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Political Parties and International Relations: The United States and the Decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa

RECENT STUDIES OF the Korean War, international oil policy, and the Marshall Plan, considering the question whether or not domestic politics affect international relations, show that, in fact, they do.¹ Diplomatic historians, being largely 'corporatists', differ on the precise roles taken by political parties and economic pressure groups in the making of foreign policy, but they now generally agree on the basic fact of their interrelation. Political scientists, being largely 'realists', remain unconvinced. In the view of Hans Morgenthau, E. H. Carr, Stephen Krasner, and Kenneth Waltz, for example, foreign policy remains a special preserve, governed by the national interest.²

Studies of United States-African relations principally fall in the realist camp, and they assume that policy towards Africa did not change, regardless of which party was in the White House. Thomas Noer claims: 'There was a *basic continuity* in goals and assumptions throughout 1948-1968 ... anticommunism, and the avoidance of violent conflict remained the overriding concerns ... the prevailing view of Africa as an arena of US-Soviet rivalry remained consistent.'³ Most scholars agree with Noer, although some add anti-colonialism and

¹ Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton, 1990); Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan* (Cambridge, 1987); David S. Painter, *Oil and the American Century* (Baltimore, 1986).

² See John Lewis Gaddis, 'The Corporatist Synthesis: A Skeptical View' and Michael J. Hogan, 'Corporatism: A Positive Appraisal', both in *Diplomatic History*, x (1986), 357-72. Note that corporatist studies typically emphasize the relative *unity* of interest, among both government and private groups, in the foreign-policy realm. However, some studies in the corporatist tradition (such as Cumings) also emphasize cleavages among various interests and how such cleavages can influence diplomacy. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* (New York, 1966); E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (New York, 1964); Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest* (Princeton, 1978); Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Relations* (Reading, MA, 1979). See also William J. Dixon and Stephen M. Gaarder, 'Presidential Succession and the Cold War: An Analysis of Soviet-American Relations, 1948-1988', *Journal of Politics*, liv (1992), 156-75.

³ Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia, MO, 1985), 256. Emphasis added.

racism as determinants.¹ In fact, however, between 1938 and 1963, US policy towards Africa changed substantially, as foreign policy meshed with domestic political debate.

The Democrats have in general been the party of anti-colonialism. The administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and even, if more ambiguously, Harry S. Truman, opposed European colonialism in Africa; the Kennedy administration also opposed European efforts to forge neo-colonial ties with former colonies. The Republicans, on the other hand, either ignored Africa altogether, or favoured colonial and neo-colonial rule. That the two parties took such different approaches to Africa decisively affected US foreign policy.

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Until Roosevelt's presidency, the United States had no significant interest in sub-Saharan Africa, except for Liberia, traditionally a US sphere of influence. This attitude began to change during the New Deal, when in 1938 the state department established a desk to monitor African developments.² With the coming of the Second World War, US interest increased considerably: extensive use was made of West African ports as staging areas for the invasion of North Africa; a US military mission, led by an admiral, was based at Dakar; and large numbers of US personnel were sent to British West Africa to build airfields and help to supply the Allied troops in the Middle East and the Western Desert.³

During this period, officials often expressed hostility towards European colonialism, as did the US popular press and the Council on Foreign Relations.⁴ As the subject gained popularity, the Republicans joined in. In 1942, Wendell Wilkie made speeches against colonial

¹ For anti-Communism, see Zaki Laidi, *The Great Powers and Africa* (Chicago, 1990); Marc Aicardi de Saint-Paul, *La Politique Africaine des États-Unis* (Paris, 1984); Madeleine Kalb, *The Congo Cables* (New York, 1982); Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* (Ithaca, NY, 1974). For anti-colonialism and racism, see Edward H. McKinley, *The Lure of Africa* (Indianapolis, 1974); Henry Jackson, *From the Congo to Soweto* (New York, 1982); Tony Smith, *The Pattern of Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1981).

² Henry Serrano Villard, *Affairs at State* (New York, 1965), 64-5; Emily S. Rosenberg, 'The Invisible Protectorate: The United States, Liberia, and the Evolution of Neocolonialism, 1909-40', *Diplomatic History*, ix (1985), 191-214.

³ Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (London, 1968), 491; W. Glassford to J. C. Dunn, 16 Nov., 1943, U[nited] S[tates] N[at]ional A[rchives, Record Group 59,] S[tate] D[epartment] D[ecimal] F[ile] no. 851T.01/70; John Kent, *The Internationalization of Colonialism* (Oxford, 1992), 87-9.

⁴ Discussion group report no. E-B71, 'The United States and the Colonial Problem', 24 June 1944; report no. P-B45, 'Dependent Areas in the Postwar World', 3 Aug., 1942, both from C[ouncil on] F[oreign] R[elations] A[rchives,] S[tudies in the] A[merican] I[nterests in the] W[ar] and the] P[ea]ce reports.

rule, and even the far-right isolationist wing of the party occasionally used anti-colonialism as a vehicle for expressing hostility towards Europe, especially Great Britain. Anti-colonial sentiment was especially marked within the Roosevelt administration, however, and it began with the president. In a speech in 1944, Roosevelt remarked: 'Last year I went to a place called Gambia in Africa ... 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 just plain exploitation of those people.'¹

Many scholars, for example Marc Aicardi,² have dismissed US anti-colonialism as mere rhetoric, but anti-colonial attitudes were expressed not only in public, but also in classified documents. The apparent abuses of the colonial system, especially the practice of forced labour, were targets of criticism. As early as 1941, an intelligence report noted 'the tradition of French, Belgian, and British exploitation' in Africa. Similarly, a state department document remarked in 1945 on 'the widespread exploitation of the Belgian Congo by Belgian cartels ... the denial of the population of the Belgian Congo, both Belgians and indigenous negroes, of any voice in the administration of this territory, [and] the lack of any indication of a genuine desire to give more than elementary education to the population.'³

Whether or not these reports provide an accurate description of European colonialism, they do suggest a sufficiently anti-colonialist tenor to US policy to cause friction between the Allies, especially with regard to the Atlantic Charter of 1941. Although the charter called for national self-determination for all states, Great Britain and the United States differed on how to apply it. For the British, the charter was to apply to areas liberated from the Axis powers, but the United States wanted also to apply it to the British colonies. When pressed at a news conference, Roosevelt stated that his administration 'had made it perfectly clear that we believed that the Atlantic Charter applied to all humanity. I think that's a matter of record.'⁴ There were other points of contention. In 1943, the state department promulgated a 'Draft Declaration by the United Nations on National Independence', approved by the secretary of state, Cordell Hull, stipulating 'that

¹ Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1944-45* (New York, 1950), 68. See also, for example, the speech by Nevada Senator George W. Malone, 'Colonial Slavery', *Congressional Record*, 28 June 1950, 9338-41.

² Aicardi, *La Politique Africaine*, 331.

³ Memos from US consulate, Leopoldville, 26 Apr. 1945, USNA SDDF no. 855A.00/4-2645 and 9 Nov. 1945, no. 855A.00/11-945; intelligence report, 'Africa and the USA', 11 Dec. 1941, USNA, US Government [agency not identified], Research and Analysis report no. 826.

