APS ACADEMY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

American Attitudes Toward Decolonization in Africa
Author(s): Steven Metz
Source: *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (Autumn, 1984), pp. 515-533
Published by: The Academy of Political Science
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2149946
Accessed: 12-04-2021 18:25 UTC

REFERENCES
Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/2149946?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents
You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

JSTOR

The Academy of Political Science is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Political Science Quarterly*

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

American Attitudes Toward Decolonization in Africa

STEVEN METZ

Many writers consider U.S. policy toward decolonization, at least under John F. Kennedy, as an extension of Americans' traditional support for self-determination, and argue that without judicious prompting from the U.S., Europe would have dragged out the decolonization process for the rest of the century.[1] Radical and Third World authors, on the other hand, claim that in those very rare instances in which U.S. foreign policy was conducive to decolonization, it simply fostered the transition from formal control under European masters to informal control under the aegis of American corporations.[2] What little real change occurred, this group argues, was the result of protest and rebellion on the part of the Africans. These conflicting interpretations and dis-

[1] Strangely enough, most "radical revisionists" remain silent on the American role in African decolonization. In three of the better known works in the genre—David Horowitz's *The Free World Colossus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1971), Gabriel Kolko's *The Roots of American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), and William Appleman Williams's *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Delta, 1969)—there are a total of two indexed references to Africa plus two additional references to the more specific issue of the Congo crisis.

[2] For a range of approaches utilizing this approach see: E. A. Tarabin, ed., *Neocolonialism and Africa in the 1970s* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978); Samir Amin, *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973); idem, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa: Origins and Contemporary Forms," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10 (1972): 503–524; I. William Zartman, "Europe and Africa: Decolonization or Dependency?" *Foreign Affairs* 54 (1976): 325–43; and Timothy M. Shaw and M. Catherine Newbury, "Dependence or Interdependence: Africa in the Global Political Economy," in Mark M. DeLancey, ed., *Aspects of International Relations in Africa* (Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana African Studies Program, 1979).

STEVEN METZ is assistant professor of political science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He is at work on a book entitled *The Anti-Apartheid Movement and American Foreign Policy.*

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

agreements leave the essential questions concerning the American role in decolonization unanswered.

It was pointed out in a report prepared in 1959 for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that postwar American policy towards Africa could be divided into three distinct phases.[3] During the Truman administration, Africa was viewed as an appendage of Europe, and there was very little Africa policy separate from European considerations. The residue of this emphasis on the European aspects of African problems remained throughout the 1950s. During the period from 1952 to 1956, attention was riveted on Korea and again on Europe, and thus interest in Africa declined to a new low. But in the years after this low, African issues once again surfaced in American foreign policy.

Given the emphasis placed on nation-building and Third World problems by Kennedy, it is often assumed that the shift in favor of a more rapid decolonization process, which was undoubtedly an aspect of U.S. foreign policy by 1962, arrived with the Kennedy administration.[4] This shift is often considered to have culminated in the transition from a Eurocentric Africa policy to an Afrocentric policy. But, as a closer examination will show, there was no radical shift in American attitudes towards African decolonization in 1961.[5] In fact, American perceptions of the decolonization issue underwent a gradual evolution during the entire period from 1952 to 1962, with 1958 generally representing a watershed.

In this article, I will examine this evolution of American attitudes toward the decolonization of Africa during the decade from 1952 to 1962.[6] Although the real roots of the decolonization debate can be traced back much further, the issue was a crucial one during World War II.[7] The 1950s saw the culmination of the issue. The focus of the paper will fall on what can be termed the opinions of the foreign-policy elite, with official policy statements, scholarly publications, and the news media providing the bulk of the evidence. The body of the paper will comprise four sections: an overview of the position of Africa in the

[3] U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *United States Foreign Policy: Africa* (A study prepared by the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University), 86th Cong. 1st sess., October 1959, 49–50.

[4] For example, Waldemar A. Nielsen, in *The Great Powers and Africa* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), points to 1960 as the "hinge year." While the great number of African nations reaching independence in 1960 undoubtedly marked a watershed for U.S. policy, the change in attitude which set the stage for this policy change can be found earlier.

[5] For a detailed discussion of this point see, inter alia, George Liska, "The Third World," in Robert E. Osgood, et al., *America and the World From the Truman Doctrine to Vietnam* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970).

[6] The term "Africa" when used here actually refers to Sub-Saharan or "Black" Africa.

[7] See William Roger Louis, *Imperialism At Bay* (New York: Oxford, University Press, 1978). Evidence for the gradual growth of support for decolonization is also found in the League of Nations mandate system and the U.N. trusteeship system. See also: Henry Gilchrist, "The United Nations: Colonial Questions at the San Francisco Conference," *American Political Science Review* 39 (1945): 982–92; Ernst B. Haas, "The Attempt to Terminate Colonialism: Acceptance of the United Nations Trusteeship System," *International Organization* 6 (1953): 1–21; and *The Mandate System: Origin, Principles, Application* (Geneva: League of Nations Publishing Office, 1945).

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

emerging American world view during this period; a sketch of the evolution of official attitudes toward decolonization; a corollary outline of non-official thinking on the issue; and a synthesis and conclusion.

Africa and the Dilemma of Power

Foreign policy can in the broadest sense be broken down into two constituent elements—goals and means. This simple typology can provide some basic insight into the problems faced by the U.S. on the decolonization issue. There was in the long run very little debate over the goal of the policy; after World War II, the inevitability of decolonization was an accepted fact in nearly every corner.[8]

The actual debate centered on three aspects of the implementation of decolonization. First was the actual method for decolonization and the role that the United States should play. Issues dealing with the proper role of the United Nations in decolonization can also be classified here. Second was the timing and speed of decolonization. This later became the key issue in the debate, and thus was the point that exhibited the greatest degree of change over the period examined here. Third was the issue of the actual stake or interest of the United States in Africa, an issue that would determine the approach to the other two.

