, that the dam and hydroelectric facilities should not be tied exclusively to aluminium operations. Like Nkrumah, Botsio stressed that Ghana's primary concern was power which would have the ripple effect of stimulating new industries with or without aluminium production. Dillon admitted that Washington had been led to believe that ninety-five percent of the power was meant for aluminium production and that no other substantial consumption would be possible. He held that other potential uses for power might change the picture and that the U.S. would be

glad to consider them. The conferees agreed that a statement would be issued indicating U.S. willingness to help Ghana realize the VRP.⁴⁴

Later that same day, the ICA arranged for Nkrumah and his aides to meet with Calhoun, the vice president of Kaiser Industries.⁴⁵ It was at that meeting that Nkrumah accepted the proposal for an updating study of the VRP and agreed to meet half the cost. In addition, he wanted Calhoun to explore the possibility of Edgar Kaiser paying a visit to Accra. Kaiser quickly jumped at the invitation, and asked to meet Nkrumah before he left the U.S. The two met in New York on 28 July 1958.⁴⁶

From all the discussions, it was clear that the U.S. interest lay primarily in the aluminium aspect of the VRP. It was equally obvious that the U.S. would not contribute to the project unless U.S. aluminium companies were keen on it. There was no indication that Washington would contribute to the dam, the power station and the ancillary works or even "explore the possibilities" of helping Ghana in these respects. According to the Eisenhower/Nkrumah joint communique which followed, the U.S. only committed itself to explore "the aluminium manufacturing phase of the project" with private American interests. It further agreed "to consider how it might assist with loans if the

⁴⁴ 845J.2614/7-2558, Memorandum of Conservation, "Ghana's Volta River Project," 25 July 1958 (NA).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 199; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 156.

required private financing were assured." The communique spoke of Washington's willingness to examine proposals which Ghana "might advance for the use of power from the Volta River for purposes other than the manufacture of aluminium." The two governments agreed on the desirability of the up-dating study and to share its cost. In concrete terms, Nkrumah may have got far less than he expected. But overall, the trip had the net effect of drawing the U.S. still further into the VRP. A month after Nkrumah's visit, Ghana signed an agreement (in Washington) with the Henry J. Kaiser Company of Oakland, California, to update the engineering reports on the VRP. Two weeks later, seven Kaiser engineers arrived in Ghana to undertake the study. On 22-26 September 1958, Edgar Kaiser and Calhoun followed with a visit to Ghana. They resumed with Ghana the discussions which had been initiated during Nkrumah's visit to the U.S. in July.

The Kaiser Reassessment Report

The *Kaiser Reassessment Report*, published in February 1959, chose Akosombo as the dam site, over Ajena which had earlier been proposed. Akosombo is a mile downstream from Ajena. The report held that it would permit a higher dam, would mean less cost, and would permit a larger electricity potential (768,000 kilowatts,

611.45J/7-2558, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 25 July 1958 (NA).

845J.2614/8-2558, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 25 August 1958 (NA).

845J.2614/9-3058, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, Washington, "Visit to Ghana of Edgar F. Kaiser and Chad Calhoun of Kaiser Industries Corporation in Connection with current Volta River Survey," 30 September 1958 (NA).

twenty-five percent higher than the Preparatory Commission's figure). It was estimated that five years (against the previously envisioned seven to eight) would be enough to build the dam at Akosombo; but a year could be saved if the contract was negotiated directly (with Kaiser) rather than by calling for tenders on an international basis. Further, Kaiser believed that it could establish an aluminium plant producing 200,000 tons of aluminium a year with seventy to seventy-five percent of the Volta dam power potential. On funding, the report envisioned that the hydroelectric project including the transmission lines and any civil works would be largely, if not entirely, financed by Ghana. On the other hand, the burden of the aluminium smelter was to be borne by the aluminium industry."

The major problem raised by the report was the question of demand for the power generated over and above the needs of the aluminium industry. The report allocated 330,000 kilowatts for use by the aluminium smelter and allowed another 175,000 kilowatts for the transmission network, to supply various cities and new industries. At the same time, it calculated that the total installed capacity in Ghana was 84,000 kilowatts, of which 53,000 kilowatts were in the mining sector and the rest was available for general utility service and industry. These figures meant that even if the new hydroelectric project displaced the entire installed capacity, there would still remain a huge amount of power to be absorbed by new general and industrial users. This

" See Henry J. Kaiser & Company, *Reassessment Report on the Volta River Project for the Government of Ghana* (Oakland, California, 1959).

implication led Kaiser to strongly recommend the development of an industrial market in addition to the aluminium smelter if Ghana was not to subsidize the cost of selling power to the aluminium companies.¹¹

The *Reassessment Report* lowered the cost of the project from the previous estimate of \$900 million: the dam, power station, and smelter could all be built, Kaiser said, for \$339.1 million. Included in this was a 500-mile transmission network, to be built at an estimated cost of \$33 million. With the network, it would be possible to deliver part of the Volta power to customers other than the smelter. In the Preparatory Commission's report, only \$450 million was believed to be essential for the basic production of aluminium and most of the balance was for other investments regarded as essential for the general benefit of the country regardless of the decision on the VRP. Kaiser achieved its scale-down by eliminating the expenditure on ancillary investments -- the cost of resettling the lake area population; health and sanitation works; and the construction of new town sites, port facilities, roads and railways. In this sense, the difference between the two estimates was not as wide as it would seem.

Over and above anything else, the Kaiser report was in favor of the VRP. This was particularly invigorating for the project itself and Nkrumah. He promptly invited Edgar Kaiser to Accra for a meeting, held on 14 March 1959. Nkrumah reiterated his determination to have cheap power from the Volta "as soon as

¹¹ *Ibid.*

possible" and that he would therefore like to see the first stage of the Akosombo project "carried out as quickly and as cheaply as possible." Putting his money where his mouth was, he asked Kaiser to immediately begin some preliminary work at Ghana's expense -- further drilling at the dam site, engineering and design, access roads, and some housing.¹⁴

Nkrumah Rouses Washington

Rising from the meeting with Kaiser, Nkrumah forwarded a summary of the discussions to Flake, the U.S. ambassador to Ghana. In the accompanying letter, he reminded Flake that the Kaiser report was in favor of the VRP. The implication was obvious: during their visit to the U.S., Nkrumah and his ministers were left with the impression that Washington would be more forthcoming if the VRP was certified to be a sound business venture by the updating study. With the ground thus cleared, Ghana expected that Washington would play ball. In the course of the meeting with Edgar Kaiser, Ghana undertook to approach the U.S. government to "immediately" assist it -- as Eisenhower had promised Nkrumah -- both in interesting industries which would be major consumers of Volta-generated power and also in working out a plan for the public sector financing of the dam construction and power installation.¹⁵ The hope that the U.S. would assist

¹⁴ For the minutes of the meeting, see 845J.2614/3-1759, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Volta River Project," 17 March 1959; Attachment II to 845J.2614/3-1959, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 19 March 1959 (both at NA).

¹⁵ For the minutes of the meeting, see 845J.2614/3-1759, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Volta River Project," 17 March 1959; Attachment II to 845J.2614/3-1959, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 19 March 1959

along these lines was embodied in Nkrumah's letter to Flake. In conclusion, Nkrumah recalled that "President Eisenhower has assured me of his interest in this project which can mean so much to Ghana, and my Government would be most grateful for any action which he and the Government of the United States could now take to bring the project into operation."⁴⁴

Commenting on the Nkrumah/Kaiser meeting and Nkrumah's letter, Flake observed that the Kaiser report had breathed new life into Nkrumah's determination to go ahead with the VRP, with a serious expectation of U.S. assistance. Washington's response, Flake emphasized, would have a "profound effect on U.S.-Ghana relations and indirectly on U.S. relations with Africa." He therefore urged that the U.S. "should press forward earnestly to assist Kaiser's effort" to bring the project to fruition.⁴⁵

In the wake of the Kaiser report, Accra was bursting with energy and expectation over the VRP. To Flake's chagrin, Washington did not share this sense of urgency. On 1 April 1959, two weeks after he had transmitted Nkrumah's letter, Flake had to remind Washington that a feedback for Nkrumah was overdue.⁴⁶ The State Department could only assure him that a reply was

(both at NA).

⁴⁴ Letter from Nkrumah to Wilson C. Flake, 14 March 1959, enclosure to 845J.2614/3-1759, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Volta River Project," 17 March 1959 (NA).

⁴⁵ 845J.2614/3-1659, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 16 March 1959; also 845J.2614/3-1759, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Volta River Project," 17 March 1959 (both at NA).

⁴⁶ 845J.2614/4-159, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 1 April 1959 (NA).

"presently under consideration" and would "be submitted soonest." On 10 April, Daniel Chapman, Ghana's ambassador to the U.S., called on the department to get some sense of how the U.S. was responding to the letter. He gathered that Calhoun was then in Ghana and that the department would be better placed to determine how Nkrumah's request could be met upon his return." Calhoun had gone to Ghana to submit his company's proposal for the initial design and construction of the power project. He reported back to the department on 20 April." Still there was no move by the State Department. On 29 April 1959, Flake sent an angry telegram to Washington, pressing that "some message" should be given to Nkrumah "immediately."¹⁰⁰ It was only then that department drafted a letter which the ambassador was asked to sign and deliver to Nkrumah.

On Ghana's request that the U.S. assist it in attracting major industrial consumers of power, the draft recalled the efforts to interest U.S. aluminium companies to establish an operation in Ghana. It was reported that as a result of those efforts, the companies had started to discuss the possibility of forming a combine which could meet Ghana's needs. The draft further promised that U.S. officials would continue discussions

⁹⁹ 845J.2614/4-159, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 6 April 1959 (NA).

¹⁰⁰ 845J.2614/4-1059, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 10 April 1959 (NA).

¹⁰¹ 845J.2614/4-2059, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 20 April 1959 (NA).

¹⁰² 845J.2614/4-2959, Telegram from Accra to the State Department, 29 April 1959 (NA).

with other American industries which were large consumers of power, to see if they could locate some plants in Ghana. On Nkrumah's major concern regarding U.S. assistance in working out a plan for the financing of the dam construction and power installation, the department reiterated Washington's "sincere desire to help Ghana in such ways as are within the limitations of its resources and other heavy commitments throughout the world." Nkrumah's attention was drawn to the point earlier made in Eisenhower's letter of 3 January 1958, "that the active participation of the aluminium industry and its ability to undertake the mining and manufacturing part of the project were essential to the success of the entire project, particularly in view of its great magnitude." He was reminded that given this sequence, Eisenhower had insisted that the U.S. would be willing to "explore with you what possible assistance it might be able to provide toward financing a portion of the hydroelectric project," but only when "you have firm indications of intention from the aluminium industry to participate and necessary assurances of financial support from either private or public sources for a major part of the required financing." An accompanying note to Flake conceded that the letter was "not completely responsive to Nkrumah's second request," but explained that it was inappropriate for the U.S. to assume the primary role of arranging the financing of the VRP.¹⁰¹

The department's draft was disappointing to both Flake and Abbot Moffat, the director of the U.S. Operations Mission in

¹⁰¹ 845J.2614/4-2959, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 30 April 1959 (NA).