⁴ Roosevelt, *Public Papers*, 437.

colonial peoples should be granted progressive measures of self-government and should be given full independence in accordance with a fixed time schedule'.¹

Europeans, who resented and strenuously resisted US anti-colonialism, were nevertheless persuaded by the United States to introduce political reforms and expand existing programmes aimed at the improvement of health care, education, economic development, and general standards of living for the indigenous populations. At the same time, they showed their resentment of increasingly aggressive US business initiatives in Africa, which sometimes worked hand-in-hand with the state department. US oil, mining, shipping, and agricultural interests, desperate for new markets during the Depression, and supported by the government, were beginning to intrude on what had traditionally been a European sphere of influence.²

The result was continued friction. Americans thought that European shipping companies 'monopolized the service between Europe and Africa' and 'blandly discriminated against American freight', and they complained of discrimination against US commercial interests in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Kenya, and Tanganyika.³ From East Africa, a US diplomat noted: 'There is no doubt in my mind the territory [Tanganyika] since 1920 has been administered solely and strictly in the interests of Britain.' A long detailed list of alleged British acts of commercial trade discrimination was issued, including aviation and shipping.⁴

Oil was a particular bone of contention. Throughout the war, Socony-Vacuum Oil (later Mobil) aggressively sought new concessions in Africa, in conflict with established European interests. Although Great Britain reportedly blocked Socony-Vacuum's efforts in the Gold Coast and Nigeria,⁵ in 1942 the French colonial authorities allowed

1 Summarized in 'Memorandum for the President', 13 Jan. 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945*, i. 19, 21. There is no record indicating whether this draft was actually approved in final form.

2 US investors held large shares in the Rhodesian Selection Trust, beginning in 1930. Other early US investors in Africa included Newmont Mining and the Ryan-Guggenheim investment group: Greg Lanning, *Africa Undermined* (New York: 1979), 293-6; Paul McStallworth, 'The United States and the Congo Question, 1884-1914', Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State (1954), 258.

3 McKinley, *Lure of Africa*, 95; memo, US consulate, Nairobi, 20 Dec. 1939, *FRUS, 1939*, ii. 323-4; *aide-mémoire*, US Embassy, London, 16 Jan., 1940, *FRUS, 1940*, iii. 119-20; Office Memo, 'Importation of Schenley Gin to Nigeria and the Gold Coast', 6 Jan., 1947, USNA [State Department] Office of African Affairs, box no. 7.

4 Memo, US consulate, Nairobi, 2 Sept. 1946, USNA SDDF no. 862S.01/9-246. This document actually came from the Truman era, but it expresses the sentiments of the New Deal foreign policy towards Africa. See also telegram from Sumner Welles, 21 Nov. 1939, *FRUS, 1940*, iii. 123-4.

5 Memo from the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, 30 Dec. 1942, USNA SDDF no. 880.6363/5.

the US Air Transport Command to lease oil installations at Pointe-Noire on the Atlantic coast. Socony-Vacuum then demanded the right to operate the installations after the war and, when the French objected, turned to the US government for support. A contemporary state department document conceded: 'the exact relationship of the United States Government and the Socony Vacuum Oil Company in the execution of leases abroad and the construction of petroleum installations may be the object of severe political criticism in post-war investigations of the conduct of the war.'¹

In fact, many Europeans suspected that US anti-colonialism masked US expansionism. Anthony Eden in his memoirs writes: '[Roosevelt] hoped that former colonial territories, once free of their [European] masters, would become politically and economically dependent upon the United States.' In the opinion of Sir Sydney Caine, 'the Americans themselves are not really interested only in the welfare of Colonial peoples but also in the exploitation of natural resources in colonial territories.'²

Documents from US archives tend to corroborate these assessments. One of the state department's leading Africa specialists, Perry North Jester, who persistently promoted US commercial expansion into Africa, strongly supported the Atlantic Charter and its call for national self-determination on economic grounds – 'the economic objectives of the Atlantic Charter, i.e. equal access and equal opportunity' and 'the fullest possible application ... of the economic principles of the Atlantic Charter to the African colonies'. Jester wished, for example, to ensure that anti-American sentiment in the Belgian Congo should not jeopardize 'the future of our economic interests in that area'.³

It is often argued, most famously by William Appleman Williams, that the United States had all along favoured an 'open door' policy only to further US trade and investment.⁴ This was certainly Jester's view of its role. He argued in 1943:

Overseas trade 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

¹ Memo, 'Socony-Vacuum's Interests in Installations at Pointe Noire', 20 Nov. 1942, USNA SDDF no. 855A.6363/10-2842. Socony-Vacuum did eventually gain concessions in Equatorial Africa, despite French hostility. See 'French Effort in Tropical Africa', *Petroleum Press Service*, Feb. 1960, 61.

² Anthony Eden, *The Reckoning* (Boston, 1965), 593; Sir Sydney Caine quoted in Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay* (New York, 1978), 402.

³ Memos by Jester, 20 Feb., 8 Mar. 1943, USNA SDDF no. 851T.01/16-1/2; memo from Jester, 6 Apr. 1945, USNA SDDF no. 855A.00/2-2345.

⁴ William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York, 1962).

we can produce more, export more, and help by our overseas trade to all lands to raise the standard of living of backward people so that they may absorb more and more of the products of American agriculture and industry ... We have therefore the most vital national interest in this matter. In my opinion it is not sufficient that there be a condition of joint world leadership by Great Britain and the United States ... [The United States cannot tolerate] agreements which would relegate *in any area of the world* American influence ... to a secondary position.¹

Another state department Africa specialist, Henry S. Villard, added: 'Never before has the word *Africa* meant so much to the people of the United States ... [T]rade is bound to grow over the years. We would not be Americans if we were not interested in that.' Similar views were expressed in documents from the Army's Office of Strategic Services, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the memoirs of George Ball, then a young aide to the Lend-Lease programme.² All implied that anti-colonialism and expansion of trade went hand in hand.

Despite Roosevelt's anti-colonialism, however, Africa was never a central concern. Roosevelt wished to expand US interests there only because he wished to expand them everywhere. When it became clear the United States would have to choose between anti-colonialism and the Atlantic Alliance, the emerging threat of post-war conflict with the Soviet Union won out. At Yalta in 1945, Roosevelt no longer insisted that the Atlantic Charter be applied to all colonies, only to those liberated from the Axis powers or previously governed under a League of Nations mandate.³

Roosevelt did not completely drop his anti-colonial stance; after Yalta, it was less pronounced than before, but the United States continued to oppose British 'imperial preference'.⁴ In the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, the US delegation, in opposition to the British, supported strong anti-monopoly, free-trade provisions for the governance of Trust territories, and specific protections for the rights of indigenous populations. With the onset of the cold war during the Truman administration, however, official interest in Africa

¹ Memo by Jester, 13 Sept. 1943, USNA SDDF no. 880.00/9-1343. Emphasis added.