Hans Morgenthau began a 1955 essay on the U.S.'s Africa policy by stating that "the United States has in Africa no specific political or military interests" and that nearly every observer agreed that actual American interests were "somewhat marginal."[9] Although this type of attitude may have overstated the case for the lack of interests in Africa, and is certainly not true today, the real security interests of the United States were beyond a doubt minimal.[10] U.S. interests in Africa during this period can be broken into three categories. First were the economic and what can be termed "Open Door" interests. Although the degree of actual trade and investment was limited, as is true in most cases of Open Door thinking, it was the pure potential of the African market that awed American businessmen. But the African market was the most underdeveloped in the world, and since most American attention was concentrated on rebuilding Europe and on fostering the postwar transition to mass consumerism in the United States, economic interests in Africa played only a minor role in policy formulation.

The second category comprises ideological or altruistic interests. Strains of Wilsonian idealism were still important in many debates over U.S. foreign policy,

[8] A major exception that is discussed below is Philip W. Bell, "Colonialism as a Problem in American Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 5 (1952): 86–109.

[9] Hans J. Morgenthau, "United States Policy Toward Africa," in Calvin W. Stillman, ed., *Africa in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 317–28. See also Donald Rothchild, "Engagement Versus Disengagement in Africa," in Alan M. Jones, Jr., ed., *U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (New York: David McKay, 1973).

[10] For an excellent evaluation of current U.S. interests in Africa see Gordon Bertolin, "U.S. Economic Interests in Africa: Investment, Trade and Raw Materials," and Geoffrey Kemp, "U.S. Strategic Interests and Military Options in Sub-Saharan Africa," in Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, ed., *Africa and the United States: Vital Interests* (New York: New York University Press, 1978).

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

and the longstanding American dedication to self-determination was often mentioned in discussions of the decolonization issue. Paul Nitze illustrated this strain of thinking in 1955 when he argued that support for colonialism was "abhorrent to American sensibilities."[11] But as was often the case, this type of interest proved more valuable as a mechanism for mobilizing support behind policies created through other motives than as an actual instigative factor in policy formulation.

The third type of American interest was undoubtedly the most important—cold war considerations and the global containment of communism. As late as 1960, candidate Richard M. Nixon argued that "in the struggle with the Russians, Africa is the most critical area in the world," while a few months later President-elect Kennedy claimed that Africa was the objective "of a gigantic communist offensive." Every defector from the Soviet Union came complete with a copy of the "blueprint" for the Soviet takeover of Africa.[12] It had gradually become clear to American policymakers that instability and chaos in Africa, which was increasingly the result of the continuation of the colonial relationship, would foster Soviet expansionism.

The intense desire for stability in Africa that resulted from this led to the first of several dilemmas that faced U.S. policymakers. The primary goal of American policy during this period was the strengthening of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance and the continued prosperity of the recovering West European economy. The exploitation of the resources of Africa was considered essential to this recovery. But as the 1950s wore on, two facts became increasingly obvious. The link between African resources and political stability in Western Europe was not as strong as had been expected earlier.[13] After 1948 no new European states fell to Communist control. By the mid-1950s, as pressure for decolonization mounted in Africa, it was obvious that the West European economic and political systems had withstood the challenges that had seemed so dire in the immediate postwar period. Secondly, the European empires were not stabilizing factors in Africa, but rather served to generate growing waves of repression and rebellion. This left the U.S. in the face of a tremendous paradox in which the support of European economic growth created conditions conducive to the expansion of Soviet influence. This was a problem that American policy never successfully overcame, but one that was eventually alleviated by the

[11] Paul H. Nitze, "The United States and Africa: An American View," in C. Grove Haines, ed., *Africa Today* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955), 475–69.

[12] See, for example, *Newsweek*, 28 November 1956.

[13] The economic benefits of colonies had been hotly debated in Britain at least since the publication of J.A. Hobson's *Imperialism* in 1902. By the end of World War II common opinion was that, contrary to the Leninist thesis, colonies were more an economic burden than a benefit. On this debate see Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, 28; L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *Burden of Empire* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), 55ff.; and Leonard Woolf, *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (London: Labour Research Department, 1920). Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher argue in *Africa and the Victorians* (London: MacMillan, 1969) that the motives for African colonization were almost exclusively geostrategic and political.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

pure rush of events in Africa and by a reevaluation of the economics of colonialism.

A second dilemma resulted from the debate concerning the proper role of the United States in the decolonization process. The postwar world situation had left the United states with an imbalance between the means of projecting power and the proper ends for this extension.[14] The U.S. was like an ungainly adolescent boy who suddenly finds himself strong, but yet is without the guiding constraints on the use of the strength. Thus, the United States found itself with a tremendous degree of influence in a sphere where no material interests guided the proper use of the influence. Later, with the growth of what Robert W. Tucker and George Liska have called an "imperial" foreign policy, in which American security and world stability were congruent, the effects of this dilemma would diminish.[15] By the 1960s the value given to global stability—the defining characteristic of an imperial power—had become a major theme of U.S. foreign policy.

In discussing the role of the United States in African decolonization, Vernon McKay argued in 1963 that by the early 1960s American interests in Africa had become "an integral part of [a] broader interest in American security, prosperity and freedom," while Chester Bowles noted as early as 1956 that on African issues "wealth and power have inescapably committed the United States to world policies and world responsibilities."[16] G. Mennen Williams, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs in the Kennedy administration, probably expressed this position best when he wrote in 1962: "Our self-interests in Africa stem from acceptance of the idea that there can be no peace for our children or our children's children unless there is stability and satisfaction around the world."[17]

Both of these dilemmas—the wavering between a Eurocentric and an Afrocentric policy and the transition from a national to an imperial definition of security—led to a policy of indecision and inaction on issues concerning African decolonization. The usual U.S. policy consisted of vague rhetoric about the right of self-determination coupled with insistence on the benefits of colonialism and abstention on U.N. votes on decolonization problems. American policymakers not only waited until it was entirely clear exactly which side change was on, but very nearly waited until the winds of change had blown the roof from the house.