Ghana. Arguing that the draft seemed to be an attempt to "disengage from our prior constructive attitude," Flake urged that "we should face squarely the explicit and implicit promises" made to Nkrumah when he visited Washington in July 1958. He observed that the records of the meetings held during that visit justified Nkrumah's expectation that with a favorable report by Kaiser, the U.S. would not only "take reinvigorated initiative" to interest private enterprise in establishing a smelter but also to consider how it could assist with loans for the dam. Flake informed Washington that in the light of his strong reservations he was withholding the delivery of the letter until it was modified to reflect a "more active participation" by the U.S. in attracting aluminium companies to the VRP. He suggested that the question of financing the dam could even be deferred on the grounds that the issue was contingent on the decisions on power construction and consumption.¹²⁴

Flake's outburst persuaded the department that he was better placed to set the tone of the letter to Nkrumah. He was therefore asked to draft the letter, but within parameters set by the department. It was clearly spelt out that the U.S. had no intention to assume the initiative in working out the financing of the VRP, and that the U.S. position had not departed from that expressed in Eisenhower's letter of 3 January 1958. Besides, it was pointed out that the *Reassessment Report* had pronounced the VRP to be economically feasible, but with a serious qualification: that the aluminium industry must be prepared to

¹²⁴ 845J.2614/5-459, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 4 May 1959 (NA).

make the necessary investment in the smelter which was to be the major power consumer. Flake was told that in the light of this condition, the U.S. regarded the participation of the industry to be an essential ingredient before the project could move ahead. Finally, he was advised to omit any reference to either the DLF or the World Bank in his draft.¹²³ Limiting himself within these guidelines, Flake drafted the letter which was approved by the department and then delivered to Nkrumah.¹²⁴

The department's draft and the guidelines given to Flake suggest that Washington was yet to reconcile itself to any real responsibility for the VRP; and that it agreed with Nkrumah's suggestion that probably only a consortium of governments, firms, banks, and public agencies could finance it. In that case, Washington's most important contribution was perceived to be gathering the parties together. This kind of role excused the U.S. from reacting as quickly and in more concrete terms to the logic of the Kaiser report. But the dynamics of the situation -- the assurances Eisenhower gave Nkrumah in Washington and the fact that Ghana had no one else to lean on -- swept the U.S., in spite of itself, deeper into the Volta currents.

On 11 May 1959, Daniel Chapman, the Ghanaian ambassador in Washington, hand-delivered to Acting Secretary Dillon a

¹²³ 845J.2614/4-2959, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 6 May 1959 (NA).

¹²⁴ For the ambassador's draft, see 845J.2614/5-759, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 7 May 1959; for the department's endorsement, see 845J.2614/4-2959, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 8 May 1959; for the neat copy of the letter, see 845J.2614/5-1359, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Volta River Project: Letter from Ambassador to the Prime Minister," 13 May 1959 (all at NA).

memorandum on the financing of the dam and power installation components of the VRP. A number of aluminium companies, the memorandum said, had indicated that they would like to have a firm word from Ghana as to the rate at which power would be sold to potential industrial consumers before making any commitments on the VRP. But without any idea of the approximate interest rates and loan amortization costs of the project, Ghana was in no position to give even a rough estimate of such a rate. The memorandum recalled the sentiments expressed on the VRP in the joint communique following Nkrumah's visit to the U.S., and stated that Ghana "would now wish to know the general basis upon which it may expect to be able to secure" U.S. financial aid for the VRP. It was explained that Ghana was anxious to know how financing could be arranged so that it could establish, within fairly close limits, a price for the power to be furnished the aluminium companies. Ghana calculated that the construction of the dam and the generation of power would cost \$180 million. Out of this figure, only \$53 million was expected to be raised internally. Chapman had no answer to Dillon's query on the status of Ghana's talks with the World Bank. Citing the case of India, Dillon explained that in similar situations where projects had been too large for any one country to finance, talks with the bank had been most helpful and had served as a "focal point." Nonetheless, he found the memorandum very illuminating, noting that up till then, no-one in Washington understood why Ghana had been pressing for some idea of U.S. financing of the VRP. He

845J.2614/5-1159, Memorandum from the embassy of Ghana, Washington, 11 May 1959 (NA).

reaffirmed the U.S. position that the aluminium industry be tied in with the project. On possible U.S. financing, Dillon promised that a DLF loan would be available. The fund's usual interest rate, he explained, was three and half percent and repayment on dam projects ran for twenty to twenty-five years. However, he cautioned that the VRP was beyond the capacity of the DLF, and therefore pointed out that the size of anything from that quarter would be determined by what Ghana could obtain from other sources. And the U.S., he explained, could not make any commitments until Congress voted on the 1960 fiscal year appropriations (by August 1959). Given these obscure baselines, no specific figure was quoted for Chapman as what Ghana could expect from the U.S. But in order to get the VRP off the "dead center" and especially help Ghana determine an approximate power rate, Dillon promised that the U.S. would be willing to explore with the World Bank the possibilities of their financing a portion of the hydroelectric project and also discuss with Kaiser "where they were going."

Nkrumah was pleased with both Flake's letter and the Dillon/Chapman conversation. Although he welcomed the idea of bringing in the World Bank to serve as a "focal point," Nkrumah insisted on riding along with the U.S. To him, the U.S. was a "powerful friend" who he wanted to have acting "from the side" to urge the aluminium industry on, stimulate World Bank's interest in close and helpful examination of financing the project, and

845J.2614/5-1159, Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 11 May 1959; 845J.2614/5-1159, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 11 May 1959 (both at NA).

possibly help at a later date with some DLF financing.¹³³ To this point, the World Bank's only contact with the VRP had been tangential, through the bank's 1956 economic survey of Ghana. As already noted, the survey returned an unfavorable assessment of the VRP. Shortly after his meeting with Dillon, Chapman established the first formal Ghana/World Bank contact on the VRP. He visited the bank and explained Ghana's need for the determination of adequate rates for power which would facilitate a decision by the aluminium companies to invest in a smelter. Chapman requested the bank's assistance in this regard as well as in putting together a financial package. The bank's response was that it would need time to study the Kaiser report, look at the new scheme as developed by the report within the overall context of Ghana's economy, and check with the U.S. government.¹³⁴

Doubts Linger, But Washington is Converted

On 28 May, World Bank Vice President J. Burke Knapp called on the State Department and reported on his meeting with Chapman. It was then that the department made it explicit that loans from the DLF and the Export-Import Bank were the only sources of official U.S. financing Ghana could secure. There was thus no prospect for special grant assistance. And there was no possibility that the two sources could together lend Ghana anything near \$100 million. Knapp dwelt on the difficulties which confronted the VRP. He noted that aluminium companies were

¹³³ 845J.2614/5-1459, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 14 May 1959 (NA).

¹³⁴ 845J.2614/5-2859, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 28 May 1959 (NA).

scouring the world for power sites, sources of bauxite and sites for smelters. In all these, he said, the VRP was not competitive. He mentioned all the other hydroelectric-aluminium projects in Africa as being more attractive than the VRP. Knapp also observed that a number of companies had already established smelters in Latin America and made tremendous bauxite discoveries in Australia and Borneo. These facts, he stressed, meant that very generous incentives had to be offered to attract aluminium companies to Ghana. In addition, Knapp believed that there would be difficulties finding a market for Ghana's aluminium. He insisted that given this kind of background, the bank needed to take a close look at Ghana's economy in order to determine investment priorities.¹⁰⁰

Ironically, the gloomy World Bank picture challenged the department to face the issue head on. Apparently, it had come to accept the point which Flake had emphasized all along: that the VRP was important for U.S. foreign policy in Africa and that its economics should therefore be discounted.¹⁰¹ On the day following the meeting, Dillon wrote to the Export-Import Bank inquiring whether it could help Ghana to prepare estimates of adequate rates for the cost of power from the Volta.¹⁰² More indicative of

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ For example, see 845J.394/5-1859, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 5 May 1959 (NA). In this telegram, Flake urged that Dillon should write Kaiser stressing the value of the VRP to U.S. foreign policy and express the hope that the company's efforts will be successful.

¹⁰² 845J.2614/5-2759, Letter from Acting Secretary Douglas Dillon to Lynn U. Stambaugh, first vice president of Export-Import Bank, 29 May 1959 (NA).

the department's new-found enthusiasm was the meeting Dillon had with Calhoun on 8 June 1959. Dillon professed Washington's continuing interest in the economic development of Ghana and reported that he had discussed the VRP with World Bank President Black. Calhoun's assessment of the VRP was far more optimistic than that presented by Knapp only ten days earlier. According to Calhoun, Kaiser's estimate showed a thirteen percent shortfall in the supply of aluminium in the U.S. and therefore a long term increase in the demand for the metal. On the VRP, Kaiser remained convinced that it was economically feasible, that low-cost power would be available for the production of aluminium, and that there would be no problem finding a market for the product and at competitive prices. Calhoun also assured Dillon that the VRP was potentially ahead of the other projects in Guinea and the Belgian Congo. Regarding discussions on the formation of a joint company or consortium for the construction and operation of an aluminium smelter in Ghana, Calhoun reported that Kaiser had been conferring with a number of aluminium companies, especially ALCAN and BAC, both of which controlled the bauxite deposits in Ghana. ALCAN, which also had bauxite concessions in Guinea and had plans to construct an alumina plant there, was said to have invited Kaiser to join in the Guinea project and then process the alumina in Ghana. Nkrumah was reported to have endorsed such an arrangement. On the financing of the VRP, Dillon gave an undertaking that the DLF and the Export-Import would be able to step into the hydroelectric project. But he quickly added that it had also become clear that the aluminium smelter was so essential to the overall project that the dam could not proceed without it.

This centrality of the smelter, Dillon emphasized, made it imperative that there had to be a firm expression of commitment from the aluminium industry to induce the U.S. government and the World Bank to go ahead with a consideration of a loan.

"Somebody," he said, "had to start putting all of the parts together." Calhoun cut in to say that Kaiser was set to do just that, a response which delighted Dillon.³³²

Washington was being helpful in other ways. Ghana had on 18 June 1959 informed the State Department of its acceptance of the World Bank's offer to appraise its economy; the department was urged to communicate the acceptance to the bank with an indication that Ghana would want the exercise completed by September 1959.³³³ Conveying this development to Black, Dillon stated that "From the point of view of the U.S. Government, it would be useful if the proposed survey be undertaken and completed as soon as possible." Black was also notified that the U.S. government had agreed to assist Ghana "in exploring with the Bank and the aluminium companies the possibilities for financing, and have suggested that the Bank might be helpful in determining an appropriate power rate." More significantly, Dillon tried to narrow the options open to the bank; or at least, make it difficult for the bank to come up with an unfavorable report on the VRP. Concluding, he emphasized that "The Volta project is obviously of considerable economic and political significance. I

³³² 845J.2614/6-859, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project -- Meeting with Kaiser Industries," 8 June 1959 (NA).