² Henry S. Villard, 'American Relations with Africa', *Department of State Bulletin*, 21 Aug. 1943; 'Africa and the USA', 11 Dec. 1941, USNA, US Government [agency not identified], Research and Analysis report no. 826; Council on Foreign Relations, report no. E-B71, 24 June 1944, CFR SAIWP; George Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern* (New York, 1982), 31.

³ Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson, 'The United States and the Liquidation of the British Empire in Tropical Africa, 1941-1951', in *The Transfer of Power in Africa*, ed. Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis (New Haven, 1982), 40-1.

⁴ Fred Block, *The Origins of International Economic Disorder* (Berkeley, 1977), 65.

ebbed still further, and after 1945 anti-colonialism with its timetable for independence was little heard of. A Council on Foreign Relations report averred: 'Up to 1945, at least, the United States maintained a position all its own. At present [1949] many people associate this country with the other colonial powers.'¹

Anti-colonialism did not disappear entirely even under Truman. In a campaign speech in 1948, he made a qualified appeal for 'self-government' in Asia and Africa, and a state department telegram in 1950 noted that the 'US has sought to maintain its traditional position of encouraging the development of dependent peoples toward self-government or independence'. European delegations to the United Nations, meanwhile, 'resented bitterly' the US position on colonialism, which was especially critical of French rule in Africa. In 1950, a meeting of US and French officials on colonialism remained 'far apart' on the question, according to the memoirs of a former state department official, George C. McGhee.²

For the most part, however, the Truman state department tended to tolerate colonialism in Africa to the point, in some instances, of open support. The director of the Office of African Affairs noted in 1951: '[A]nticolonial feeling in certain African territories constitutes a formidable problem for the Free World ... It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that the Colonial Governments exert efforts greater than heretofore to weld a loyal link between the African peoples and themselves. Our own position in this vitally important matter, stemming from our leadership role in the Free World, must be one of encouragement.' Elsewhere, a state department official stated that Africa 'was the responsibility of the European "metropolitan" powers'.³

Official anti-colonialism thus diminished after the death of Roosevelt because Truman needed a military and political alliance with Europe to support the United States in its confrontation with the Soviet Union. The European economies, which the United States wished to rebuild, in turn, needed the support of their colonies, whose

¹ Discussion meeting report, 20 Apr. 1949, CFR, groups series, vol. xxxvi, 1949/50-1950/51, p. 12. See also Peter Duigan and L. H. Gann, *The United States and Africa* (London, 1984), 285; Dean Acheson to Benjamin Gerig, 7 June 1946; memo of conversation by Alger Hiss, 16 Oct. 1946; Dean Acheson to Senator Austin, 8 Nov. 1946, *FRUS*, 1946, i. 595-60, 644-6, 677-8.

² Noer, *Cold War*, 22; memo, US consulate, Leopoldville, 18 Feb. 1950, USNA SDDF no. 511.55A21/1-2750. Also, the US delegation to the United Nations Trusteeship Council occasionally adopted mildly anti-colonial stances: see group meeting report, 17 Nov. 1949, p. 4, CFR, groups series, vol. xxxvi, 1949/50-1950/51; George C. McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World* (New York, 1983), 221.

³ Angus Ward to E. H. Bougerie, 23 Apr. 1951, USNA SDDF no. 661.70/4 2351; McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World*, 114.

exports of raw materials earned them dollars. The drain on the colonies' foreign exchange was regarded as a necessary evil.¹

Naturally, tensions between colonial and US commercial interests did not disappear. Some US companies were allowed to invest in Africa; others were not.² State department reports show that US companies were restricted in French Equatorial Africa with respect to petroleum, in British East Africa with respect to shipping, and in British West Africa with respect to cocoa. When US businessmen complained that the Europeans were as usual blocking the competition, US officials paid little attention; the US not only tolerated colonialism, but also provided it with direct financial support. By early 1951, over \$400 million in Marshall Plan aid had been spent by the British, French, Belgian, and Portuguese empires in Africa, in addition to foreign aid under the Point Four programme.³

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If anti-colonialism diminished under Truman, it disappeared under General Dwight David Eisenhower, whose papers contain remarkably little on Africa. The number of US diplomats stationed in Africa had declined by 1953 from 207 to 129, and Eisenhower appeared ready to buttress the European position. State department officials frequently praised the French, British, and Belgian colonial administrations in Africa and warned against the dangers of 'premature independence'.⁴

Many US policy-makers believed that colonial rule would continue in Africa long into the future. A 1953 report from the Council on Foreign Relations noted: 'the dominant power group [in East Africa] is the European. This situation will remain for a long, long time unless

1 Allister E. Hinds, 'Sterling and Imperial Policy, 1945-51', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xv (1987), 148-69; discussion group memo, 23 Dec. 1949, esp. pp. 5, 13, CFR, groups series, vol. xxxvi, 1949/50-1950/51.

2 Belgium, in particular, followed a policy of permitting selected US companies (especially ones with political connections) to invest in the Congo. Nevertheless, the Belgians still controlled 90% of investments in the Congo in 1955, and they seem to have restricted the activities of many US investors. See David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and US Policy in the Congo Crisis* (Chicago, 1991), 66-9.

3 US consulate, Dakar, 7 Aug. 1948; foreign service dispatch, Dakar, 10 Nov., 1949, USNA SDDF no. 851T.6363/8-748, 12-149; US consulate, Nairobi, 30 Sept. 1946, USNA SDDF no. 862S.01/9-3046; memo, US embassy, London, 1 July 1947, USNA SDDF no. 880.85/6-2647; SDOAA memo, 6 Mar. 1947; SDOAA memo of conversation, 11 Aug. 1947, USNA, box 7; discussion meeting report, 3 Apr. 1951, p. 3, CFR, groups series, vol. xxxvi, 1949/50-1950/51. Note that these figures are for all of Africa, not just sub-Saharan Africa.

4 See the following from *Department of State Bulletin*: 'Progress toward Self Rule in African Territories', 22 Feb. 1954; 'Progress in the Camerouns', 'Administration of Tanganyika', 1 Mar. 1954; 'Progress toward Self Government in the Camerouns', 21 Feb. 1955; 'Political Progress in Togoland', 14 Mar. 1955; 'The Racial Problem in Tanganyika', 25 Apr. 1955; Russell Warren Howe, *Along the Afric Shore* (New York, 1975), 123.

there is a catastrophe.' The following year the Council predicted that 'Sierra Leone or French West Africa, for example, are not now seeking independence and will likely not do so for some 15 to 20 years.'¹ In fact, Sierra Leone would become independent in 1961, and most of French West Africa in 1960. When a National Intelligence Estimate correctly predicted in 1956 the rapid movement towards independence in British and French Africa, it still assumed that the Belgian colonies would remain dependent for a much longer period, and neither suggested ways in which to court nationalist leaders in Africa nor devised a plan for dealing with independent African states. As late as 1958, a state department report on the Belgian Congo noted: 'At present, there is nothing to indicate that the Belgians will be forced out soon.'² Therefore, while France and Great Britain increasingly perceived their African colonies to be financial burdens blocking modernization at home, and sub-Saharan Africa began to achieve independence – Sudan in 1956 and Ghana in 1957 were quickly followed by Guinea in 1958 and seventeen other states in 1960 – one US official admitted: 'we have, today, relatively little direct association with Africans, or knowledge of what they are thinking which is a serious and unnecessary handicap.'³