[14] George Liska argues in the "Coda" to *Russia and World Order* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) that this imbalance between foreign policy means and ends is a defining characteristic of the modern world system.

[15] For more on this point see Robert W. Tucker, *Nation or Empire*? (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969); idem, "The American Outlook," in Osgood, et al., *America and the World From the Truman Doctrine to Vietnam*; or George Liska's *Imperial America: The International Politics of Primacy* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967) and idem, *Career of Empire* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

[16] Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 273; Chester Bowles, *Africa's Challenge to America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956), 3.

[17] G. Mennen Williams, "American Foreign Policy and the Emerging Nations of Africa," State Department Press Release 241, 4 November 1962.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Official Attitudes: From Eurocentrism to Global Strategy

Other than in the brief period following the Spanish-American War, U.S. attitudes had always been decidedly anticolonial. Before World War II, however, isolationist sentiment and America's status as a minor power had limited this anticolonialism to a strictly rhetorical level. During the war, however, support for the worldwide expression of American values was whipped to a fervor in order to solidify public support for the war effort. According to the popular view, the war was not fought in order to prevent the aggrandizement of German or Japanese national power, but for the global promulgation of American ideals. This great belief that the war represented the victory of American ideals, when combined with the preponderance of American power, led to a new wave of foreign-policy idealism best expressed in the creation of the United Nations. This belief also formed the embryo of American support for African decolonization. Even during the war, Franklin Roosevelt "repeatedly and insistently . . . made clear to the European allies his conviction that the Age of Imperialism was over." Secretary of State Cordell Hull was an especially vigorous proponent of decolonization.[18]

At the beginning of the 1950s, however, many American policymakers felt that decolonization could at least be postponed if not avoided altogether. It was thought that when the European metropoles had recovered enough from the war to turn their attention to the construction of their proposed imperial unions, the unrest and burgeoning nationalism in the colonies would prove transitory. It did not. By the late 1950s, it was found that nationalism did not disappear when suppressed, but tended to surface with increased vigor, increased popularity, and increased violence. Thus, there was a slow and incremental growth in the attitude among U.S. policymakers that change could not be stemmed, and that somehow the U.S. should throw its weight with the trends of the future.

But the problem arose in this evolution of discovering exactly which side change was on. The lack of trained and knowledgeable Africa experts was appalling—there was no Africa Bureau in the State Department until 1958, so all information about the continent was handled by the thinly stretched Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs. The crucial decade of 1952–1962 was not only a period of transformation of American policy towards Africa, but was also a period of learning for the foreign-policy elite. For the first time, Africa was not merely an appendage of Europe, but had become a policy problem in its own right.

The leitmotif of foreign policy during the first years of the Eisenhower administration, both towards Africa and towards the rest of the world, was the cold war. The perceptions generated by this struggle pervaded policymaking. Within this context, the American experience with the new states of Asia and Africa in

[18] See Hull's speech reprinted in Leland M. Goodrich and Marie J. Carroll, eds. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1944), 5:6. For more detail, see the first volume of Hull's *Memoirs* (New York: Macmillan, 1948).

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

the period directly following World War II tainted opinions on other aspects of the decolonization issue. As John Foster Dulles so repeatedly expressed, decolonization and the other problems of the new states were to be viewed through the prism provided by the cold war, and thus strategic and tactical considerations molded attitudes towards further decolonization. It was felt that decolonization was to proceed only when the allegiance of the new states to the Western alliance could be ensured. Often in Africa this criterion could not be met.

This fact led to the two primary aspects of U.S. policy towards African decolonization before 1958: a Eurocentric policy that placed the growth and stability of the European economies at the top of the priority list in the colonial relationship; and a repeated warning that in the long run colonialism had benefited the African states and that the detrimental results of an independence granted before the African state was "fully prepared" would outweigh any possible benefits. These two aspects of the U.S. Africa policy are evident in nearly all official statements during this period.

The assessment of the situation in Africa as the 1950s began had been radically different. Africa at that time, according to one State Department official, was "not a crisis area"; there had been "no significant inroads" by communism, and the political situation across the entire continent was "relatively stable and secure."[19] The general recommendation was that the United States should not pursue the decolonization issue too strenuously, and when action was required, it should be strictly through the auspices of the metropole. There was a widespread feeling that this "stable and secure" area, replete with the "happy" colonial relationships that Philip Bell described, should be left alone. Colonialism was "progressive"; it had led to the modernization of Africa and would eventually generate stable and economically viable states.[20]

The only obvious result of severing the colonial relationship before the sufficient development of the economy and political system would be chaos, a situation conducive to Communist penetration. It was felt that Britain and France, at least, were making the minimum acceptable movements toward decolonization. Warnings of the dangers of premature independence pervaded statements on Africa policy during the first Eisenhower administration. George C. McGhee, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian and African affairs, stated in 1951 that "the United States government has always maintained that premature independence for primitive, uneducated peoples can do them

[19] George C. McGhee, "United States Interests in Africa," State Department Press Release 469, 5 June 1950, 2. McGhee was assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian and African affairs.