³³³ 845J.2614/6-1859, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 18 June 1959 (NA).

therefore hope the necessary further studies as to its economic and financial feasibility can be completed as soon as possible."¹⁴

In spite of the weight the department was throwing around, there was still strong opposition to U.S. involvement in the VRP. On 10 August 1959, Export-Import Bank President Samuel Waugh wrote Dillon claiming that the bank had received numerous calls from the American aluminium industry opposing the investment of huge public funds in Africa for the reduction of bauxite to aluminium, especially because "there are sufficient facilities for this in the United States for the foreseeable future." On this basis, he advised that a study should be made to determine U.S. requirements for new sources of aluminium "over the years to come."¹⁵

Waugh went on to stress that by their analysis of the *Reassessment Report*, the feasibility of the VRP "has not been clearly established." He endorsed the view that the hydroelectric project should not be considered unless there were firm commitments from the aluminium industry or some other large industrial user who would consume a very substantial portion of the power. He talked of the power supply which would be in excess of the demand of the aluminium industry (or the other large industrial user) and agreed with the Kaiser report that the viability of the VRP also depended on the possibility of

¹⁴ 845J.2614/7-959, Letter from Douglas Dillon to Eugene Black, World Bank president, 9 July 1959 (NA).

¹⁵ 845J.2614/8-1059, Letter from the president, Export-Import Bank of Washington to Douglas Dillon, 10 August 1959 (NA).

attracting additional industrial power consumers, besides the aluminium project. Waugh insisted that without effective demand for the extra power, "estimated rates will be incorrect and rates to the aluminium company will have to be revised upwards unless the government is willing and able to sell power to the aluminium company at a loss." The Kaiser estimate was dismissed as unrealistic since it discounted the cost of the ancillary projects involved in the VRP. It was contended that a more realistic estimate must include the cost of infrastructural projects to attract new industries; availability of skilled and unskilled labor; the cost of various social and welfare requirements in the affected area, including resettlement, housing, hospitals, and schools. "In short, a careful study," Waugh insisted, "should be made to ascertain the ability of the economy of Ghana to absorb a project of this magnitude."¹⁰⁰

The State Department's enthusiasm was not dampened by Waugh's letter, which certainly says something of the extent to which it had embraced the VRP. On the bank's point that the VRP should not be given too much encouragement unless it was thoroughly planned in all its aspects, Dillon replied that Ghana had, on its own initiative, requested the World Bank to send a team for an economic survey which would evaluate the VRP within a wider context, adding that he expected that the World Bank would be quite realistic in its report.¹⁰¹ Kaiser was partly responsible

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ 845J.2614/8-1059, Letter from Acting Secretary Douglas to Samuel C. Waugh, president, Export-Import Bank of Washington, 19 August 1959 (NA).

for the confidence which the department exuded. The company had become so upbeat on the prospects of the VRP that it was not in the least bothered by the worries and calls such as that of the Export-Import Bank for a reassessment of construction costs. From the preliminary quotations it had received on hydroelectric equipment, Kaiser had found that the costs were much less than previously thought. Nor was the company bothered about the surplus power to be generated from the VRP. Instead, it noted that Ghana's power demand had not been static and that the demand could even outstrip supply within five years after building the power installation. In this calculation, Kaiser drew on examples such as India's, where there was also a very low demand for power when a hydroelectric project was planned.*** So optimistic was Kaiser about the VRP that in September 1959 it expanded its interest in the VRP from the contract for the construction of the hydroelectric power dam to also include aluminium production. As put by Edgar Kaiser, the reason for this new dimension was that all the other major aluminium companies had some strong footing in West Africa: ALCAN, BAC and Olin Mathieson were all involved in the Guinea projects.***

*** 845J.2614/9-2559, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 25 September 1959 (NA).

*** See 845J.2614/9-1859, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Present Status of Negotiations Between Kaiser Group and Ghana Government Concerning Volta River Project," 18 September 1959 (NA), and its enclosures. Also relevant is a letter dated 19 September, together with a number of attachments, from Kaiser Industries to Acting Secretary Dillon informing him of "recent actions and events pertaining to the formation of a Ghana Aluminium Consortium for the purposes of producing primary aluminium in Ghana, utilizing electrical energy from the proposed Volta River Project." Incidentally, the letter has no classification number.

VALCO is Born

Kaiser's optimism lifted the VRP into the realm of possibility. Nkrumah had in January 1959 asked ALCAN to assume primary responsibility for organizing a private consortium to construct and operate the aluminium smelter. After several months, ALCAN had made no headway. In mid-August 1959, Edgar Kaiser met with ALCAN President Nathaniel Davis, as a result of which ALCAN surrendered the responsibility for organizing the consortium to Kaiser. On 10 September 1959, Edgar Kaiser convened a meeting of potentially interested aluminium companies: ALCAN, Aluminium Company of America (ALCOA), Kaiser Aluminium and Chemical Corporation, Olin Mathieson and Reynolds Metals. The firms asked Edgar Kaiser to prepare a detailed financial and organizational proposal for the formation of the consortium, which would set up a smelter plant. Four days later, Edgar Kaiser and Calhoun were in Accra. Following their briefing, Nkrumah welcomed the consortium arrangement. The Ghanaian government subsequently announced that it had asked Edgar Kaiser, and that he had accepted, to take the lead in forming the consortium.¹⁴⁷

At the meeting with Ghanaian officials, Kaiser explained that under the consortium set-up, the smelter company was to be a non-profit operation and would therefore have to sell the pig aluminium to the participating companies in proportion to their investment and at cost. Each company was thus required to separately market its share of the aluminium and reap the profit or loss. Nkrumah picked this arrangement apart. First, he pointed

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

out, and Edgar Kaiser agreed, that it was unworkable if government or private individual stockholders were brought in since these would not have made any initial investment. In particular, he indicated that although his government was primarily interested in producing power as cheaply as possible, it was equally interested in having "a reasonable" share of the profits and/or risks in the smelter and that this implicitly undercut the proposition of a non-profit making smelter. With these as his preliminary observations, Nkrumah asked Kaiser to come up with "a sound proposal" for the development of a consortium which would establish a smelter company in Ghana and purchase sufficient power to justify the construction of the dam and power project. While conceding that the smelter should initially be financed entirely by the consortium, Ghana demanded that it should be given the option to purchase fifty percent of the stock at "a reasonable" price within about twenty years from the start of the operation. Nkrumah pledged that with the consortium effectively in place, his government would "be prepared to take responsibility for financing" the construction of the dam and power installation. He added that Ghana intended to sell power to the smelter company at cost plus minimal profit. The meeting agreed that in drawing up its final plans, Kaiser would have to take the issues raised by the Ghanaian government into full account.⁴⁴

On 4 November 1959, ALCAN, ALCOA, Kaiser, Olin Mathieson, and Reynolds met in New York to consider Kaiser's proposal for

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

the consortium. Agreement was reached to form a company called the Volta Aluminium Company (VALCO) under Ghanaian law with a capitulation made up of \$75,000 contributions from each firm. Kaiser indicated that it would take a one-third interest in the smelter project, while ALCAN and Olin Mathieson wanted ten percent each. ALCOA and Reynolds reserved their positions, with the latter expressing strong misgivings on Ghana's desire for equity participation in the project. In spite of this, Ghana was informed that there was a genuine interest among the firms for the formation of the consortium. The meeting agreed that VALCO would expect some tax concessions to be provided by specific legislation. Ghana was also expected to give definite assurances to the consortium of "a reasonable power rate."

As might have been expected, the formation of VALCO was very welcome news in Accra. At long last, the VRP seemed on the verge of achievement. Nkrumah assured Kaiser that Ghana was prepared to finance the dam construction alone if that was the only way to secure power from the Volta for the smelter. As a testimony to this commitment, Ghana immediately signed two new contracts with Kaiser. One, at a cost of \$1,600,000, covered a new engineering design of the dam. The other, which amounted to \$5,500,000, was for additional construction at the dam site and the provision of some equipment such as dredgers. When added to the earlier contract for preliminary works, these brought the total contracts with Kaiser to \$9,600,000, all of which were being financed by

845J.2614/11-2359, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project and Guinea Bauxite Deposits," 23 November 1959 (NA).

Ghana alone.¹⁴³ Kaiser was also required to complete by 1 September 1960, the design and drawings of the dam and power installation together with the tender documents which would enable Ghana to call for bids on an international basis.¹⁴⁴

The formation of VALCO also induced Ghana to finally invite the World Bank, just before Christmas 1959, to send a team to study the VRP. Reporting this development to the State Department, Flake observed that Nkrumah had been very reluctant to invite the bank because he felt the economic feasibility of the project had already been amply demonstrated and that a new survey was only a delaying tactic. He emphasized that Nkrumah was in no mood to have anybody query the wisdom of the VRP any longer and would be quite prepared to look beyond the World Bank for financial assistance. Flake therefore advised that the department should urge "speed and utmost tact by World Bank team even if World Bank eventually has to refuse loan." A minute on Flake's telegram shows that the department did telephone the World Bank urging that it should waste no time in sending its team to Ghana.¹⁴⁵

In January 1960, World Bank officials arrived in Ghana to determine the economic feasibility of the VRP and its probable effect on the national economy. The bank's report, submitted to Ghana in July 1960, was not encouraging. "Even taking all the

¹⁴³ 845J.2614/12-1659, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 16 December 1959 (NA).

¹⁴⁴ 845J.2614/12-2259, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta Project," 22 December 1959 (NA).

¹⁴⁵ 845J.2614/12-2459, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 24 December 1959 (NA).

intangible benefits into account," it concluded, "the over-all balance of costs and benefits is on the positive side to only a modest extent at best." The report put the cost of the first stage of the project somewhat higher than the \$300 million calculated by Kaiser.¹²⁶

The Final Negotiations

By the time the report was issued, the VRP had gathered so much momentum that it could no longer be put on hold. Two weeks after the World Bank report was submitted, Kaiser officials arrived in Accra on behalf of VALCO to discuss the power cost with Ghana. This turned out to be a very thorny issue. The attraction of the aluminium companies to having a smelter in Ghana lay in the cheapness of power. Kaiser engineers figured that the power rate should be in the neighborhood of 2.5 mills per kilowatt.¹²⁷ But Ghana had to sell the Akosombo power at a profit over its cost of production -- unless it decided that the direct revenue to Ghana from the project (in taxation, excise duties, railway freights, harbor dues) would be so important that it could afford to sell power at cost or even slightly under, in order to entice the consortium to begin work quickly. In the event, the World Bank insisted that the power project itself be self-sustaining. Basing themselves on this, the Ghanaians asked for 4.5 mills. A stalemate ensued.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 204.

¹²⁷ A mill, equivalent to one-tenth of a U.S. cent, is the unit used in the U.S. to calculate power payments.

¹²⁸ Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 204.

In August 1960, Gbedemah had a series of negotiations in Washington with the World Bank, the State Department, the Treasury Department, the Export-Import Bank, and the DLF. Under the package worked out, Ghana was to provide \$85 million of the funds required for the hydroelectric project at Akosombo, while the World Bank and the U.S. were to provide \$40 million and \$30 million respectively in loan funds.¹²³ But the U.S. (and certainly the World Bank) was to make the money available to Ghana only when it "reaches a satisfactory arrangement with the owners of the proposed aluminium smelter and the financing required in addition to the possible U.S. participation is assured."¹²⁴ The fate of the VRP was thus hinged on negotiations between Ghana and VALCO on the cost of power for the smelter. By this point, the consortium was the only member of the aluminium industry ready to work with Ghana. Thus Ghana had little option but to reach an agreement, any agreement, with VALCO if the project was to move ahead. As should be expected, this put VALCO in a very strong bargaining position. The implication was that if Ghana failed to cut a deal with VALCO, there was hardly any chance that the smelter would be built and -- as Washington had pressed on countless occasions -- without the smelter, Ghana might as well

¹²³ Discussion at the 456th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, August 18, 1960, AWF, NSC Series, Box 13 (DDEL). In addition to these, Britain provided \$15 million, also as a loan. See "Green Light for the Volta," *West Africa*, 27 August 1960, 959.

¹²⁴ Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 17 August 1960, White House Office, International Series, Box 7 (DDEL).

as forget the entire scheme or at least any U.S. assistance for it.

The World Bank had confided to the State Department that the VALCO offer (of 2.5 mills per kilowatt) was "disappointingly low"¹¹¹ and would never be enough to cover the debt service.¹¹² The bank was thus quite unwilling to go along with the consortium. On the other hand, Kaiser had threatened to withdraw, but later opted to work on the World Bank, arguing that its estimates were not as optimistic as the bank seemed to believe.¹¹³ The World Bank was moved, not by the force of Kaiser's argument, but by another consideration: the Soviets had, in May 1960, mentioned to a Ghanaian parliamentary delegation in Moscow the possibility of a substantial loan, at low interest, towards the VRP.¹¹⁴ Faced with this Soviet interest in the project, and thus unwilling to undercut a U.S. foreign policy strategy, the World Bank relented.¹¹⁵

In the final negotiations, VALCO played its strength to the fullest and extracted onerous terms from Ghana. In the agreement settled in November 1960, Ghana was denied its original intention of acquiring some equity participation in the smelter. Imports by

¹¹¹ Memorandum for the president, "Your Appointment with President Nkrumah of Ghana," 21 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL).

¹¹² "Imperialism and the Volta Dam," *West Africa*, 24 March 1980, 523.

¹¹³ Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 204, 206.

¹¹⁴ "Prospect on the Volta," *West Africa*, 21 May 1960, front page editorial.

¹¹⁵ "Imperialism and the Volta Dam," *West Africa*, 24 March 1980, 523; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 157.

VALCO for the construction of the smelter and its operations were to be duty free for the first thirty years; there were to be no restrictions, control or taxation of aluminium exports; imported alumina was to be duty free for thirty years; VALCO was to be granted pioneer company relief which exempted it from all taxation of its income for at least five years, extending beyond that period to a maximum of ten years if profits had not totalled a specified minimum (which was then set at £G20 million); and from the years when income tax did become payable until 1997, the tax rate would be that applicable to companies on 2 January 1961, which was then forty percent of retained profits plus a further two and half percent of profits transferred out of Ghana. Two other major concessions involved the agreement to sell power to the smelter at 2.625 mills per kilowatt, which was a little more than the cost price and the lowest in the world, and to retain this price for thirty years. As well, in order to keep the cost of the project down and thus ensure a low price for power, VALCO stripped the VRP of its ancillary public works.¹⁰ VALCO was even able to evade any firm commitment to install a plant to convert locally mined bauxite into alumina. Instead, it was allowed the anomaly of importing alumina processed by Kaiser plants in the U.S. from bauxite mined in Jamaica, from concessions owned by Kaiser and Reynolds. This was a major departure from the original conception of the VRP. All proposals, including the Kaiser report, had included a bauxite mine and an alumina plant. The

¹⁰ Killick, "The Volta River Project," 402-403; Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 62-63; "Imperialism and the Volta Dam," *West Africa*, 24 March 1980.

Reassessment Report found that there were "ample reserves of acceptable quality bauxite to support a substantial aluminium industry in Ghana" and recommended an alumina plant and smelter, to be built at Tema.¹⁰⁰ Kaiser had shifted away from this commitment as early as January 1959. When he met Nkrumah on 14 March 1959, Edgar Kaiser lobbied hard for his firm to be allowed to construct the dam. But he hedged when Nkrumah requested him to build (and operate) the aluminium smelter, saying that Kaiser engineers required further drilling information on the Akosombo site.¹⁰¹ This reticence had nothing to do with the market prospects of aluminium, at least in the short run: five days after meeting Nkrumah, Edgar Kaiser told the State Department that "there is no question more aluminium will be needed five years from now."¹⁰² He was holding back on the smelter because the aluminium companies had some other ideas on how the industry should be operated in Ghana. The alternative was floated by ALCAN President Davis: he saw Nkrumah in January 1959 and subsequently proposed the possibility of a 50,000 to 80,000 ton aluminium smelter to be built at Tema to use alumina produced from ALCAN's bauxite concession in Guinea. For this, Ghana was expected to grant a twenty-five-year contract for power at two mills per kilowatt with an option to renew the contract for another twenty-five years at three mills per kilowatt. Nkrumah snubbed this deal

¹⁰⁰ *Reassessment Report*, 1-4.

¹⁰¹ 845J.2614/3-1959, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 19 March 1959 (NA).

¹⁰² 845J.2614/3-1959, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 19 March 1959 (NA).

as Ghana intended the aluminium smelter being proposed as a part of the VRP to rely on local, not imported, bauxite. He made this quite clear at his meeting later with Edgar Kaiser.³³⁷

Before Kaiser's Accra trip, he learned from Davis that while Guinea had a higher quality bauxite than Ghana, Ghana had the potential for more and cheaper power, and therefore that it made more economic sense for the aluminium companies to use the Volta power to smelt alumina which would be imported from Guinea. Kaiser was completely taken in by the proposal.³³⁸ Meanwhile, Washington had since been pressing Nkrumah that the power project would have to subsist on the aluminium industry and that it would therefore be difficult if not impossible to finance the hydroelectric works without a smelter. In his desperation to get the VRP off the ground, Nkrumah accepted this logic in May 1959: he was now prepared to have alumina from Guinea converted into aluminium in Ghana, arguing that such a process was a sufficient justification for the Volta power project, "even if no bauxite is mined in Ghana."³³⁹ The translation of Davis' idea into practice ensured that Ghana was to serve VALCO as a source of cheap electricity for aluminium production. The VRP was thus to be an

³³⁷ For example, see "Statement by the Prime Minister," Attachment I in 845J.2614/3-1959, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 19 March 1959 (NA).

³³⁸ 845J.2614/3-1759, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Accra to the Department of State, "Volta River Project," 17 March 1959; 845J.2614/3-1959, Memorandum of Conversation, "Volta River Project," 19 March 1959 (both at NA).

³³⁹ 845J.2614/5-1459, Telegram from Accra to the secretary of state, 14 May 1959 (NA).

integrated scheme, but integrated within the vertical confines of the American aluminium industry.

Apart from the power rates, the other sticky issue in the final negotiations was the feasibility of the additional transmission facilities. Ghana and Kaiser contended that by providing power for private consumers and mining companies, the facilities constituted a cost-effective measure. World Bank dissented.¹³³ In its July 1960 report, the bank had estimated that Ghana's power needs would be less than Kaiser had predicted, and recommended postponing a decision on building the transmission lines to carry power to other customers.¹³⁴ In October 1960, Nkrumah wrote Eisenhower requesting \$23 million in U.S. assistance for financing additional power transmission facilities. Like the bank, the U.S. was not convinced that "sufficient facts have been provided to support this position." But in responding to Nkrumah, Eisenhower and the State Department were not dismissive of the Ghana/Kaiser position. Instead, care was taken to leave the door open for future consideration of the transmission lines without delaying the beginning of the main projects -- the dam and the smelter. Framed along this line, Eisenhower's reply emphasized that there was no disagreement about the need for building the transmission system. "The issue arises, rather," he added, "over when the demand for power will justify its construction. I feel sure that well before

¹³³ Telegram from the Department of State to AmEmbassy, Accra, 18 November 1960, AWF, International Series, Box 15; White House Office, International Series, Box 7 (both at DDEL).

¹³⁴ Siekman, "Edgar Kaiser's Gamble in Africa," 204.

construction need start, in order to have it ready when power will be ready for delivery, facts will be available which will permit full agreement on the issue now in dispute."¹³⁵ With Eisenhower's letter, the matter rested.

It can be readily observed that the U.S./Ghana disjunction over the Congo¹³⁶ did not hamper U.S. interest in the VRP. Washington stayed on course because of the growing Soviet interest in Ghana, and especially in the Volta project. As earlier shown, Moscow had already made some advances to Ghana on the VRP in May 1960. Seven months later, there were further reports that the Soviet Union had offered to design a hydroelectric power dam to be built at Bui on the Black Volta. Moscow also indicated its willingness to supply technical equipment and technicians and to carry out the survey of the Bui dam.¹³⁷ As the State Department explained, the U.S. was "of course, concerned that should current negotiations with VALCO break down Ghana may turn to the USSR for assistance."¹³⁸ There were thus political reasons for Washington's interest in the VRP.¹³⁹ But that was not all. The U.S. loan for the VRP was, by

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ This is discussed in the previous chapter.

¹³⁷ "USSR To Build Second Volta Dam," *West Africa*, 19 November 1960, 1319.

¹³⁸ Memorandum for the president, "Your Appointment with President Nkrumah of Ghana," 21 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL).

¹³⁹ In this respect, also see Thomas J. Noer, "The New Frontier and African Neutralism: Kennedy, Nkrumah, and the Volta River Project," *Diplomatic History*, 8, 1 (Winter 1984), 63-64; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 157.

any measurement, a sound economic investment. By 1960, the aluminium industry had recovered from the trade setbacks which plagued it in 1957/58 and was expanding dramatically. In the U.S. itself, Aluminium Limited had plans to increase its smelter capacity from 750,000 tons to one million tons. In France, P echiney established a plant near Pau with a production capacity of 56,000 tons per annum -- representing an increase of one third in France's aluminium output. At the same time, Greece signed a contract with French companies for a \$75 million aluminium industry; and a \$7 million aluminium plant in Buenos Aires -- the largest in Latin America -- was under construction. Besides, there were reports of plans for some of the world's largest plants in both Australia and Poland. Everywhere, there was confidence not only that demand would keep pace with supply, but also that aluminium would continue to be in greater demand than all other metals: in 1960, aluminium in industrial construction and equipment in the U.S. was expected to reach 650,000 tons -- an increase of 100,000 tons over the previous year.¹⁰⁰ This confidence certainly rubbed off on the VRP. And in an expanding global market, Washington could not have been uninformed of the benefits to be derived by the control of the VRP by America's aluminium industry.

¹⁰⁰ In 1930-60, the percentage annual rate of growth in production of the principal metals was: lead, 1.4; zinc, 2.4; copper, 3; steel, 3; aluminium, 9. Another way of looking at the matter is to note that world aluminium consumption trebled in the decade 1949 to 1958, from 1.2 million metric tons to 3.1 million. See "Prospect Fair for Aluminium," *West Africa*, 10 November 1960, 1019.

Part IV
CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

BY the end of 1960, Ghana's image in the U.S. was that of a dictatorial, socialist state. The relationship between the two countries had -- as shown in chapter 5 -- gone sour over the Congo crisis. As uneasy as it ever was, the U.S./Guinea relationship could have ambled through the entire Eisenhower presidency. But it was all thrown out of gear by the Congo crisis. The U.S. senators who undertook a study of mission of Africa in November/December 1960 concluded that Guinea had "become very deeply involved with the East." They had, according to their report, noticed "over 450 bloc technicians" in advisory positions in nearly every ministry and department of the government; that following Guinea's adoption of a new currency,¹ "the great bulk of its trade has abruptly shifted away from the franc to the bloc;" and that it had accepted "total bloc credits of over \$100 million, as well as barter deals which have mortgaged at least one major export crop to the bloc for a minimum of 2 years." Even Guinea's political system, the senators noted, was "indistinguishable from a Communist one." Writing it off as a lost cause, they recommended that "Pending clearer evidence that Guinea indeed wants our friendship and wishes to -- and can -- preserve its independence from the bloc, we believe that the United States should maintain no more than a token aid program just to keep the door open."² Morrow described the

¹ Guinea pulled out of the franc zone on 2 March 1960. See "Sekou Toure's Surprises," *West Africa*, 12 March 1960, 287.

² Study Mission to Africa, November-December 1960, *Report of Senators Frank Church, Gale W. McGhee, and Frank E. Moss*, 40-41.

reception Toure accorded the senators as "notably cooler" than that received by American public figures who had previously been in Conakry. Placing the matter on a broad canvass, he cabled Washington that Toure left a distinct "impression that he [Toure] has all but written off [the] possibility of any significant cooperation with United States." In his memoir, Morrow ascribes Toure's attitude on the occasion, not to the "Communist" hold but his disaffection with the U.S. policy over the Congo.

Perhaps even more than Nkrumah, Toure was a strong Lumumba partisan. According to Morrow, Toure had therefore been "very much irked" by the leading role played by the U.S. in seating the Kasavubu delegation at the UN General Assembly in September 1960.¹ Toure sent his first message to Eisenhower on the Congo in August 1960, urging that the U.S. should "take vigorous action" to effect the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution calling for the evacuation of all Belgian troops from the Congo and respect for its territorial integrity. "We are certain," he added, "that if you will contribute your support, only a few hours will be needed to save the peace, which will benefit the African peoples and the entire world."² Eisenhower saw the note as an opportunity to educate Toure on the need to support the UN in the Congo. He affirmed that the U.S. was not inclined to act unilaterally in the Congo because of its belief

¹ Telegram from the embassy in Guinea to the Department of State, 20 December 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960, xiv* (1992), 722-723.

² Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, 216.

³ Message from President Toure to President Eisenhower, 7 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960, xiv* (1992), 395.

that the crisis there could be surmounted "only through the united efforts of all countries...coordinated through the United Nations under the effective leadership of Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold." He contended that it would be a great contribution to peace if Toure himself were to use his influence in Africa to "encourage the fullest possible support for the United Nations effort in the Congo."

Incidentally, two days after Eisenhower's reply to Toure, the State Department was in agreement with a request by Baron Scheyven, the Belgian ambassador to the U.S., that Washington should use its influence to forestall any changes in the Security Council resolutions under which Hammarskjold had been operating in the Congo. Like Scheyven, Toure must have been motivated by the fact that international organizations such as the UN are only as effective as their most powerful members want them to be. He was therefore definitely not asking the U.S. to sidestep the UN,

Telegram from the Department of State to the embassy in Guinea, 15 August 1960, *ibid.*, 411.

Ibid., 416, n. 1. Scheyven's request was a sequel to messages Lumumba had sent to Hammarskjold. Citing the Security Council resolution of 14 July which had authorized the secretary general to provide the Congolese government with military assistance and to do so in consultation with it, Lumumba asked that the UN "place all its resources at the disposal of my Government," and that Congolese troops take over the task of guarding all airfields in the Congo from UN troops, that Congolese troops and those from the African contingents in the Congo be sent to Katanga, that aircraft be provided to the Congo government for the purpose of restoring order, that the Katanga rebels be disarmed and their weapons be put at the disposal of the Congo government, and that all non-African troops be withdrawn from Katanga. On 15 August, Lumumba informed Hammarskjold that the Congo government had lost confidence in the secretary general and requested that the Security Council should send observers from African and Asian countries to ensure the application of its resolutions. See *ibid.*, 412-413.

but only to help ensure that UN resolutions were implemented, in other words, to ensure that the UN was more effective. It was not that Toure was off-mark as that his request -- the evacuation of Belgian troops -- did not serve U.S. interests. On 16 August 1960 -- five days before a UN Security Council session on the Congo -- the State Department instructed the U.S. mission at the UN to ensure that the withdrawal of Belgian troops received "minimum attention and that discussion will focus on crux of issue" -- which it defined as the dispute between Lumumba and the UN secretary general on the future role of the UN in the Congo.⁷ Worse for Toure was that he was not in good standing with Washington over the Congo. From Leopoldville, U.S. Ambassador Clare Timberlake had reported, on 17 August 1960, that "It seems clear that Guinea is going straight down the Communist line and will continue that way."⁸ Two weeks later, the U.S. mission at the UN suggested that the Soviet Union could only disrupt UN operations in the Congo "through `flag of convenience.' This would only be Guinea or Ghana."⁹ A meeting between Toure and Satterthwaite in New York on 6 October 1960 failed to bridge the differences. Satterthwaite reiterated the U.S. position that the problem revolved around Lumumba who "seemed determined to curtail the United Nations role in the Congo and facilitate that of the Soviet Union." Toure would not accept this reductionism: the

⁷ Telegram from the Department of State to the mission at the United Nations, 16 August 1960, *Ibid.*, 414.

⁸ Telegram from the embassy in the Congo to the Department of State, 17 August 1960, *ibid.*, 419.

⁹ Telegram from the mission at the United Nations to the Department of State, 26 August 1960, *ibid.*, 445.

issue, he insisted, was the independence and territorial integrity of Congo. He wanted the legality of the Congolese government, as established through free elections, to be respected and reproached the UN for ignoring the needs of the government which had invited it into the country.¹¹

In November 1960, Toure cabled Eisenhower again complaining of "our concern at the development of a partisan position by the United States in the situation in the Congo." He "earnestly" requested Eisenhower to "cease supporting the position of the enemies of African emancipation, who are employing every possible means against the legitimate Government of the Congo to attack the unity and territorial integrity of the Congolese nation." Toure warned that if the U.S. maintained its "present position," Guinea would decline participation in the conciliation commission "and will take any position in African affairs consistent with Congolese interests."¹² Eisenhower regretted that Toure's cable reflected "a serious misunderstanding" of the U.S. policy "in support of African freedom." Toure was reminded that the U.S. had been "in the forefront of those nations who have favored emancipation of all peoples, including Africans, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations." With specific reference to the Congo, Eisenhower recalled that the U.S. had welcomed its independence, had "recognized and upheld its unity and territorial integrity through United Nations actions," and refrained from unilateral

¹¹ Memorandum of Conversation, "Congo," *ibid.*, 515.

¹² Telegram from Sekou Toure to Eisenhower, 20 November 1960, AWF, International Series, Box 25 (DDEL).

intervention in its internal affairs. He held that "Although considerable partisanship has been demonstrated by some states, our support for the recognition of M. Kasavubu as Chief of State, a constitutional position which is universally accepted and recognized in the recent report of the UN, is not a question of partisanship but an attempt to strengthen one of the essential foundations of stable and effective government in that unhappy country." Eisenhower insisted that such a position was "in strict conformity with the interests of the Congolese Government and people" and that, in any case, "a large number of African states have taken a similar stand." Concluding, he invited Toure to fully support the UN effort in the Congo given "the fact that the United Nations success is vital for the welfare of the Congolese."

Morrow recalls that Toure was "very unhappy" with how the second message he had sent to Eisenhower was handled. Not only was he surprised at the tone of the response, he was particularly displeased with the fact that Eisenhower released the reply to the press. Thereafter, Toure sent a message to President-elect John F. Kennedy, but also "received a rebuff on this score when Kennedy let him know that he too was supporting the stand" taken by Eisenhower. According to Morrow, Kennedy's reply "surprised and nettled Toure, who expected a difference of opinion" between him and Eisenhower. Toure reacted by recalling Guinean troops from the Congo. It was against this tense background that the

¹⁰ Letter from Eisenhower to Sekou Toure, 25 November 1960 in Outgoing Telegram from Department of State to AmEmbassy, Conakry, 26 November 1960, AWF, International Series, Box 25 (DDEL).

senators met with Toure.¹⁴ Unlike Ghana's case, there was no public rancor between the U.S. and Guinea over the Congo. But like Nkrumah, Sekou Toure was sorely disappointed with the U.S. position, and as with Ghana, this undermined relations with the U.S.

At the same time Washington was losing its old friends, it was acquiring new ones. This dynamic can be easily picked from Eisenhower's cognitive structuring of West African leaders. He considered Nkrumah as "glib and facile." By contrast, Sylvanus Olympio of Togo seemed "sensible, stable and untheatrical," and gave "the impression of thinking before he speaks."¹⁵ Later, Eisenhower told British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that the African who had impressed him most was Olympio, "a modest, quiet-spoken, intelligent man."¹⁶ There were also the *Conseil de l'Entente* states under the leadership of Houphouet-Boigny: the U.S. embassy in Yaounde reported that the states in the grouping were "thoroughly pro-western."¹⁷ But the biggest attraction was Nigeria. Eisenhower had intended to attend Nigeria's independence ceremonies in October 1960, but was restrained by the fact that his presence would have made it difficult for the Queen of

¹⁴ Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, 216-221.

¹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, "Conversation with Prime Minister Nehru," 26 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53, (DDEL).

¹⁶ Memorandum of Conference with the president (and Prime Minister Macmillan), 27 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL).

¹⁷ See Telegram from the embassy to Cameroon to the Department of State, 13 November 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 240.

England not to attend; and by established practice, she did not attend such ceremonies.³³ He regarded Nigeria as the "most mature" African country, which should therefore take the lead in organizing an "African confederation."³⁴ Thus at their meeting in October 1960, Eisenhower told Nigeria's Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, "we put great interest and stock in Nigeria." For due emphasis, he assured Balewa that he was not "just talking; we will be depending on Nigeria heavily."³⁵

In weighing Eisenhower's assessments, it is relevant to bear in mind Robert Jervis' proposition that by the logic of images, political leaders "try to project desired images, whether accurate or not, and skeptically view the images projected by others."³⁶ In his memoir, Eisenhower recalled that in talking with African leaders in September 1960, his main aim was to advance his pet scheme for the formation of a pan-African grouping of nations. Olympio applauded the idea. By contrast, "This idea," according to Eisenhower, "seemed of little interest to Nkrumah, a leftist who was reputed to harbor an ambition to

³³ Memorandum of Conference with the president, 1 August 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 51 (DDEL).

³⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, "Conversation with Prime Minister Nehru," 26 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL). Eisenhower told British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that Nigeria "shows some signs of the possibility of exercising leadership in Africa. It is more populous and more advanced than the other countries." Memorandum of Conference with the president (and Prime Minister Macmillan), 28 September 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53 (DDEL).

³⁵ Memorandum of Conference with the president (and Prime Minister Balewa), 8 October 1960, White House Office, International Series, Box 1.

³⁶ Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (1970; New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 15.

expand the borders of Ghana by means other than voluntary federation."⁴⁴ At the particular point in time, the Congo -- rather than plans for a pan-African movement -- was uppermost in Nkrumah's mind. And on that, he was not in agreement with the U.S. It is thus understandable that Eisenhower did not have kind words for him.

Of Nigeria's Balewa, Eisenhower wrote: "Stately and solemn in his native garb, he spoke in a clipped and precise British accent....In particular I appreciated the fact that he seemed to harbor no strong resentment against the British. Rather, he backhandedly praised them for the conscientious job they had done in training their public servants in preparation for independence."⁴⁵ Eisenhower did not add, but must have even been more swayed, that Balewa told him that Nigerians "had great confidence in the President's ability to avoid the catastrophe of another war;" that "We know that the United States has no aggressive intentions, has never started a war, and has never had expansionist aims;" that he had rebuffed Soviet advances to open an embassy in Nigeria, assuring Eisenhower that "this example of Russian pressure was in itself an indication that one must not give in to them;" that he condemned Ghana and Guinea for accepting Soviet assistance and gave unsolicited assurances that Nigeria would not do same; that he had sought Eisenhower's advice on how Nigeria should vote in the UN on Chinese representation in the organization; and that Balewa invited him to visit Nigeria

⁴⁴ Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 582-583.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

because the people "would like to see the President, who had contributed so much to the peace of the world."⁴⁴

In seeing Nigeria as the cornerstone for any serious undertaking in Africa, Eisenhower was not alone in high American policymaking circles. There was a widespread feeling that given its (potential) human and material resources, Nigeria was a good bet. A study undertaken in 1959 for the U.S. Senate observed that "With more than 34 million inhabitants, it will be the most populous of African states....We can anticipate that Nigeria will have a leading position in the Conference of African States, in the United Nations African Caucusing Group, and in other all-African groupings by virtue of her size, her population, her economic potential, and the political experience of her leaders."⁴⁵ This perception -- greatly helped by the undisguised pro-Western orientation of the Nigerian leadership -- was an incentive for Washington's willingness to cultivate a "special relationship" with Nigeria. Thus the 1960 Senate study mission to Africa considered the assistance -- estimated at about \$13 million "over the next year" -- then due to Nigeria to be "an insufficient concentration of effort in a country as crucial as Nigeria. Because of its size and importance, what happens in

⁴⁴ Memorandum of Conference with the president (and Prime Minister Balewa), 8 October 1960, AWF, DDE Diary Series, Box 53; also in White House Office, International Series, Box 1; Memorandum of Conversation, "Call of Prime Minister Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria on the President," White House Office, International Series, Box 1 (all at DDEL). Also see "Memorandum of Conference With President Eisenhower," 8 October 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv, (1992), 228-232.

⁴⁵ *Africa: A Study Prepared at the Request of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate*, 58.

Nigeria will profoundly influence the course of events in all of West Africa....We therefore insist that it is imperative for the United States to move with the utmost speed to assist Nigeria."²⁰

However, in rounding up, it seems more profitable to discuss the nature of U.S. policy in Africa -- in its broad sense -- by the end of 1960. In 1950, the State Department became convinced, George McGhee says, of "the importance of developing an overall African policy in view of the 'malleability of the African people' and our influence with the colonial powers."²¹ As subsequently set, the major objective of U.S. policy in Africa was to influence the process of political change. This broad rubric included ensuring a pro-Western orientation by Africans, and therefore warding off countervailing influences such as "Communism" and nonalignment. In spite of these efforts at policy formulation, it was not until the end of July 1957 that the first NSC policy statement on Africa, NSC 5719, titled "U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960" was issued. However, more remarkable was that even with papers such as NSC 5719, there was really no U.S. policy for Africa all through the 1950s -- that is, if by "policy," one is thinking of a coherent plan *for action*. It is instructive that in the same 1957, when NSC 5719 was issued, the NSC embarked on a proposal for "A Study of Africa in Transition" which derived from the recognition that "since the end of World War II, Africa was the only major geopolitical area where the U.S. had not

²⁰ Report of Senators Frank Church, Gale W. McGhee, and Frank E. Moss, 29.

²¹ McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World*, 116.

systematically defined its national interests and formulated a coherent policy." Significantly, the proposal found that "The U.S. has reacted in Africa, here and there, to specific situations; but more often than not our [U.S.] national behavior has been characterized by acts of omission rather than commission." Against this background, it was emphasized that "The gathering momentum of forces at work in Africa, their interweaving with American interests in Europe, and to a lesser extent with our interests in the Middle East and Asia, and a growing awareness of the United States' stake in Africa make it likely as well as necessary that a coherent national policy for the region be developed in the reasonably near future."¹¹

By 1959, the "coherent national policy" was yet to materialize. Thus in February 1959, *The New York Times* carried a news analysis titled, "U.S. Still Seeking an African Policy." The article noted how Africa's "political awakening" had caught Washington off guard and compelled the State Department to search for "meaningful African policies." One anonymous official was quoted as saying that "The African demand for political independence and improved living standards has begun to erupt much sooner than the experts anticipated. We are still laying the foundation for policy and action."¹² Similarly, John Morrow, who was appointed as U.S. ambassador to Guinea in May 1959, reports that "Despite the briefings, and the conscientious reading of

¹¹ "Project Proposal for a Study of Africa in Transition," 22 July 1957, NSC 335th Meeting, Tab D (NA).

¹² Dana Adams Schmidt, "U.S. Still Seeking an African Policy," *The New York Times*, 2 February 1959.

available documents," in late June 1959, "I was finding it difficult to ascertain the current United States policy in Africa." He observed that

As I continued my talks with State Department officials and those in other governmental agencies, I began to sense that there was an unwritten policy on Africa which would make it extremely doubtful that the State Department would produce in the foreseeable future a blueprint for coping with the profound political, economic, and cultural changes taking place throughout Africa.

According to Morrow, what passed for policy was the view that the U.S. "should proceed with `deliberate speed' in any effort to aid the burgeoning African states -- particularly those states where European nations had long held major interests. Washington officials were hopeful that the ties, economic and otherwise, which formerly had bound African nations to the British or French, would be sustained in some fashion."

For clarity sake, there is no doubt there were position papers on Africa setting out U.S. objectives in Africa. The point is that what passed for policy was essentially designed to excuse the U.S. from any tangible involvement in Africa, whether on the transition to independence or on foreign aid. Observing that the U.S. still did not have an "African policy," the State Department's Office of African Affairs prepared a paper on "The United States in Africa South of the Sahara" in 1955. Its stated objective was to "seek to create a greater sphere of activity which is identifiably American." This, it said, "would be a matter of creating policy where none has ever existed." The

¹ Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea*, 23, 28.

paper's starting-point was that with the increasing tempo of African nationalism, the U.S. "may be constantly pressed to endorse either the European or African point of view." It was suggested that the way out of such a dilemma lay in "the development of a more independent policy in Africa." But at the same time, the paper acknowledged the difficulty in pursuing such an "independent policy": "We cannot adopt courses of action which will directly undermine the Metropolitan powers, for not only would this action ignore the constructive work they are doing, but it would arouse such resentment on their part as to weaken our general position. At the same time, we cannot afford to ignore the aspirations of the Africans, since our silence would be construed as opposition."¹ This way, the paper ended up, not with any "independent policy," but with what Richard L. Jones, the U.S. ambassador in Monrovia, described as "a holding-position policy aimed at preserving the status quo."²

In May 1959, Deputy Assistant Secretary James Penfield outlined the U.S. role in Africa's economic development. This too was cast in negative terms. He readily conceded that in all respects -- trade, administration, political and economic development, and education -- the "European colonial or former

¹ For the paper, "The United States in Africa South of the Sahara," 4 August 1955, see File 312 UN, Dakar consulate general, Classified General Records, 1947-55, Box 3 (Suitland). The paper was an enclosure to Department of State Instruction CA-1535, 23 August 1955, which was sent to U.S. diplomatic missions in Africa and Western Europe. It is also reproduced in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, xviii (1989), 13-22.

² 611.70/10-3155, Desp. from AmEmbassy, Monrovia to the Department of State, Washington, "Comments on the Paper on United States in Africa South of the Sahara," 31 October 1955 (NA).

colonial powers" had contributed "far more to Africa than we have" and were still "continuing their interest and contributions." Penfield then declared that "We regard this as natural, and we welcome it. We have no desire to interfere with this fruitful development of these new relationships, and in fact we are taking particular care to avoid slipping into such a position, which could only result in friction and rivalry contrary to the best interests of the new African states, of our European allies, and of ourselves."¹³

Even on blocking "Communist" penetration into (West) Africa, the same pattern was at play. For example, because of the manner in which it became independent and the petulant French reaction to it, Guinea was generally regarded as the African country most vulnerable to "Communist" penetration (at least, until the Congo crisis erupted in 1960). In October 1960, the JCS worried that Guinea was "increasingly following the path leading to domination by international communism."¹⁴ In spite of this apprehension, Washington spent more than a year negotiating with Guinea for agreements on technical assistance, investment guarantees, and friendship, commerce and navigation. That was in spite of the well known fact that the "Communists" had moved in without such agreements, established a radio station which carried Guinea's voice all over Africa, and built a four-lane highway linking the

¹³ James K. Penfield, "The Role of the United States in Africa: Our Interests and Operation," *Department of State Bulletin*, 8 June 1959, 842.

¹⁴ Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense Gates, "U.S. Interests in Ghana and Guinea," 17 October 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 161.

capital city (Conakry) with its airport.¹⁵ A State Department intelligence report acknowledged that "The Soviet Bloc has established a position of considerable influence in Guinea, and this former French West African territory may now have veered somewhat from its neutral course in foreign affairs." But Guinea was regarded, not as the sign of the future, but as an exception: it was believed that "Guinea is drawn toward the Communist states mainly by substantial Bloc economic aid." Above all, the report did not sense any indication that the "Communists" aimed at seizing power in Guinea. "Rather, Soviet activities in Guinea are part of a many-sided effort to erode Western positions and brighten the public image of the Communist system in African and the underdeveloped world generally." This was not especially discomfoting to Washington; instead it played down the "Communist" presence in Guinea: "Guinea," it was noted, "lies within a Western politico-military sphere of influence."

Given the foregoing, it was appropriate that a 1959 study prepared for the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations opened with the observation that "The United States has never had a positive, dynamic policy for Africa." The Program of African Studies at Northwestern University which prepared the report reached that conclusion on the basis of the overly negative, Eurocentric bias of U.S. dealings with Africa. As they put it,

¹⁵ Dana Adams Schmidt, "U.S. Studies Role of Reds in Africa: Experts Find Soviet Bloc's Economic Aid to Guinea is Pattern for Congo," *The New York Times*, 21 July 1960.

¹⁶ Intelligence Report (IR) No. 8251, "Pro-Soviet Neutralism in Guinea?," Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 12 April 1960 (NA).

"Until very recently, we have looked to the continuing control by friendly European powers as a guarantee of stability." The study also cited the "tendency to allow U.S. policy toward Africa to be formulated in the capitals of Europe," and recalled that it took the U.S. over a month to recognize the sovereignty of Guinea which "had come into being in accordance with procedures laid down by our French ally; and we showed extreme caution in granting aid requested of us by this new country." It recommended that "The United States must treat Africa as a major policy area, to be approached on a level of equality with other policy areas, particularly Europe, where African-American interests are involved." As a prerequisite, the report urged that the U.S. "must relinquish the negative, ad hoc approach" that had characterized its African policy.¹⁷

Senators Frank Church, Gale McGhee, and Frank Moss who undertook a study mission to Africa in November-December 1960. Like the Senate study a year earlier, their report was equally scathing in its criticism of U.S. policy in Africa. The senators found that "Without any adequate evidence of the truth of the equation -- one established under different world conditions -- we apparently cannot escape the habit of weighing our policies toward Africa against the chances that they would shatter our alliance system with Europe." Further, they observed that "the impression given by our activities in Africa as a whole is one of

¹⁷ *Africa: A Study Prepared at the Request of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 1.7, 2, 13, 12.

improvisation....We have been reacting rather than initiating."⁶⁶ This observation appropriately describes U.S. policy in Africa in the period, 1950-60. As chapters 3 and 4 show, both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were ever so anxious to avoid any responsibility in Africa -- that was left to the Western Europeans, especially Britain and France. Thus in August 1960, Acting Secretary of State Douglas Dillon reminded the NSC that "The U.S. position in Africa therefore was different from that in other underdeveloped areas in that we were supporting other industrial countries rather than assuming the main role."⁶⁷

Africans, and especially, their political leaders, had high expectations of the U.S. presence in Africa. Sekou Toure, for example, was optimistic that the U.S. was "better situated than most Western powers to adopt correct policies towards Africa because it has no colonies and it has a colonial past."⁶⁸ More specifically, some thought that relations with the U.S. would help them reduce their dependence on Western European neocolonialism, which they considered more pernicious. For example, Niger's Prime Minister Hamani Diori was anxious for American private investment "in order to break up the monopoly of French trading companies."⁶⁹ Above all, there was a widespread

⁶⁶ Report of Senators Frank Church, Gale W. McGhee, and Frank E. Moss, 4, 6.

⁶⁷ Discussion at the 456th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, 18 August, 1960, AWF, NSC Series, Box 13 (DDEL).

⁶⁸ 611.70B/6-3059, Incoming Airgram from AmEmbassy, Conakry to the secretary of state, 30 June 1959 (NA).

⁶⁹ 811.05145H/6-1659, Incoming Telegram from AmConsulate, Abidjan to the secretary of state, 16 June 1959 (NA).

expectation that the U.S. would lend its weight to the cause of self-determination in Africa. One can argue that these expectations underestimated the geopolitical considerations which influenced policymaking in Washington. Nonetheless, by opting for a rather symbolic role and relying on the Europeans as its proxies in Africa, the U.S. was able to concentrate its resources on more strategically important "Third World" regions, especially, Asia and the Middle East. But that meant the disappointment of the expectation that the emergence of the U.S. as a superpower would provide Africans a negotiating space, distinct from the Western European, in the world system. Perhaps, John F. Kennedy sensed the depth of this disappointment by the end of 1960. In his presidential campaign speeches, he made capital out of the absence of a policy for Africa. On the whole, he is said to have made 479 references to Africa during the campaign, emphasizing that "we have lost ground in Africa because we neglected and ignored the needs and aspirations of the African people."¹²

¹² Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, 554. Richard Mahoney has pointed out that much of this was sheer political opportunism. Kennedy's "Senate record on liberal issues," he says "was weak and, in the case of civil rights, particularly so." Set in this context, "Kennedy's handling of the African issue in the 1960 campaign -- his pitch to the liberal and black vote -- was a minor classic in political exploitation in foreign policy." Mahoney therefore dismisses that constant references to relations with Africa as strategy to woo "American blacks without alienating Southern whites." See his *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, 30-31.

Hegemony in the Outermost Periphery

This study has explored the subtleties which shaped U.S. policy in Africa. As the preceding chapters have shown, there was in Washington, a strong conviction in America's mission of global leadership; an acknowledgement of Western Europe's paramountcy in U.S. diplomacy; a commitment to a global Open Door, including the conviction that access to "Third World's" raw materials was a strategic "national security" imperative. Anti-Sovietism was, of course, an important consideration too -- but not as important as popularly believed. Elsewhere -- whether in Western Europe, Asia or the Middle East -- the prospects and fear of Soviet penetration induced a more active and direct U.S. involvement. By contrast, all through the 1950s, Washington tried very hard to keep its involvement in Africa to the barest minimum.

No doubt, Washington's minimalism was predicated on the knowledge that the European powers, especially Britain and France, still had considerable political, economic and social leverage in Africa. It was thus convenient for the U.S. to rely on this European influence as the "stabilizing" force in Africa.

¹ For example, see Charles C. Alexander, *Holding the Line: The Eisenhower Era, 1952-1961* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1975), 5-7. Also see Richard A. Melanson, "The Foundations of Eisenhower's Foreign Policy: Continuity, Community, and Consensus," in Richard A. Melanson and David Mayers (ed), *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 50. On Dulles, see Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in American During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 22; Rolf Steininger, "John Foster Dulles, the European Community, and the German Question," in Richard H. Immerman (ed), *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton University Press, 1990), 79; Ronald W. Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (New York: The Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1982), esp. 214-5, 299-307.

And this implicitly ruled out alienating those powers or undermining their position in Africa in any real sense. As one policy paper put it, a "major U.S. interest" in Africa was to "Support the colonial powers' presence in the area and of their responsibility for the security, political and material progress of the African peoples, and the latter's adherence to the free world."⁴⁴ The U.S. desired that the Europeans should continue with this stabilizing role even after independence. At the April 1959 tripartite (Britain-France-U.S.) talks on Africa, the U.S. delegation surveyed the political developments in Africa at the time, and assured the Europeans that Washington considered it "essential" that the changes should take place "in an orderly manner and in the closest cooperation with the Western powers. Europe and Africa are complementary, and the closest ties must be preserved after the colonial period has passed." The Europeans were further assured that the U.S. regarded them as "best equipped" for sustaining Western influence in Africa, and therefore that Washington was "most anxious to work in the closest cooperation with the former administering powers of the newly independent areas."⁴⁵

This strategy of Washington entrusting the Western initiative in the periphery to the Europeans and settling for a supporting role was not exclusive to Africa: it was a strategy

⁴⁴ Paper prepared by the NSC staff for the NSC Planning Board, "Africa: Major U.S. Interests," *FRUS, 1952-1954*, x (1983), 102. (The paper was undated, but could have been written in March/April 1954: see *ibid.*, 101, n. 1.)

⁴⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, "First Tripartite Talks on Africa," 16 April 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, xiv (1992), 47.

applied when and where America's "national security" interests were not in any danger. A 1949 CIA report confessed that "Everywhere in the world outside the Western Hemisphere and Northeast Asia, British power is an essential component in the present structure of U.S. security....In consequence the United States has counted on the British, sometimes pursuant to formal agreement but more generally by implication, to assume primary affairs in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and most of Africa."⁴ There was thus what H.W. Brands has called America's "Commonwealth strategy" -- relying on the Commonwealth framework -- as the mechanism to safeguard South Asia in the period 1947 to 1950. The "Commonwealth strategy" sprang from the realization that "a direct assumption of responsibility for the securing of India and Pakistan was entirely out of the question" at a time when the American public was just getting accustomed to the idea of an American commitment to Europe. In the circumstance,

American officials sought to pursue a policy of indirect influence. The United States would work through collaborators, through agents who would extend the American reach in South Asia beyond the limits set by American resources and American domestic politics. This was where the Commonwealth -- Britain especially, but also Canada, Australia and others -- could be persuaded to accept continued responsibility for the security of the subcontinent.

Brands shows that Washington held on to the strategy, even with Mao Tse-tung's accession in China in late 1949; it was the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 that finally forced America to assume direct responsibility for securing its

⁴ CIA, "U.S. Security and the British Dollar Problem," ORE 79-49, 31 August 1949, PSF, Intelligence File, Box 257 (HSTL).

"national security" in the region.⁴⁷ Like Brands, Robert McMahon also found that during the same period, Washington opted to defer to "Britain's leadership" in the region. In McMahon's words, "Citing Britain's historic ties to South Asia and the continuing connection through the British Commonwealth, every major American policy formulation of the late 1940s advised that the United States follow Great Britain's lead on all substantive matters relating to the Indian subcontinent."⁴⁸

This pattern of relying on Europeans to enhance the global projection of U.S. power is no contradiction of hegemonic power relations. "A ruling group is hegemonic," Alan Cafruny says, "because it is capable of universalizing its interests, albeit not without certain limitations and contradictions."⁴⁹ More explicitly, Robert Cox takes it as axiomatic that "hegemony, though firmly established at the center of the world order, wears thin in its periphery."⁵⁰ In this regard, one needs to recall that from the onset Washington did not aim at direct interventionism in the UDCs, certainly not to the degree it did in Western Europe via the Marshall Plan and its derivatives. For Africa in particular, Kolko argues that "Despite its Open Door

⁴⁷ H.W. Brands, "India and Pakistan in American Strategic Planning, 1947-54: The Commonwealth as Collaborator," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xv, 1 (October 1986).