The US government began to take more interest in Africa in response to decolonization, rather than as a supporter of it. In 1956, in 'recognition of the increasing importance of Africa in world affairs', the state department had created the new position of deputy assistant secretary for African affairs and, two years later, created the bureau of African affairs headed by a full assistant secretary. The secretary of state himself, John Foster Dulles, the vice-president, Richard M. Nixon, and the ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge, all urged cabinet members to pay official visits to Africa to make the acquaintance of African leaders. Nixon toured Africa himself in 1957 and, on his return, again called for closer attention to African affairs.⁴

¹ Discussion meeting report, 5 Feb. 1953, CFR, groups series, vol. xlvi, 1952/53-1953/54, p. 8; discussion meeting report, 26 May 1954, p. 6, CFR, groups series, vol. xxxiv, July 1959-June 1960.

² 'Briefing Paper for Mr Clarence B. Randall on United States Foreign Economic Policy in Africa', 29 Mar. 1958, p. 3 [Dwight D. Eisenhower Library], C[larance] R[andall Collection], special studies series, box 1; National Intelligence Estimate, 14 Aug. 1955, pp. 45-7, *FRUS*, 1955-7, xviii.

³ United States Council on Foreign Economic Policy, memo, 23 Jan., 1958, p. 4, CR, Randall series, subject subseries, box 1. See also R. F. Holland, 'The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xii (1984), 165-86; Miles Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France* (Princeton, 1984).

⁴ 'New Organization for Conduct of African Affairs', *Department of State Bulletin*, 24 Sept. 1956; White House memo, 28 Apr. 1956, [Eisenhower Library,] A[nne] W[hitman Collection], cabinet

Meanwhile, outside the administration, the international affairs directorate of the AFL-CIO, which often worked closely with the Central Intelligence Agency, was promoting anti-Communist labour activity in the Belgian Congo, and the CIA was helping to fund the African-American Institute, a non-governmental research organization.¹

One should not, however, misunderstand the nature of the Eisenhower administration's interest in Africa or exaggerate the extent of it. Policy for Africa remained largely in the hands of the bureau of European affairs. Africa was given a low priority by the administration, because it was still thought of as a European concern, and the idea of independence was frowned on. In 1957, a state department document expressed concern that African nationalism was 'undermining the influence of the [European] Metropolises in guiding the evolution of the African peoples along sound and orderly lines'. Three years later, a National Security Council discussion paper expressed the view that African independence posed 'serious problems for the United States while providing potentially "unparalleled opportunity" for Soviet Bloc penetrations.'²

Both the geopolitics of the cold war and the cost of bold new initiatives diverted attention from Africa. The treasury department and the bureau of the budget were apparently worried that new US commitments in Africa would be costly. When decolonization was clearly inevitable, the Eisenhower administration urged the Europeans to establish paternalistic relationships with their former dependencies, and to guard against 'extremist elements'. Neo-colonial relationships were recommended to 'preserve the essential ties which bind Europe and Africa'.³

series, box 7; National Security Council memo, 'The Vice President's Report to the President on Trip to Africa', 7 Apr. 1957, pp. 9, 11 [Eisenhower Library], OSANSA collection, special assistants series, subject subseries, box 10.

¹ Weissman, *American Foreign Policy*, 105-6; Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York, 1980), 28, 46, 352-3. Weissman specifically mentions that the AFL-CIO worked with labour leader Cyrille Adoula, who later became premier of the independent Congo. Weissman does not state specifically when the AFL-CIO began its activities in the Congo, but it appears to have started at some point before 1960, during the Eisenhower presidency.

² 'Memorandum from the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Rountree) to the secretary of state', 16 Aug. 1957, *FRUS*, 1955-7, xviii. 70-1; National Security Council memo, 28 July 1960, OSANSA collection, NSC series, policy papers subseries, box 28. The NSC discussion paper, mentioned in the text, is paraphrased in this document.

³ 'Statement of US Policy toward Africa South of the Sahara to Calendar Year 1960', transmitted 23 Aug. 1957, *FRUS*, 1955-7, xviii. 76, 77, 79, 80. This document also noted the possibility of 'stagnant or repressive' policies by the European powers in Africa; the document recommended that the United States should oppose such policies, but no specifics were given; National Security Council memo, 'US Policy towards Africa [revised]', 23 Mar. 1960, OSANSA collection, NSC

On rare occasions, there was criticism of colonial rule, but it was vague and mild. In 1956, Lodge warned: 'we, as a nation, are not appealing to young people. In countries as far apart as France and Japan there is evidence that young people think that we are supporting out-going regimes ... The prime cause for our lack of appeal for youth is our apparent sympathy with colonial powers and their interests.'¹ When Lodge advised Eisenhower, however, to take a strong public stand against colonialism in order to improve the US image – advice echoed (if not very strongly) by some members of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy and of the US delegation to the United Nations² – no attention was paid. More typical was Eisenhower's praise in 1960 of the Portuguese for their 'civilizing mission' in Africa, at a time when he was failing to answer a letter from Ahmed Sekou Toure, the president of newly independent Guinea.³

The most important African issue to arise during the Eisenhower administration was the Congo Crisis, which began on 30 June 1960, now the Congo's Independence Day. Anarchy and civil war followed, involving one of the largest UN peacekeeping operations in history, as well as foreign intervention by the United States, the Soviet Union, and several European states. Although the role of the crisis in the decolonization of sub-Saharan Africa is too complex to be discussed here, clearly Belgium had made plans to retain its control over the Congo, even after independence. A United Nations intelligence report from October 1960 states:

During the latest phase, and in contrast with the precipitate mass departure of last July, the Belgian influx to the Congo is progressing at a steady pace and there is evidence of centralized planning behind this infiltration ... The Belgians have achieved some success in reestablishing their political, or, at any rate, administrative, influence in Leopoldville ... The most striking occurrence, in recent weeks ... was the taking of office by Mr. M. Tshibamba in the Ministry of Health, who following his appointment on 20 September, as *Commissaire général*, arrived with half a dozen Belgian advisers ... One of the latter told ONUC [United Nations] staff member that there

series, briefing notes subseries, box 1.

¹ State department memo, 26 June 1956, AW, Dulles/Herter series, box 5.

² National Security Council memo, 9 May 1958, *ibid.*, box 10. This document stated that Clarence Randall, head of the Council of Foreign Economic Policy, advocated anti-colonial policies at a meeting of the National Security Council. See also 'Memorandum from the assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs (Key) to the deputy under secretary of state (Murphy)', 20 Apr. 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-7, xviii. 6-7.