[20] The emphasis on the beneficial nature of colonialism was standard in policy statements of this period. See, for instance, Julius C. Holmes, "The United States and Africa: An Official Viewpoint," State Department Press Release 235, 1 May 1958; George V. Allen, "United States Foreign Policy in Africa," State Department Press Release 206, 21 April 1956; and George C. McGhee, "Africa's Role in the Free World Today," State Department Press Release 564, 27 June 1951.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

more harm than good."[21] Two years later, McGhee's successor, Henry A. Byroade, echoed this viewpoint when he argued that "premature independence can be dangerous, retrogressive and destructive."[22] Even in the later years of the decade, Julius C. Holmes, a special assistant to the secretary of state, argued that "premature independence and lack of appreciation of the interdependence of the world community may be as dangerous for Africa as the denial of independence."[23]

The problem with thinking of this type is obvious. As premature independence became a stock anathema in U.S. policy, the tendency was great to categorize all moves towards independence as premature. When premature independence grew to a phobia for policymakers, the ability to accurately discern the phenomenon diminished. And likewise, the ability to "get on the side of change" was eroded.

In the larger struggle that represented the cold war, Europe was, of course, the first line of defense. Thus, all policy considerations tended to become sublimated to European concerns. U.S. policymakers were seldom bothered by the fact that the use of African resources as a tool for European economic recovery and the simultaneous economic development of the African economies were, in the long run, antithetical. The United States had been stung by the post-independence neutralism of India and others, and wanted to be certain that Africa would not join this desertion of the West. The Asian-African Conference, held in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955, had heightened American fears that the newly independent nations, although operating under the guise of "non-alignment," were, in fact, inching toward the Communist camp.[24]

Therefore, the brunt of American policy was composed of support for slow, orderly progress towards some faraway state of independence, or preferably, of autonomy within a colonial league—all instigated and controlled by the metropole. What Americans desired, in fact, was the preservation of a facade of Wilsonian-type support for self-determination while carefully avoiding any affront to the European metropoles.[25]

[21] McGhee, "Africa's Role," 3.

[22] Henry A. Byroade, "The World's Colonies and Ex-Colonies: A Challenge to America," State Department Press Release 605, 30 October 1953, 3.

[23] Julius C. Holmes, "Africa: Its Challenge to the West," State Department Press Release 32, 27 January 1958, 6.

[24] For an analysis of the Bandung Conference see George McTurnan Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1956). For more on Dulles' reaction to the nonaligned movement, see Michael A. Guhin, *John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and His Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 252–64. Richard Goold-Adams argues in *The Time of Power: A Reappraisal of John Foster Dulles* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962) that Dulles's inability to adjust to neutralism sometimes leaned him toward support for the continuation of colonialism. See, inter alia, 310.

[25] But it must be remembered that Woodrow Wilson too could jettison self-determination when other calls beckoned. Wilson's original mandate plan was used as a bargaining chip with the British and French on other issues. See, for instance, Ernst B. Haas, "The Reconciliation of Conflicting Colonial Policy Aims: Acceptance of the League of Nations Mandate System," *International Organization* 5 (1952): 521–30.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

The total bankruptcy of this position gradually became evident. As Senator John Kennedy noted in a 1956 speech in Kansas City, Missouri, the U.S. position on decolonization issues had "frequently been characterized by indecision, confusion, haste, timidity and an excessive fear of giving offense."[26] But the growing rapidity of change, as crucial event piled on crucial event in Africa, forced a reevaluation of the U.S. position on decolonization and in a broader sense, came to illustrate the changing perception of America's role in the world.

These changes in the United States Africa policy were not the result of large-scale alterations in policy strategy or content, nor were they entirely the result of personality differences between the Kennedy and Eisenhower administrations. The most significant of these changes, in fact, took place within the Eisenhower administration. *New York Times* columnist James Reston noted that by 1956, U.S. foreign policy was "in its tone and procedure . . . quite different from what it was at the beginning of the Eisenhower administration," and that one of the most important of these changes was "a new emphasis on working with the rising nationalistic forces of Asia, the Middle East and Africa."[27] Reston accredited the bulk of this shift to a growing involvement of Eisenhower himself in the foreign-policy decision-making process.

The first hints that the American policy of promulgating glacial change was ineffective had come not from Africa, but from Asia. There was a feeling among American policymakers that communism had gained dominance over nationalism in many of the new states of the region.[28] The drawn-out rebellions in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indochina seemed to illustrate the results of futile attempts at stopping the tide of decolonization.

Although the Suez crisis in 1956 represented the first great divergence of American and European thinking on events in the Third World, most of the shift in Africa policy that took place between 1952 and 1960 can be traced to the climactic ruse of events in Africa itself. Even though violent uprisings had been crushed in Madagascar, Kenya, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Guinea, there was a feeling among both Africanists and policymakers that perhaps revolution in Africa was not as far in the future as had been expected.[29] The growing strife in Algeria provided stark evidence for this.

[26] Reprinted in *Congressional Record*, 6 June 1956, 9,614–15.

[27] James Reston, "U.S. Diplomacy," *New York Times*, 19 November 1956.

[28] Paul M. Kattenburg, *The Vietnam Trauma in American Foreign Policy 1945–75* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1980), 10. For a good thumbnail sketch of decolonization in India, Pakistan, Burma and Malaysia see *Britain and the Process of Decolonization*, pamphlet RF.P. 5865/70 (London: Reference Division, Central Office of Information), 10–16.

[29] Crawford Young, "Decolonization in Africa," in Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, eds., *Colonialism in Africa*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1970), 2: 461. For a good discussion of the political events surrounding the rebellions in the French colonies see Edward Mortimer, *France and the Africans 1944–1960* (New York: Walker, 1969). On the Mau-Mau revolt in Kenya see Robert Buijtenhuijs, *Le Mouvement "Mau-Mau"* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971); Carl G. Rosberg, Jr., and John Nottingham, *The Myth of "Mau Mau": Nationalism in Kenya* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1966); and Fred Majdalany, *State of Emergency: The Full Story of Mau Mau* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1963).