⁴⁸ Robert McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 18-19.

⁴⁹ Cafruny, "A Gramscian Concept of Declining Hegemony: Stages of U.S. Power and the Evolution of International Economic Relations," 104.

⁵⁰ Cox, *Production, Power and World Order*, 150.

objectives, which were irreconcilable with such imperialist economic relations," the dominant U.S. concern in the late 1940s and early 1950s "was the restoration of a sound European economy which would then be strong enough and confident enough to cooperate with the larger American design for an integrated world economic order."¹¹

As noted in chapter 2, Gramsci taught that hegemony embodies an ideological construct of ruling class legitimization. At the same time, he emphasized that one essential prerequisite for the establishment of such an order is for the dominant class to relinquish force and authoritarianism and embrace the politics of alliances and co-optation as its method of governance. The other prerequisite is that it must be prepared to make some concessions to the subaltern classes. In Gramsci's words, "The fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed -- in other words, that the leading group should make sacrifices of an eco-corporate kind."¹² The U.S. experience furnishes considerable evidence that such concessions could also include delegating some (political) responsibility to the leading cadres of those being incorporated into the hegemonic order.

For the U.S., there were a number of compelling reasons why it had to make such concessions to the Europeans. As shown in the earlier chapters, the Western European powers -- and especially,

¹¹ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 112.

¹² Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 161.

France -- were not totally reconciled to playing second fiddle in world affairs in the aftermath of World War II. According to D. Cameron Watt:

whatever the underlying realities of power, Britain and France started from the assumption that their own pre-war spheres would be maintained or restored to them. Britain still believed in its destiny in the Empire, in the Middle East, in the Eastern Mediterranean and initially in Germany itself. France, in the person of de Gaulle, had spent most of the war years attempting to demonstrate total independence, and had every intention of asserting an equal right to impose a repressive settlement on Germany as well as to repossess its patrimony in Africa, Indo-China and the Middle East. These ambitions did not fit in very easily to a framework of American tutelage or dominance.³³

At the least, Washington's calculation that an alliance with Western Europe was a primary condition for the kind of global balance of power which would be in harmony with its "national security" meant that it could only have ignored these geostrategic realities to its own peril. Given the circumstances, it was also imperative and prudent that at several levels, some tangible concession be made to the Europeans, and responsibility over their spheres of influence counted for much in this regard. Second, and this is related to the issue just raised, even as they aspired to the universalization of their power and interests, American leaders were acutely aware that while their country was the world's preeminent power, it was far from being an omnipotent power. This meant that although Washington considered that its domestic stability and prosperity hinged on the stability of every other unit of the international system,

³³ D. Cameron Watt, "Perceptions of the United States in Europe, 1945-83," in L. Freedman (ed), *The Troubled Alliance: Atlantic Relations in the 1980s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 29-30.

there was at the same time the realization that it lacked the wherewithal to singlehandedly police all the world. The CIA and JCS rankings -- like those of George Kennan¹¹ -- differentiating between areas of vital and peripheral importance to America's national security, were informed by this awareness of the limits of America's abilities to project its preeminent power worldwide. There was thus an early and ready recognition of the need to assign supervisory roles over most of the periphery to the core powers. When in April 1943, Roosevelt was asked what would replace Article X of the League of Nations Covenant -- to maintain world peace -- he replied that the U.S. and China "would police Asia, Africa would be stabilized by Britain and Brazil, and Europe by Britain and Russia."¹² The substance of this idea was made quite real by the perennial unwillingness of Congress to provide the financial support required for an activist, internationalist foreign policy. In the circumstance, the delegation of supervisory responsibility to the Europeans over places such as Africa made perfect sense: Washington left the chief partners in its world system to produce the public good of international stability in the areas where they were best equipped to do so. That was a highly cost-saving division of labor based on comparative advantage within the hegemonic system.

¹¹ Report by the Policy Planning Staff, "Résumé of World Situation," 6 November 1947, *FRUS, 1947, i* (1973), 772-77. Also see Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 58-60.

¹² LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina: 1942-45," 1280.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

"MANUSCRIPTS don't burn," says a character in Mikhail Bulgakov's classic Russian novel, *The Master and Margarita*. Unfortunately, the burning of manuscripts is a commonplace in reality. Worse still, shredders are fast becoming part of the normal office equipment. Deliberate destruction of official documents -- whether by burning or shredding -- is, of course, an age-old practice, which has since caught on with the Washington foreign policy establishment. For example, a 1950 State Department circular directed all American diplomatic and consular offices to check their files of "country policy statements" and destroy "in accordance with security regulations all copies bearing a date of issue earlier than 1948."¹ "National security" provides the ready justification for this kind of practice. It is similarly invoked to "classify" documents -- that is, to deny public access to documents; and to "sanitize" some which have been declassified. There are certainly clear "national security" grounds for "classifying" (and even destroying) some documents. The fact of the matter, however, is that in this -- as in other areas -- "national security" has been open to much abuse. The result is that, in many cases, the criteria for "classifying documents" defy all logic. In particular, I do not understand why a number of materials relating to U.S. policy in Africa in the 1950s² are still "classified," while those on Vietnam in 1958-63;

¹ Circular Airgram 405, 6 April 1950, File 320, Accra consulate, Classified General Records, 1950-52, Box 5 (Suitland).

² Examples are the following State Department materials: Lot 56 D271, Lot 56 D418, Records of the Office of African Affairs, 1944-52;

Cuba, 1958-60; Korea, 1955-59; and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-60 are accessible.

Indeed, manuscripts do "burn," not only literally, but also figuratively (through shredding, "classifying" and "sanitizing" documents). Whichever form it takes, the "burning" of manuscripts ensures that the historian's sources are further fragmented. The question as to whether, in the circumstance, history is still worth practicing is a very old one. Quite distinct from an exact replication of what had happened, historians aim at its intelligible reconstruction. For this purpose, the notion that the writing of the history of any given subject should await the availability of all the relevant sources has never been a viable writ; to insist otherwise will mean that no history will ever be written.

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 Lot 62 D205, Lot 62, D417, Lot 62 D421, Lot 64 D353, Lot 64 D358 all Records of the Bureau of African Affairs, 1958-59;
 Lot 59/60 D257, Records of the Chief of the Division of Dependent Area Affairs (Benjamin Gerig), 1948-58;
 Lot 60 D512, Lot 62 D182, Records of the Office of Dependent Area Affairs, 1944-61;
 Lot 62 D255, Records of the Office of Dependent Area Affairs, 1953-59; and
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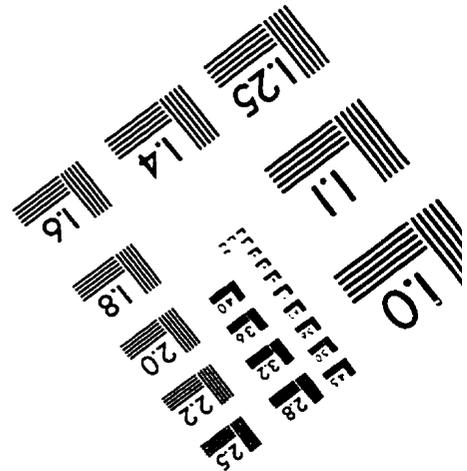
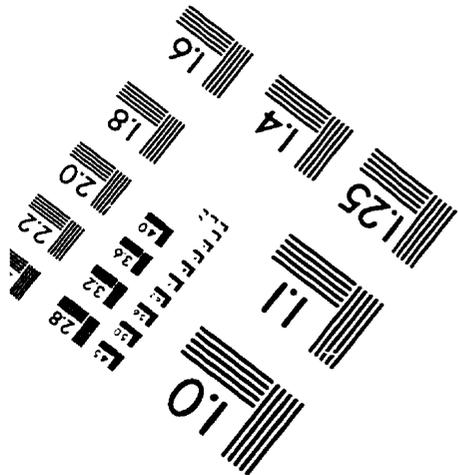
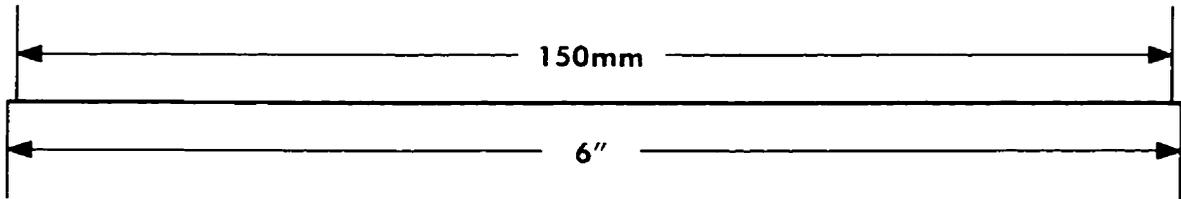
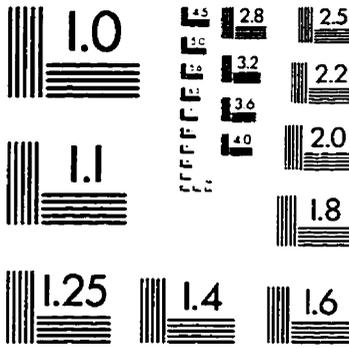
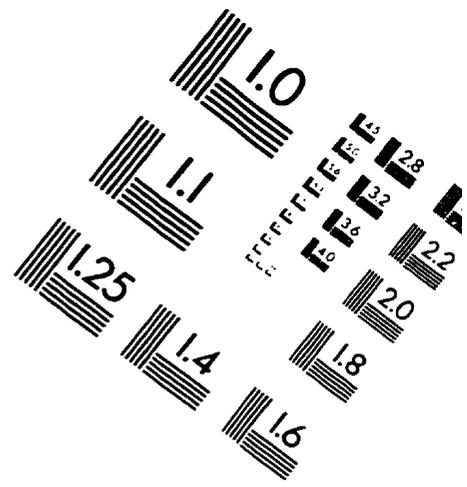
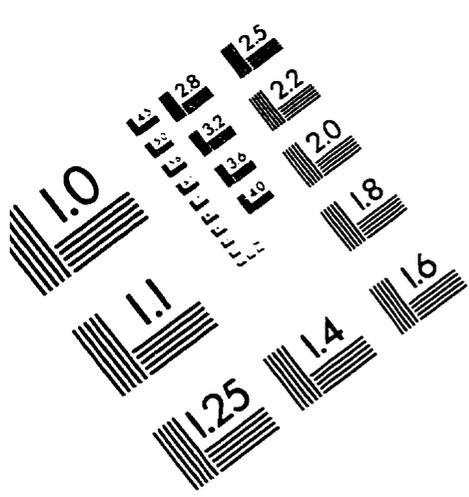
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