³ Although Eisenhower ignored the letter, it was answered routinely by the US embassy in Guinea: White House memo, 24 Apr. 1959, AW, Dulles/Herter series, box 9; Noer, *Cold War*, 58.

was no longer any need for their [*sic*] Advisory team, 'since we, Belgians, are back in power'.¹

Belgian influence was particularly strong in the province of Katanga, which had seceded from the Congo in July 1960 and formed an independent state – nominally headed by Moïse Tshombe, an African politician 'whose sole purpose was to protect European economic interests' – and which contained most of the Congo's mineral wealth.² Although there is substantial evidence that the Union Minière company of Belgium, working in close co-operation with the Belgian government, had largely financed this development,³ declassified documents show that the Eisenhower administration almost unanimously supported the Belgians, and turned a blind eye when Belgian paratroopers intervened in July 1960 and later massacred a crowd of civilians at the port city of Matadi. The CIA covertly delivered arms to Katanga's military, and US and Belgian intelligence collaborated to overthrow the Congolese prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, whom they regarded as excessively nationalistic and anti-Belgian.⁴

In his memoirs, Eisenhower wrote scathingly of African nationalism, noting with approval that most of the new African states relied on European advisers in the 'key positions in communications, armed services, government, and such industry as existed'. Eisenhower's ambassador to independent Guinea, John H. Morrow, later noted: '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.'⁵ Neo-colonialism, rather

¹ Untitled document, 18 Oct. 1960, pp. 1, 3, United Nations Archives, New York, DAG-13/1.6.1.0:53. This document is untitled and is not explicitly identified as a UN document. However, I am confident that it was written by UN staff since it was found in the UN archives, in a folder marked 'Pol[itical] and Sec[urity] Matters'.

² Kalb, *Congo Cables*, 324.

³ David N. Gibbs, *Congo Crisis*, ch. 3; Conor Cruise O'Brien, *To Katanga and Back* (New York, 1966). The Belgian government did, later, distance itself from Katanga secession, although Belgian companies continued to support Katanga until the secessionist regime was terminated, in early 1963. For information on the UN role, see David N. Gibbs, 'Comment fut scellé le destin d'un pays aux richesses convoitées', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, xl (1993), 22.

⁴ The delivery of arms to Katanga was actually completed in Feb. 1961, during the Kennedy administration, although it seems very doubtful that Kennedy actually approved the action: Richard Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa* (New York, 1983), 80-1. There was tension briefly when, in July 1960, the United States reluctantly voted to replace Belgian troops in the Congo with UN troops. However, the documentary record makes clear that US policy remained fundamentally supportive of Belgian interests and of the Belgian-sponsored Katanga secession. See Gibbs, *Congo Crisis*, ch. 3.

⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (Garden City, NY, 1965), 572; John H. Morrow, *First American Ambassador to Guinea* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1968), 28. The administration also encouraged Italy to form close ties with its former colony of Somalia: 'Les États Unis manifestent

than decolonization, became the hallmark of the Eisenhower administration's policy towards Africa.

* * *

In contrast to the government's lack of interest, the public's interest in Africa gradually increased during the late 1940s and 1950s. The number of books about Africa published in the United States increased substantially during the 1950s, and the press increasingly covered African developments. The Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford foundations gave generously for education, especially to Nigeria's University of Ibadan, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (in co-operation with Westinghouse) tried to help the fledgeling Nigerian steel industry.¹

Similarly, US firms had been eager in the 1950s to increase exports to Africa and, especially at the end of the decade, to invest there directly. In 1958, the American Assembly commissioned a major study, 'The United States and Africa', and in the same year a well-attended Africa trade fair was held in New York.² Socony-Vacuum Oil invested in French Equatorial Africa, Harvey Aluminum and Olin-Mathieson in Guinea, Reynolds eyed the Belgian Congo, and Farrell Lines shipping with African ports. Other US businesses curried favour with emerging African leaders: Chase National Bank and the Bank of Manhattan (later Chase Manhattan) with Nnamdi Azikiwe, later the prime minister of Nigeria; AMAX mining with African leaders in Northern Rhodesia; and Maurice Tempelsman, a New York industrial diamond merchant and prominent investor in Africa, with nationalist leaders throughout Africa.³

un intérêt croissant pour les territoires de l'Afrique noire', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, v (1958), 92; National Security Council memo, 10 Aug. 1960, OSANSA collection, NSC series, policy papers subseries, box 28, p. 7.

¹ 'Les États Unis et le développement économique de l'Afrique', *Notes et Études Documentaire*, iv (Aug. 1960), 5; Edward Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy* (Albany, NY, 1983), 74-9, 96; state department staff summary supplement, 8 Aug. 1960 [Eisenhower Library], W[hite] H[ouse Office Collection], staff research group, box 20.

² *The United States and Africa*, ed. Walter Goldschmidt (New York, 1963), xiii-xvi; Council on Foreign Economic Policy, 'Review of the Background of the Africa Fair', 22 Aug. 1958, CR, Randall series, subjects subseries, box 1.

³ The Socony-Vacuum interest was indicated by the activities of Darlington, Kennedy's ambassador to Gabon and, previously, an executive with Socony-Vacuum. See his memoirs, Charles F. Darlington and Alice Darlington, *African Betrayal* (New York, 1968). See also William Attwood, *The Twilight Struggle* (New York, 1987), 226, 241; William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks* (New York, 1967), 14, 38-9; Robert Bielskas, former executive with Farrell Lines, telephone interview with author, 9 June 1987; memo, US consulate, Lagos, 17 Mar. 1949, USNA SDDF no. 848L.516/3-1749; Anthony Lake, *The 'Tar Baby' Option: American Policy toward Southern Rhodesia* (New York, 1976), 73; 'Maurice Tempelsman's African Connections',

As economic opportunities in Africa increased during the 1950s, owing partly to a welcome from liberalizing colonial regimes, US direct investment in Africa rose prodigiously.¹ Even so, numerous impediments still existed, especially in French Africa, where institutions were being devised to tie the colonies to France, even after independence. All but one (Guinea) of the new French-African states, used the CFA [Communauté Financière Africaine] franc, which was tied to the French franc, and gave important advantages to French investors, while discouraging investors from other states.² One retired US official noted: 'France takes part of their exchange earnings [from Africa] for the benefit of the metropole. This is an old colonial practice which is now quite rightly termed "neocolonialism" ... [The practice] bears particularly harshly on the dollar earnings of these states and limits their commercial relations with the United States.'³

In the Congo, the Belgian colonial administration often succeeded in stifling foreign initiative: an article in *Fortune* in 1952 explained: 'The Congo business climate being that of a tropical gentlemen's club, the word competition causes smiles ... All the big corporations are Belgian-controlled, closely interconnected, and devoid of antitrust sentiment. One US corporation recently abandoned the possibility of a Congo venture largely because the only available transport system and electric power are tied to a Belgian controlled miner of the metal in question.' Similarly, *Le Monde* reported in 1956 that Belgian interests sought to bar US businessmen from participating in the massive Inga hydroelectric project; and the state department wondered in 1960 whether the British might 'have preempted the iron and steel sector' in Nigeria and taken measures to stifle US investment.⁴ Whereas Europeans in general wished their former colonies to remain exporters

Fortune, 15 Nov. 1982.

¹ US investments in all of Africa, including North Africa, show almost a three-fold rise during 1950-60, as measured in current dollars. However, these figures overstate somewhat, since they do not take inflation into account: Gordon Bertolin, 'US Economic Interests in Africa: Investment, Trade, and Raw Materials', in *Africa and the United States: Vital Interests*, ed. Jennifer Seymour Whittaker (New York, 1978), 24. On the liberalization of trade during this period, see 'Economic Advances in Africa Cause Big Changes in Trade with World', *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, 29 Oct., 1956.

² White House staff summary supplement, 8 Aug. 1960, WH, staff research group, box 20; 'Colonial Big Five', *Fortune*, Nov. 1952; Darlington and Darlington, *African Betrayal*, chs. 5, 10. Among France's former colonies on the African continent, only Guinea failed to adopt the CFA franc after independence.

³ *Ibid.*, 112; also Francis Terry McNamara, *France in Black Africa* (Washington, DC, 1989).

⁴ 'The Congo is in Business', *Fortune*, Nov. 1952; L'Équipement industriel de l'Afrique noire', *Le Monde*, 22 Jan. 1956; Jean-Claude Willame, *Zaire, l'Épopée d'Inga* (Paris, 1986), 32; White House staff summary supplements, 8 Aug. 1960, WH, staff research group, box 20.

of primary products, many US companies, especially exporters of capital goods, wished to promote industrialization.¹

Africa, however, which in 1960 accounted for only two per cent of total US foreign investment,² was not a major target; other regions of the world were clearly more important. But it was widely believed that African investment had considerable potential for growth. A report in 1958 from a representative of Inland Steel provides a particularly interesting analysis:

After a visit to modern Africa, one cannot help but think of the description 'Sleeping Giant' ... The population, thanks to modern medicine, is growing rapidly ... What Africa does produce in the way of minerals is very significant today but the surface has hardly been scratched ... The agricultural output is very important and can be increased tremendously using modern methods ... The African market for industrial and consumer goods is still in its infancy and could become one of the largest in the world ... Great Britain is not very well liked by the people of many of her territories that are on the verge of independence. Most of these countries will turn to the United States for aid and advice ... We should shape our African policy with this in mind.³

By the late 1950s, a gulf had apparently developed between certain US business interests, keen to promote development in Africa and to risk quarrels with the Europeans to bring it about, and an administration committed to working with its European allies even at the cost of slowing down political and economic change.

* * *

By 1958, Eisenhower's Democrat-controlled Congress had become sceptical of his policy towards Africa: the Senate Foreign Relations Committee implicitly criticized the administration for its failure to support African nationalism.⁴ John F. Kennedy, a leading anti-colonial figure in the Senate, frequently met with visiting African nationalist leaders and, as chairman of the Africa subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urged the administration to cultivate

¹ On colonial economic policy, see group meeting memo, 23 Dec. 1949, CFR, groups series, vol. xxxvi, 1949/50-1950/51. On US encouragement of Third World industrialization, see Sylvia Maxfield and James Nolt, 'Protectionism and the Internationalization of Capital: US Sponsorship of Import Substitution Industrialization in the Philippines, Turkey, and Argentina', *International Studies Quarterly*, xxxiv (1990), 49-82.

² US department of commerce, *Selected Data on US Direct Investment Abroad, 1950-76* (Washington, DC, 1982), 11. These figures are for the entire African continent, including countries north of the Sahara.

³ P. D. Block III, 'Report on Africa', 17 Sept. 1958, pp. 1-3, CR, Randall series, subject subseries, box 1.

⁴ United States Senate, 'Africa', report no. 4 in *United States Foreign Policy: A Compilation of Studies* (Washington DC, 1960), 308, 320.

contacts with them. In 1959, Kennedy stated: 'Call it nationalism, call it anticolonialism, call it what you will. Africa is going through a revolution ... The word is out – and spreading like wildfire in nearly a thousand languages and dialects – that it is no longer necessary to remain forever poor or forever in bondage.'¹ Other liberal Democrats agreed with Kennedy; Chester Bowles in *Africa's Challenge to America* took a strong anti-colonial line, as did Adlai Stevenson in an article entitled 'The Support of Nationalism Helps Combat Communist Imperialism'.²

The Democrats' reappearance as champions of anti-colonialism was also partly a response to the advent of the civil rights movement in the United States. However, one should not overstate the case; many Democrats with interests in policy towards Africa (including Stevenson and Kennedy) did not at first show much concern for the rights of African-Americans who, at that time, had little, if any, direct influence on US foreign policy.³ Anti-Communism was a stronger incentive to Democratic anti-colonialism. Many establishment figures (Democrats as well as Republicans) believed that the United States was losing its popularity throughout the Third World, owing to Eisenhower's support for colonialism; and that the Soviet Union and 'China were making political gains among newly independent countries by their (largely rhetorical) opposition to it.⁴ The United States should be fighting colonialism to head off incipient Communism in Africa.

A third incentive (generally overlooked) was provided by the Democrats' business connections. As we have seen, US businessmen were vigorously seeking trade and investment opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa, and several prominent Democrats, including Bowles, Stevenson, and Kennedy, had established close connections with some of these companies.⁵ As the Democrats, since Roosevelt, had traditionally supported commercial expansion in Africa, the Kennedy

¹ Quoted in Ball, *Another Pattern*, 222; Mahoney, *Ordeal in Africa*, 22.

² Chester Bowles, *Africa's Challenge to America* (Berkeley, 1957); *The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson*, ed. Walter Johnson (Boston, 1976), vi. 536-8.

³ On the role of African-American lobby groups with an interest in Africa, see Jackson, *From the Congo*; Milton D. Morris, 'Black Americans and the Foreign Policy Process: The Case of Africa', *Western Political Quarterly*, xxv (1972), 451-63.

⁴ This is a major theme in Attwood, *Reds and the Blacks*.

⁵ Bowles became a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation; Stevenson became legal counsel to Tempelman and the Reynolds metal company. Both of Stevenson's trips to Africa (1955 and 1957) involved legal business for his clients, and his political interest in Africa dovetailed nicely with his legal practice. The AMAX President, Harold Hochschild, was an important contributor to Stevenson's 1956 presidential campaign. In addition, Tempelman had close ties to the New York Democratic Party and established a friendship with John Kennedy: see Gibbs, *Congo Crisis*, ch. 4.

administration would be much more aggressive in that regard than its Republican predecessor.¹

Meanwhile, the Democrats hammered away at Eisenhower's hostility towards even moderate African nationalism. During the presidential campaign in 1960, Kennedy mentioned Africa on numerous occasions in his campaign speeches – claiming that the United States had 'lost ground in Africa because we have neglected and ignored the needs and aspirations of the African people'² – and once elected, he made substantial changes. First, Africa received much more attention. The state department's Africa bureau, previously a backwater, became more influential under its new head, G. Mennen Williams, formerly governor of Michigan (who for some time had taken an interest in Africa), and was given its own independence within the state department hierarchy: it was no longer subservient to European interests. One member of the bureau commented: 'American policy ... used to be run by the Pentagon, the CIA, the European desks, everyone but us; but now we're running it.'³ Other prominent supporters of African nationalism were given even more senior positions. Stevenson became ambassador to the United Nations, and Bowles became Kennedy's first under-secretary of state. Much talk was heard of rapid decolonization for Africa and the establishment of independent, nationalist governments.⁴

The second aspect of Kennedy's Africa policy was the expanded US presence in Africa – often achieved at the expense of Europe. Williams was especially forceful in promoting the cause, as were many of the new ambassadors to the African states. For example, Edmund Gullion, the US ambassador to the Congo during the Kennedy era, was 'strongly against the policy of permitting or encouraging Belgians to resume the leading role in Congo affairs ... we [Americans] want to have some significant say.' Charles Darlington in Gabon, William Attwood in Guinea, and William Mahoney in Ghana all aimed at increasing US influence, leading the secretary of state, Dean Rusk, who never shared the new enthusiasm for Africa, to lament that they often 'believed that the United States should play "Mr Big" in every African capital'.⁵ Certainly, the style, rhetoric, and substance of policy

¹ This factor is typically neglected by studies of US-African relations. See, for example, Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Africa, the United States, and the World Economy: The Historical Basis of American Policy', in *US Policy toward Africa*, ed. F. S. Arkhurst (New York, 1975), 11-55.

² Quoted in Ball, *Another Pattern*, 222.

³ Quoted in Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation* (New York, 1967), 35.

⁴ See, for example, Kennedy's public toast to Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, 16 July 1963, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963* (Washington, DC, 1964), 563-4.

⁵ Memorandum for the Record', 23 Aug. 1963, interview notes, Ernest W. Lefever Papers, box

all changed under Kennedy. US officials argued for eventual independence for the Portuguese colonies; CIA officers made contact with guerrilla leaders in Angola; and the CIA subsidized a trip to the United States by the Mozambique nationalist Edouardo Mondlane.¹

The Kennedy administration's policy towards the Congo – where Katanga continued to thrive, receiving subsidies from the Belgian Union Minière company, protection from European mercenaries, and covert support from France, Great Britain, Portugal, and South Africa – supported a United Nations military buildup.² As George Ball explained in 1961: 'Tshombe is the basic problem ... Our policy must therefore be directed most immediately to destroying Tshombe's assurance in his own military supremacy, and to removing, or at least greatly weakening, the influence of his Belgian advisers ... We must immediately build up [the] UN fighting power.'³

As the United States provided close to half the funds required by the UN force, which administered much of the Congo during this period, it had considerable control over operations and was able to arrange a series of diplomatic, economic, and military measures to terminate the Katanga secession and to remove the European mercenaries. A former UN official, Conor Cruise O'Brien, recalls in his memoirs that the United States was, in fact, the only Western power to support the anti-Katanga policies of the United Nations; that, during 1961, 'the only Consul of a major interested power who was on the United Nations side without reservations was the American Consul ... All the other Consuls in Elisabethville [Katanga] represented Western European countries and the general feeling among them ... was one of resentment at the American Government's "pro-Congolese" and "pro-UN" attitude. The American Consul was *ex officio* somewhat unpopular – and became more so.'⁴

Republican congressmen, by contrast, who adopted a pro-Belgian position during the Kennedy administration, were severely critical of it

8, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University (Gullion's opinions are paraphrased in this document); Williams, *Africa for the Africans*, 176; memo from G. Mennen Williams, 30 Oct. 1960, USNA, G. M[ennen] W[illiams Papers], box 29. On Ghana, see Mahoney, *Ordeal in Africa*, ch. 8; on Guinea, see Attwood, *Reds and the Blacks*; on Gabon, see Darlington and Darlington, *African Betrayal*. See also, Robert B. Shepard, *Nigeria, Africa, and the United States* (Bloomington, 1991), ch. 2; Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York, 1990), 273.

1 Mahoney, *Ordeal in Africa*, 204-6, 236-7.

2 See Gibbs, *Congo Crisis*, ch. 4. In 1961, the government of Belgium (though not Belgian companies) changed and became somewhat distant from Katanga.

3 George Ball, 'Memorandum for the President', 23 Sept. 1961, John F. Kennedy Library, national security file, countries series, box 27/28.

4 O'Brien, *To Katanga and Back*, 109; Weissman, *American Foreign Policy*, 104.

for opposing the secession of Katanga. Whereas support for neo-colonialism in Katanga became a Republican *cause célèbre*, Democratic congressmen (with some exceptions) were inclined to support the administration which, in the end, prevailed.¹ With US support, a multinational UN force assaulted and quickly defeated Katanga's army in December 1962–January 1963. Katanga was reintegrated into the Congo.

The Congo Crisis was the first instance of direct US intervention in the politics of Africa. Roosevelt's anti-colonialism had never gone beyond rhetoric, and Eisenhower's support for Katanga only served to reinforce Belgian policy. Kennedy's policy, by contrast, significantly affected the outcome of the crisis, which almost certainly would have been different without US pressure.

Kennedy's policies led to a substantial increase in US influence in central Africa, which after his death increased even further. US officials became close advisers to the Congolese government, especially after General Joseph Mobutu seized power in 1965. By 1967, the *New York Times* commented: 'Americans play a predominant role' in the Congo, despite continuing Belgian influence. US 'Embassy officials are in almost constant touch with the [Congolese] President and key Cabinet ministers. Neither the Belgians nor the French have comparable access.'² The Congo had moved out of the European into the US sphere of influence.

The expansion of US influence was not confined to the Congo. Diplomats throughout Africa, and the Kennedy administration itself, encouraged investment and provided subsidies to companies willing to invest in 'poorer nations around the world'.³ In Gabon, for example, despite resistance from the dominant French interests, the US ambassador, Charles Darlington – himself a former executive with Socony-Vacuum – spent much of his term promoting US business interests, especially railways and natural resources. In the Congo, US officials worked closely with Tempelman; in Guinea, they promoted investment in the mining of bauxite; and in Ghana, they sought US capital to finance the Volta hydroelectric project.⁴

¹ See Gibbs, *Congo Crisis*, ch. 4. Some southern Democrats, often allied with the Republicans at this time, also supported Katanga. Senator Thomas Dodd, a Democrat from Connecticut, was another Katanga supporter; he was, however, exceptional and most northern Democrats defended the administration's policy in the Congo or showed little interest in the matter.

² 'US Influence in Congo', *New York Times*, 3 Aug. 1967.

³ See 'Administration Urges New Incentives for Investment in Developing Nations', *Business Week*, 3 June 1961.

⁴ Darlington and Darlington, *African Betrayal*, ch. 5. On Darlington's oil background, see *Who's Who in America*, 1968–9; Attwood, *Reds and the Blacks*, 124–5; Mahoney, *Ordeal in Africa*, ch. 6.

But Kennedy's challenge to colonialism and neo-colonialism recognized limits. When the policy threatened the Atlantic Alliance, which the United States was not willing to sacrifice for anything in Africa, US Africa policy gradually softened. In late 1962, the US delegation at the United Nations voted against economic sanctions against Portugal, and even Mennen Williams conceded that 'the United States should supplement rather than supplant the former metropole[s]' in Africa.¹

Although the United States never attempted completely to cut the neo-colonial ties between Europe and Africa, only to weaken them, Kennedy's strong anti-colonial stance aroused strenuous and well-documented opposition among Europeans. French officials were especially suspicious of US motives in Africa. US ambassadors, for example, recall that the French distributed 'ugly pictures of racial disturbances in Mississippi and drafted scurrilous tracts against the United States', while other French propaganda allegedly emphasized racial violence in Alabama. All attest to the Franco-US feud.² A US journalist, Russell Warren Howe, commented: 'the US faced open hostility in Africa from France ... French Africans who showed pro-American sentiments were sandbagged by French agents in African administrations; almost all American attempts to invest in French Africa were sabotaged, usually successfully.'³ The Belgians, too, were critical of US policy, especially Kennedy's Katanga policy. Accusing the United States of pursuing its own economic objectives in Africa, one Belgian investor commented: 'Les trusts Américains, notamment la Chuquicamata de la Chile Copper Company, de l'Anaconda Group, ont tout tenté pour nous supplanter au Katanga,' and warned that the 'Anglo-Saxons' could become 'les maîtres absolus du marché mondial du cuivre'.⁴ Even Paul-Henri Spaak, the pro-US foreign minister of Belgium, expressed suspicion of American businessmen. Some of these claims were exaggerated – there is no evidence, for example, that the Anaconda Mining Company was involved in the Congo Crisis – but recent research clearly shows that US business interests were involved in the Congo, and that US investors did influence Africa policy during the Kennedy years.⁵

1 See Mahoney, *Ordeal in Africa*, chs. 7, 8; Noer, *Cold War*, 93, 149. See also memo from G. Mennen Williams, 6 Nov. 1962, GMW, box 29.

2 Darlington and Darlington, *African Betrayal*, 153; William Attwood, *Twilight Struggle*, 241; 'Le Congo et les États-Unis', *Marchés Tropicaux*, 6 July 1963.

3 Howe, *Afric Shore*, 151.

4 Quoted in 'Le Katanga a contre-courant', *Le Monde*, 8 Aug. 1961.

5 'Text of speech by vice prime minister and minister of foreign affairs Paul-Henri Spaak before the Belgo-American Association', 24 Mar. 1963, Adlai E. Stevenson Papers, Princeton University, box 868.

From Great Britain came further denunciation of US foreign policy. One Tory MP referred to Kennedy's policy in Africa as 'a form of sinister international capitalism',¹ while another commented:

The whole business has a sinister ring, reminiscent of Abadan [in the Persian Gulf] ... It is almost inescapable that the State Department seeks to dominate the Central African copper industry for American commercial ends, not for the benefit of the inhabitants. This sinister picture is still further blackened by the common knowledge that until recently the American Consul-General's office in Salisbury [Southern Rhodesia] was staffed almost on a 'Russian' scale, and that its employees were deliberately currying favour with African agitators ... If these suggestions are well founded they make nonsense of President Kennedy's plea for an 'Atlantic Community'.²

One need not accept all of these allegations to recognize the deep split that had appeared between the United States and Europe over Africa, and the distance travelled since Eisenhower's day.

* * *

It is tempting to view Kennedy's Africa policy in purely cold war terms: anti-Communism, of course, bedevilled every president after 1945. Scholars such as Noer, Rupert Emerson, Immanuel Wallerstein, Aicardi, and Gabriel Kolko,³ dismiss Kennedy's policy as mere rhetoric, arguing that it was driven by unavoidable US deference to NATO allies and did not differ much from the policies of previous administrations. These arguments do not survive scrutiny of the historical record, for they fail to explain Kennedy's fundamental shift in policy during the Congo Crisis, or the aggressive promotion of schemes likely to increase US influence in Africa. Finally, they ignore the degree of hostility expressed by Europeans. Kennedy's anti-colonialism was more than rhetoric: it was a reversion to the anti-colonialism of Roosevelt.

Noer's thesis – that the United States followed a consistent foreign policy in this period – cannot, therefore, be sustained. US policy changed significantly with changing administrations – Roosevelt's strong anti-colonialism, followed by Truman's mild, then

¹ Sir W. Teeling in *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 671, 7 Feb. 1963, 706.

² Henry Kerby, 'US Interests in Africa: Katanga's Copper', letter to the editor, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 Aug. 1962.

³ Noer, *Cold War*; Rupert Emerson, 'American Policy in Africa', *Foreign Affairs*, xl (1962), 309; Rupert Emerson, 'The Character of American Interests in Africa', in *United States and Africa*, 32–5; Wallerstein, 'Africa, the United States'; Aicardi, *La Politique Americaine*, 331; Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World* (New York, 1988), 191; Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy towards Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis, and Change* (Cambridge, 1994), ch. 1.

Eisenhower's strong pro-colonialism and, at last, Kennedy's return to Rooseveltian anti-colonialism. The realist approach cannot explain the shift from Eisenhower's policy to Kennedy's. Though equally opposed to Communism, each took a different course in Africa.

The corporatist thesis, that foreign policy is affected by party politics, and that the two parties took different approaches to both, offers a better explanation. Clearly, the Republicans favoured colonialism, and the Democrats anti-colonialism. Only the Truman administration – at the height of the cold war – proved somewhat of an exception to this rule. Both Republicans and Democrats collaborated with business interests, but the Democrats under Roosevelt and Kennedy were much more aggressive in promoting US investment in Africa, even at the cost of friction with European allies. The Eisenhower Republicans, on the other hand, did little to promote US investment.¹

The Democrats' policy for Africa, both economic and political, is consistent with the conclusions of Franz Schurmann and Thomas Ferguson,² who emphasize the internationalist ideology of the Democratic party, which offered a warm welcome to business interests lobbying for activist policies in Africa. The Democrats' interest in Africa followed from an internationalist ideology. The Republicans were somewhat less internationalist and were, accordingly, less inclined to favour the expansion of US influence in so 'remote' a region.

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¹ During the Congo Crisis, there is evidence that Eisenhower sought to protect some politically connected investors in the Congo. However, the administration was not receptive to investors who sought to increase the US role and to displace European interests. See Gibbs, *Congo Crisis*, ch. 3.

² Franz Schurmann argues that the Democrats' internationalism was primarily motivated by ideological concerns and their association with free trade interests was more the result than the cause of this internationalism, while Thomas Ferguson, in contrast, argues that free-trade interests decisively influenced the Democratic party. Both approaches agree, however, on the basically internationalist orientation of the Democratic party. See Franz Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power* (New York, 1972), ch. 2; and Thomas Ferguson, 'From Normalcy to New Deal: Industrial Structure, Party Competition, and American Public Policy in the Great Depression', *International Organization*, xxxviii (1984), 41-94.