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Political events in Africa also added to the feeling of great and imminent change. 1958 proved to be an especially crucial year in this respect. The independence of Sudan in 1956 and, even more importantly, the creation of Ghana in 1957 had had far-reaching consequences in the rest of Africa. The imminence of continent-wide independence could be sensed by the remaining African colonies. In 1958, a series of conferences and meetings, beginning with the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Conference, illustrated both the ability of African peoples to speak for themselves in the world arena and the importance which this group placed on speedy decolonization.[30]

In addition, gradual changes in the intensity and tone of the cold war could finally be felt in the years following Josef Stalin's death in 1953. Waldemar Nielsen noted:

> President Eisenhower took office early in 1953 in an international atmosphere still dominated by the confrontation with the Soviet Union. By the beginning of his second term, however, profound changes had begun to take place within the Soviet Union and the Communist world and throughout the less developed areas, which led to the emergence of a new and more intricate world balance and, in the case of Africa, called for far-reaching revisions of American policy. The adequacy and the timeliness of the Eisenhower administration's response to the new requirements led to great disputes and eventually made Africa for the first time a major issue in American politics.[31]

In 1959, Joseph C. Satterthwaite, the first assistant secretary of state for African affairs, recognized that 1958 was a landmark year and noted that "the political situation in Africa can be described as vibrant if not effervescent."[32] Given these events, U.S. policymakers began a frantic re-evaluation of the decolonization issue.

The changes that emanated from this reevaluation were again more transitions of tone than of content. A type of Aristotelian ethics predominated, as moderation remained the password for policy proposals. In May 1958 State Department official Julius Holmes summed up the attitudes toward decolonization as "support for progressive tendencies in the metropole and moderate leaders in Africa."[33] This distillation of U.S. policy illustrated two overwhelming problems. First, while everyone supported "progressive" actions by the metropole, it was much more difficult to garner consensus as to the definition of progress. A major source of irritation with African leaders was the American satisfaction with any action professing movement towards independence; what interested the Africans was the speed with which this movement proceeded. Thus the African

[30] For a discussion of the impact the events of 1958 had on U.S. policy see Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, 399–442.

[31] Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*, 259.

[32] Joseph C. Satterthwaite, "The United States and the New Africa," State Department Press Release 38, 17 January 1959.

[33] Julius C. Holmes, "The United States and Africa." Holmes repeated this point later in the same month in the speech "Africa's Challenge to the Free World," State Department Press Release 292, 29 May 1958.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

leaders called on the United States to foster movements that were both progressive and rapid. Second, "moderate" African leaders were often merely whoever both had power and was anti-Communist. As was illustrated after a slate of military coups swept Africa in the mid-1960s, "moderation" often equaled pro-Westernism.

But policy rhetoric did change after 1958 and by 1960 on the verge of the great wave of African independence—administration spokesmen did begin the call for a stronger degree of support for decolonization.[34] But in the long run, Eisenhower policy towards Africa remained Eurocentric and avoided direct involvement in the decolonization process. It was found that it was easier and politically expedient to avoid taking sides altogether in decolonization conflicts. As late as 1959, Dana Adams Schmidt, a foreign correspondent for the *New York Times*, wrote in an article entitled "U.S. Still Seeking an African Policy" that the United States had no coherent and clear Africa policy.[35]

But change in Africa had begun to flow at a breakneck pace even without U.S. support. The growing importance of Africa could be sensed in policy-making circles. The 1959 study of the U.S. Africa policy made for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was highly critical of the apathy of the policy. The report opened with the contention that "the United States has never had a positive, dynamic policy for Africa."[36] It was noted that the rapidity of change in Africa had eroded the validity of the Eurocentric policy of the pre-1958 period, and that the retention of any degree of influence in Africa required the relinquishment of the "negative, ad hoc approach that has marked . . . [U.S.] policy."[37] Among the recommendations of the report were the creation of a policy that would emphasize three main features: the realization that Africa was a major policy area in its own right and not merely an appendage of Europe; the acceptance of nonaligned and neutral positions by the new African states; and support in the United Nations for a definite timetable for decolonization, especially for the trusteeships.

There were two other very important themes of this study, one of which represented a radical break with past policy and one of which represented a continuation of earlier policy. First, the report stated that "evidence of effective penetration by Russia or her satellites is light and spotty," thus opposing the cold war considerations that had and would continue to determine much of the American Africa policy.[38] Second, although the report did call for a more intense degree of support for decolonization, it continued to stress the emphasis on the mechanisms of the metropole in this process. Thus, the U.S. continued to favor moderation in all changes.

[34] See, for example, Joseph C. Satterthwaite, "The United States and the Continent of Africa," State Department Press Release 610, 24 October 1960.

[35] Dana Adams Schmidt, "U.S. Still Seeking an African Policy," *New York Times*, 2 February 1959.

[36] Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *United States Foreign Policy: Africa*, 1.

[37] Ibid., 12.

[38] Ibid., 11.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Kennedy had beeen an early vocal supporter of decolonization. In 1956 he had called for increased pressure for decolonization on the European metropoles and for an end to the American practice of abstaining from U.N. votes on decolonization issues.[39] But like Dulles and other members of the Eisenhower administration, the primary rationale behind this position was cold war considerations, thus illustrating that a schism in tone but not in content existed between the Kennedy and Eisenhower positions. The actual decolonization issue played a smaller part in Kennedy's Africa policy than in Eisenhower's since the majority of Africa states were independent by the time Kennedy took office in 1961. There were three aspects of the Kennedy approach to the issue that set it off from earlier methods.

First was the great emphasis placed on the internal nature of the threats to the African states, including those that were approaching independence. G. Mennen Williams noted in an important policy speech soon after Kennedy's inauguration that the revolution of rising expectations, and its ensuing chaos and instability, was the greatest threat to peace in Africa and not Soviet intervention.[40] Even earlier, Williams had emphasized that a basic change in American relations with Africa would have to be predicated on a slate of domestic changes in the United States, including a solution to civil rights problems, an increasing study of Africa and African issues, and the growth of cultural exchange programs with African states.[41]

As an aspect of the nation-building policy, Williams argued that the creation of stable economies in Africa would prove a greater deterrent to Communist intervention that would other cold war tactics. It was proposed in a State Department pamphlet that as African nations develop "the opportunities for communism to establish quick or easy footholds on the continent will diminish."[42] Williams furthered the exuberant optimism of the nation-building mentality when he announced that "we can compete with the Communists on equal terms, and I think we need have no fear of comparison with them."[43]

When a newspaper in Kenya quoted Williams as advocating "Africa for the Africans," many black Africans felt that a real change in the American position was imminent.[44] Economic development through the local leaders appeared to be the order of the day. But contrary to a trend that appeared to have emerged in the last Eisenhower years, cold war considerations were again the paramount rationale of U.S. policy; nation-building was, in the end, merely a new tactic in

[39] See the speech reprinted in *Congressional Record*, 6 June 1956, 9,614–15.

[40] G. Mennen Williams, speech to National Press Club reprinted as State Department Press Release 156, 24 March 1961.

[41] G. Mennen Williams, speech reprinted as State Department Press Release 41, 30 January 1961.

[42] U.S. Department of State, Office of Public Service, "The United States and Africa," Department of State Publication 7710, African Series 40, July 1964, 15.

[43] G. Mennen Williams, "American Foreign Policy and the Emerging Nations of Africa."

[44] For a discussion of this event see McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, 351–53. It later turned out that this quotation was printed out of context, but because of the furor that it created among the white settlers in Kenya, Williams later explained that he meant all Africans, black and white.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

the strategy of global containment.[45] Tactics and tone had changed, but policy content, whether verbal or real, changed very little from the Eisenhower to Kennedy administrations.

A second major aspect of the Kennedy policy was a concerted attempt to separate the African and European aspect of the problem. Decolonization was no longer considered a zero-sum game in which the independence of an African state meant the weakening of a European state. This change was due to two developments. First, the resurgent European economy had proved that it could function quite well without attached empires. Second, national liberation movements in Africa had raised the costs of colonialism to the point where the benefits of empire were far outweighed by the costs.

A third important aspect of the Kennedy policy was the growth of imperial-type interests in the evaluation of American security concerns in Africa. When G. Mennen Williams wrote that "there can be no peace for our children or our children's children" without world stability, he expressed this trend of changing U.S. attitudes. Other U.S. officials, while noting the lack of American material interests in Africa, stressed that Africa was part of an indivisible security system based on global containment and world stability.[46]

In sum, the official line in U.S. policy towards decolonization exhibited a gradual evolution in tone from 1952 to 1962, with a growing acceptance of eventual African independence and the role that the U.S. would play in the post-independence period. There was a parallel shift from a strictly Eurocentric policy in which the benefits of colonialism to the NATO countries was the primary motive of our Africa policy to a position that attempted to separate the European and the African aspects of the problem. There was a shift from the perception that African independence was a threat to the West to the perception of an opportunity for the establishment of stable, pro-Western states. But in the long run, the changes in U.S. policy were often frantic attempts to catch up with the tremendous pace of change, and this meant that the actual impact of U.S. policy was often small.

Non-official Opinion: Developing Critiques and Proposals

While most issues in U.S. foreign policy inspire criticism in academia and journalism, the U.S. Africa policy during the 1952–1962 period showed an amazing lack of discussion. This was due in part to a widespread ignorance of African

[45] Two important policy statements by the deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs in 1959 and 1960, for example, made no mention of the cold war aspects of U.S. policy in Africa. See James K. Penfield, "The Role of the United States in Africa: Our Interests and Operations," State Department Press Release 325, 19 May 1959; and "Africa: A New Situation Requiring New Responses," State Department Press Release 246, 5 May 1960.

[46] G. Mennen Williams, "American Foreign Policy and the Emerging Nations of Africa"; J. Wayne Fredericks, acting assistant secretary of state for African affairs, "The Impact of the Emergence of Africa on American Foreign Policy," State Department Press Release 291, 4 May 1962.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

affairs in the United States and in part simply to the lack of African experts in the universities and the press. When the need arose in the early 1950s for a cadre of African experts in the State Department, few could be found among career Foreign Service officers. Africa had traditionally been a very low-status area that was often avoided by the most highly skilled professionals. This meant that many of the State Department's Africa experts were drawn from the universities. Prior to the 1950s, American policy had relied on European sources, both diplomatic and academic, for African information. A small number of African studies programs had been established at American schools in the 1950s but the number of available scholars, and thus the number of Africa experts in the State Department, was limited. This meant that there was an astonishing dearth of appreciation for the long-range implications of events transpiring in Africa. Because of the interconnectedness of policymakers and students of African affairs—with several key figures such as Chester Bowles and Vernon McKay having written both as policymakers and as scholars—the academic discussion of the U.S. Africa policy closely followed the contours of the official line.

An early discussion of the decolonization issue is found in a 1952 article in *World Politics* by Philip W. Bell.[47] In an extreme example of realpolitik logic, Bell decried the "general moral-political attitude" that led the U.S. at least verbally to support decolonization even in instances where the decolonization process would have run counter to American interests. Bell pointed out that the primary goal of U.S. foreign policy was the continuation of the European economic recovery. Since decolonization would have ostensibly have damaged or slowed this recovery, he argued, the United States should foster what Bell called "happy" colonial relationships, while allowing decolonization where resistence was strong.[48] Thus, the U.S. should support colonialism as long as it did not clash with other vital interests or become "morally corrupting to our own culture or institutions." There are two very obvious shortcomings in these proposals. First, Bell did not clarify the order of priority of his various proposals. For example, what should the U.S. do in a case in which the metropole practices repressive policies to the point that support for the metropole is contrary to American "culture and institutions"? Which is the higher goal, American culture or Europe's economy? Second, Bell did not discuss the means by which "happy" colonial relationships are to be preserved in the face of growing nationalism and widespread dissatisfaction with the colonial relationship. As resistance and nationalism grew in Africa, arguments such as Bell's tended to disappear, but the idea that European economic recovery depended on the survival of colonialism persisted well into the late-1950s.[49]

In a 1955 article, Hans Morgenthau focused on the problems which arise when the interests of the metropole states clash with those of the United States on

[47] Bell, "Colonialism as a Problem."

[48] Ibid.

[49] See, for example, "Africa Makes a Start Toward a Better Day," *New York Times*, 8 February 1953.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

decolonization issues.[50] Morgenthau realized that "the United States has in Africa no specific political or military interests," which meant that the major interest in the continent were those associated with global containment and world stability.[51] Because of the tendency to subordinate American to European interests in U.S. Africa policy, Morgenthau argued that the United States "subordinated its long-range interest in the autonomous development of the native population in short-range considerations of strategy and expedience."[52] Morgenthau proposed the abandonment of the Eurocentric aspects of the Africa policy and an attempt to "internationalize" the decolonization issue by increasing the role of the United Nations. In this way, Morgenthau argued, the United States could hurry the decolonization process and increase its influence in Africa without tarnishing its image either in Africa or in Europe. Whether the gradual erosion of the ability of the U.S. to control the General Assembly and the ensuing radicalization of the body on decolonization issues would have altered Morgenthau's position remains unknown.

In stark opposition to the realpolitik of Bell and Morgenthau, Paul Nitze argued in a 1955 essay that colonialism was completely incompatible with "American sensibilities," and in a somewhat Hegelian vein, proposed that the "historic development of world forces" would force the United States to take a stronger stand on decolonization.[53] Nitze felt that since unequivocably supporting all instances of decolonization could lead to chaos (and to Communist penetration), a middle course should be found that consisted of "throwing our weight behind the acceleration of self-determination for all peoples under conditions which will see preserved these precious freedoms one attained."[54] This proposition was obviously simply a rehash of the Eisenhower administration's warnings of the dangers of premature independence with an added dose of bombast.

One of the most influential discussions of the American role in Africa to emerge from this period was Chester Bowles's *Africa's Challenge to America.*[55] Bowles argued that the Eurocentric nature of American foreign policy had led to a perception of containment that stressed only the military aspects of the policy, thus creating an African policy constructed of "negativism," which actually eroded the potential influence of the United States in Africa. Like Morgenthau, Bowles favored a more Afrocentric policy in which the goal of the American policy was to be an increase of U.S. influence rather than the stabilization of the European situation. But again, the policy positions of Bowles did not differ substantially from official policy, since he favored the "orderly evolutionary approach" to decolonization. But in one respect Bowles was slightly ahead of the official line, in that he favored the establishment of a specific

[50] Morgenthau, "United States Policy Toward Africa."
[51] Ibid., 317.
[52] Ibid., 321.
[53] Nitze, "The United States and Africa," 477.
[54] Ibid., 478.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

timetable for decolonization rather than the open-ended procedure then in practice.

This emphasis on a gradual decolonization continued throughout the 1950s, often surfacing even after the events of 1958 had proven the inevitability of decolonization. An editorial in the 27 January 1959 *New York Times* stated that "in many, if not most, cases it can be argued that the native people are not yet capable of organizing a democratic, efficient, economically viable state," and thus "progress should be controlled and measured."[56] But one year later, C. L. Sulzberger pointed out that U.S. policy towards Africa adapted to change much too slowly, and thus a transformation of American attitudes was needed.[57]

This admixture of conflicting approaches, divergent interpretations, and jumbled policy proposals was as typical of American comments on African decolonization as it was an official policy. But the actual differences in content were small. The view that pictured decolonization as a minor struggle between an intransigent Europe and an equally intransigent Africa persisted throughout the decolonization period. The need to preserve the image of the United States as the altruistic champion of liberal causes lent weight to those who supported the African position, but the spectre of Communist gains in Europe created a policy that could not sever the support for any European policies, however hopeless and misdirected. What resulted was a widespread desire to avoid the issue completely and to remain aloof from the decolonization process.

But this approach too proved hopeless. As Rupert Emerson has pointed out, for the U.S. during this period, hegemony precluded apathy on an issue as important and as inflammable as decolonization. Emerson noted that "the softening of the attitude toward colonialism is . . . one phase of the general American turn toward conservatism in world affairs."[58] And this was a conservatism bred by superpower status. As Vernon McKay argued, world hegemony had caused American attitudes towards Africa decolonization to swing from an "unthinking support of the abstract principle of self-determination" to the exact opposite—an overwhelming fear of "the dangers of premature independence."[59]

Rupert Emerson's *From Empire to Nation*, written in 1959, perhaps came the closest to expressing the attitudes of a nearly mature U.S. attitude toward decolonization.[60] While warning of the ominous—and inevitable—struggles that accompany the rise to nationhood, Emerson noted also the unstoppable nature of decolonization. Part of imperialism was the diffusion of culture and ideas, he argued, and a major portion of the ideas borne by European imperialism consisted of a high value for nationalism. As Emerson wrote: "Imperialism forged

[55] Bowles, *Africa's Challenge.*

[56] "Africa on the Move," *New York Times*, 27 January 1959.

[57] C. L. Sulzberger, "When the Cold War Reaches Africa," *New York Times*, 6 January 1960.

[58] Rupert Emerson, "American Policy in Africa," *Foreign Affairs* 40 (1962): 309.

[59] McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, 322.

[60] Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

the tools with which its victims could pry it loose."[61] In Emerson's work, as in the policy of the Kennedy administration, there was a pervasive feeling that whether to support or oppose decolonization was no longer the issue—the real question was how best to tap the currents of change that decolonization brought.

As Donald Rothchild has noted, by the late 1950s the United States had "emerged as a key force for stability, not transformation."[62] America attempted to "get on the side of change," but all too often it was change which had already occurred rather than change which was about to happen, and "as a result, the United States stands out prominently as a status quo power in a rapidly changing African context."[63]

Conclusion

Americans' attitudes toward decolonization, like their perceptions of many other facets of world politics, underwent a drastic evolution during the crucial decade from 1952 to 1962. The United States had begun to feel comfortable with the hegemony which had been thrust upon it, and had begun to explore the resulting consequences and nuances. It was found that hegemony was not merely a source of unwanted responsibility and unnecessary fear, but was also a potential vehicle for the enactment of practical change. The evolution of U.S. perceptions towards African decolonization during this period is illustrative of many of these changes.

The African policy of the U.S. exhibited the growth of an imperial-type array of interests. No longer were the limited bounds of physical security the only, or even the major, parameters of U.S. interests. Although the argument can be made that the increasing costs of repression in Africa would have offset the economic benefits, Philip Bell may very well have been right when he argued that the continuation of the African empires would have contributed to containment as it was originally construed. But for the first time stability—world stability—was a central goal of U.S. foreign policy. It is this broadening of the concept of national interests that is the first indication of an imperial-type policy. But even as American interests became imperial, it was imperialism of an adolescent type in which the ideological and moralistic considerations indicative of a minor power continually infringed on the more amoral analyses of a true empire.

This situation created a paradox in which the traditional cry for world self-determination, which had been a useful rallying point when American attitudes actually mattered very little in world politics, was mixed with the difficulties of world leadership. Americans discovered that one must be more careful of what one says when people listen. As an imperial power, America's interests and world stability had become more congruent. But perhaps the major problem of many

[61] Ibid., 18.
[62] Rothchild, "Engagement versus Disengagement," 217.
[63] Ibid., 221.

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

imperial powers, as Henry Kissinger has pointed out, is the paradox of promulgating stability in a revolutionary world system.[64] And the world of the 1950s and 1960s was nothing if not revolutionary. This paradox led to many attempts to remain detached and aloof from the events that transpired in Brussels or Accra, though the total bankruptcy of this position was quickly evident. However much Americans wanted to, they could not both create stability and ignore potential instability. This led to frantic attempts to "get on the side of change," often with mixed results.

Thus the United States attempted to mold what was considered a "moderate" policy that would foster decolonization only when a slate of crucial criteria were met. To a casual reader of statements on African decolonization during this period, it would appear that even though the boundries of moderation were never seriously challenged, there was a gradual shift from a strongly Eurocentric policy to a strongly Afrocentric one. In fact, this was not true. What actually happened was an attempt to solve this paradox through the separation of the European aspects of world stability from the African aspects. The U.S. claimed that it could both wholeheartedly support decolonization and continue to place the highest priority on the European alliance. In effect, Americans came to realize (somewhat later than Europe itself) that Europe did not really need Africa, and that by fostering political independence within the framework of economic dependency, Europe could come very close to preserving the benefits of colonialism without the onerous costs.

At some time during this period, essential American attitudes about the meaning of national liberation and decolonization were changed. Independent Africa was no longer a "threat" to the West, and decolonization was no longer synonymous with the collapse of the European economy and a new Communist onslaught. Africa was considered an eager laboratory for the experiments in nation-building. It was realized that somehow, through sheer luck and in spite of frequent bungling, we had won the battle for men's minds in Africa, since, for the time being, most of the new African nations had rejected Marxism/Leninism. Even the "worst-case" situations—the Nkrumahs, the Tourés and the Nyereres—were not Fidel Castro or Ho Chi Minh. In effect, the United States decided that decolonization was not so bad after all. It would take more time and some real instances of "premature independence" (the Congo and the Portugese colonies) to seriously challenge this new euphoria. While the Congo did bear out the fact that the granting of independence "prematurely" could augment Soviet influence in Africa, the American answer to the problem had changed since 1952. Rather than attempting to bolster European rule during the period of political development in Africa, the U.S. itself stepped in to fill the political void. The problems remained the same, but the answers were different.[65]

[64] See Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964).

[65] On the impact that the Congo crisis had on U.S. policy toward Africa see Henry F. Jackson, *From the Congo to Soweto: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Africa Since 1960* (New York: William Morrow, 1982), 21–52; Arnold Riukin, *Africa and the West* (New York: Praeger Publishers 1962),

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Racism and ethnocentrism were still intricately interwoven in U.S. Africa policy; it was, however, racism of a different type. Africans were no longer considered intractable primitives in need of perpetual (or at least long-term) tutelage, but rather as people who, given economic assistance and an occasional well-placed shove, might possibly prove able to govern themselves. American leaders, however, remained blind to the fact that aid and shoves given in an imperial context cannot destroy colonialism, but only serve to make it slightly less onerous and marginally more bearable. The residue of this blindness remains an element of American Africa policy today. U.S. policymakers have yet to learn that decolonization is not merely an exchange of flags, but is a transformation of both attitudes and actions.

110–25; and Steven R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974).

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Mon, 12 Apr 2021 18:25:29 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms