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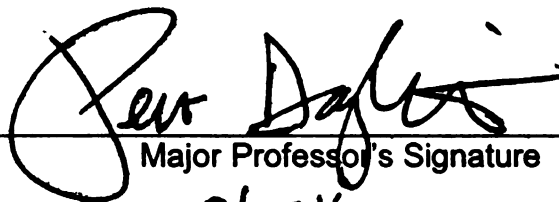
CULTURAL IMAGERY AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AS
SOURCES OF U.S. SOFT POWER IN WEST AFRICA:
UNFOLDING U.S. CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH WEST
AFRICA FROM 1957 TO 1991

presented by

Amzat ASSANI

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By

Amzat ASSANI

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ABSTRACT

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By

Amzat ASSANI

This dissertation examines U.S. cultural relations with Africa from the independence of Ghana in 1957 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Using primary sources as well as secondary sources, newspapers and unpublished documents, it explores the correlation between the policy of communism containment and the development of U.S. program of cultural relations with African countries throughout the Cold war era. It argues that, educational exchanges, cultural activities, and international visitors programs, conceived and operated by the State Department and the United States Information Agency on one hand, and the program of volunteerism operated by the Peace Corps were all used as sources of U.S. Soft Power in West Africa during the period studied. With their participation in these different programs, many American citizens, African-American diplomats, jazz performers, intellectuals, and artists helped project during the Cold War era the image of the U.S. as a country of freedom and democracy, a land of opportunities for everyone. Through their action they became passive agents, contributing indirectly to the objective of the government to persuade African leaders, intellectuals and other politics of public opinion of the values and benefits of liberal democracy by using the United States as primary reference.

From a general perspective, this dissertation seeks to expand through the study of Benin and Ghana, the existing knowledge on U.S. program of cultural relations. In doing so it attempts to examine, how states and individuals experience a policy globally conceived and regionally applied. It notices that U.S. program targeted mainly the heart and mind of the elite of these countries in order to raise its soft power, and that U.S. cultural policy was foremost conditioned politically by the ideological inclination of the beneficiaries of American assistance. Analyzing the reports of some participants in exchange programs from Benin and Ghana and the how Jazz artists view the jazz program, it notices how discrepancies existed between the expectations and objective of the government and the personal experience of individuals agents in most of the programs. Despite this gap, this dissertation notes that all is all the above mentioned activities of cultural exchange contributed to presenting some facets of American culture and institutions and touched the lives of many Africans in rural areas. However, as many of these programs were influenced by the Cold War, this dissertation ends with an interrogation about the future of U.S. soft power in Africa.

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DEDICATION

YA ALLAH, AL HAMDULLILAH RABIL ALAMINA.

I would like to dedicate this work to:

- My parents: my Father, Saoudou M.ASSANI and my late Mother Monique AKUESSON, my late half mother Sidicatou BANGO.
- Special dedication to Mohamed Irfane ASSANI and his mother Karen ADIN, may this work inspire you and make you proud.
- My brothers and Sisters among whom I would mention Latifatou, Isbatou and Zinatou: thank you all for your encouragement.
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- My siblings Thiamiyou, Bachirou and his family, Cheffiou and his family Djemilou, Faouzih and all the rest of my other brothers and sisters. May you find in this dissertation an example of perseverance and patience.
- All my nieces and nephews.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFGRAD: African Graduate Fellowship Program

A.F.R.C: Armed Force Revolution Council

A.D.P. : Agence Dahoméenne de Presse

A.O.F: Afrique Occidentale Française

A.S.P.A.U.: African Scholarship Program of American Universities

A.T.L.A.S.: Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills

C.E.P.S: Customs Excise and Preventive Services

C.I.A.: Central Intelligence Agency

CIAA: Coordinator for Inter American Affair

C.P.P: Convention People's Party

C.U.: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

E.C.O.W.A.S.: Economic Community of West African States

I.C.C: Interdepartmental Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics

I.M.F.: the International Monetary Fund

I.R.C: the Information Resources Center

M.C.C.: Millennium Challenge Corporation

N.A.S.A.: National Aeronautic and Space Administration

N.A.T.O.: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

N.G.O.: Non-Governmental Organizations

N.L.C: National Liberation Council

N.R.C: National Redemption Council

O.W.I.: Office of War Information

P.N.D.C.: Provisional National Defense Council

P.N.P: People's National Party

P.P.: Progress Party

R.P.C.V.: Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

S.E.A.T.O.: South East Asia Treaty Organization

S.P.S.S.: Special Protocol Service Section

TEXACO: The Texas Company

U.G.C.C.: United Gold Coast Convention

U.N.: United Nations

U.N.E.S.C.O.: United Nations Educational Science and Communication Organization

U.S.A.I.D.: United States Agency for International Development

USIA: United State Information Agency

U.S.I.S: United States Information Service

U.S.S.R.: Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics

INTRODUCTION

On July 11th, 2009, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, visited Ghana on his first official trip to a sub-Saharan African country since he took office as the 44th president. As soon as he landed, thousands of people welcomed him and his family in a country that is now considered by his administration as one of the few successful democracies in sub-Saharan Africa. The “Obama effect” took Accra, the capital city, like a storm for a few days with many Ghanaians wearing uniforms embellished with the president’s picture while waving Ghanaian and U.S. flags. This was not the first time that an American President had such a positive effect on how Africans perceived the U.S. Prior to Obama, Presidents John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton had their moments of glory and praise on the continent. Even today many on the continent still hold them in high respect and admiration.

There are, however, many reasons why President Obama’s visit to Ghana was so important to African people. Obama’s personality, skills as an orator, and his message of hope and peace resonated in Africa and contributed to his own popularity and that of the U.S. in Africa. In addition to these elements, the President’s African heritage, his father being Kenyan, influence many Africans to view him not only as the first African-American President but also as an African in the White House. Besides the idiosyncratic elements, for a continent like Africa where racial issues have created in the past some diplomatic tensions with the U. S., Obama’s presidency represents a positive statement in stark contrast to the negative ideas people may have forged about the chances of black people to make it in America.

If in the past the appointment of black diplomats as ambassadors was intended to raise U.S. soft power in sub-Saharan Africa, today the symbolism attached to Obama's presidency adds an exceptional dimension to that soft power especially when he declared before the Ghanaian parliament: "I have the blood of Africa within me."¹ Obama's presidency thus reinforces the belief that the U.S. is a country where many dreams can be achieved, regardless of racial or ethnic background, and contributes to creating a new momentum for the U.S. soft power in Africa.

Like Barack Obama many American and African-American diplomats, jazz performers, intellectuals, and artists helped project during the Cold War era the image of the U.S. being a country of freedom and democracy and a land of opportunities for everyone. Many citizen ambassadors were sent to different parts of the world, including a significant number to the newly independent African countries through the government's programs of cultural exchanges. By participating in sponsored concerts, lectures, and related cultural activities they became active agents of containment, assisting in countering the negative image of the U.S. portrayed by the Soviet Union and communist propaganda during the Cold War. The Cold War followed the Second World War and it was characterized by the ideological battle between the former Soviet Union and the United States. One of its consequences was the active interest that the U.S. government invested in the political evolution of sub-Sahara African countries, especially in the years after their independence. Despite the seemingly minor role that Africa plays in the U.S.

¹ Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament, <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/July/20090711110050abretnuh0.1079783.html&distid=ucs#ixzz0dgTqHPCGW> accessed September 30th, 2009.

national security, one of Washington's concerns was the spread on the continent of the communist ideology supported by Moscow.

Through its foreign policy, America sought to prevent the expansion of communist influence on the continent. This policy, known as the containment of communism, became the cornerstone of U.S. strategy against Soviet Union's expansive ambitions. To a large degree, it shaped not only American political, economic, and military interventions on the continent but it also influenced its program of cultural exchanges with many African countries from 1957, the year Ghana became the first black African country to gain independence, until 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed as an international sovereign entity.

Using Ghana and Benin as primary cases, this dissertation examines how the United States' cultural relations were aimed at curbing the anti-American propaganda orchestrated by the Soviet Union and other communist countries in so-called "Third World" countries. Through cultural exchange programs, the U.S. somewhat successfully attempted to increase the appeal of the American political system and cultural values in sub-Saharan Africa countries between 1957 and 1991. This dissertation explores how cultural activities such as movies, news outlets, and concerts sponsored abroad by the U.S. government and exchange programs to the U.S. were used as part of the strategy to project the ideals of democracy and freedom in these countries while simultaneously proving the capacity of America as a global leader. The exchanges included study and professional development programs like the Humphrey, Fulbright, and the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD)/ Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills (ATLAS) and other similar programs. They were usually two way exchanges that

allowed many citizens from both countries to visit or stay in the U.S. and similarly sponsored many Americans (students, scholars, artists) to travel abroad for research, teaching, academic or professional activities. If some of the programs were framed as assisting the newly independent countries in their effort of national development, their ultimate goal was to increase the appeal of the American democratic system, its culture and also to consolidate U.S. global leadership. This power to attract or to appeal is what Joseph Nye refers to as soft power, that is the “ability to shape the preferences of others.”²

From the Cold war perspective, the use of soft power was aimed at influencing the ideological preferences adopted by African countries to guide and shape for their policy of national development. Like many Third World countries, after decolonization African nations were confronted with the choice between socialism with its economic mode of development and liberal democracy with capitalism as its mode of economic development. Influenced by the ideas of the Bandung conference of 1955, many among these countries claimed to be non-aligned, that is not following any particular ideology, especially in their international relations.³ However the international system of aid did not leave them with much freedom for such an option.⁴

When studying U.S. foreign relations, military assistance, economic cooperation, and regional alliances are usually prioritized over cultural relations. In the mid-1960's, historian Charles Frankel already deplored the little attention given to cultural exchanges in the scholarship on U.S. foreign policy when he characterized the “American

²Joseph S. Nye *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 2.

³Kenneth D. Kaunda, *The Origin and Growth of Non-Alignment* (Lusaka, Zambia: Neczam, 1971), 4.

⁴Peter J. Schraeder, Steven W. Hook, and Bruce Taylor “Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows” *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Jan., 1998): 310.

educational and cultural policy abroad” as the neglected aspect of foreign affairs.⁵ Today the scholarship on U.S. foreign relations has expanded to cover a wide range of interests including cultural relations. But despite this growing interest, the scholarship on cultural relations is still comparatively smaller. Moreover, in the available scholarship not much said about the African continent. This silence on Africa may prompt the conclusion that there are no cultural exchanges between the U.S. and the continent. This dissertation disagrees with such a conclusion and argues that educational exchanges, cultural activities, sponsored visits of media men from Benin and Ghana, the Peace Corps programs, and other related activities have significantly contributed to maintaining the U.S. cultural relations with Africa with the objective of increasing its soft power on the continent. While many countries welcomed the exchanges, the overall U.S. foreign policy, the controversial role played by the U.S. in the Congo-Kinshasa crisis of 1960-1965, the civil right movements in the U.S., and the American attitude on many international issues like the apartheid in South Africa, counterbalanced the positive impression the above mentioned exchanges were supposed to generate and failed to create a favorable opinion that could help establish long term and peaceful political relations between the U.S. and these countries.

Through the study of U.S. relations with Benin and Ghana, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge on the U.S. foreign policy especially on its cultural diplomacy with significant countries in West Africa. This study addresses the following major questions: What were the sources of soft power in the U.S. relations with West Africa and what role did they play? How did the U.S. government use soft power in

⁵Charles Frankel, *The Neglected Aspect of Foreign Affairs: American Educational and Cultural Policy Abroad* (Washington: Brookings Institution 1966), 2.

its African diplomacy? Were the U.S. cultural exchanges with Africa effective to the point of influencing the political relations with African countries? What difference did the colonial past of the two countries make in their relations with the U.S.? How successful was U.S. cultural diplomacy in promoting a more positive image of the U.S. western styled democracy, and the free market, with the context of the Cold War?

To address these questions, an Anglophone and a Francophone country have been chosen as case studies. Ghana, a former British colony, was the first sub-Saharan African country to become independent in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah was one of the pioneers of Pan-Africanism, a movement that aimed at the complete liberation of the African continent from foreign domination. With Ghanaian independence, Nkrumah set the stage for an era that was going to be politically very important for the African continent. Geopolitically, the U.S. - Ghana relations could influence other bilateral relations on the continent. However, the political evolution of the Ghana after the independence did not fulfill that promise. The political climate between the two countries deteriorated after series of military putsches, affecting thereby many aspects of their cooperation.

Benin, on the other hand, is a French speaking country with a notorious history of political instability between 1960, the year independence was gained, and 1972, when a military coup brought Major Mathieu Kerekou to power. After the coup, the government took series of decisions about the political future of the country and its ideological orientation. The country's name was changed from Dahomey to Benin and Marxism-Leninism was adopted in 1975 as the driving ideology. The political rhetoric changed thereafter with a constant criticism of the western nations. These western nations were

considered as the source of international imperialism and neocolonialism with a particular emphasis on France, the former colonizer. Since its independence, Benin and the U.S. entertained good relations. The U.S. was among the very first countries that recognized Benin as an independent country and the two countries signed a bilateral agreement on technical cooperation that was later on extended to other areas like educational or other cultural exchanges. After the 1972 coup and the adoption of Marxism, the nature of U.S. relations with Benin changed dramatically.

As a concluding remark on this section it is important to note that transnational cultural activities among nations predated any formal involvement of governments. Cultural diplomacy became part of governments' foreign policy mainly in the 19th century but it took a particularly different dimension after the Second World War.

Historical Background to the Development Cultural Relations

The twentieth century was dominated by many conflicts and wars. The two World Wars are among the most violent conflicts humanity has ever known. The international order that followed the end of the Second World War took its roots in many conferences that were held in Cairo, Tehran, and Yalta while the allied forces were still fighting the Axis. The Yalta conference of 1945 addressed different issues related to the organization of the postwar order. To secure an enduring postwar peace, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt agreed on the creation of an international organization, the United Nations and they made a declaration on all the liberated countries particularly those of Eastern Europe. This declaration called for the organization of free and democratic elections in all the liberated countries of Europe including those liberated by the Red Army.⁶ But the

⁶ See the Protocol of Proceedings of Crimea Conference, Section II Declaration of Liberated Europe <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1945yalta.html> accessed June 1st, 2010.

lack of cooperation from the Russians on the organization of free and democratic elections in Eastern Europe -liberated by the Red Army- raised suspicions in the West about the real intentions of the Soviet Union. The adoption of the Truman Doctrine (in 1947) announced the beginning of the ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. This rivalry created an international climate of conflicts where the Soviet Union developed an expansive ideological policy toward Third World countries and the United States determined to counter this advance for the sake of freedom and democracy. A Cold War ensued between the two super powers which resulted quite often in open conflict as in Congo-Kinshasa (1960-1965) or violent long lasting wars like the cases of Vietnam and Angola (1975-1991).

On the diplomatic front, the soviet policy was characterized by the ambition of increasing its influence at international level. In Washington, since George Kennan's "Long Telegram" of February 1946, the Truman doctrine of 1947 and chiefly the NSC-68 of 1950, the prevention of communism expansion became an important matter in U.S.'s relations with the rest of the world. This policy known as the containment of communism characterized the American diplomacy throughout in the Cold War. From military dissuasion to political or economic sanctions, different approaches were used by the U.S. to stop or discourage the rise of communist regimes around the globe. But the Cold War was not only about direct or indirect military confrontations. The propaganda machines of the two superpowers used extensively their existing cultural assets to project an image of a successful ideological system. The famous "kitchen debate" between President Richard Nixon and the Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was one of those instances where cultural values were projected as symbols of ideological and economic success.

Historian Elaine May Tyler has suggested:

In a lengthy and often heated debate with Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev at the opening of the American national Exhibition in Moscow, Nixon extolled the virtues of the American way of life, while his opponent promoted the communist system. What was remarkable about this exchange was its focus. The two leaders did not discuss missiles, bombs, or even modes of government. Rather they argued over the relative merits of American and Soviet washing machines, televisions, and electric ranges- in what came to be known as the “kitchen debate.”⁷

The debate showed how in addition to strategic and economic containment, the Cold War became a cultural battlefield where both leaders praised the merits and values of their respective ideological system. It pioneered what Tyler characterized as an “ideological struggle fought on a cultural battleground” and shows how culture became an important side-show in the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁸

People are usually impressed by the military and economic might of a country. Likewise, Tyler and other scholars argue that the average citizens of post-colonial nation-states could be seduced by the standard of living and the way of life of average U.S. or Soviet citizen. This explains in part why cultural diplomacy became an important component of states’ foreign policy after World War II. But apart from the Cold War propaganda or competition purposes, the development of cultural relations can also be understood as an alternative solution to military intervention that could contribute positively to the promotion of international peace. Mutual appreciation and understanding of cultural values or ways of life can facilitate peaceful relations between two nations while reducing conflict among them. These preoccupations about peace inform the cultural policies of nations like France, England, and Germany that had suffered much as

⁷Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound : American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York : Basic Books, 1988), 10.

⁸ May, *Homeward Bound*, 11.

a result of two world wars, and later on the U.S., who have respectively invested in programs of cultural exchanges with other nations by creating special agencies that were specifically in charge of presenting and interpreting their respective ideas and values abroad.

In 1947, historians Ruth McMurry and Muna Lee published one of the pioneering books on post World War II cultural relations programs, *The Cultural Approach, Another Way in International Relations*. Although outdated, as a reference work on how cultural diplomacy took a different shape after World War II the book is still relevant today. It gives an insight on the general purposes and characteristics of many programs of cultural relations starting with the French program. McMurry and Lee's studies show how France was the first among western nations to have recognized the importance of a large-scale cultural relations program between the late 19th century and the First World War. Limited in resources and area of coverage, the French program covered in those days only the Near East and the Far East and consisted of philanthropic and educational activities. As Ruth McMurry and Muna Lee explain, "the French Government, through the French Catholic teaching missionaries, carried on extensive religious, educational, and philanthropic works in the Near and in the Far East. Schools, hospitals, orphanages, dispensaries, and agricultural institutions were established in the Mediterranean Basin."⁹

Despite the atrocities of both world wars, the French program was maintained. During the Second World War it was continued by the Vichy regime. French refugees in England and North America also contributed to the diffusion of French culture abroad through smaller scale cultural activities. After the war, the French government made an

⁹ Ruth McMurry and Muna Lee, *The Cultural Approach, Another Way in International Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), 9.

extra effort to sharpen and clarify the content of its programs so as to meet the challenges of the new international environment. The main focus was to spread the true French thought in “all countries, large and small.” According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the official organ in charge of the program, “the France that which is beloved in the world and which the modern world needs is the France of the French Revolution and the rights of men.”¹⁰

The French example was emulated by other countries that joined the group of nations seeking to project a positive, non distorted image of their countries abroad. For a long time a bystander of the international commitment to cultural relations and propaganda, the British created in 1934 the British Council for Relations with Other Countries, an organization which objective was to articulate and reflect the national interpretation of the British culture abroad.¹¹ This organization was created, according to Ruth McMurry and Muna Lee, as a way to fight against propaganda from other great powers:

British representatives and members of British trade missions in many parts of the world became increasingly aware of the harm that was being done to British interests abroad by the propaganda activities of certain Great powers, and repeatedly made recommendations that the British Government take steps to counteract these activities. After a long and careful consideration of the problem, plans were laid for the British program. They stressed cultural relations rather than cultural propaganda. It was not until November, 1934, however, that on the advice of Foreign Office, the British Council for Relations with Other Countries was established to carry a program of cultural expansion or ‘national interpretation’ abroad.¹²

¹⁰ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 35.

¹¹ Ali Fisher, “A Story of Engagement: the British Council 1934–2009”, 17, *The British Council 75 years of Cultural Relations*.
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/PageFiles/5236/A%20Short%20History%20of%20the%20British%20Council%202009.pdf> Accessed January 1st, 2010.

¹² McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 137-138.

This interpretation consisted in promoting abroad “a wider knowledge of the English language, literature, art, music, science, educational institutions and other aspects of our national life, and thereby to encourage a better appreciation of Great Britain and to maintain closer relations between this and other countries.”¹³ The agency became the British Council and its history ever since its creation has been that of modernization, adaptation, and more importantly, expansion over the 75 years of its existence. Today, the British Council has “over 220 offices in 110 countries and territories across the world, a turnover of more than £600 million and 7,400 employees – 15 per cent of whom are in the UK and 85 per cent in the other countries in which we operate.”¹⁴

About four years after the British, the U.S. of America officially launched its program by creating in 1938 Division of Cultural Relations within the Department of State. The Division was in charge of the Department’s international activities of cultural intent. Being a latecomer in the field did not actually affect the dynamism and the vibrancy of the U.S. program. The American program grew over the years to become one of the most effective elements of U.S. post world war II diplomacy. According to the Departmental Order 367 that created the Division, its (Division) activities abroad consisted in the exchanges of professors, teachers, and students and include also cooperation in the fields of music, art, and literature. Furthermore, the division was also in charge of the “formulation and distribution of libraries of representative works of the United States and suitable translations thereof.”¹⁵ As described, these activities are not

¹³ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach* 138.

¹⁴ Neil Kinnock *Foreword* to *A Story of Engagement: the British Council 1934–2009* by Ali Fisher, *The British Council, 75 years of Cultural Relations*.
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/PageFiles/5236/A%20Short%20History%20of%20the%20British%20Council%202009.pdf> Accessed January 1st, 2010.

¹⁵ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 208-209.

much different from the goal set by the French and the British agencies. The role of these **agencies** was also viewed as non-political, projecting a façade of an apolitical program.

The Second World War brought some changes in the way cultural relations were **viewed** in U.S., the apolitical nature of the Division was revised but not fully changed. **Faced** with the Nazi propaganda machine, the State Department debated the role of the **cultural** policy in responding to negative propaganda. The result was the creation in 1942 of **a** separate agency, the Office of War Information (O.W.I.) which disseminated information abroad on the U.S. war effort while explaining its overall objectives in the war. After the war, the Nazi propaganda was replaced by the Soviet propaganda machine in the cold war context. Europe was economically crippled and the colonized world was becoming more and more vocal about its right to self-determination. This new context called for the restructuration of old agencies and the creation of new ones. More importantly there was an increase in budget size of these agencies and an expansion of their coverage area.

Why Africa Gained Visibility and Importance

In 1938 when the U.S. program of cultural relations was officially launched, many African countries were still under colonial domination and the U.S. had virtually no strategic interest on the continent. Africa was considered by U.S officials, as an appendage of Europe.¹⁶ However, with much of Europe being severely weakened by the war, the rise in relative power of the Soviet Union, along with the growing nationalism in Asia and Africa, the U.S. was forced to radically change its perspective of Africa. Africa was to become a real strategic concern of the U.S.

¹⁶ Peter Schraeder, "Speaking with many Voices: Continuity and Changes in U.S Africa Policies," *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol. 29, issue 3 (Sep., 1991): 375-6.

Increasingly in the 1950s with African colonies, anti-colonial activist groups fueled with nationalist sentiment of their leaders, were asking for independence and liberation from foreign domination. Among these leaders was Kwame Nkrumah who successfully led Ghana to independence in 1957. Ghana's independence launched the beginning of a new era in the political evolution of the continent. In 1958 its example was emulated by Guinea (Conakry), that under the leadership of Sekou Toure voted against the French referendum on the constitution of the Fifth Republic. This new development in world affairs would herald the undoubted changes that awaited the U.S. approach to world realities, particularly, African realities.

In response to those changes, a separate African Affairs bureau was created in the State Department in 1958.¹⁷ This was a positive move in the U.S. foreign policy reflecting the reality that by the end of 1960, seventeen African countries became independent, sovereign states. These countries were soon faced with the challenges posed by the construction of stable country and a prosperous nation. Despite the natural resources that many of them have, the lack of sufficient financial means to solve the problems created by the independence made them dependent on foreign powers-often their former colonial masters. But aids and assistance, especially in the Cold War, were bound by allegiance to the ideology supported by each of the superpowers and their allies.¹⁸ Right after their independence, numerous sub-Saharan Africa countries signed cooperation agreements with Moscow. The latter offered economic, military and educational assistance to those countries with no real strings attached.

¹⁷Schraeder, "Speaking with Many Voices," 377.

¹⁸Peter Schraeder, Steven W.Hook, and Bruce Taylor "Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle" *World Politics*, 50.2 (Jan., 1998): 305.

As far as the U.S. is concerned, despite the recognition of these countries' independence, the United States was still ambivalent as to a full commitment on the continent considering the fact that these were territories ruled by their allies. That ambivalence changed with the election of President Kennedy in 1961. Kennedy believed that the previous administration focused more on Europe and consequently neglected third world countries like those of sub-Saharan Africa. He felt that by not paying much attention to these newly independent countries the Soviet Union would be presented with the unprecedented opportunity to spread its influence throughout the continent of Africa. This preoccupation led to the extension of U.S. containment policy in Africa, developing an approach that include, apart from economic and military assistance, a cultural policy that emphasized *inter alia* cooperation in the field of education and cultural exchanges. In addition to the activities of the agencies like the United State Information Agency (U.S.I.A.), and the program of exchanges, his administration created the Peace Corps, an organization of volunteers in 1961. This was an innovative decision which in retrospect, was an important contribution to the promotion of U.S. soft power in third world countries.¹⁹

Literature Review

It has been argued that culture as instrument of foreign policy has not received appropriate attention in the scholarship on U.S. foreign affairs. Walter Hixson, for example, notices with regret in 1997 that “cultural diplomacy is yet to receive the attention it deserves.”²⁰ If this statement is accurate, it is also important to notice that

¹⁹ Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 3- 5.

²⁰ Walter L Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), x.

since the end of the Cold War and in the post 9/11 era, there has been a growing interest of scholars from different backgrounds in studying the impact of cultural exchange in the victory over communism and, building on those findings, there is a call for using more and more cultural exchanges as a way to reduce misunderstanding and conflict with the Islamic world in the aftermath of 9/11.

From the preoccupation of the immediate aftermath of the Second World War to the study of specific institutions of propaganda, scholars have written on different aspects of cultural relations. The first group includes books that are historical in nature and explain the birth, the purpose, and modes of operation of the cultural programs in general. These books address the role cultural policy within the preoccupations of postwar peace. They thus have an international perspective on the subject and question, through their analysis of the birth, development, and evolution of cultural programs, how they contribute to world peace. In this category Ruth McMurry and Muna Lee's *The Cultural Approach, Another Way in International Relations, Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations* by Thomson and Laves', and Frank Ninkovich's *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. foreign policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* could be listed.²¹

McMurry and Lee in their book *The Cultural Approach*²² analyze and study the programs of nearly twenty countries France, Great Britain, Germany, the United States, the Soviet Union and Japan and come to the conclusion that that despite differences in these countries' policies, their cultural programs share all some specific characteristics. This pioneering work shows how important cultural relations are among nations and how

²¹ Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

²² Ruth Emily McMurry and Muna Lee, *The Cultural Approach, Another Way in International Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947).

a successful postwar peace depended on the level of mutual understanding among nations. It is a good reference for any work to be done within this field because it contains useful information on the inception and the characteristics of cultural relations mainly as developed in wake of the Second World War. But the world has evolved since the end of then, there is a tremendous development in the field of communication and many of the programs studied in the book have changed or disappeared. It was published at a time when the American program was just about a decade old. For these reasons this source is only good for general information about cultural policy and should be necessarily be complemented by more recent and publications on the topic.

Addressing the post Second World War context, *Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations*, (1963), outlines the main ideas of a cultural policy especially in the context of the Cold War, emphasizing the importance of educational exchange as a way to promote understanding among nations in general but particularly as a way to explain the American values to the citizens of other nations. It listed three major tasks that the U.S. was supposed to tackle to survive and win the cold war. Among these was the need to familiarize other nations with the “values for which American democracy stood.”²³

Reflecting on the beginning of cultural relations, Charles A. Thomson and Walter H.C. Laves in *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* trace its origin to the 19th century and underline the pioneer role played by private and philanthropic organizations.²⁴ They explain that governments felt the need to intervene in the field for three reasons. The first was “the advance of science, democracy, and education which

²³ American Assembly, *Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall 1963), 17.

²⁴ Charles A. Thomson and Walter H.C. Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963).

had accompanied the industrial revolution.”²⁵ The second reason was because of “the extension of political democracy [which] had enhanced the importance of common people everywhere.”²⁶ Finally the third reason has a lot to do with access to education. They explain that education has endowed the larger portion of educated public with new knowledge:

The voice of the people was increasingly heard in the formulation of foreign policy. Thus the growing importance of the new public its new knowledge and power, joined to the stepped-up facilities for international communications, led to the demand that peoples should speak to peoples. This demand was reflected in the adoption by governments of programs to reach the minds and hearts of other peoples.²⁷

If the above listed books provide a general understanding on the origin and evolution of the practice, the following category gives an insight on the specificities of bilateral cultural relations. The first cases in U.S. cultural relations were with Latin America, China, Germany, and Japan to name but a few. These studies help understand the component and purposes of these first programs and shed light on some of their shortcomings. J. Manuel Espinosa’s *Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy: 1936-1948* fits in this category.²⁸ Here the author analyzes one of the first programs in the beginning of the American cultural relations that is the Latin American program. The book is informative by nature and helps explains how the program took shape. He notes in the book how the bases of this program were initiated at the Conference of Buenos Aires in 1936. In an assessment of a decade and half of the program he noted how the success of that pioneering effort of people-to-people

²⁵ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations*, 31.

²⁶ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations*, 32.

²⁷ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations*, 32

²⁸ J. Manuel, Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1936-1948* (Washington: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Dept. of State, 1977).

diplomacy opened a new road to international understanding and “established the basic policies and patterns which, in the following decades, have governed the Department-sponsored educational and cultural program.”²⁹

The Chinese program that followed in 1942 inspired from key elements of the cooperation with Latin America. In *America's Cultural Experiment in China: 1942-1949*, Wilma Fairbank studies the U.S. cultural policy with China before the communists under Mao's leadership took control of the country. This program officially started on January 14th, 1941 and concluded with the end of the Fulbright program in 1949. It was characterized by the exchange of experts from the U.S. going to China and Chinese coming to America. There were also exchanges of important scientific journals in microfilm format. This program was modeled out of the Latin American experience but soon the peculiarities of the realities of the Chinese situation convinced the State Department of the necessity to adapt its cultural policy to the country. Fairbanks characterizes these years as the period of “trial and error” and argued that the U.S. cultural relations in those years that were perceived more as a government public relations service. For Fairbank this shouldn't have been the case. They recommend that interdependence that characterizes the postwar international relations reality guide any future U.S. policy toward China. The Latin American experience and the Chinese cooperation paved the way for the U.S. cultural policy in Germany after the defeat of the Nazis.

Like Espinoza and Fairbanks, Henry Kellerman, in *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program between the United States and Germany 1945-1954*, assesses ten years of cultural exchanges with

²⁹ Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, 319.

between the U.S. and Germany and concludes that these exchanges had a positive on how both countries perceived each other. The first contacts between U.S. and Germany occurred as a consequence of the respect and admiration that American scholars had for the German science and scholarship in the pre-war time.³⁰ The situation changed after the defeat of the Nazis that caused the occupation and the administration of the Federal Republic of Germany by the U.S. and their Allies. Cultural exchanges during the occupation were rather part of the overall U.S. policy during the occupation. Evaluating the U.S. program in Germany, Kellerman asks whether the result met the expectations. He asked “whether and to what extent the U.S. investment in the program had any tangible, lasting, and traceable effect.”³¹ His answer to that question is nuanced although it acknowledges a certain positive impact of the cooperation on the Germans and the political institutions of the country. He observed that based on “testimonials by high public officials in Germany and in the United States; of institutional evaluations; of reports and letters written by sponsors and participants” there is evidence of the effectiveness of the program especially on the institutional reform in post Nazi Germany.³² But in his views, although personal and national pride in Germany may prevent many observers from acknowledging any correlation between the exchanges and the post Nazi reform, there is evidence of U.S. influence on the “governmental system, in national legislation, in administrative procedures, in academic life, educational institutions and so on.”³³

³⁰ Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program between the United States and Germany, 1945-1954* (Washington: Dept. of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 1978), 3.

³¹ Kellerman, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 209.

³² Kellerman, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 209.

³³ Kellerman, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 210-211, 216.

A third group of publications focuses on the Cold War and studies it as a cultural battlefield and usually claim that culture made an undeniable contribution to the demise of communism in Eastern European or the Soviet Union. They can be ranked as case studies but they are limited in scope, examining mainly cultural relations as instrument of foreign policy and propaganda during the Cold War. Hixson's *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961*, for example, shows how the collapse of Soviet Union was partly due to U.S. cultural infiltration in the Soviet Union. Hixson wrote in that "Washington sought to destabilize the Soviet and East European Communist Party (C.P.) regimes, first through "psychological warfare" and then through an ultimately more effective, albeit longer term, program of gradual infiltration. Despite misperceptions and a lack of priority accorded to such efforts, Washington had succeeded in parting the "Iron Curtain" by the end of the Eisenhower years."³⁴ As it appears, for Hixson, it was not an iron fist that helped disintegrate the Soviet system, rather it was cultural infiltration that over time complemented the other means used by the U.S. and the West to overcome the Soviet regime. This is shared by Richmond Yale in *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War* in which the author asks what caused communism to collapse and the cold war to come to a close? To answer that question, Yale went over different theses before concluding that cultural contact with the west played a major role in the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to him,

the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism were consequences of soviet contacts and exchanges with the west, and with the United States in particular, over the thirty-five years that followed the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953. Moreover, those exchanges in culture, education, information, science and technology were conducted by the United States openly, for the most part, under agreements concluded with Soviet government, and at a cost that was minuscule in comparison with

³⁴ Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, ix.

U.S expenditures for defense and intelligence over the same period. The result was an increase in Western influence among the people in Russian who count- the intelligentsia.³⁵

It is the evolution of these exchanges that are highlighted in the book. This valuable source of information on the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy supports the claim that although culture plays a complementary role in relations among nations, it does have a political impact that can go far beyond any tangible expectation.

The last category of books studies the history by some federal agencies, the role played by individuals in the evolution and development of U.S. cultural program. Here scholars choose to study either educational exchanges, exchanges of documents, the use and impact of jazz performers or other artistic modes of expression as instruments of public diplomacy. In *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*, Penny M. Von Eschen studies the use of Jazz performers as cultural ambassadors in the Cold war era. In the effort to counter the Soviet Union cultural offensive in Third world countries, the State Department capitalized on the success and popularity of a host of famous jazz performers like Louis Armstrong, Dizzie Gillespie, Duke Ellington and many others less famous. These artists lent their fame and talent to the government to show how the success of many among them (who were African- Americans) was the proof that America is place where all its citizens have the opportunities to uplift themselves.

The U.S. turned to jazz because unlike other genres, jazz is seen to reflect a truly American identity and the American system as the freedom of expression. Lisa Davenport studied jazz as an instrument of U.S. Cold War diplomacy and notes how the

³⁵ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), xiv.

damaging effect of violence in urban areas and racial discrimination in the fifties and the sixties forced the Eisenhower administration to seek for solutions to improve the image of the U.S. as a world leader abroad. But not only jazz or plastic arts generated interest among the scholars of U.S. cultural policy. Many also chose to write about the use of books and libraries as strategy to influence the elite in the third world particularly in Africa. Mary Niles Maack's article "Books and Libraries as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy in Francophone Africa during the Cold War," explains how books and libraries were used as part of U.S. cultural policy in French-speaking Africa during the Cold War. She observed that "Book donations, translation and publishing programs, and the creation of cultural center libraries were all means by which foreign governments sought to influence the African elite during the Cold War era."³⁶ As far as the former French colonies in Africa were concerned, their close economic and political ties with France put them "on the periphery of the ideological struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union."³⁷ But this fact did not prevent foreign powers including the U.S. from being drawn to those countries and to use "books as a significant element of their cultural diplomacy."³⁸ Unlike Maack who focused her studies on francophone Africa, Karen B. Bell's chapter "Developing a "sense of community": U.S. Cultural Diplomacy and the Place of Africa during the early Cold War period, 1953-64"³⁹ argues that American cultural policy in the Cold War aimed at preventing the spread of soviet as a way to contain communism by creating a sense of community with west African nations.

³⁶ Mary Niles Maack, "Books and Libraries as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy In Francophone Africa During the Cold War," *Libraries & Culture* 36 (Winter 2001): 58-59.

³⁷ Mary Niles Maack, "Books and Libraries," 59.

³⁸ Mary Niles Maack, "Books and Libraries," 59.

³⁹ Karen B. Bell, "Developing a "sense of community" : U.S. Cultural Diplomacy and the Place of Africa during the early Cold War period, 1953-64" in *The United States and West Africa : Interactions and Relations* ed. Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 125-146.

The above listed books show from different perspectives the importance of culture in U.S. foreign policy. But out of all only a handful of them directly address Africa as an area of interest and importance in the U.S. cultural policy. These are Mary Niles Maack, Karen B. Bell, Lisa Davenport and Penny M. Von Eschen who touch on Africa related issues. This limited publication on Africa makes it a real challenge for this project to find enough secondary sources addressing U.S. cultural policy with sub-Saharan African countries. On another level almost none of these books used a specific theory in their study of the American cultural relations. Only Karen B.Bell draws on Josiah Royce's concept of "beloved community" in her Chapter to discuss the main objective behind the U.S. cultural relations with West Africa in the early Cold War period .While this project does not argue for the necessity to use a theory, it somehow offers an alternative approach to look at U.S. cultural relations by considering how it can potentially contribute to enhancing the appeal of the country abroad. This explains the choice of soft power as conceptual framework.

Power is essential in international relations, because it conditions states' behavior and can coerce or influence their behavior. In his important book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Joseph Nye notes the changing nature of the concept of power in International Relations. "Power is like the weather," he explains, "Everyone depends on it and talks about it, but few understand it."⁴⁰ Nye defines power as "the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. But there are several ways to affect the behavior of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract them and co-opt them to what you

⁴⁰ Nye, *Soft Power*, 2.

want.”⁴¹ Nye thus distinguishes among military power, that he characterizes as coercive; economic power, that he finds inducing; and soft power that in his explanation is attractive.

Nye argued that the soft power of a country is based on three main resources: “its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (where it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).”⁴² Culture, he argued, is not only commercially transmitted but can also be transmitted “through personal contacts, visits, and exchanges.” He explains that “the ideas and values that America exports in the minds of more than half a million foreign students who study every year in American universities and then return to their home countries, or in the mind of the Asian entrepreneurs who return home after succeeding in Silicon Valley, tend to reach elites with power.”⁴³ Nye thus confers a certain fluidity to culture, fluidity that goes beyond the control of any governmental policy or institutions.

If culture is a source of soft power, then what is culture? How does cultural representation operate? What role does human agency play in cultural relations? And how do governmental institutions participate in the promotion of a national culture abroad? How is culture understood, particularly in the context of interstate relations? Nye Defines culture as “the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society. It has many manifestations. It is common to distinguish between high culture such as literature, art, and education, which appeals to elites, and popular culture, which focuses

⁴¹ Nye, *Soft Power*, 2.

⁴² Nye, *Soft Power*, 11.

⁴³ Nye, *Soft Power*, 13.

on mass entertainment.”⁴⁴ Nye distinguishes then between elite and popular culture. This distinction is important when a government is devising its cultural policy as it is shown later on in this dissertation. For example, when sending artists abroad the State Department set the guideline to be followed in selecting the members of the audience. Similar practices can be observed with the cultural policy of the former Soviet Union who gave priority to intellectual and opinion leader over the common man in identifying their target audience. The most important thing to retain at this level is the key terms of his definition that are values and practices. Projecting values and practices that appeal to foreign elite is an effective way to use soft power. Here one may ask what is to be understood by value and how can it be expressed or represented.

The notion of culture as value is also shared by Richard Johnson et al. in *The Practice of Cultural Studies*. These authors assert that culture is perceived as value understood as the aesthetic and moral values of art, literature music. These values according to them are not the one that determines the sense of belonging in or that exclusion from these fields. For example, it is not the kind of value that make Ernest Hemingway a great writer or literature man but it is the kind of values that make *The Old Man and the Sea* an important and beautiful piece of literature accessible to an average reader who can appreciate the beauty of the prose without being necessarily an English major student or a literary critique. Culture is also viewed, they argue, narrowly as the policy of large-scale institutions like government. Here it is more about organization and

⁴⁴ Nye, *Soft Power*, 11.

regulation of a particular field of conduct.⁴⁵ Culture as a cohesion is associated with policy and is viewed as a source of social cohesion and belonging.⁴⁶

Scholar Tony Bennett took on the question of the inclusion of institutional policy (or governmental dimension) in the forms and fields of culture. He believes that in order to do so, there should be a review of the definition of 'culture' as it is traditionally understood. "The most important single influence here," he explains, "has been Raymond Williams' work, especially in the distinction it proposes between culture as "a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group" and culture, in its more restricted sense, as "works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity."⁴⁷ Bennett suggests:

Culture is more cogently conceived, I want to suggest, when thought of as a historically specific set of institutionally embedded relations of government in which the forms of thought and conduct of extended populations are targeted for transformation-in part via the extension through the social body of the forms, techniques, and regiments of aesthetic and intellectual culture.⁴⁸

Bennett thus recognizes that a government does have a role to play in the culture of a nation. It implies that culture is dependent on the relations between institutions and a group of populations. It suggests the transformative role played by these institutions in shaping through their policy the thought and cultural practices of a certain population. Government does not define the culture of a nation but it participates in the process of its transformation through policy making whether on a large scale or on a smaller scale. The challenge of this way of conceiving culture is to apply it to relations among nations

⁴⁵ Richard Johnson, et al, *The Practice of Cultural Studies* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE, 2004),11.

⁴⁶ Johnson et al., *The Practice of Cultural Studies*, 11.

⁴⁷ Tony Bennett, "Putting Policy into Cultural Studies" in *Cultural Studies* Lawrence Grossberg et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 25.

⁴⁸ Bennett, *Cultural Studies* 26 -27.

without raising questions about cultural imperialism. If as Bennett explains it “thought and conduct” are targeted for transformation, for this to be achieved in the international context, the government policy will intentionally create the conditions that facilitate the process of transformation.

For example, by legislating the conditions of acquiring a new technology like the computer or a cell phone, the government is participating in the process of transformation of a national culture, changing the patterns of communication in that society. Applied to the relations among nations, cultural policy may involve the decision of a superpower to influence political values or social habits of citizens of other nation-states. This could happen through an influence on the way a particular group of people design their government institution or their social organization. The promotion of western democratic values in third world countries would be a good example here. Somehow in this case there is the absence of the historical relations that exist between the population of a country and the institutions that govern the country. This makes cultural policy at international level, especially if considered from the perspective of Tony Bennett, an inter-states matter. A superpower will act on the type of transformation a national government of less developed country would wish for the well being of its population. This would occur through the mechanism of cooperation, the import and export of cultural goods and more importantly through its policy of receptivity of foreign ideas.

From the above definitions it appears that values, ideas and meaning are essential in the notion of culture. These values and ideas influence the daily practices that give meaning for a particular group of populations, thereby helping define their way of life and their identity. Having defined culture, one may ask why is culture important in the

relations among nations and why has it become such an important aspect of many countries' foreign policy especially after World War II?

Differences in values and ideas could create conflict among nations and jeopardize the chances of building a peaceful world unless each actor recognizes its responsibility and act accordingly to create conditions of mutual understanding with other actors. Exchanges, dialogue, and other forms of contacts among actors of the international system are thus important to prevent misunderstandings and a distorted or inaccurate perception of the other or his values. A distorted perception of one actor in international relations by another quite often leads to the rejection of that actor's values thereby creating antagonism and conflicts. Cultural understanding is thus important for the stability of international relations as explained by Dominique Joaquin-Berdal et al:

Cultures influence world politics in numerous ways. Cultures partly constitute the international system: they make up people's ethnic, national and political identities. Also, often ingrained within different cultures are alternative visions of how the world system should be regulated. Within the international system, the goals that actors seek to achieve, as well as the means with which they try to do so, are informed by the cultures to which these actors belong.⁴⁹

Joaquin-Berdal et al. explore the influence of culture on the "alternative visions of how the world should be regulated."⁵⁰ One may argue that at the core of the ideological battle of the Cold War was the battle over which vision of the international system should prevail. Each of the two sides involved in the competition was fighting for the prevalence of its political and ideological values whether it was the democratic liberal values or the ideology of communism. This ideological battle altered the nobility attached

⁴⁹ Dominique Joaquin-Berdal et al, "Introduction" to *Culture in World Politics* edited by Dominique Joaquin-Berdal, Andrew Oros, and Marco Verweij (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 7.

⁵⁰ Joaquin-Berdal et al, "Introduction," 7.

to cultural relations viewed as a way to promote international peace. What is cultural relations and how does it relate to the notion of soft power?

The phrase cultural relations refer to interactions between cultures whether these interactions are direct or indirect. Akira Iriye explains that “Direct interactions include physical encounters with people and objects of another culture. Indirect relations are more subtle, involving such things as a person's ideas and prejudices about another people, or cross-national influences in philosophy, literature, music, art, and fashion.”⁵¹ Cultural relations among nations or groups of people do not need the intervention of government to occur. Interactions between people have always occurred in the history of nations without the intervention of governments. But the interactions at stake in this study is the one in which the government is involved. People’s interaction although cultural may not be subjected to any political agenda. Governments’ interventions influence the nature of contact individuals have and quite often place the interactions in the frame of a specific agenda. This is why Akira argues that “when cultural interactions deal with such matters as officially sponsored exchange programs or dissemination of books and movies, they may be called cultural policies.”⁵² Since this dissertation studies the exchanges sponsored by the U.S. government, its focus is therefore U.S. cultural policy in West Africa. The objective of the cultural policy of a nation is to correct “the image of that nation formed abroad by those who know it only through its soldiers or its diplomats or

⁵¹ Akira Iriye “Cultural Relations and Policies” *Encyclopedia of the New American Nation*
<http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/A-D/Cultural-Relations-and-Policies.html> Accessed October 7th, 2009.

⁵² Akira Iriye Cultural Relations and Policies *Encyclopedia of the New American Nation*
<http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/A-D/Cultural-Relations-and-Policies.html> Accessed October 7th, 2009.

its men of business—through its political and military and commercial enterprise in foreign markets and in foreign places.”⁵³

To avoid confusion between cultural relations and related notions like propaganda, there is the need to define what propaganda stands for. Nicholas Cull et al give a good definition of propaganda as:

The deliberate attempt to influence public opinion through the transmission of ideas and values from a specific purpose that has been consciously devised to serve self-interest of the propagandist, either directly or indirectly. Whereas information presents its audience with straightforward statement of facts, propaganda packages those facts in order to elicit a certain response. Whereas education—at least in what I take to be the liberal notion of education—teaches us how to think in order to enable us to make up our own minds, propaganda dictates what one should think.⁵⁴

More explicitly, the CIA when reporting on the Soviet and communist cultural policy in

Third World countries distinguished between cultural activities and propaganda:

Communist foreign propaganda activities involve the manipulation of mass media to disseminate information and ideas designed to obtain the maximum possible support for communist policies. For example, a list of these propaganda activities may include broadcasting, publishing, news agencies activities, film showing and exhibit. Communist cultural activities, in contrast, seek to depict Communist artistic and literary achievements and include the exchange performing troupes and literary works.⁵⁵

Propaganda has turned into a negative term although originally the word referred to dissemination of information. Because of the negative connotations that usually come with the word, propaganda will not be used as often as cultural relations or cultural

⁵³ Macleish, Introduction to *The Cultural Approach* by McMurry and Lee, ix.

⁵⁴ Cull, Nicholas John, David Holbrook Culbert, and David Welch. *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2003), xix.

⁵⁵ CIA Intelligence Report No 118, *Communist Cultural and Propaganda Activities in the Less Developed Countries*, 3. http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp accessed 6/19/2009

activities. From these definitions it appears that propaganda can be part of cultural relations program but cultural relations do not mean propaganda.

Cultural relations programs share overall the same characteristics. After comparing the French, the British, the German, the American and other programs, Ruth McMurry and Muna Lee list what they see as the main characteristics of cultural program:

1. / from the beginning, most programs of cultural relations abroad have been initiated and controlled or supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Foreign Office, in which budgets a large proportion of the funds for carrying them is placed. In only a few cases were they initiated by the Ministry of Education, although this ministry usually cooperates closely with the Foreign Office cultural projects abroad. By and large, the programs have become an important arm of foreign policy. 2. / Each country has a strong belief in the importance of its own culture and a desire to have other countries know and appreciate this culture. 3. / each country believes that the improvement of cultural relations leads to better economic and political relations. 4. / Each country centers much of its effort in the teaching of the national language (French, German, and English) in foreign lands as a basis for better cultural and economic relations. 5. / Each country, having decided to develop a program of cultural relations with other nations, has given it strong moral and financial support. All have recognized the need for a permanent program of cultural relations abroad to carry out certain of their foreign policies.⁵⁶

As important as these characteristics are, there is an important footnote for the list to be complete, the signature of cooperation agreements between two or more countries. These bilateral or multilateral agreements are necessary for cultural policy to be carried out legally without any suspicion of cultural imperialism. They make a big difference in how a state or a government intervenes in the field of cultural relations. If individuals' rapports or contacts are at the heart of cultural relations, through "treaties of friendship or immigration or emigration policies," governments make those contacts much easier and

⁵⁶ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 4-5.

perhaps more effective.⁵⁷ But government intervention is not confined to the legislative or facilitating role, governments' cultural programs takes different forms.

In their study on government cultural activities, McMurry and Lee identify “ the establishment and support of cultural centers or institutes and schools in foreign countries; the interchange of technical experts, professors, teachers, students, and leaders in various fields of intellectual and artistic expression; the exchange of books and other printed materials, lectures, concerts, and exhibitions.”⁵⁸ They also note how radio, motion pictures and new media were increasingly used as part of the means to present the national cultural identity abroad.⁵⁹ If in the postwar context these activities and media were very useful and effective, they appear somewhat obsolete today with the advent of internet and other faster modes of communication. This poses real challenges to the new approach governments should adopts in its cultural policy. But as this dissertation is limited to a specific time period, issues related to the challenges posed by new form of communications will not be addressed here.

Methodology and Scope

As an American studies project, this dissertation adopts an interdisciplinary approach and draws on the methodologies used in history, cultural studies, and international relations. It uses primary sources collected through archival research in Benin and Ghana and in library of Michigan State University. Without the daily newspaper like “la nation,” “*Aube Nouvelle*” in Benin and the “*Daily Graphic*” in Ghana, it would not have been easy to find out how news men felt about their experience in the

⁵⁷ Charles Alexander Thomson and Walter H.C. Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1963), 23.

⁵⁸ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 5.

⁵⁹ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 5

United States. These sources were complemented by official publications, dissertations and memoirs at the Universite d'Abomey-Calavi and the University of Ghana, Legon. The statistical data on U.S. educational exchanges and volunteers would not have been possible without official records and publications available at the library of Michigan State University. Among these were the records of the Fulbright Commission on educational exchange, the State Department publications, Congressional reports and other official documents. It is important to mention how the Peace Corps website has been a great asset for statistical data on the number of volunteers dispatched abroad.

The project is primarily the study of two cases of bilateral cooperation that is the relations between the United States and two distinct third world countries of Africa, Benin and Ghana. Consequently it emphasizes state-to-state relations and uses official documents like bilateral agreements and other relevant primary sources in its analysis. However, cultural exchanges involve public diplomacy. In the explanations of Nicholas Cull, "public diplomacy is an international actor's attempt to conduct its foreign policy by engaging with foreign publics."⁶⁰ A mere act of signing a bilateral agreement is not enough to reach the goals set for a bilateral cooperation. Individuals are important as active or passive agents in the delivery of the cooperation. This brings another level of analysis to the study that is the individual to individual level. Here personal accounts, individual experiences are important for this kind of analyses. But there is a third possible level which is related to the relations between state and individuals. It deals with the impact of the government on the foreign public opinion through the exchange of artists but also through exhibition, photo display and the distribution of free literature and

⁶⁰ J. Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xv.

the use of broadcasting media. Today with the development of digital media there is no boundary to that type of interaction between a government and foreign audience.

The dissertation covers the period between 1957 and 1991 that is the time between the independence of Ghana (1957) and the fall of Soviet Union (1991) the other major power who was engaged in a Cold War with the United States. The time frame was chosen because decolonization in Africa happened in the context of the Cold War when the two superpowers were vying for ideological influence in several third world countries. It is primarily the study of the cultural relations as conducted by the government of the United States. Identifying a specific theory about cultural relations is a challenge that has not been fully solved. There is no specific theory about cultural relations among nations. The interdisciplinary nature of the subject makes it difficult to identify which theory better applies to the study of culture among nations. However as this project is looking at how culture may influence the behavior of other international actors through, the notion of soft power seems appropriate and therefore will be referred to as the main theory. It should be made clear however that the primary objective is the study of cultural relations.

This project does not intend to provide answer to all the questions relevant to U.S. cultural relations with West Africa, the magnitude of the task and the limited resources available discourage any such ambitions. In its modest way, it aims at contributing to the understanding of how after a period of indifference, hesitancy and ambivalence, the United States acknowledged the changes that were taking place in the colonial territories of West Africa and indulged in a Cold War against the spread of communism in those areas. It is a contribution to the understanding of the way cultural containment played out

on the African front. It seeks to explore what Walter Hixson called “the transmission and dissemination of culture across international boundaries” by considering among others, the “sharing and transmitting of consciousness...communication of memory, ideology, emotions, lifestyle, scholarly and artistic works, and other symbols.”⁶¹ In retrospect the transmission of a lot of these values listed by Hixson occurred during the period considered here especially the sharing of ideology. For many of these values to be easily and lawfully transmitted, there should be a favorable political environment either at internal or at international level. This makes thus cultural policy largely inseparable from foreign policy in general. Operating on this idea, the present project will start with the survey of the political context in which U.S. program was conceived. This logic of understanding cultural relations through the political environment that create them guides the content and structures each of the chapters of this project that are briefly summarized as follows:

Chapter 1, “U.S. Postwar Foreign policy: Assuming a Global Leadership,” studies mainly the evolution of U.S. program of cultural relations after the Second World War. Since that evolution cannot be understood unless analyzed within the frame of the general changes that occurred in the U.S. foreign policy after the war the chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section examines how moral, economic, security, military and strategic reasons were behind the U.S. decision to abandon its traditional isolationism and embrace a policy of intervention. It analyzes how the Kennan *Long Telegram* of 1946, the Churchill Iron Curtain’s speech, the Truman doctrine, and the adoption of NSC- 68 all informed the postwar approach to what was then perceived as

⁶¹ Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), x.

the U.S. responsibility in assuming a global leadership. In assuming that role the U.S. claimed that its objective was to protect the free world against the rising threat of totalitarian communist regime. The chapter analyzes in the second section the evolution of the U.S. cultural relations program. It traces the birth of the program to the prewar era and identifies the different agencies and institutions that have shaped its development from 1938 onward. The chapter shows how, although apolitical in theory, the different international crises have influenced not only the institutional make up of the program but also its objective. Agencies like the Office of War Information, the Coordinator for Inter American Affairs have all been reorganized into a new interim agency after the war. The different exchange programs and cultural activities initiated by the State Department became part of the U.S. propaganda machine although the official rhetoric avoided the term propaganda. This section also shows how the containment of Soviet and communist expansion influenced the development of the postwar U.S. cultural relations program. New federal agencies were thus created and the program was expanded to many regions of the world notably the decolonized areas among which the African continent. By the time of African Decolonization in the 1960's, almost all the mechanism of the execution of U.S. cultural policy were already in place.

Chapter 2, "U.S. Relations with Africa: From Minimalism to Ideological Battleground," studies specifically the rising stake for U.S. in Africa. It shows how initially, the United States' government, for different reasons political or strategic, stayed away from the African continent and from nearly all Africa related issues before the Second World War. This period of indifference contrasted with that of decolonization and independence that helped the continent gained gradual visibility in U.S. foreign

policy. These changes in the political situation of Africa brought Washington to have a different approach from its traditional, very minimalist attitude toward the continent. As a result of Washington's change of policy the African bureau was created in 1958. The chapter links U.S. intervention on the continent to the competition caused by the growing influence of the Soviet Union and its communist ideology in many emerging nations of Africa. Thus U.S.-Africa relations in the Cold War years could not be dissociated with the policy of the containment of communism. As the Soviet Union provided educational scholarships to citizens of many African countries and signing cultural agreements with many of them, African countries, so did the U.S. extend its cultural program to African countries, sending many artists, musicians, speakers to these countries while welcoming many Africans to the U.S. for visit, study and others. The chapter examines the role played by these agents of cold war and the impact of the volunteer while addressing the racial question and how it presents a threat to the promotion of a positive image of the U.S. in Africa.

Chapter 3, "U.S. Cultural Relations with a Peripheral African Country: The Case of Republic of Benin," analyzes how the political crisis in the relations between the two countries affected the cultural exchanges program. The chapter explores U.S. cultural relations with the Republic of Benin as peripheral country, to use the Mary Niles phrase, but also as an example of African Marxist regimes. It first examines the political evolution of the country before analyzing its cultural relations with the U.S. It goes over the history of the political relations between the two countries and notes how these political relations affected the country's cultural exchanges with the United States of America. Through a study of the activities of the U.S. Cultural center in Benin and the

accounts of students and media men like Rene Ewagnignon and J. Vieyra, who have visited the U.S., the chapter analyzes how the cultural programs affected opinion makers and their perceptions of the U.S. as a country and the U.S. as a civilization or culture. The study of their construction of what U.S. image along with the impact of the Peace Corps volunteers on the life of rural populations give a hints on the effectiveness of U.S. cultural policy in generating U.S. soft power in the Benin .

Chapter 4, “U.S. Cultural Relations with Africa: The Case of a Pivotal State, Ghana,” examines U.S. cultural relations with Ghana between the independence of the country and the fall of the Soviet Union as a world superpower. It will have an in-depth look at the evolution of the cooperation between the two countries and analyze to what extent their political relations affected U.S. cultural policy with Ghana. Ghana was the first sub-Sahara African countries to gain independence in 1957. As a nationalist leader and a former Lincoln University and University of Pennsylvania student Nkrumah persona influenced the relations between the U.S. and Ghana countries in the first years after the independence. Ghana independence and Tanzania were the first African countries to have received the Peace Corps volunteers. The peculiarities of its position on the African continent and the presence of a non negligible community of African-American plus the commonality of language with the U.S. may have generated more cultural proximity with the latter making cultural relations more possible than the first case studied that is Benin. But such a contention would be neglecting the internal political situation in Ghana that has also had its share of political instability. Whether this has negatively influenced its relations with the U.S. is one of the questions this chapter addresses.

Chapter 5, “The Promises and the Limits of Soft Power in Africa” compares U.S. relations with Ghana and Benin and evaluate how exchanges of students, volunteers and the jazz diplomacy influenced the perception of the U.S. in the two countries. It also takes a critical looks at these programs by analyzing through them the promises and the limits of U.S. soft power in the period studied. The chapter touches on the conflicts that impeded U.S. exchanges from generating long lasting peaceful political relations with these two countries. These were the crisis in Congo, the apartheid situation in South Africa, the Angola and the controversial role the U.S. intelligence played in many crises that did not facilitate the promotion of peaceful relations on one hand between U.S, and Ghana and on the other between the U.S. and Benin.

The dissertation ends with a conclusion that summarizes the main ideas of the project and questions the future of U.S. soft power in the post cold war Africa. It also asks what impact the Obama presidency could have on the future of U.S.-Africa relations. This structure helps understand how the U.S. cultural program was created and how it has been extended to African countries. By starting with the change in U.S. postwar foreign policy, this structure hopes to provide a good historical and political background information about the international context in which the two cases that will be studied occurred and evolved. The structure of the dissertation thus helps trace the political and spatial evolution of the cultural policy from its inception to its adjustment to the Cold War context. To better understand how the U.S. postwar cultural diplomacy evolved, this dissertation will thus start with the study of the political evolution that led the country to abandon isolationism and embrace a policy of global leadership.

CHAPTER 1

U.S. POSTWAR FOREIGN POLICY: ASSUMING A GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

This chapter studies the change of policy that occurred in U.S. foreign relations after World War II and its implications for the U.S. program of cultural relations. The chapter is divided in two sections, the first section examines the adoption of the policy of containment after the Second World War and the second section deals essentially with the evolution of U.S. program of cultural relations from its beginnings to its adjustment to the Cold War context.

The U.S. and the Soviet Union became two superpowers competing ideologically in the postwar years in many parts of the world. Unlike the Soviet Union, the U.S. reached a military and economic development that in the words of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, was never before matched in human history.¹ This new level of development combined with the changing balance of power in the postwar world, the destruction of Europe and the rise of the Soviet Union as an expansive, ideological global power, led the United States to revise its traditionally isolationist attitude towards world affairs and adopt a policy that will prevent the expansion of communist ideology backed by Moscow.

Section I: Devising a Policy of Containment

The adoption of containment in the late 40's occurred as a major change in U.S. postwar foreign policy. This change was brought about by a combination of factors (economic, military development) but more importantly it came as a response to the perceived threat of the Soviet Union ideological expansion first in Europe and gradually in other parts of the world. Containment marked the end of isolationism, a principle

¹ Winston Churchill Centre *Sinews of Peace* (Iron Curtain)
<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=429> (accessed March 23rd, 2009)

drawn from the ideas of George Washington that has influenced the American foreign policy for about a century and half. Isolationism can be explained as the deliberate choice by the U.S. to refrain from entangling in world affairs and follow its own political destiny. In his farewell address, George Washington warned his fellow citizens about alliances and called for the United States to stay away from European affairs:

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.²

A close reading of this statement suggests that Washington does not deny that the U.S. maintains trade ties with other nations however these ties should not be followed by strong political entanglements. But if there were any engagements formed at the foundation of the Republic, these engagements should be respected and fulfilled with good faith. Analyzed within its historical context, isolationism reveals that the founders of the young Republic had two major concerns that, in retrospect, justified the choice to stay away from Europe. The first concern was that because it was the only democracy in existence in the late 18th century, the U.S. could not expect any sympathy from Europeans for its liberal ideology and the second concern was about the serious challenges of nation building that America was confronted with.³ Therefore the

² Avalon Project, *George Washington Farewell Address 1796*
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp (accessed March 6th, 2009).

³ Thomas M. Magstadt, *An Empire if you Can Keep it: Power and Principle in American Foreign Policy*

imperatives of nation building and that of the protection of its political system combined with the fact that “a vast ocean protected America from Europe’s armies and insulated it from Europe’s wars,” justified the rationale behind isolationism.⁴

This doctrine is important in the study of U.S. foreign policy because it left its marks on the American foreign policy for a century and half. No other political doctrine has shaped the way America interacts with the rest of the world as isolationism had for such a long time. Isolationism was sometimes reinterpreted, as historian Ernst Van Beugel observes, or expanded but the core ideas have always remained: “other words would be used, different ideologies preached, various actions adjusted to different circumstances, but Washington’s words formed the basis for the famous doctrine of isolationism which for such a long period would dominate American Foreign Policy.”⁵ Washington’s original statement was concerned with the political fate of the young republic among other nations particularly U.S. relations with the old continent of Europe. But Presidents James Monroe and Theodore Roosevelt through their interpretation expanded the application of isolationism to the whole continent of America.

In his annual message to Congress in December 1823, President James Monroe stated that it was not part of the United States’ policy to intervene or take part in any conflict that opposes the European powers and that the U.S. would have nothing to do with the existing colonies of the European powers. On the other hand, European powers did not have anything to do with the Republics of the Americas as far as colonization or

(Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, c2004), 41.

⁴ Magstadt, *An Empire if you Can Keep it*, 41.

⁵ Ernst Van Beugel, *From Marshall Aid to Atlantic Partnership: European Integration as a Concern of American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Elsevier Pub. Co., 1966), 3.

other related matters were concerned.⁶ Any such attempts, according to Monroe would be considered dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States. That declaration, known ever since as the Monroe doctrine, became famous for closing the door to European influence in the Americas. In doing so it expanded the initial doctrine of isolationism to the continent of America and consecrated the rise of the U.S. as a regional power. Somehow it is important to note that if the Monroe Doctrine extended isolationism to Latin America, it was not necessarily for altruistic reasons. It was done for mainly strategic, national interest and national security purposes. Besides, the Monroe Doctrine would not have been effective if Spain had not lost its position as a great power and if it was not implicitly supported by the British.⁷

President Theodore Roosevelt also expanded isolationism by reemphasizing the ideas of the Monroe Doctrine in his fifth annual message in 1905. In his address Roosevelt explained that it was part of the duty of the United States to intervene in the Caribbean and Latin American countries to protect life, property, and to bring order. Together the Monroe doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary consolidated U.S. isolationism while asserting its rise as a regional power.

But despite its apparent dominance on U.S. foreign policy, isolationism did not necessarily create a consensus among the Americans for over time the debate about U.S. foreign policy has generated different schools of thought. Historian Esmond Wright distinguishes among those who share and support the ideas of Washington that is the isolationists and those who have an alternative vision about how U.S. should interact with the rest of the world that is the Internationalist.

⁶ Wade Richard C. Wade, Howard B. Wilder, Louise C. Wade, *A History of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, c.1968), 222.

⁷ Magstadt, *An Empire if you Can Keep It*, 48.

In his explanations, isolationists use a set of arguments to justify the claim that America should refrain from being involved in European affairs. They claim that the U.S. is geographically isolated and enjoys therefore an inexpugnable position against any foreign attacks. In addition they argue that the U.S. can be “economically self-sufficient, and does not need a policy of Free Trade.”⁸ Beside in their analysis, the cosmopolitan nature of the American racial and ethnic fabric commands that the country remains isolated to help “fuse its many people into one, to find its own special character and culture.”⁹ To these claims, internationalists respond that the development of modern means of transportation made the ocean that separates the U.S. from the rest of the world, particularly Europe, a possible path of conquest and not a barrier that could separate the country from the other parts of the world. They argue that despite its economic success, the U.S. still depend on the European economy, especially U.S. farmers and cattle raisers who need European markets for their surplus of crops. To complete their arguments, internationalists draw the attention of isolationists on U.S. dependency on foreign nations for raw materials like “tin, nickel, tungsten, chrome, rubber, coffee, tea and tropical drugs, and increasingly for extra supplies of oil.”¹⁰ Wright notes that two main arguments hold against Isolationists, one historical and the other practical. He wrote that historically “the United States has always valued the promotion of democracy more than sterile isolationism.”¹¹ Such an ideological commitment is therefore perceived by Wright as against any idea of self withdrawal from world affairs. On a practical level Wright shares internationalists claim that “peace must be organized and protected by a system of

⁸ Esmond Wright, *The American Dream: from Reconstruction to Reagan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 282.

⁹ Wright, *The American Dream*, 282.

¹⁰ Wright, *The American Dream*, 282.

¹¹ Wright, *The American Dream*, 282.

collective security” but not by being negative like the isolationists.¹²

Along the same line, drawing from George Kennan’s view on U.S. national security, John Lewis Gaddis distinguishes between the Universalists and the Particularists. Gaddis explains that Americans who advocate universalism seek “congeniality through homogeneity, by working to make the world resemble the United states as much as possible, on the assumption that , once it did, nothing in it could pose a serious threat.”¹³ The ‘particularists’ argue that what is important is to ensure that the world does not threaten the United States, whether it resembles it or not.¹⁴ Security from the particularists’ perspective lies in diversity not uniformity, other countries do not need to resemble to the U.S. In fact U.S. can even live with a hostile country provided this country does not have the means to threaten its national security or interest. Universalists think harmony is possible and supports the claim that security will come through it while particularists see security rather through a “careful balancing of power, interests, and antagonisms.”¹⁵

Isolationists influenced U.S. foreign policy for over a century and half from Washington’s address in 1796 until the outbreak of the Second World War. At the end of World War I, isolationism was briefly abandoned when President Wilson took an active part in the Treaty of Versailles, issued the fourteenth points and played an important role in the resolution of the conflict and the creation of the League of Nations.¹⁶ But his participation in the creation of the League was not materialized since the U.S. Senate

¹² Wright, *The American Dream* 282-283.

¹³ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 26.

¹⁴ Gaddis, *Strategy of Containment*, 26.

¹⁵ Gaddis, *Strategy of Containment*, 26.

¹⁶ Wright, *The American Dream*, 283.

refused to ratify the treaty, an act that brought America back to isolationism until December 7th, 1941 when the Japanese attacked the Pearl Harbor military base during the Second World War. U.S. engagement in the war thereafter marked the beginning of its change of attitude toward international issues. This process culminated, after the war, with its rise as a global leader of the international crusade against communism.

If Pearl Harbor caused the U.S. to join the battle against the Axis during the Second World War, the choice to remain involved in world affairs after the conflict came as a result of the realization by the United States that “isolationism was no longer a possible alternative and that its future was tied to every part and section of the world.”¹⁷ The international realities changed so rapidly at the end the war with European countries facing very tough economic and social situations but mainly with the appearance of two new superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. These two countries became the two dominant players that influenced greatly the international relations of the postwar time. Unlike the destroyed Soviet Union, the U.S. came out of the war economically stronger and with better military potentials. In spite of these capabilities that gave him an edge over many other countries, including the Soviet Union, the U.S. was still hopeful for a one-world system free of division where every nation would be able to express and enjoy its free sovereignty.¹⁸ But ideological differences combined with a sequence of events soon transformed that hope into an illusion and brought about changes in the general conduct of the U.S. foreign policy notably in its attitude towards the Soviet Union.

At the Yalta Conference of February 1945 the three leaders Franklin D.

¹⁷Ernst Van Der Beugel, *From Marshall Aid to Atlantic Partnership; European Integration as a Concern of American Foreign Policy*, 17.

¹⁸Van Der Beugel, *From Marshall Aid to Atlantic Partnership* 17.

Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill agreed on the organization of free elections in the territories freed by the Allied forces.¹⁹ The non respect of this clause by the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe liberated by the Red Army made the West question Moscow's real intentions and its good faith in respecting the resolutions of Yalta. More and more the Soviets developed an attitude of imperial power particularly in Eastern Europe. In addition to this mounting Soviet threat, Western European countries were faced with very disastrous economic situations, their political system called for reform while their population was still under the fresh memory of one of the most terrible tragedies in human history.

The combination of the above described factors made the U.S. decide that despite the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, the new turn in Moscow attitude did not help maintaining good relations with it anymore. Such was the international context in which George Kennan published in 1947 the article "The Source of Soviet Conduct" in Foreign Affairs, an anonymous article signed Mister X which main purpose was to explain to the American public opinion the reason behind the change of U.S. attitude toward the Soviet Union and the necessity to adopt a new policy at international level. If the article has the historical privilege to have propelled the concept of containment to the attention of the American and international public opinion, its content was drawn from the more official document the *Long Telegram* of 1946. The *Telegram* laid the foundation for U.S.

¹⁹ Protocol of Proceedings of Crimea Conference, Section II Declaration of Liberated Europe: "To foster the conditions in which the liberated people may exercise these rights, the three governments will jointly assist the people in any European liberated state or former Axis state in Europe where, in their judgment conditions require, (a) to establish conditions of internal peace; (b) to carry out emergency relief measures for the relief of distressed peoples; (c) to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of Governments responsive to the will of the people; and (d) to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections."
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1945yalta.html> accessed 6/1/2010.

postwar policy of containment by depicting the Soviet regime as a potential danger to U.S. and its western allies security and interest and by strongly recommending that the U.S provide guidance and support for European countries.²⁰

George Kennan *Long Telegram*

In the *Long Telegram*²¹ sent on February, 22nd, 1946 Kennan explains how the Soviet Union's leaders viewed the post war international order and what they believed should be the Soviet Union policy both at national or international level. The Soviet perception of the world order after the war was highly influenced by their strong belief in the ideological division between socialism and capitalism and that both systems could not coexist or cooperate in peace. In Kennan's views, this perception was founded on the historical Russian sense of insecurity developed over the centuries as a consequence of the constant invasion the old agrarian, czarist Russian empire was subjected to. This belief, although factually inaccurate, determined the Soviet policy both at national and international levels. And to understand how the soviet power acted, it has to be viewed from its two levels of operation that were official and unofficial or subterranean.

Kennan explains that: "(1) Official plane represented by actions undertaken officially in name of Soviet Government; and (2) Subterranean plane of actions undertaken by agencies for which Soviet Government does not admit responsibility." But regardless of the level, the main objective of the soviet government was to increase the power and influence of their country at international level while snatching every opportunity to weaken the power and influence of western capitalist nations. For this

²⁰ Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 63.

²¹ Otherwise stated, most of the quotes in this section are from George Kennan's "The Long Telegram" <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm> accessed June 5th 2010.

purpose, they exploited differences among capitalist nations and encouraged their friends to do the same.

The implication of this division on official level was an “internal policy devoted to increasing in every way strength and prestige of Soviet state.” This resulted in an increase of military industrialization and in an impressive display of military power which purpose was to convince the international opinion of the soviet power while maintaining a policy of autarky devoted not to reveal its weakness. At international level, there were efforts to advance the official limits of the Soviet power either through official participation in international organizations or through assistance to territories still under colonial domination. Here the main goal was to weaken western influence and favor the rise to power of government that will be friendly toward the Soviet Union.

This official policy was complemented by several actions posed underground through a network of various groups, individuals or organizations acting on behalf of the Soviet power even though the latter did not publicly claim responsibility or refuse to claim responsibility for any of their actions. Among these underground agents were the “inner central core of Communist Parties in other countries,” the “rank and file of Communist Parties,” or a variety of national associations like labor unions, youth, women, or other social organizations, racial societies, cultural groups and other similar groups. These underground elements were used by Moscow to “undermine general political and strategic potential of major western powers.” In short Kennan concludes that, “all Soviet efforts on unofficial international plane will be negative and destructive in character, designed to tear down sources of strength beyond reach of Soviet control.” Summarizing the Soviet threat, Kennan described the Soviet regime as a political force

“committed fanatically to the belief that with us [U.S.] there can be no *modus vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure.”²² This diagnosis made, Kennan reassured however that the Soviet power was still weak compared to the West and could be dealt with without any military operation: “I would like to record my conviction that problem is within our power to solve--and that without recourse to any general military conflict.” For this to happen, Kennan emphasizes the role of education of the American people about the soviet system but also about the virtues of the American system and values.

He first recommended that the U.S. study carefully the new soviet system with a complete detachment then strongly recommended that the American public be educated about the Russian threat for much depended on the health and vigor of the American society. World communism, he explained was like a malignant parasite, which feeds only on diseased tissue. For him “Every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems of our own society, to improve self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit of our own people, is a diplomatic victory over Moscow.”²³ He recommended that the U.S. show guidance and leadership to other nations otherwise the Russian will take the American place:

We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in past. It is not enough to urge people to develop political processes similar to our own. Many foreign peoples, in Europe at

²² George Kennan, “George Kennan’s Long Telegram,” 1946 in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Vol. VI Eastern Europe: the Soviet Union(Washington D.C., U.S. government 1946, Printing Office, 1969), pp.696-703, 706-709.

²³ Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.), 63.

least, are tired and frightened by experiences of past, and are less interested in abstract freedom than in security. They are seeking guidance rather than responsibilities. We should be better able than Russians to give them this. And unless we do, Russians certainly will.²⁴

As this survey of the telegram shows, the term containment did not appear in the Telegram but the idea did. It was in the article “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” published the following year that deducting from all his explanations on the Soviet’s leaders outlook on world affairs, what policy they would adopt and how they intended to deal with the capitalists that Kennan explained how the U.S. should respond to the Soviet as follows:

In the light of the above, it will be clearly seen that the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.²⁵

Containment as enunciated by Kennan raised many questions about the means and the objective that this dissertation cannot claim to fully address. At this level what is important to ask question is how to understand containment and in what ways was the Soviet threat actually dealt with. These questions will be addressed further down. But first let’s notice that Kennan concerns about the Soviet behavior and his calls for responsible U.S. leadership were also shared by the former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in his ever since famous speech of March 1946 the “Sinews of Peace” commonly known as the “Iron Curtain Speech.”

²⁴ Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.), 63

²⁵ “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” By X <http://www.historyguide.org/europe/kennan.html> Accessed June 7th, 2010.

The Iron Curtain Speech

The former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who led the country through the dire moments of the war, was invited to address a group of graduates at the Westminster College in Fulton (Missouri) in March 1946. In his personal address, Churchill painted a negative picture of the situation in Europe and particularly stressed the fact that America has become a world power that should feel in addition to a sense of duty done (the victory over the Nazis), a sense of responsibility for the generations of the future. He declared that “the United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy. For with primacy in power is also joined an awe inspiring accountability to the future. If you look around you, you must feel not only the sense of duty done but also you must feel anxiety lest you fall below the level of achievement.”²⁶ This means that the victory was meaningless and less efficient unless the U.S. embraces the sense of responsibility that comes with it. After that observation, in one of the most quoted excerpts of his speech, Churchill drew the attention of the President and the audience on the gravity of the situation in Europe that is the division de facto of the continent:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.²⁷

In Churchill’s view the urgency of the above described situation called for a new

²⁶ Winston Churchill Centre *Sinews of Peace* (Iron Curtain)
<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=429> (accessed March 23rd, 2009)

²⁷ Winston Churchill Centre *Sinews of Peace* (Iron Curtain)
<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=429> (accessed March 23rd, 2009)

‘deal’ in Europe; that is the unity of all the European nations without any permanent outcast because “the safety of the world requires” it. That urgency also recommended that the U.S. shows no indifference to the duty and responsibility that history has made his. From this perspective, the Churchill’s speech appeared as a call for the abandonment of isolationism. It was also a call for U.S. leadership and a warning against Moscow policy. Above all, it was a call for caution and prudence but action against the new directions in Moscow. Churchill’s Speech and Kennan’s Telegram’s are two important documents that were very influential in the adoption of the Truman Doctrine an important political and strategic move toward to the implementation of the doctrine of the containment.

The implementation of the Containment policy

At this juncture it is probably important to ask what containment means. John Lewis Gaddis defines ‘Containment’ as “the word most often used to characterize United States Foreign and military Policy during the early years of the Cold War.”²⁸ Although accurate that definition tends to restricts the application of the containment policy only to the first decade that followed the end of the Second World War. In actual fact containment influenced U.S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War years that is from 1945 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Each president after Harry Truman adopted a variant of this policy, causing containment to expand geographically and embrace, apart from Europe, other areas in the World including Asia and Africa. Strategically, “Kennan’s original formula called for a fluid combination of diplomatic, economic, military and propaganda efforts around the Soviet perimeter.”²⁹ In application

²⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

²⁹ Simon Davis, and Joseph Smith, *The A to Z of the Cold War*, (A to Z guides, 8. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 118.

of Kennan's idea the U.S. government took a series of measures that became the major policies of the containment era. Thus the Truman doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the creation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (N.A.T.O.) and other regional alliances like the South East Asia Treaty Organization (S.E.A.T.O.) ranked among some of the earlier strategies used by Washington to counter the expansion of Soviet influence in Europe. But under the influence of Paul Nitze, Kennan's conception of containment was seriously challenged in 1950 with the adoption of the NSC-68, a document that "awarded containment a permanent globally militarized character."³⁰ The choice of the military option reflects the opposing views of both men on how to handle the Soviet threat. Kennan viewed containment as "a political strategy for combating a political threat. Nitze defined the word the way it was really used: as a military strategy for combating a military threat."³¹ While Kennan did not rule out the military option he did not view the militarization of the Cold War and the arm race that ensued as the best approach to containment. Unlike Universalists mentioned earlier in this chapter, Kennan identified himself, according to Gaddis, as a 'particularist.' This explains his belief that the American interest "would be best served not by trying to restructure the international order -the "universalistic" solution- but through the "particularist" approach of trying to maintain equilibrium in it, so that no one country, or group of countries, could dominate it."³² Restoring the balance of power was thus crucial to Kennan's particularistic approach.

According to Gaddis, two corollaries can be drawn from Kennan's Logic. The

³⁰ Davis, and Smith, *The A to Z of the Cold War*, 118.

³¹ Thompson, Nicholas, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), 3.

³² Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 28.

first was that not every parts of the world were vital to U.S. national security, “Industrial capacity, together with the access to raw materials necessary to sustain, was the key to power in the world, Kennan believed; the United states could tolerate the existence of unfriendly regimes in many areas provided they lacked the means of manifesting that hostility in ways that could threaten the United States.”³³

Another implication of Kennan’s thought was “that the internal organization of other states was not, in and of itself, a proper matter of concern for American foreign policy.”³⁴ For Kennan U.S. could coexist and draw some advantages from diversity, “what was dangerous was the combination of hostility with the ability to do something about it.”³⁵ When analyzed properly, the only country that could present a major threat to the United States in the post war context was the Soviet Union.³⁶ These ideas were fundamental in shaping President Truman’s administration response to the Soviet communist threat.

The Truman Doctrine

Kennan suggestions were very influential in the elaboration of the Truman doctrine that is “the anti-communist principle of the foreign policy enunciated by President Truman in a message to Congress at a time when Greece and Turkey were in danger of Communist subversion.”³⁷ The Truman Doctrine set the stage for a more interventionist U.S. foreign policy in the aftermath of the Second World War and it is considered one of the first foreign policy decisions that launched the Cold War. President

³³ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 27.

³⁴ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 30.

³⁵ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 30.

³⁶ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 32.

³⁷ Esmond Wright, *The American Dream: From Reconstruction to Reagan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 336.

Truman's decision to ask Congress to give U.S. government the authorization to provide economic assistance to Greece and Turkey, constitute a major step in implementing containment.

Truman stated in his address how each nation should have the freedom to choose between alternative ways to rule their country. That alternative present these nations with the option of choosing a system based on the will of the majority "distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression."³⁸ Truman opposed this system to the one that is based on "the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority." Such a regime he claims "relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms."³⁹ Without direct allusion to any specific countries, it is clear that the President's speech drew from the Kennan's piece and Churchill's remarks on the division of Europe in two. Between the lines it clearly identifies the two ideological systems that were competing for influence: capitalism and communism.

Elaborated in response to the crises that were about to develop in Turkey and Greece, Truman's speech pioneered through the program of assistance to these countries, the use of economic help as a way to contain the spread of communism. The doctrine stated that "one of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and the other nations will be able to work out a way of life free of coercion."⁴⁰ The threat of communists seizing power in Europe explains why this objective became the main characteristic of the U.S. foreign policy. The American

³⁸ Podell and Anzovin. *The Truman Doctrine*, 540.

³⁹ Podell and Anzovin. *The Truman Doctrine*, 540

⁴⁰ Podell and Anzovin. *The Truman Doctrine*, 540

assistance was necessary if democratic values were to be preserved in Western Europe and other parts of the world. As Truman stated “it must be the policy of the U.S. to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”⁴¹ The nature of the assistance was explicitly stated in the following line in his speech, U.S. “help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.”⁴² In the application of the ‘Truman Doctrine,’ the United States provided an economic assistance of about 400 millions dollars to the government of Greece and Turkey.

The Truman doctrine represented a paradigm shift in the history of U.S. foreign policy. Smoothly but certainly, the country was abandoning isolationism and was embracing a policy of intervention based the defense and the promotion its democratic ideals. That type of economic assistance was extended to the entire Western Europe with an invitation. That assistance was awarded to about fifteen nations of the Western Europe. The plan was known as the European Recovery Plan (E.R.P) usually referred to as the Marshall Plan.

The Marshall Plan

As mentioned earlier, the situation of Europe in 1947 was very desperate with the economy down and almost everything to be reconstructed. “Anyone who visited Europe in the late spring or early summer of 1947” wrote Allen W. Dulles “came away with serious forebodings. The pump priming which the United States had one for a very sick continent was coming to an end as Europe, emerging from the worst winter in decade,

⁴¹ Podell and Anzovin. *The Truman Doctrine*, 540.

⁴² Podell and Anzovin. *The Truman Doctrine*, 540.

was facing the most devastating drought of recent times.”⁴³ The old continent was facing serious challenges that called for immediate assistance otherwise things could get worse. Besides, due to the importance of the European economy in the world, its “desperate economic situation” could soon affect the international trade if serious measures were not taken to rescue Europe. More seriously, although the American economy was doing comparatively much better after the war, “State Department officials were worried that the shift from war-time to peace-time economy might cause domestic economic problems. Facing a large export surplus, officials feared that the dwindling dollar reserves of European nations and, thus their inability to pay for imports, could easily spell unemployment and even new depression for the United States.”⁴⁴ It was thus in the interest of the U.S. to provide economic assistance to the Europeans countries because “In June 1947, the United States had political, strategic, and economic interests in helping the countries participating in the Marshall Plan.”⁴⁵

But that economic advantage was not the sole reason behind the plan. Despite Marshall’s claim that U.S. policy was not directed against any “country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos,” it would be shallow analysis to dissociate the Plan from the containment policy. The Marshall Plan was part of the first strategies of containment for “by stabilizing democratic institutions through economic aid and by urging close cooperation among the West European nations, American policy makers sought to prevent the Soviet Union from expanding its influence in Western Europe.”⁴⁶ Somehow the major purpose of the plan remained as Marshall “the revival of

⁴³ Allen W. Dulles, *The Marshall Plan* (Providence, RI, U.S.A: Berg, 1993), 2.

⁴⁴ Michael Wala, Introduction to *The Marshall Plan* by Allen W. Dulles (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993), x.

⁴⁵ Sturgis “Government and Politics” in *American Decades Primary Sources*, 241.

⁴⁶ Michael Wala in Introduction to *The Marshall Plan* by Allen W. Dulles (Providence, RI, U.S.A : Berg,

a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.”⁴⁷ The Secretary of State George Marshall explains the consequence of inaction: “the truth of the matter is that Europe’s requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products - principally from America - are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help or face economic, social, and political deterioration of a very grave character.”⁴⁸ In addition to these economic and social problems, there was a geostrategic dimension of the communist threat which seemingly explained the domino theory. There was the fear that the rising influence of communist parties could spill over the entire Western Europe if nothing was done to stop it. The Plan was adopted in June 1947 under the name of the European Recovery Plan. Not only economic, strategic and political reasons were behind the adoption of this plan but there was also a moral and humanitarian reason as well.

History shows that in 1951 when the plan ended, its general objectives were fulfilled: “when the European recovery Program came to an end in 1951, it had revitalized the economies of the sixteen participating countries.”⁴⁹ Not only did the plan help promote and consolidate economic cooperation among European countries, but it “stiffened their resistance to communist aggression, meeting its objective of “restoring the confidence of the European people in the economic future of their own countries and of Europe as a whole.”⁵⁰ The plan was a success in bringing “Europe back to its feet”⁵¹

1993), ix.

⁴⁷ Sturgis “Government and Politics” in *American Decades Primary Sources*, 241.

⁴⁸ Amy H. Sturgis “Government and Politics” in *American Decades Primary Sources* vol. 5 pp 205-251, editor Cynthia Rose (Detroit: Gale, 2004), 241.

⁴⁹ Wade, Wilder, Wade, *A History of the United States*, 760.

⁵⁰ Wright, *The American Dream* 338.

⁵¹ Sturgis, “Government and Politics” in *American Decades Primary Sources*, 239.

and in consolidating the United States' position as leader and superpower in the world. Because of the Marshall plan the country "gained a power unimaginable only a few years earlier" and European were able to increase their Gross National Product from 15 to 25.⁵² The Marshall Plan was also a success in that it became a model in how the U.S. offered assistance to other nations.⁵³

While the Marshall Plan was helping to rebuild the European nations, another development was going on in the rest of the world. More and more, claims for self-determination were multiplying in the colonized world. Many of the population of these areas were receptive to nationalist rhetoric. But the U.S. who actively contributed to the Atlantic Charter, showed an ambivalent position as far as the independence of the colonized world particularly Africa was concerned. One of the reasons was that as U.S. still focused on Europe recovery, a support for the independence of the Third World might affect its western allies who depended largely on raw materials from these areas. It was in this context that Kennedy was elected in 1960.

The Kennedy Era

The sixties brought a new direction to the development of U.S. diplomacy and its leadership. The Marshall Plan and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization brought relative stability in Europe but Washington still focused more on Europe than other parts of the world. Meanwhile decolonization has already started and new nations were joining the international community. In 1947 India became independent, 1957 it was Ghana in Africa who became one of the first African countries to gain its independence. The following year, Guinea-Conakry also became independent in 1958

⁵² Sturgis, *Government and Politics*, 240.

⁵³ Sturgis *Government and Politics*, 240.

after having voted no to the French referendum which called for all the French colonies in Africa to remain in the French federation. In all these countries, nationalism was an important driving force behind the anti-colonial success. Kennedy, in many of his trips as Senator, found out that the U.S. paid less attention to those nations. He felt deeply concerned afterward that nationalist sentiment might be turned against the U.S. Furthermore many of these newly independent countries were turning toward the Soviet Union for assistance to build their countries. The positive response given by the Soviet to those countries make them regard the Russian with high esteem. Like many European countries after the war, there was the urge to replace the colonial administration and to fulfill the needs of the populations. These were challenges that many of the new third world leaders were not accustomed to. Unlike the European countries that were economically and technologically advanced before the war, the third world countries were in need of specific assistance. The kind of assistance that should solve the problems created by independence, that is education, salary, fight against poverty health policy and so on. Kennedy seriously criticized the Eisenhower administration saying that it focused too much on the western European countries.⁵⁴ In fact by the time Kennedy sworn in as President, many in third world countries did not have good impressions about the U.S.

Kennedy thought that Moscow's help could eventually create the avenue for communist in-roads in the 'third world', particularly in Africa. With Kennedy, containment would go global and include a more social and cultural dimension in the cooperation with the newly independent nations.⁵⁵ The tone was set from the inaugural

⁵⁴ Elizabeth C. Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 60's* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998) 112.

⁵⁵ Janet Podell and Steven Anzovin "The Kennedy Inaugural" in *Speeches of the Presidents* (New York: the H.W Wilson company, 1988), 604.

speech as he made it clear that the U.S. was attached to freedom and its survival and success. A commitment he made obvious when addressing the newly independent nations, he warned: “To those new states we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect them to support our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom.”⁵⁶

When the president talked about ‘a far more iron tyranny’ he was alluding to communist government that according to him would definitely prevent these nations from preserving basic human rights and freedom. In a more persuasive tone Kennedy pursued “to those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.”⁵⁷ This statement denotes a whiff of humanitarian aspect brought to U.S. involvement in third world countries. There is also an implicit commitment to alleviate poverty in those parts of the world. He would argue in others instances, the conditions in the Third world were different for those of the Northern countries whose level of development before the war was not too different from that of the U.S.; thence the assumptions that the infrastructure that could ease the reconstruction of the European continent did not exist in the third world. As a matter-of-fact the type of cooperation the U.S. should have with those states must different from the kind of cooperation it had with the western European countries.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Sturgis “Government and Politics,” 240.

⁵⁷ Sturgis, “Government and Politics,” 240.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth C. Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: the Peace Corps and the spirit of the 60's* (Massachusetts: Harvard University press, 1998,), 91.

However it is important to mention that an involvement of the U.S. in the Third World did not imply a complete change in its policy with the European nations. The President made it clear at the beginning of his speech “To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do--for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.”⁵⁹

All in all, from Truman to Kennedy, the U.S. moved definitely away from isolationism and became not only deeply involved in world affairs but playing actively the role of world leader. The construction of a peaceful world has thus brought the U.S. to intervene in many geographical areas in the world. This intervention took a variety of forms including military, like in Vietnam, economic in Europe and political. The promotion of peace could not only be economic or military. For the promotion of democratic principle cannot be forceful otherwise it may well jeopardize the nobility attached to it.

Permanent peace in the world could not only be achieved through economic assistance or military alliances. Securing a strong and solid alliance with the goal of preserving the international peace and stability required also a policy that helps reduce misperceptions of each other and concomitantly increase understanding among the people and nations of the world. Archibald MacLeish, one of the most prominent librarians of Congress, wrote that “the world’s hope for peace, which is another way of referring to the world’s hope of survival, is directly dependent upon mutual understanding of peoples.”⁶⁰ Preserving that survival, especially in the late forties, called for more understanding

⁵⁹ Podell and Anzovin “The Kennedy Inaugural,” 604.

⁶⁰ Archibald MacLeish Introduction to *The Cultural Approach, Another Way in International Relations* by Ruth Emily McMurry and Muna Lee (Chapel Hill, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1947), v.

between leaders and elites of different nations.

For the U.S. program of cultural relations, the objective will be to increase mutual understandings where cultural similarities already existed (like in Western Europe) or to establish the bases for a more elaborate policy of the promotion of cultural relations, especially in areas where significant cultural differences exist with the U.S. These efforts led to the development of the American program in the post Second World war years.

Section II: Evolution of U.S. Program of Cultural Relations

Cultural contacts between people from different areas, countries, culture or civilizations are not recent phenomena of international relations. They are as old as “the flow of people and ideas across national boundaries.”⁶¹ Throughout history, “traders, missionaries, military personnel, tourists, and an assortment of emerging international types bred by industrialism”⁶² have all reflected through their actions some aspects of cultural interactions between different nations, group of people or different continents. Although their action could not be visibly linked with any foreign policy objective, the probability of some remote connections could not be completely dismissed.⁶³ People like Christopher Columbus, Savorgna de Brazza, Stanley and many others have all been involved in adventure, explorations with the blessing of some rulers or royalties. Their discovery, had, one way or the other, some remote relations with foreign policy objectives.

The American program of cultural relations started officially by the end of the thirties, in 1938. However transnational cultural activities were quite significant before

⁶¹ Robert Blum, *Introduction to Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations* American Assembly. (N.J.: Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, 1963), 1.

⁶² Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 8.

⁶³ Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 8

that year and were mostly held by private actors. Their actions were largely independent and were not connected with any government and thus could not be seen as a continuation of the foreign policy of any administration. With the changing context of international relations such separation between cultural action and governmental policy could not last forever. Gradually, governments stepped into the field of transnational cultural activities, guided by the prospect for political or strategic advantages. At the first the U.S government's intervention was more regulatory. This type of interventions was also complemented by its encouragement of collaboration between public and private organizations. These collaborations betrayed mainly at the beginning of the twentieth century, some remote interest in exerting some influences on cultural activities held by private actors. For Frank Ninkovich, "it was only with the formation of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1910 that cultural relations were institutionalized and tied, however tentatively, to foreign policy objectives."⁶⁴

Private actors included philanthropic organizations like the Carnegie Endowment, the Rockefeller Foundation and others. In initiating at different levels and in different areas exchange programs either in technical or educational fields, these actors pioneered what would later become the official practices in the American cultural relations with other nations. Referring to the work of the Carnegie Endowment for example, Frank Ninkovich wrote that it "pioneered in arranging interchanges of important personages in the attempt to create more cordial relationships between national elites, especially with Latin America and the Far East."⁶⁵ Likewise the Rockefeller Foundation, established in 1913, after a decade on scientific and medical research also showed interest by the 1920's

⁶⁴ Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 8.

⁶⁵ Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 12.

in cultural relations. Its program of international medicine, according to Ninkovich, “was the technical model for all forms of cooperation.”⁶⁶ Many of them worked with the conviction that to build a peaceful world one needs to promote cultural exchanges among people, nations and countries for an increase in mutual understanding brings a decrease in conflicts. For Andrew Carnegie “international conflicts were caused by diplomatic misunderstandings.”⁶⁷ For him, leaders tend to be mutually suspicious and stranger to one another as a matter of fact their differences usually end in strife. On the other hand difference between two friends end up in peaceful settlement either by these two friends or through arbitration of some of their friends.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the prevalence of private philanthropic organizations did not prevent the U.S. government from initiating culturally related actions on its own. According to Charles Thompson and Walter Laves attempts by officials to present U.S. culture abroad could be traced as far back as to people like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson whose book “Notes on Virginia” was first published in Paris.⁶⁹ More formally, it was in the nineteenth century that one could see the American government intervene although intermittently and sporadically, in transnational cultural activities. Many of these interventions were more regulatory in character and they were resolutions taken by Congress or executive decisions about exchanges of documents or printed material between the U.S. Library of Congress and other foreign libraries. Thomson and Laves summarized few of them:

In 1840 what might be called the first continuing activity in official cultural relations originated in a joint resolution of Congress, providing for exchange of published materials between the library of Congress and

⁶⁶ Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 15

⁶⁷ Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 8

⁶⁸ Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 8

⁶⁹ Charles Alexander Thomson & Walter H.C. Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), 29.

foreign libraries. In 1867 the Smithsonian Institution was assigned responsibility for interchange of public documents with institutions abroad. In 1868 the first annual report of the United States Commissioner of Education carried information on education in other countries; and beginning in 1892 his office was charged with the task of making and issuing studies of education abroad. In 1892 the National Bureau of Standards was authorized to receive as guests foreign scientists and technicians.⁷⁰

All in all, on the eve of World War I, the American government was quasi-absent from the field of transnational cultural relations. With only a handful of regulations that could be listed in assessment this self-restraint could have resulted from the isolationist policy that characterized the U.S. foreign policy for almost a century and half or a lack of interest in the cultural matter as even in domestic policy there was hardly a cultural policy of the government. It could also be the fact that the U.S. at the turn of the century was not yet a global power and therefore viewed cultural expansion differently from countries like France or Great Britain that were both imperial powers. It would take three more decades, owing to the rise of the U.S. as a regional power and assuming its leadership in containing the influence of totalitarian regimes in the western hemisphere, to see the government becoming more pro-active in the promotion of cultural relations' with other nations. This occurred by the end of the thirties when changes in the international political environment affected the American traditional policy toward Latin American countries. Favored by the depression many totalitarian regimes emerged in Germany, Italy and Japan. These regimes relied and heavily used propaganda as a key tool to govern and indoctrinate their populations of counties but also tried to influence other nations that could likely become more receptive to their ideology. Quite often this propaganda goes beyond the national borders and spill over to other part of the world like

⁷⁰ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 29.

Latin American. This raised serious concerns among the officials in the U.S, concerns that were justified as at the beginning of the twentieth century, many Latin American countries seemed to have closer ties with European countries than they had to the U.S. Many of them might become more receptive to those ideologies and that could eventually jeopardize the American position in an area considered important for the U.S. national security. In addition to this the overall perception of the United States policy in Latin America was not very pleasant nor was the image of the American as a human being. Talking about the U.S-Latin America relations, Thomson and Laves explained:

in the early years of the twentieth century, our relations with Latin America were strained by Theodore Roosevelt's action in Panama, later pithily summarized in the phrase, "I took the Canal Zone"; by a series of armed interventions in the Caribbean area; by Theodore Roosevelt's tutelary interpretation of the Monroe doctrine, which sought to justify such interventions by attributing a regional police power to the United States; and later by Woodrow Wilson's nonrecognition policy.⁷¹

From Latin American perspective the U.S. power was characterized by arrogance supported by force and unilateralism; the country itself seemed "distant and alien". In Thomson's explanations, on average the American was not seen as a scholar, an artist or a humanitarian, or simply put an ordinary, understandable human being⁷². Rather he was popularly viewed as "a vigorous people, but rude and crude, avid for money and material goods. Too prevalently it was symbolized by the invading marine with his trampling boots or the exploiting and corrupting capitalist."⁷³ These preconceived ideas about the U.S. and the American could not really help establish good and constructive relations with the Latin American people. It could also be very damaging for the U.S policy in the region. For any policy to be effective a climate of trust and confidence was to be

⁷¹ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 33.

⁷² Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 34.

⁷³ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 34.

established between the American republics and the United States and for this to happen, the above mentioned apprehensions and stereotypes “had to be corrected and humanized if the people of Latin America were to accept the United States as any sort of “good neighbor”⁷⁴ as Roosevelt wished it in his first inaugural speech of March 4th, 1933.

Franklin D. Roosevelt is generally referred to as the father of the ‘good neighbor policy’, but this policy was not the first attempts in the history of the American presidents to create good relations with the Latin American countries. It was rather a consecration of a trend laid down by previous administrations. Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover for example showed similar patterns of good relations with Latin America as they managed to avoid armed interventions in that area. The Clark memorandum released by Hoover in 1930 was an example of diplomatic appeal that separated the Roosevelt corollary from the Monroe doctrine. The Memorandum recognized any U.S intervention in Latin America as part of its right as a sovereign state and not linked with the Monroe doctrine. Following that trend was the Roosevelt’s policy of ‘good neighbor’ of the thirties that fall in the trend of diplomatic appeal.

The ‘good neighbor policy’ was Roosevelt’s foreign policy that essentially targeted the Latin American republics. Enunciated in his inaugural, that policy was articulated at the 7th Pan-American Conference in Montevideo by the U.S Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Its purpose was to do away if not completely at least to a large extent with armed intervention in Latin and promote change and a new type of relations with the U.S neighbors of the south.

U.S. cultural relations program was launched in favor of that policy. In application of the resolution of the many pan American conferences held in Latin

⁷⁴ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy* 35-36.

America, the changes in U.S. diplomacy toward Latin America and the will to reinforce relations between the Latin American republic through cultural relations led to the creation of two institutions: the Interdepartmental Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics (ICC) and the Division of Cultural Relations at the Department of State.

Institutional Beginning

Born out of oral instruction from the president in 1936, the ICC was formally authorized in 1930 with the Public Law 355 that came into force on August 9th, 1939. The goal of this legislation was to improve the relationship between the American Republics, using the government agencies “in carrying out reciprocal undertakings and cooperative purposes” expressed in various actions taken by the Buenos Aires Conference of 1936 and the Lima Conference of 1938.”⁷⁵ The ICC covered a wide range area of cooperation that can be divided according to Thomson and Laves’ analysis, into three groups: the first group included cooperative, scientific and technical projects. The second group comprised the exchange of specialized information and that of materials on educational methods and labor standards, scientific and technical books and publications, library catalog cards, and albums of folk music. Finally the last area of cooperation dealt with the exchange of persons for education and training in as many fields as agriculture, civil aviation and others.⁷⁶ These projects were planned and executed on a bilateral basis with the expectation that they would benefit both parties. It was agreed upon that the financial costs would be shared by the parties and determined by the nature of the project. The ICC dealt with what later on became the U.S technical cooperation and worked

⁷⁵ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 36.

⁷⁶ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 37.

mainly with government agencies, to carry out its project. This technical aspect was complemented with the task of the Division of Cultural Affairs, an agency that was directly involved with academic and artistic exchanges.

Division of Cultural Affairs

The Division of Cultural relations in the Department of State was another agency that came out of Roosevelt's diplomacy. Created by a Departmental Order in 1938, this Division was in charge of carrying out the official international activities of cultural intent; that is,

embracing the exchange of professors, teachers, and students; cooperation in the field of music, art, literature and other intellectual and cultural attainments; the formulation and distribution of libraries of representatives works of the United States and suitable translations thereof; the participation by this Government in International radio broadcasts; encouragement of a closer relationship between unofficial organizations of this and of foreign Governments engaged in cultural and intellectual activities; and , generally, the dissemination abroad of the representative intellectual and cultural works of the United States and the improvement and broadening of the scope of our cultural relations with other countries.⁷⁷

This intent summarized all the main characteristics and goals of the United States cultural relations program. It appears that the exchange of people in education, the arts and letters or the dissemination of information about the U.S. are key elements of this program. Compared to the French or British models, these objectives were not very different.

The Division of Cultural Relations thus emphasized initially "the more traditional academic and artistic exchanges" predominant for intellectual cooperation under the League of Nations.⁷⁸ Unlike the Interdepartmental Committee the Division operates mostly with private organizations. If philanthropic organization were crucial in

⁷⁷ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach, Another Way in International Relations*, 208-209.

⁷⁸ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 36.

pioneering many cooperative and exchange practices in transnational cultural activities, the official American program owes a lot to the work of the ICC and the Division of Cultural Affairs. The Division posed the main principles that guided U.S. cultural policy in wartime as well as in the postwar years. The role of the Division was important in the beginning and in the implementation of the U.S. cultural relations program. One of the first elements the agency retained was the emphasis on the exchange of persons. The collaboration with the private organizations that marked the early stage of the government intervention was probably one of the most salient aspects of cultural relations. However as the scale of exchanges was going to get higher and higher with the government's involvement, it would have been hazardous to leave private organizations deal with this alone. H. Bradford justified the government role of the government in this task: "...an impressive flow of foreigners to the United States, to develop a feeling for American life in its native habitat, was bound to require some special governmental assistance for surmounting the obstacles. The consequence was a great expansion in organized public and private programs for the "exchange of persons" with foreign countries."⁷⁹

This collaboration was soon confronted with concerns about the real objectives of the program and foreign policy goals. The question was "whether a cultural relations effort should be disinterested in character, or whether it ought frankly (or upon occasion covertly) to serve propagandistic purpose."⁸⁰ Some of the officials thought that the cultural program should advance the "Good neighbor policy" in Latin America and thereby counter the Axis' influence. The objective of the Interdepartmental Committee

⁷⁹ H. Bradford Westerfield *The Instruments of America's Foreign Policy*, (New York: Crowell c1963), 245.

⁸⁰ George N. Schuster, *Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations* American Assembly. (N.J.: Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, 1963),10.

was instead to strengthen political solidarity among the American republics.

After many debates, a consensus was reached in 1944 toward the end of the war. The Advisory Committee finally proposed that “to the degree that the United States foreign policy sought to achieve mutual international understanding, and a peaceful, secure, and cooperative world order, cultural relations could serve to implement that policy.”⁸¹ But the committee made sure that this statement did not create confusion in its interpretation. Consequently as to clarify it further, in June 1944 a resolution of the General advisory committee declared that “No program of international cultural relations should be an instrument by means of which one people attempts to impose its ideas or conceptions upon another, or to achieve cultural ascendancy, or to accomplish non-cultural objectives.”⁸² Any cultural programs thus in the words of the Advisory Committee “must be collectively agreed upon as between peoples and must be mutually acceptable and reciprocally carried out.”⁸³ This is a very important point as it goes against any kind of unilateralism in cultural relations.

The principle of reciprocity was retained for the activities of the Division as a group of congressmen argued that a “one way road’ may not help acquire the knowledge of the many activities being carried on by the Latin American peoples and government that will be both educational and inspirational to us as well as valuable to our national life.”⁸⁴ The early exchange activities of the Division were elitist but later on the General Advisory Committee revised that on the argument that cultural activities and economic cooperation were interdependent and that to use the words of Vice President Henry A.

⁸¹ Minute of the general Advisory committee cited in Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 44.

⁸² Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 44.

⁸³ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 44.

⁸⁴ Thomson and Laves *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy* ,38.

Wallace “cultural activities should be thought of in terms of social functions.” This recognition brought the advisory committee to have an all inclusive view of cultural activities, embracing thus not only the fine arts but also other field like agriculture or public health in their cooperation.⁸⁵ It was then argued by the prominent members of the Advisory Committee that cultural relations “should be planned to help men to acquire skilled trades, to improve agricultural methods, and to forward flood control and irrigations projects.”⁸⁶ The Division also supported the idea of creating American libraries abroad and even considered the possibilities for the U.S. government to support or encourage the creation of American schools or college abroad.

Having identified the different types of activities the program of cultural relation should cover, the division answered the question of ‘how’ to deliver cultural relations but has not yet provided an adequate response to that of “who” should be in charge of delivering cultural relations because traditional diplomats are trained to carry out more political and administrative functions. Agency in cultural relations is important for the fact that cultural relations is not only sending books abroad or building libraries. It is also projecting ideas or ideology and “the best way to convey an idea is to embody it in a human being and send him to the place where the idea should be implanted, or to bring someone from that place to watch the idea embodied in action.”⁸⁷ The choice of agents for cultural delivery becomes thus delicate when it is understood that is rarely a consensus on what best represent a national culture. It becomes even more of a daunting task when the projection of this culture is officially sponsored in a country like the United

⁸⁵ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 39.

⁸⁶ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 40.

⁸⁷ H. Bradford Westerfield *The Instruments of America's Foreign Policy*, (New York: Crowell c1963), 245.

States where there is certain “apprehensiveness about government playing an active role in the promotion of ideas.”⁸⁸ How should a professional cultural attaché present that culture, especially if he happens to develop ideas that are in conflict with the official representation. This is the belief that is implicit behind the logic of exchange and that added to the challenges faced by the division in its early days to select a person who is able to qualitatively deliver the program in the host country and vice versa.

In solving that problem the Division created and defined the post of cultural Relations Officer, known as Cultural attaché. Quoting McMurry and Lee, his prerogatives are described as “assisting the head of the Diplomatic mission in matters of cultural significance and keeping the Department at Washington fully informed of local developments in the cultural field.”⁸⁹ Beside this administrative position the General Advisory Committee of the Department of State required that the attaché’s profile should include a suitable personality that would help them develop a good working relation with the people in the host country. Furthermore he must have ‘broad intellectual and cultural interest’ enabling them to appreciate matters beyond their specialty. They must have ‘constructive imagination and enthusiasm’ and show ‘maturity’ ‘education’ and ‘good judgment’ in their viewpoint. Last but not least, they must show some readiness to learn local language if they don’t have a ‘fluent command of it already.’⁹⁰ Additionally he must be knowledgeable about the culture and institutions of the U.S. and be ready to do the same about his host country. He is considered a new kind of diplomat and “was supposed to possess a broad and rounded knowledge of the social, educational, scientific, and

⁸⁸ Frank A Ninkovich, *U.S. Information Policy and Cultural Diplomacy*, Headline series, no. 308. (New York, N.Y.: Foreign Policy Association, 1996), 7.

⁸⁹ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach, Another Way in International Relations* ,214.

⁹⁰ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 215.

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artistic life of the United States, and of the leading public and private organizations in those areas of activity. Correspondingly he was to inform himself of similar activities and trends in the country where he was stationed.”⁹¹ His role was broadly defined and consisted among others in keeping a “benevolent eye” on American cultural centers and schools abroad.

By the end of the war the American cultural program was well in operation, having solved many of the challenges posed by government intervention in the field and by its collaboration with private actors. Some of these problems were related to the way its programs should be delivered in the host countries or what are the qualifications of the cultural attaché. But the grey area between cultural relations and foreign policy objectives was not fully solved. The outbreak of the Second World War brought the matter to the table again, forcing the officials to create new agencies.

Impact of World War II

World War II influenced greatly the U.S. program of cultural relations. The war forced the government to revise its cultural program notably its agencies and its objective. The war sharpened the strategic importance of Latin America for the U.S. national security. The war also brought more pressure on using cultural activities to fulfill the objectives of U.S. foreign policy, particularly in helping the fulfillment of the wartime foreign policy goal. It was expected that cultural activities strengthen the solidarity among the American Republics but also that they help these countries develop a positive attitude toward the U.S. These expectations were important because in the context of the war a successful cultural program could add to the prestige of the U.S. and

⁹¹ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 45.

thereby create a natural shield against the Axis propaganda.⁹² It was to meet all these new expectations that in addition to the previous agencies, two new agencies were created: the Coordinator (or Office) of Inter American Affairs and the Office of War Information. If the ICC and the Division were expected to neutral and mostly apolitical, the wartime context that generated these new agencies dictated their objective and made them act clearly as instruments of American propaganda.

The Coordinator for Inter American Affairs (C.I.A.A.) was created in 1939 by President Roosevelt who appointed Nelson Rockefeller as the head of this new agency which major purpose was the defense of the western hemisphere against the Nazi influence. Its activities were “economic and informative” and they were mostly carried out through “press, radio, and motion pictures.” Owing to the experience of its staff in private sector the CIAA was able to develop cooperation with the private organizations while at the same time energetically expand the role in “stimulus, sponsorship, and operation.” The CIAA and its staff were essential in bringing the arts and the entertainment in the realm of cultural exchanges. In fulfillment of its goals and following the objectives of its creation, the CIAA as a wartime strategy “produced Spanish-Language newsreels and documentaries and also made effective use of entertainment film. Walt Disney studios, for example, created *Saludos Amigos*, a feature-length cartoon using Disney’s famous character in Latin America settings, as a contribution to good neighborliness. The OIAA’s radio division broadcast twenty-four hours a day to Latin America by 1941, compared to twelve hours a week in 1939. The OIAA supplied newspaper clients throughout the hemisphere with news and photos.”⁹³

⁹² Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy* 47.

⁹³ Stanley I. Kutler et al, *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Twentieth Century*. (New York: Charles

By 1941, the CIAA launched the translation program which consisted in translating U.S. book into Portuguese or Spanish or vice versa. Toward the end of the CIAA in 1943 when the translation project along with other activities were transferred to the Department of State, the American Council of Learned Societies and other organization that were deeply involved in the project had signed about 116 books' contract out of which 57 were published.⁹⁴ McMurry and Lee the distribution process of the books translated: "government assistance is usually confined to a payment for translation rights or the purchase of a certain number of copies of each book in lieu of a translation fee. The books are then brought out by recognized publishers and distributed through commercial bookstores without government responsibility for profit or loss."⁹⁵

Since the Department of State and the CIAA were all involved in cultural relations there were undoubtedly some overlap in their competence. The difference was that one agency was created by the White House and had a short term goal for wartime "emergency" while the other has a long-term goal that goes beyond the time of conflict. This distinction became significant when in 1943 almost all the activities of the CIAA were transferred to the State Department. Nevertheless, the works of the CIAA were positive in complementing the cooperation developed by the Department of State with U.S. educational organizations.

The Office of War Information (O.W.I.) is the second agency created in the middle of the Second World War. It was established in 1942 with the goal of facilitating "the development of an informed and intelligent understanding, abroad, of the status and progress of the war effort and of the war policies, activities, and aims of the

Scribner's Sons, 1996-), 703.

⁹⁴ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 219.

⁹⁵ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 219.

Government.”⁹⁶ With this aim, the new agency almost completely absorbed the Division and made the opinion that the “democratic philosophy of the United States must always be the true purpose of cultural activities, however discreetly camouflaged it might be.”⁹⁷

Information was the key factor in the OWI operations and cultural activities even if they did intervene, were just used as a way to supplement its information activities. The Office of War had characteristically three kinds of activities that had all informative character. The first was a small scale program of travel for individuals, usually mass media and communication people. The Office was also involved in books and magazines distribution abroad through the 28 information libraries it then had abroad. These books were either in English or they were translated. In Thomson and Laves’ explanations, “these collections contained a wide range of books on the history, life, and thought of the U.S.” The collections were mostly available for editors, scholars or public officers while a less sophisticated audience was served by exhibits.⁹⁸

The Cold War

As discussed earlier in this chapter, with the general political atmosphere that followed the war, the dream of one world soon became evanescent. Bipolarity ensued with antagonistic ideological competition between the two superpowers that emerged from the conflict: the United States and the Soviet Union. Each power showed the interest in influencing as many countries as possible especially the emerging Third World countries. That situation generated the Cold War. If the Second World War forced revision and restructuration in U.S. cultural program, the ideological competition with

⁹⁶ McMurry and Lee

⁹⁷ George N. Schuster “The Nature and Development of United States Cultural Relations” in *Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations* by American Assembly. (N.J.: Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, 1963), 12.

⁹⁸ Thomson and Laves, 52

the Soviet Union will have a much stronger impact on its scope and character. As explained by George N. Schuster the Cold War:

immensely broadened the scope of our cultural activities and then it gave it a radically different character. The Soviet Union was beyond any doubt determined to establish the dominion of communism over the world; and though it was at first difficult for many to believe that this was the case, the grim evidence became more and more overwhelming. One of communism's most thoroughly tested methods was forming elites, usually comprised of unhappy and unemployed intellectuals in disaffected areas, so that through them propaganda carefully tailor-made for the purpose could be widely disseminated. The most effective contention of that propaganda no doubt was that the Russian system was technically the most efficient and at the same time the most ardently dedicated to peace.⁹⁹

So the elite and the poor were the target of Soviet cultural activities. By extension this includes poor countries as well. To counter this propaganda and strategy of the Soviet, a revision of the apolitical nature of the U.S. cultural relations program was necessary. maintaining a separation between foreign policy objectives and cultural relations threaten to jeopardize the future of program as many Congressmen may not vote for it unless it serves the purpose of the overall U.S. foreign policy.

The agencies involved in the program had to be reformed and further differences need to be clarified between cultural relations, educational exchanges and so on. The Office of Inter-American Affairs, the Office of War Information all disappeared after the war, they were all absorbed by an Interim Information Service that paved the road, in a four months a period, for the Organization of International Information and Cultural Affairs, created in 1946 the new agency show some expansions in the program as it covered five regions.

Meanwhile, the Fulbright Act was passed in 1946. Initiated by Senator J. William

⁹⁹ George N. Schuster "The Nature and Development of United States Cultural Relations" in *Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations*, 16-17.

Fulbright, its objective was to convert the cash credit generated by the purchase of U.S. property left in the war devastated countries into money that would be used for educational exchange program. Items like machine tools, bulldozers and stocks of foods and clothing”¹⁰⁰ very useful to those war torn countries could only be paid in dollars and this dependence on foreign currency could negatively affect their economy. The newly voted act provided a solution to that problem by allowing those countries to use the funds in national currency for the purpose of “financing studies, research, instruction, and other educational activities” of American citizens in those countries.¹⁰¹ However the counterpart was not possible since non Americans could not have access to those funds for studying or teaching or researching in the U.S. This loophole in the provision of the Act was filled with appropriation of dollar funds from other U.S. government funds, some private organizations either American or foreign. The Fulbright program operates with a Board of Foreign Scholarships in and the US and most countries they have a binational commission to select the candidates to study in the U.S. The Fulbright program is one of the most successful achievements of the postwar years, its worldwide impact is nowadays undeniable.

Not long after, the Smith-Mundt Act was also voted in 1948 after many delays, interrogations and trips in Europe to witness the reality of Soviet anti-American propaganda. It is officially known as the “United states Information and Educational Act.” Its objective were “ to enable the government of the United states to promote better understanding of the United States in other countries, and to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other

¹⁰⁰ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy* , 60.

¹⁰¹ Thomson and Laves *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 60

countries.”¹⁰²

These two acts show how U.S. outlook on culture in its relations with other nations changed after the war. The American active participation in the foundation of the UNESCO and the voting of important Bills related to international cultural exchange reflect how important culture has become in U.S postwar diplomacy. The Fulbright Act passed in 1946 and later on complemented by the Smith-Mundt Act in 1948 show how cultural relations and exchange programs have made their way successfully to the field of American diplomacy, becoming one of the “key features of U.S. leadership in the postwar world.”¹⁰³ But the mounting propaganda of the Soviet Union and the decision of the government not to let the world know the truth about the U.S., its system and way of life led to the adoption of the program of citizen diplomacy under the suggestion of President Eisenhower.

People-to-people Program

This could be called President Eisenhower contribution to the development of the United States cultural relations program. Following an idea he defended at the Baylor University in Texas in 1956, asking for more sympathetic understanding among citizens of the world, the president invited a group of leaders from different professional, business or voluntary organization at the white house. Their task was to discuss the idea of bringing private citizens and groups to join in the effort of creating a “people-to-people partnership.”¹⁰⁴ As a result:

the movement encouraged American towns and cities to affiliate with

¹⁰² Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 67.

¹⁰³ Liping Bu, “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War” in *The Cultural Turn: Essays in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations* Frank A. Ninkovich, Liping Bu eds. (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 2001), 10.

¹⁰⁴ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy* 131.

municipalities abroad, American corporations and business forms operating overseas to cultivate better community relations, American individuals to write letters, contribute books, and send past issues of magazines to individuals in foreign countries and to provide home and community hospitality to foreigners visiting the United States, numerous and varied organizations to adopt overseas project or to engage in exchanges with their corresponding associations abroad.¹⁰⁵

The result of this movement was mitigated. It helped create some contact between Americans people or groups and their counterpart abroad. But the result are nothing comparable to what have been done by “foundations and by educational, scholarly, religious, and industrial groups and organizations.”¹⁰⁶ In 1961, the idea of citizen participating in the cooperation program of the government was taken to another level by a critique of Eisenhower foreign policy toward the emerging nations, President Kennedy, the result was the creation of the Peace Corps of the United States.

The Peace Corps

The list of U. S. agencies that intervene in its cultural relations program would be incomplete if the Peace Corps is not included. Created in 1961 by the U.S President John F. Kennedy with the Executive Order 10924, the Peace Corps function was to “be responsible for the training and service abroad of men and women of the United States in new programs of assistance to nations and areas of the world, and in conjunction with or in support of existing economic assistance programs of the United States and of the United Nations and other international organizations.”¹⁰⁷ As the Executive Order shows, the main goal of the agency at its beginnings was to assist newly independent countries or other developing nations in their policy of national development. In actual fact the agency

¹⁰⁵ Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 133.

¹⁰⁶ Thomson and Laves *Cultural Relations and U.S Foreign Policy*, 133.

¹⁰⁷ SEC. 2. *Functions of the Peace Corps*.(a)

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/jfkeo/eo/10924.htm> (accessed June 23rd, 2009 8:03pm.)

explains that President Kennedy's intention was to "promote world peace and friendship." It is to attain that objective that a threefold objective has been assigned to the Peace Corps:

To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.

To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.

To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.¹⁰⁸

The Peace has quickly become a special instrument in US cooperation with the rest of the world particularly the third world countries. Over the years the program has increased in number of volunteer, appropriations and countries covered. Since its official establishment on March 1st 1961, the Peace Corps has dispatched about 195,000 volunteers in about 139 countries around the world.¹⁰⁹ Volunteers have greatly contributed to the development of the host countries and improve the image of the American by showing other aspect of the 'American character' to the populations of host countries. Volunteers have served in various fields from the beginning. Today they serve as "education, youth outreach, and community development; business development; agriculture and environment; health and HIV/AIDS; and information technology."¹¹⁰

H. Bradford Westerfield wrote that "the comforts' of an era of western hegemony over the rest of the world were- and would continue to be- undeniably pleasurable for the United States; and some inclination to restore as much of them as possible can be detected in a very large part of American policy since World War II."¹¹¹ Perhaps this

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.whatispc.mission>, (accessed June 23rd, 2009 8:30pm.)

¹⁰⁹ http://www.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/about/pc_facts.pdf accessed June, 2nd, 2009 at 7:43pm

¹¹⁰ http://www.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/about/pc_facts.pdf accessed June, 2nd, 2009 at 7:43pm

¹¹¹ Westerfield *The Instruments of America's Foreign Policy*, 243.

explains the changes noticed in the U.S postwar foreign relations as shown in this chapter: end of isolationism, more interventionist policy and rise to world leadership have all characterized U.S. foreign policy since the end of the war. American involvement in world affairs was characterized by economic assistance like the Marshall, military alliance, and to the development of a program of cultural exchange that has gradually covered almost all the regions of the World helping the U.S. to reach an undeniable level of cultural preeminence. This achievement resulted from a constellation of different factors, starting from the Second World War:

World War II brought new and unparalleled opportunities for extending U.S influence. New wartime propaganda agencies, the presence of U.S. army troops around the globe, the Americanization associated with postwar occupations, postwar aid and informational programs, and the anticommunist cultural offensive launched in the early 1950s all helped the United states attain preeminent cultural, as well as military, power in the post-world war II era.¹¹²

This chapter has shown how the international context of the post World War II brought about changes in U.S. foreign relations and how America became a world leader involved in an ideological competition with the Soviet Union. That change of policy influenced the evolution of the American program of cultural policy after the war to fit the context of Cold War of the late 40's and the 50's.

By the sixties, when many African nations became independent, almost all of the institutional instruments of the postwar U.S. foreign policy were in place, particularly its institutional mechanism of cultural exchanges. If decolonization did not bring much change in the ideological basis and the institutional operation of the program, it somehow brought about a geographical expansion in its delivery. In 1958 the African Bureau was

¹¹² Stanley I. Kutler, et al. *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1996-), 703.

created in the State Department This creation was an important administrative change in the history of the U.S. relations with Africa. Until then the continent had not received any proper attention from Washington despite the fact that the relations between the two entities go as far back as the foundation of America. The next chapter will show how after a period of indifference and minimalism, Africa started gaining more recognition in U.S. foreign policy especially in the years after the independence.

CHAPTER 2

U.S. RELATIONS WITH AFRICA: FROM MINIMALISM TO IDEOLOGICAL BATTLEGROUND

The previous chapter shows how the contemporary U.S. –African relations developed in an international context of bipolarity marked by the ideological rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. As a consequence of this rivalry, the United States adopted a policy of communism containment with the goal of preventing the Soviet Union spreading its ideological and political influence to other countries, especially the emerging countries of the decolonized world. The prior chapter also demonstrated how containment played a highly influential role in U.S. foreign policy, conditioning to a large extent every aspect of its relations with the rest of the world, particularly with the “Third World” countries after decolonization. From military cooperation to economic assistance, and cultural exchange, U.S. foreign policy was influenced by the power dynamics imposed by the bipolar context of the cold war. If the Marshall Plan, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) marked the economic and military strategies that help stabilize Europe after the war, cultural exchanges and information policy transmitted through the office of the United States Information Agency (USIA) transformed the Cold War into a *total* war with the aim of winning hearts and mind of both the elite and the masses in the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia. This was the context in which the political independence of many African countries occurred in the 1960s.

This chapter examines the development of U.S. cultural relations with West African countries after their independence. It starts with the analysis of the change in the official U.S. attitude toward Africa in general from indifference to minimal yet

significant involvement in the post independence economic and political development of African countries. Despite several changes of administrations in Washington, the chapter notes how the American engagement in Africa, regardless of the political party that controlled the White House, was primarily aimed at preventing the newly independent countries from becoming *hotspots* in the Cold War, through the development of “socialist policy” and accepting economic and political support from the Soviet Union or their allies in the Eastern Bloc.

West Africa is located in sub-Saharan Africa, spanning from the Saharan desert in the north to the Gulf of Guinea in the south. It is made up of 16 countries with a colonial heritage from the major European colonial powers: France, Britain and Portugal. The French had controlled Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire Niger, and Mauritania and gained part of Togo after the First World War. British had controlled Sierra Leone, Gambia, Ghana, and Nigeria. The Portuguese were present in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde—colonies that did not gain their independence until 1975. As a region, West Africa is important for this study not only for its rich cultural heritage that has some ramifications with aspects of American culture but also for the indirect impact it has on the U.S. relations with the western European allies.

In general, when discussing U.S. Cold War intervention in Africa, the Congo crisis, the Angola War, or the Horn of Africa are usually mentioned. West Africa is usually regarded as marginal and less relevant to the Cold War competition between the two superpowers. Yet, although no major cold war related conflicts occurred in that part of Africa, West Africa was not entirely free from the ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. In fact it is one of the first areas in Africa where the

U.S. tried to stop the emergence of Soviet influence.¹ Besides from 1960 until the end of the decade, the first officially proclaimed socialist regimes of Africa were located in West Africa. These were the regimes of Sekou Toure in Guinea, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Modibo Keita in Mali, who all declared themselves non-capitalist.²

Until the Second World War, with the exception of Liberia, official contacts between the U.S. and Africa were almost inexistent. U.S. had practically no major interests on the continent and most of these African territories were still under colonial domination. Apart from missionary churches operating on the continent, there was no particular political interest to make official America sensitive and inquisitive about African issues. Apart from Liberia and few and the southern part of Africa, there was no colonial interest and no real economic stake as such on the continent. This may explain why the U.S. stayed aloof and let Europeans control and exploit the resources of the continent. Yet the links between the two entities go back to the founding of the United States of America. Peter Duignan and L.H.Gann observed, “contacts between Africa and the United States are of ancient origin. They are closer perhaps than those that exist between Africa and any European country.”³ A similar argument is made by Toyin Falola and Alusine Jalloh who recall that U. S.–West African relations can be traced back to the era of the transatlantic slave trade that saw “between nine and thirteen million Africans

¹ Sergey Mazov argue during a talk in 2003 that “Archival evidence suggests that West Africa became a Cold War issue in January 1956 when the United States prevented exchanging of Embassies and developing relations between the USSR and Liberia. In West Africa Americans challenged Soviets in every sphere – political, diplomatic, economic, social and military. Each major Soviet move caused counter or pre-emptive measures that contributed much to frustrate its plans.” Synopsis of the talk on “Soviet Policy in West Africa (1956-1964) as an episode of the Cold War.

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1417&categoryid=09B6BF65-65BF-E7DC-40F567F157F96E15&fuseaction=topics.events_item_topics&event_id=27557

² While these governments claimed to be socialists, none of them embraced Marxism which is based on the classes struggle.

³ Peter Duignan & L.H. Gann, *The United States and Africa: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), xiii.

transported to the American continent. Although the majority went to Brazil and the Caribbean, an estimated 400,000 slaves, or roughly 4 percent of the total, were carried to British North America.”⁴ Falola and Jalloh argue that “this group of Africans and their African American descendents established the basis for the relationship between the United States and West Africa.”⁵ Ever since, that connection has left an indelible imprint on the way Africa is viewed by the U.S. greatly, influencing American diplomacy as many African nations rose to statehood.

After the end of the Atlantic slave trade in early 19th century and the abolition of slavery, Africa has become less visible on U.S. diplomatic map. America became more focused on its own domestic problems and found no particular interest in developing political ties with Africa. The first connection of U.S. with Africa in the modern time would be made with the foundation of Liberia as a settlement for freed slaves in 1822. Between the creation of Liberia and the beginning of World War I, the American concerns for African affairs according to Duignan and Gann were almost nonexistent:

Official America, until the outbreak of World War I, had but little concern in African affairs. The United States had taken no part in the partition of Africa. The state department largely considered the African continent an extension of Europe in both the political and the diplomatic sense. American empire builders looked to Cuba and the Philippines, not the so-called Dark Continent. Similarly, the American economic stakes in Africa amounted to little. Most America capital was invested at home, what there was of U.S. trade was centered on Europe and the Americas.⁶

However, there were rare occasions where America intervened in Africa related issues. In 1880, U.S. took part in a conference dealing with Morocco and similarly it took part in the Algeciras conference in 1906. The U.S. was also present at the Berlin

⁴Jalloh and Falola eds., *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations* (Rochester: University Press of Rochester, 2008), 1.

⁵ Jalloh and Falola, *The United States and West Africa*, 1.

⁶ Duignan and Gann, *The United States and Africa*, 185.

conference of 1884-1885 that consolidated the scramble for Africa and attributed most of the continent to European colonial power. It was at this conference that the Belgian Congo was attributed to King Leopold of Belgium who ruled that territory as a private property and committed some of the worst crimes and human right abuses of colonial history. Here the U.S. made its first policy statement applicable to sub-Saharan Africa. The statement “endorsed free access for American commerce and benevolent treatment of the Africans.”⁷ Despite these concerns for a humane treatment of Africans, the final act of the conference was not submitted to the U.S. senate for ratification by President Cleveland. David Dickson explains that the then Secretary of State justified the position by asserting that the United States was “unprepared to accept political engagements in so remote and undefined a region as that of the Congo Basin.”⁸ This statement explains well why the U.S. adopted a neutral attitude toward Africa until the Second World War.

The war was a turning point in how the United States viewed Africa. As a consequence of the important role that Africa—its territory, people (as soldiers) and raw materials—played in World War II, the continent gained more visibility in U.S. policy. According to Andrew de Roche the Second World War had impacted the U.S.-Africa relations in many ways. He explains that it established in the mind of leading American policymakers the strategic importance of Africa. More and more officials from the State Department increased their attention to African issues, including pondering ideas on how to end colonization.⁹ He notes that African-Americans particularly developed an interest in Africa, showing some concerns over the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 but also

⁷ David A. Dickson, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 2.

⁸ Dickson, *United States Foreign Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2.

⁹ Andrew DeRoche, "Relations with Africa since 1900" In *A Companion to American Foreign Relations*. Schulzinger, Robert D. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003) 106.

because five thousand African-Americans soldiers among the “black units of the U.S. army were stationed there” in Liberia that served as a military basis during the war.¹⁰ Serving as a military base was beneficial to Liberia because the U.S. reconstructed most of the country’s infrastructure, both countries signed an agreement on mutual defense and the U.S. also helped Liberia with the Lead Lease Act funds. But this change of attitude in the American perception of Africa had little impact on the overall perception of Africa and Africans. Some among the higher officials, like undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, still doubted that Africans were ready for independence because for him, Africans were “in the lowest rank of Human beings.”¹¹

For African-Americans, the independence of Africa was part of the “double victory” they aimed for after the war. De Roche saw a parallel between fight for liberation in Africa and the African American struggle for civil rights in the U.S., he wrote that “just as the war gave a boost to the civil rights movement in the United States, it sparked the struggle for Liberation in Africa.”¹² Indeed right after the war there more and more claims for self-government and an increase in the number of nationalist movements toward independence on the African continent. This announced the era of decolonization in the world still under foreign domination --particularly in Africa.

Decolonization and Independence

Favored by their experience in the war and by a growing number of intellectuals who could validly challenge their European counterparts, many “Third World leaders became more vocal about the right to self- determination and independence. These demands were channeled through nationalist movements that sprang up in many areas

¹⁰ DeRoche, "Relations with Africa since 1900," 106.

¹¹ DeRoche, "Relations with Africa since 1900," 107.

¹² DeRoche, "Relations with Africa since 1900," 107.

and that in the long run, led to the independence of India, Ghana and many other African countries. Many factors explain the rise of nationalism in Africa. These include the impact of the Second World War and the influence of Pan-Africanism and education.

Some may argue that a man suffering needs not to be reminded that he is. But sometime the astute and subtle way the mechanism of oppression is implemented requires a certain leadership to make the victims aware of their situation. Modern education through the elite provided this leadership in colonial Africa. Missionary churches were among the first institutions to have started modern education in colonial Africa. In that respect they played a catalytic role (indirectly probably or more specifically an unintentional role) in developing African nationalism as Vincent Khapoya explains: “In many African colonies, mission schools were the main educational institutions, and the expense of educating Africans was often borne entirely by the missions. In other colonies, the colonial government provided the funding, but the teaching staff and the curriculum were the responsibility of the missions”¹³ Apart from spreading the gospel, these missionary churches were not only imparted the mission of asserting the superiority of the western values but they were also expected to help increasing the level of productivity of the Africans by giving them the appropriate education. This shows clearly that the civilizing mission of colonization, the motto of some colonial powers like France, was just a cover for the real goal: to serve the interest of the colonial power.

During the process of colonization, despite initial resistance, most Africans found it useful and important to have a western education. It is a common belief that educated Africans would become the link between Africans and the Europeans. As it turned,

¹³ Vincent B. Khapoya, *The African Experience: An Introduction* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998), 153.

Leaders like Jomo Kenyatta and Leopold Sedar Senghor's respectively from Kenya and Senegal show that Africans were right about acquiring western. Both through their mastery of European languages were able to present the beauty of African values and culture to the west while at the same time criticizing the horrors of colonialism on the African people. They both became president of their country. ¹⁴ African elite through modern education acquired the skills that helped them articulate their demands and question the legitimacy of colonial authorities. Education also became a powerful medium of acculturation of Western Christian (and political) values, values that the African very cleverly and ingenuously, to the utter surprise of her/his colonial master, incorporated into political debate over their struggles. According to Ali Mazrui, "The destruction of the 'pagan' African culture was naturally accompanied by attempts to replace it with some aspects of the English way of life. Next to making the boys and girls upright Christian, this was an important aim of the Christian educators."¹⁵ He concludes that missionary education was perhaps far more successful at producing a new cultural African than a consistent Christian. Many of the first leaders of independent Africa were products of missionary education. One could name few among them -apart from Senghor (Senegal), and Kenyatta (Kenya), the list include Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia), Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria), and Kamuzu Banda (Malawi).¹⁶

By showing the dichotomy between its teachings and its daily practices, the Church contributed to the growth of African nationalism. Its contemptuousness attitude to African traditions and cultures contradicted sharply with its doctrine of spiritual kinship

¹⁴ Khapoya, *The African Experience*, 154-5.

¹⁵ Khapoya, *The African Experience*, 155

¹⁶ Khapoya, *The African Experience*, 155

of every human being regardless of his ethno-racial origins.¹⁷ The church's silence on colonial oppression, its constant way of shutting down any attempt by Africans to discuss political affairs and issues related to Africa at school provoked the birth of African Initiative Churches (AIC) lead by Africans who pinpointed the double standard of the colonial church.¹⁸

Until the eve of the Second World War, the myth of the white man superiority on which most of the colonial enterprise rested was not seriously challenged. It would take the two world wars to persuade Africans (with the experience of ex-service men) that in peace as in war human experiences-whether white or black-were the same and therefore there was no difference between Europeans and Africans. The Second World War played an important role in weakening the colonial powers. France for example was humiliated by Germany, a defeat that "helped to destroy the myth of its imperial invincibility." England was impoverished by the war and was forced within a couple of years to let go of India (1947).¹⁹

For Basil Davidson there is not much difference between African nationalism and European nationalism. Just like the rights of man was the main pedestal of European nationalism, so were the principles of equality and freedom to the African nationalism. "In Africa, as in Europe," he explained, "the driving inspiration was not that all men should be divided by becoming nationals, but that all men should be united by becoming free."²⁰ Most of the effort of resistance or defiance developed under the colonial oppression would eventually lead to the independent movement of the post second war

¹⁷ Khapoya, *The African Experience* 155

¹⁸ Khapoya, *The African Experience*, 157-8

¹⁹ Ali Mazrui, "Seek Ye First the political Kingdom" in *General History of Africa* (UNESCO. Volume VIII: *Africa Since 1935* Edited by A.li A. Mazrui 1993), 1072 p. 112.

²⁰ Basil Davidson, *Africa in History: Themes and Outlines* (London: Phoenix, 1992), 325.

period. By the end of the War, African nationalism became more established probably because of the influence of the African intellectuals in Africa and from the Diaspora community, particularly within the Pan-African movement. Pan-Africanism in the beginning was a “protest movement against the racism endured by black people in the new world”? It then slowly evolved into an anti-colonial struggle instrument, “dedicated to bringing about African leaders and intellectuals who hoped that perhaps in the future, African states might be federated as the United States of Africa.”²¹ If some Africans were more conciliatory with the colonial administration, an important number among the rest was also defiant of those administrations. Many of those who challenged the colonizers intellectually were the pioneers of the independence movement. Their nationalistic and Pan-Africanist feelings evolved into an undeniable political force worth being acknowledged by Washington for the future of its political relations with Africa.

Evolution of U.S.-Africa Relations after World War II

American attitudes toward the political situation in Africa were gradually revised by the mid fifties. Looking towards the future of U.S. relations with the emerging nations of Africa officials in Washington became aware of the need for their country to acknowledge the increasing desire for self-determination expressed widely across sub-Saharan Africa. These officials also stressed the need for the U.S. to become proactive in supporting those changes without alienating the interest of their European allies. This change of attitude was clearly demonstrated in point 13 of a policy guidance to the U.S. government which recommended that the U.S. government:

- a. Support the principle of self-determination (self-government or independence) consistently and in such a way as to assure that evolution toward this objective will be orderly; making clear, however, that self-

²¹ Khapoya, *The African Experience* ,166

government and independence impose important responsibilities which the peoples concerned must be ready and able to discharge
b. / encourage those policies and actions of the metropolitan powers which lead the dependent peoples toward responsible self-government or independence.²²

That change in rhetoric did not fundamentally touch U.S. traditional Eurocentric attitude toward the colonized world: that is, Europe first, Africa second. Despite the change of administration in Washington, this Eurocentric approach remained constant throughout the Cold War. The United States was caught between its loyalty to their European allies and the support for the right to self determination that drew on the principles of equality and freedom so central to American democracy. Historians Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann explain how the U.S. tried to move out of this ambivalent position: “the American responded to the Africans challenge in a slow and ambivalent fashion. They stood committed to decolonization; yet they had no wish to alienate their NATO allies by hurrying the pace. Washington tried to escape from this dilemma by backing the reformers within the metropolitan countries.”²³ But the situation in the colonies was evolving so rapidly that Washington was forced to change its policy particularly in the second term of President Eisenhower.

In 1953 when President Dwight Eisenhower became president, he gave little attention to the European colonies in Africa and the aspirations of their populations. Eisenhower maintained the same Eurocentric policy of the administration of President Harry Truman toward the colonized territories of Africa. On important international issues related to Africa, like the question of Apartheid, he maintained a middle road policy, condemning South Africa at the United Nations while maintaining at the same

²² “Statement of U.S. Policy toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar year 1960” *Foreign Relation of the United States 1958-1960* vol. XIV Africa, 28.

²³ Duignan and Gann, *The United States and Africa*, 286.

time relations with the Apartheid regime. But in his second term, Eisenhower realized the force of global decolonization and acknowledged the aspirations of the African populations for their autonomy. Signs of change of policy were visible in 1957 when on March 6th Ghana became independent. High-level officials led by Vice-president Richard Nixon represented the Eisenhower administration at the celebration of that historical event. As a result of the vice-president's trip, the strategic importance of sub-Saharan Africa gained a boost. Upon his return to Washington, Nixon submitted a report in which he emphasized the "importance of Africa in the Cold War struggle against the Soviets."²⁴ No doubt Nixon's assessment of the evolution of Africa influenced the creation of a separate Bureau for African Affairs in the State Department in August 1957.

For Political scientist Peter Schraeder "the primary mission of the Africa Bureau is the maintenance of smooth and stable political relationships with all African governments. The emphasis is on quiet diplomacy and the negotiated resolution of any conflict that may arise."²⁵ With the creation of the African Bureau, the prospect for a better future for U.S.-Africa relations could be clearly noticed. One of the first implications in the change of policy in Washington was the change in rhetoric on decolonization, "anti colonialism came to be interpreted as a policy that was moral in itself, as a device for expanding American trade, and as a means for strengthening the American position where the newly independent states were endowed with a voting strength in the United Nations quite out of keeping with their military or economic power."²⁶ Here it is legitimate to ask whether African countries held any grudge against

²⁴ De Roche, "Relations with Africa since 1900," 109.

²⁵ Peter Schraeder, "Speaking with many Voices: Continuity and Changes in U.S Africa Policies, " *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol. 29, issue 3 (Sep., 1991), 377.

²⁶ Duignan and Gann, *The United States and Africa*, 288.

U.S. previous indifference toward decolonization and if consequently this could affect the future of their relations with the U.S. Political scientist Rupert Emerson ruled out such a possibility on the basis that,

African Leaders ordinarily came to power in their own countries with no deep and immediate sense of grievance, however vehemently they repudiated colonialism as an institution, and they continued to utilize the services of a large number of expatriate officials and experts during an extended interim period. The fact that the United States was intimately allied with the former colonial power was therefore not a matter to which any great attention needed to be paid, even though the universal drift was toward some version of neutralism.²⁷

Moreover, Emerson contends that even though the U.S. was hesitant in endorsing the independence of a country like Guinea 'out of deference' to France, the American image was "enhanced by its traditional aura of anti-colonialism." Emerson asserts that the U.S. had reason to be optimistic about its future relations with newly independent African nations. Africans expected the U.S. to be "sympathetic to their needs and desires, be a source of material bounty and technical assistance, and open up another door to the great outside world than that provided by the colonial powers."²⁸ Similarly, the Americans thought that the development the newly independent countries "should be promoted both for their own sake and to aid them in evading the dangerous wiles of communism, whose policies might be expected to be in general accord with those of the United States."²⁹

In Emerson's analysis, Africa and U.S. were starting their relations almost on a 'clean slate' because on one hand, Africans states were like newborns and did not have any previous established foreign policy other than the one inherited from the former

²⁷Rupert Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1967),4.

²⁸ Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy* 5.

²⁹ Emerson. *Africa and United States policy* 5-6.

colonizer or the one established by the independence movement. On the other hand, although the U.S. past relations with Africa were so old and multiform, “the continuing ties in the present century were so slight and inconsequential that it was both possible and necessary to make virtually a new beginning.”³⁰ On the whole, Emerson argues, the interest of both parties, the United States and African countries, were not clearly identifiable in the early years of independence, better they seemed “not to be in conflict with each other.”³¹

At this juncture it is important to ask if this optimism about U.S.-Africa relations could resist the effect of time but more importantly ask if Emerson analysis includes national security and national interest that are crucial in U.S. foreign policy. If the answer is positive, then it is legitimate to investigate the variables that determined U.S policy towards to continent, and to ask whether there could be any compatibility between American interests and African interests.

Back in the sixties the idea of identifying U.S. interests or advocating the rising stake for the American national security in an area that has been under European domination for over a century, was not widely shared. Nonetheless the idea was not as ludicrous as such. While Rupert Emerson was not very specific about the nature of interest that could be at stake for the U.S. in Africa, Steven Metz argues that there were three kinds of interests for U.S in Africa on the eve of its independence: economic, ideological or altruistic and global communism containment.³² Metz thinks that there were some economic interests for the U.S. in Africa even if these interests were not as

³⁰ Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy* 6.

³¹ Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy*, 7.

³² Steven Metz “American Attitudes Toward Decolonization in Africa” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (Autumn, 1984), 517-518.

significant as American interest in Europe or Latin America. He wrote that “it was the pure potential of the African market that awed American businessmen.”³³ However, the African market in the 1960s was one of the most underdeveloped in the world and thus despite its potential for future U.S. economic relations, the focus of American business men on the reconstruction of Europe cause economic interests to play a very minimal role in U.S. policy formulation.

Metz adds to this potential economic interest, the ideological interest of the U.S. which he links to the continuation of strains of Wilsonian idealism in the debates over the U.S. foreign policy in the mid fifties and early sixties. This type of thinking which reflected U.S. longstanding commitment to self-determination, explains why high officials like Paul Nitze argued that support for colonialism was "abhorrent to American sensibilities." Metz categorized this antinomy between American principle and the idea of colonialism as the ideological or altruistic interest of the United States in post independence Africa.

Finally a third type of interest for the U.S in Africa was the global containment of communism. This preoccupation became much clearer and more emphasized after the visit of Vice-President Richard Nixon to the continent in 1957. The vice president realized that a non-negligible part of the Cold War was likely to be played in Africa and that Moscow could exploit any political instability on the continent for the expansion of its ideology. That realization influenced the strategic importance of the continent. But despite that boost, only few among the high ranking officials in Washington attached any strategic importance to sub-Saharan Africa. Yet it is area that is present in the analysis of David Dickson's three identifiable strategic interests for the U.S. in the sixties.

³³ Metz “American Attitudes,” 517.

According to him, sub-Saharan Africa “commanded sea and air passages which affected the West’s economic and military wellbeing.” In case of conflict between the Soviet Union and the West he asserted that “Soviet control of airfields, ports, and support facilities in the Horn of Africa or the Western bulge of Africa could jeopardize communication between the Persian Gulf area, North America, and Western Europe.”³⁴ Moreover, Dickson pointed out that at this time the United States had some tracking stations and bases in Africa, specifically in countries like Nigeria, Zanzibar, South Africa and Madagascar. These space-tracking facilities were deemed important to the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA). Finally, the U.S. has some mineral interest in sub-Saharan Africa as well, but according to Dickson this interest was not very important.³⁵

On the eve of the 1960’s Presidential elections, there was apparently some fixity in U.S. policy toward Africa. Washington operated with the premise that maintaining Africa in the Western sphere of influence was essential in preventing Moscow from gaining any sort of influence in sub-Saharan Africa.³⁶

John F. Kennedy’s election as president brought a change to that Eurocentric fixity in the American attitude toward Africa. Kennedy attempted to break away from that premise of using the tight bond between Africa and the West as a strategy of containment. Dickson explains that “[a] new slogan arose which soon found its way into many administration statements. This statement is that the cold war was to be kept out of Africa was to be free to follow its own destiny removed from the manipulation of the

³⁴ Dickson, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa* ,12

³⁵ Dickson, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa* 12-13.

³⁶ Dickson, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa* 18.

superpowers.”³⁷ But Despite that desire to move away from the cold war preoccupation in Africa and despite the peculiarity of President Kennedy’s diplomacy in Africa, for the political scientist Donald Rothchild, there was no fundamental change in the U.S. policy toward the continent under his administration. Rothchild notes that the Kennedy administration continued to advocate ties with Western Europe as a way of maintaining the international order that came out of decolonization.³⁸

Euro-centrism and containment thus influenced the American policy in Africa throughout the Cold War era and conditioned Washington’s attitude toward many West African countries. However, although containment remained constant with most of the different administrations that followed one another in Washington, there were some differences in how each of them, from Eisenhower to Reagan, implemented their Africa policy. Usually the American policy was shaped by the preferences and priorities set by the new administration. President Richard Nixon, for example, promoted ties with conservative African leaders and relaxed the U.S. stance on the White racist regimes of southern Africa while President Jimmy Carter appeared more principled in his African policy. He supported self-governance and democracy for Africans as a way to efficiently contain the Soviet influence in Africa. His successor Ronald Reagan was more direct, if not more assertive, when it comes to containing communism in Africa and the Third World in general. During his presidency, Reagan attached much importance to the prestige of the U.S., the sense of purpose, and military credibility, and subordinated the issues of democracy, human rights, to the imperative of “effective response to the

³⁷ Dickson, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa*, 18.

³⁸ Donald S. Rothschild, “The U.S. Foreign Policy Trajectory on Africa” *SAIS Review* - Volume 21, Number 1, Winter-Spring 2001, 180.

perceived Soviet threat.”³⁹ President Reagan thus raised the cost for antagonizing U.S. for many Marxist or socialist African countries. As a matter of fact Soviet allies in Africa were viewed as enemies and their neighbors or internal insurgents were given proper assistance by the United States.

So far I have argued that contrarily to the prevailing belief, there was a recognition in Washington of the importance of Africa to U.S. policy even if it is not as strategically important as other continents. But one may ask if this importance was significant enough to justify Washington intervention on the continent. On another level if containment aimed at countering the Soviet Union from gaining ideological influence in Africa, what was the nature of the Soviet threat in Africa? What strategies did the Soviet and eastern bloc use in order to gain influence on the continent, but also in the third world in the general? How did the U.S. respond to those threats? How did the United States develop an interest in Africa and newly independent Africa? Addressing these questions help us understand why and how the United States developed its cultural policy with African countries and mainly, why it can be considered a branch of U.S. foreign policy. However, before coming back to the American containment strategy it is necessary to look at the Soviet Union and communist countries’ cultural policy in post independence sub-Saharan Africa.

Soviet and other Communists Cultural Activities in Africa

The Soviet’s attempt to woo Africa dated back to Lenin. But like the United States, the Soviet Union had little contact with sub-Saharan Africa prior to the Second

³⁹ Donald S. Rothschild, “The U.S. Foreign Policy Trajectory on Africa” *SAIS Review* - Volume 21, Number 1, (Winter-Spring 2001): 182-183.

World War and the decolonization era.⁴⁰ Among other explanation for this lack of contact was the fact that from the Soviet perspective, Sub-Saharan Africa lacked in real progressive organizations that could function like a political party. To Lenin an efficient, well organized party is the essential “vanguard” to a successful revolution. In the Soviet analysis, while there were some African nationalist movements fighting for the liberation of many colonies, such movements were not progressive enough and not representative enough to be categorized as parties or even to be considered for any assistance from the Soviet Union. Robert Legvold, a specialist of the soviet foreign policy, explains that “It took Soviet commentators nearly a decade to decide that the nationalist movements of Africa were essentially progressive enough and deserve support.” By that time he argued, the Soviet policymakers were confronted with the independence of Ghana which launched the era of decolonization in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁴¹

Ghana’s independence caused the Soviet Union to change its attitude towards African colonies and it led to a gradual reduction of the distance between Moscow and sub-Saharan Africa. The development in the Soviet relations with the African continent increased after the independence. It took many forms, economic assistance, military agreements, educational exchanges and most of all the increasing promotion of cultural activities with these areas. Of course these different co-operations were not philanthropic in nature. Moscow and the other communist countries had their respective agenda.

Frederick Charles Barghoorn summarizes Moscow policy and its purposes as follows:

The long-run objective of soviet policy in the underdeveloped countries remains that of smoothing the path for the eventual accession of

⁴⁰ Frederick Charles Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive; the Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy*,(Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1960), 19.

⁴¹ Robert Legvold *Soviet Policy in West Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 19.

communists to power. The short-run objectives are several. Highest priority, perhaps, is assigned to the undermining of western influence. Another major purpose is to present to the peoples, and particularly to the intellectuals, of these countries an appealing picture of Soviet life and of Soviet domestic and foreign policy. A related purpose is the establishment of personal and organizational links between Soviet artistic, scientific, and academic institutions and counterparts in target areas. An attempt is also made to use cultural exchanges to influence the policies and attitudes of local noncommunist political leaders.⁴²

More and more politicians and other prominent figures among the Soviet intellectuals pressured citizens, professionals, artists, sportsmen or people from different categories of the working class to show sympathy to the anti-colonial struggle of the Asian and African people while trying to win their hearts and minds. Soviet scholars were able to demonstrate how the “republics of the Soviet East” had, with the active help of the Great Russian people, overcome their former backwardness in the shortest possible time and had become “the lighthouse of communism in the East.”⁴³ The aim was to project in Africa as well as in Latin America an image of the Soviet Union as a capable and serious partner in their policy of national development. To this end, two major techniques were used by the Soviet:

One of these was to utilize exchange visits as occasions for publicizing these Soviet achievements most calculated to convince Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans of Soviet solicitude and respect for them. The other and closely related technique consisted in the careful cultivation of the predispositions and susceptibilities of peoples whose traditions, aspirations, and grievances had been carefully studied.⁴⁴

Soviet effort seemed to have paid off within a decade after Africa’s independence.

Apart from elevating the image of the Russians among some African elite, communists’

⁴² Baghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 189

⁴³ Baghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 192.

⁴⁴ Baghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 192.

ideology was able to find its way to a number of professional and social organizations in many African countries. Duignan and Gann explain that “communists in sub-Saharan concentrated on infiltrating trade unions; on African nationalist movement; on building networks of agents and supporters through local “peace movements,” cultural fronts, youth leagues, women’s associations , and scholarship programs for study in the Soviet Union and on similar measures.”⁴⁵ All these activities played important roles in the Soviet and the communists’ cultural strategies in Africa--which the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) categorized as propaganda. The CIA asserted that “communist foreign propaganda activities involve the manipulation of mass media to disseminate information and ideas designed to obtain the maximum possible support for communist policies. For example, a list of these propaganda activities may include broadcasting, publishing, news agencies activities, film showing and exhibit.”⁴⁶ The CIA states that Soviet promoted cultural activities “seek to depict Communist artistic and literary achievements and include the exchange of performing troupes and literary works.”⁴⁷

In general the communist goal in using both practices, was to “establish and strengthen rapport with the people of less developed countries” by identifying with their political and economic aspirations. Most of all, “Soviet propaganda in the underdeveloped countries appeals particularly to the radical anti-western nationalism which has developed in recent years.”⁴⁸ Likewise, they exploit any dissatisfaction and help overthrow ‘unfriendly regimes.’ Communists were selective when it comes to their

⁴⁵ Duignan and Gann, *The United States and Africa*, 286.

⁴⁶ CIA Intelligence Report No 118, *Communist Cultural and Propaganda Activities in the Less Developed Countries*, 3. http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp

⁴⁷ CIA Intelligence Report No 118, *Communist Cultural and Propaganda Activities in the Less Developed Countries*, 3.

⁴⁸ Baghoorn *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 190.

target groups. They quite often weigh their importance and receptivity to their message but also studying the type of media to use for them. Poor and illiterate people are not included in their potential groups. As the report states, “the illiterate and the poor are rarely the target of communist propaganda. They have the least access to propaganda media, exert little pressure on government policies, and usually are not a revolutionary force. Those groups typically targeted are youth and students, young government and military officials, leaders of trade unions, and employees of information media.”⁴⁹

Cultural agreements were used to establish presence in less developed countries. From 1956 and 1964, for example, the number of agreements signed with African countries went from 0 to 46. In 1965 alone they signed a total of 39 agreements.⁵⁰ The report states that “in every year since 1960, communist agreements with African countries have accounted for one-half to two-thirds of the total number of agreements and protocol signed.”⁵¹ These agreements legally provided a pretext for the Soviet and eastern bloc to organize cultural activities in third world countries and also to initiate exchange programs with them. These agreements facilitated the establishment of friendship and cultural societies, especially bi-national friendship societies or cultural centers were established in many countries around the globe. These organizations were “responsible for conducting many activities, including exhibits, language lessons, film presentations, distribution of propaganda materials, and sponsorship of travel to communist countries.”⁵² Books and periodicals also occupied an incredibly important place in the communist cultural propaganda. Millions of copies of books were published

⁴⁹ CIA Intelligence Report No 118, 3.

⁵⁰ CIA Intelligence Report No 118, 7.

⁵¹ CIA Intelligence Report No 118, 7.

⁵² CIA Intelligence Report, No 118, 9.

and distributed in the less developed countries. Usually many of these books were ideological containing the ideas of Lenin, Marx or Engels or the account of the Soviet Communist Party activities. Other types of literature included magazines; newspaper and publication of the Tass News Agency. But occasional there were fiction works depicting stories of bravery during the war of national liberation that is the Second World War. There were usually distributed for free to students or other visitors of the cultural centers or the libraries in the host countries. These printed media were complemented by a growing program of mass media communication as shown by a comparison between the broadcasting time of Radio Moscow and that of 'The Voice of America' the broadcasting branch of the United States Information Agency. In 1964 for example, while the VOA was broadcasting only 46 hours to Africa in 1964, radio Moscow was broadcasting 129 hour in the same period with the inclusion of some native African language like Bambara, Hausa and Somali.⁵³

While television was not as developed in many African countries in the sixties, the Soviet bloc used alternative visual media in their cultural activities. Films and exhibits of photos or artistic works and later on video and similar media were extensively used both in host countries and at international level. Films were usually distributed "by Communist diplomatic missions, cultural centers, and friendship societies" and the admission to the projection session was usually free.⁵⁴ This was an important asset of their propaganda apparatus as movies can reach a far larger audience than other media. Its effectiveness was increased by the strategy of free admission, the connection between the audience and most of the themes explored by or the questions addressed in these

⁵³ CIA Intelligence Report., No 118, 12.

⁵⁴ CIA Intelligence Report No 118, 19.

movies. Quiet often these themes were related to the direct experience of many populations in third world despite a heavy emphasis on the depiction of the achievement of communist societies.⁵⁵ The Soviets generally made an effort to be represented at international film festivals and present competitive films which usually win many awards.

The importance of human agency in enabling cultural persuasion was also emphasized in the communist strategy to make their ideological appeal to African countries. This was reflected through the different exchanges program they maintained throughout the entire cold war period. Not only were the large mass of populations targeted, but the elite was particularly targeted through the program scholarships or educational or cultural exchanges. According to the CIA report “the communist countries promote extensively the exchange of delegations, performing groups, and sports teams in order to establish personal contacts with selected groups in the least developed countries. Because these contacts are easily adapted to all fields, they afford opportunities to establish friendly relations and gain influence. In the 60’s on average the annual cost of all of all Chinese and Soviet exchange programs could be estimated as high as \$100 million, and out of this total amount the less developed countries accounted for an important share.⁵⁶ That trend continued with an ongoing increase in exchange as shown in the CIA report:

During 1964, communist and less developed countries exchanged a large number of delegations representing the fields of art, music, science, education, writing, and journalism and representing trade Unions, youth organizations, and student organizations. At least 1500 delegations (compared to about 800 during 1955) ranging in size from one or two members to large groups of 50 to 100 traveled between communist and

⁵⁵ CIA Intelligence Report, No 118, 19

⁵⁶ CIA Intelligence Report, No 118, 20.

less developed countries during the year. India and Indochina were the major less developed country participants, exchanging about 200 and 170 delegations, respectively. Among other important participants, Ghana and Algeria each account for 120 delegations, Mali for almost 90, and Guinea and Tanzania for about 60 each.⁵⁷

In addition to these different programs, the Soviet Union and its allies used economic and technical assistance to promote good relations with many new states in Africa.

The eastern bloc Cultural offensive in Africa may not have presented a direct and important threat to the United States' interest, but that offensive could become over the years a serious threat to the interest of U.S. allies of Europe. What made this cultural inroad a plausible threat was the negative depiction of the United States and western democracy that was an important component of the propaganda activities. With such a threat, it is not surprising that Africa became one of the areas where the U.S. cultural policy was eventually extended to after the decolonization. Among others the objective of this policy was to tell the truth about the U.S., its culture and its institutions.

American Cultural Policy in Africa

The battle to win hearts and minds of the African populations brought the U.S. to promote the development of cultural ties with Africa. Karen Bell referred to this policy as the attempt to "develop a sense of community" with West African countries. Elaborating on that concept she drew on the philosopher Josiah Royce claim that a "community can only exist where individual members are in communications with one another so that there is to some extent and in some relevant respect, a congruence of feeling, thought,

⁵⁷ CIA Intelligence Report, No 118, 20.

and will among them.”⁵⁸ The ideal community in Royce sense is what she called the “beloved community” in which members pursue the “cause of loyalty, truth, and reality.”

Karen argues:

America’s perceptions of truth and reality became instruments of cultural diplomacy and served to complement the high politics of power and security throughout the cold war. The diffusion of truth, reality, and ideological loyalty by exporter of cultural values to the recipient undergirded this form of diplomacy and formed the central features of U.S. information, propaganda, and cultural matrix for expanding U.S activities on the African continent.⁵⁹

This statement echoed the views expressed in the late 50’s, on the eve of African independence in different official documents like memoranda and policy statements on Africa. Making projections on the future of the region in those days and searching for ways and means to maintain good relations with the new countries, in most of them there was a recurring emphasis on cultural ties and education as part of U.S. cooperation with newly independent African countries.

From May 30th to June 2nd, 1960, there was the “Conference of Principal Diplomatic and Consular Officers of North and West Africa” held in Tangier chaired by U.S. Assistant Secretary Satterwaithe.⁶⁰ It was attended by about 19 diplomatic and consular missions in Africa and official representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, and the U.S.I.S. The conference, which comprehensively addressed U.S. policy in Africa, produced a document that contained conclusions and recommendations in four different domains for U.S. policy: political, economic, culture and information, and administration. As far as cultural recommendation is concerned, the

⁵⁸ Karen Bell, “Developing a sense of Community: U.S. Cultural Diplomacy and the place of Africa during the Early Cold war Period 1953-1964” in *The United States and West Africa* Jalloh and Falola eds., 126.

⁵⁹ Karen Bell “Developing a Sense of Community,” 126.

⁶⁰ Department of State “General U.S Policy Toward Africa” *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960 volume XIV, Africa, (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1992),137.

conference emphasized three points to make the cultural ties between the U.S. and the region possible. First the conference mentioned the “need for greatly expanded information and cultural activities in Africa especially tailored for various regions. The Conference expressed a hope that the United States Information Service posts in the newly emerging countries would be fully staffed, equipped and financed in the shortest possible time.”⁶¹ The second point of the recommendations stated:

One element of primary importance for the achievement of American policy objectives in Africa is a wider dissemination of knowledge of the English language. As far as the former French dependencies are concerned, however, this encounters a special degree of sensitivity and resentment on the part of the French government. It was concluded that the United States must, without renouncing its objective of creating a wider knowledge of English in the countries concerned, take into account the attitudes of the French Government.⁶²

The last point addressed issues related to the programs that brings Africans on visits to the U.S. It was recommended that there be more ‘coordination and planning’ between the different programs involved and that the agencies that were involved “should be particularly careful to so arrange grantee programs as to minimize the danger of racial incidents.”⁶³

From the 60’s through the end of Soviet rule, the United States maintained a policy of cooperation and assistance with many African countries including Benin and Ghana. Likewise its cultural relations included different programs like the cultural presentations, the program of educational exchanges, professional visits to the U.S., exchange of volunteers through the Peace Corps and many other types of technical

⁶¹ Department of State “General U.S Policy Toward Africa”, 140.

⁶² Department of State “General U.S Policy Toward Africa”, 140.

⁶³ Department of State “General U.S Policy Toward Africa”, 140.

assistance and cultural cooperation through the United State Information Agency posts, the book distribution programs, and other programs.

Education (formal schooling) was essential to the changes that led to the independence of African countries. The American government did not lose sight of the long-term impact that formal education could have on the destiny of the new nations. Besides, educational exchanges were a big part of the Soviet bloc cultural activities in Africa. For the U.S. to carry out any cultural program, the country receiving or hosting artists must agree to such activities. This explains why right after the independence, the U.S. signed many bilateral agreements with most of these countries of West Africa. They covered different areas ranging from economic to military assistance with in many cases a special emphasis on educational assistance.

Educational exchanges

Education is an important aspect of the U.S. exchange program with Africa. Assessing the situation of the West African states, soon after independence, the U.S. government recognized the need to provide assistance in education sector. Ideas and communications are important in cultural relations and they can be validly transmitted through education.⁶⁴ Educational exchange is thus one of the key elements in cultural relations especially when dealing with nations in construction like African countries at the independence. The leadership in the African Bureau firmly believed that contributing to the formation of a new class of elite and leaders in every walk of life, not only would generate a lasting friendship between the U.S. with Africa, but the exchanges of students,

⁶⁴ Frank Ninkovich wrote that the “trust in transcultural capacity of ideas to hasten the arrival of generalized “understanding” comprised the intellectual core of the U.S. approach to cultural relations.” *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 182.

teachers and others would pave the road for an easy and indirect penetration of American thought, American values, in short the American way of life. This, they were convinced would reflect on how institutions are established, the exposure to the American lifestyle could eventually influence Africans who had studied in the U.S. and that influence would show through their decision-making. Mindful of the importance of the educational exchange on the relations between two nations the U.S., extended the benefit of the Fulbright scholarships to many African countries. The total number of Fulbrighters from Africa has reached 9, 703 including Humphrey fellows in 2007.⁶⁵

The Hubert H. Humphrey North-South Fellowship program was announced late in 1978 by the White House but it started effectively in September 1979. The goal of this new fellowship was to bring approximately “50 young professionals in public service from developing nations to study at institutions in the United States for one year of post-graduate work.”⁶⁶ According to the Fulbright commission, the Humphrey scholarship is directed toward ‘career development of the next leadership generation in the developing nations.’ For this reason, Humphrey fellows have both a rich academic and professional background and their “Study programs are geared to problem solving rather than to academic disciplines. Emphasis has been placed on professional work in the fields of agriculture, public health, planning and resource management, and public administration.”⁶⁷

Cultural Exchanges

Cultural exchanges played an important role in U.S foreign Policy. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs helped deliver these programs of the State Department

⁶⁵ Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, *Annual Report 2007-2008*, 70.

⁶⁶ Report on Exchanges *16th Annual Report* December 1978, 9.

⁶⁷ Fulbright Program Exchanges *18th Annual Report*, December 1980, 7.

abroad. The 1966 report of the Bureau indicated that: "Cultural presentations" are major part of the U.S cultural exchange program. The Government attaches great importance to the sending abroad of our best and most representative cultural attractions, including performing artists in music, the dance and drama."⁶⁸ In application of that program, the Bureau provided USIS post with books, records of American music and also sponsored exhibits of photography and paintings. The Bureau justified the use of arts as a means of cultural diplomacy: "There are two basic and essential reasons for the State Department's cultural Presentation's program. First, the arts portray the diversity and vitality of the American scene. Secondly, since the arts appeal to certain human aspirations, the unifying artistic experience helps reduce cultural barriers among peoples of the world."⁶⁹ Arts are fungible and can reach even the portrayed enemies of the U.S.A. However, it is important to ask if it is necessary that the government use music groups, for example, if commercially transmitted American music was already flowing over the shortwave airways to many parts of the world. In their book about U.S. African relations, Peter Duignan and L.H Gann wrote that American goods that were successful on African markets included among others "movies, which had a near monopoly of the African market. American musical instruments, phonographs, and records also dominated the market."⁷⁰ This shows how the U.S. popular culture was widely consumed in Africa in the 1960s and that it exerted a strong appeal on the African youth. A lot of this influence came from commercial sources and its distribution in Africa is hard to track down just like its impact. A possible way to make an assessment of the impact could be done would

⁶⁸ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Annual Report to Congress on the International Educational and Cultural Exchanges Programs Fiscal Year 1966*, 57.

⁶⁹ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs *Annual Report 1966*, 57.

⁷⁰ Duignan and Gann, *The United States and Africa* 207.

be the study of musical bands and their creation in Francophone and Anglophone Africa; bands of Soul, Jazz or Rhythm and Blues music. There are certainly a great number of such bands that are influenced by the American popular music, however for numerous reasons this issue cannot be elaborated on in this part. Rather, it is more important to focus on the official approach to what best reflect the U.S. culture and which cultural activities are likely to project what America stands for.

Music, arts, books, and periodicals have been used to show what reflect American life and institutions. These were part of the program initiated by the State Department in 1954 that was called 'Cultural Presentation.' The different activities that followed the program became an important part of the U.S. effort to contain the influence of communism in Africa, in reaction to the sponsoring by the Soviet government of international African tours by Russian artists and ballet or dancing groups. U.S. response to this cultural offensive was what it has best to offer in music at the time: Jazz.

The Jazz program was one of the programs initiated under the administration of President Eisenhower who personally believed in the impact relation between citizens from different countries could have on promoting peace and mutual understanding among nations. It was in that spirit that the people to people, the sister cities, and the jazz diplomacy program was created. By the 1950s, and throughout the cold war, the Soviet cultural propaganda was comprised of all kind of exchanges as shown above, artists, ballets sponsored by the government. The artists selected were touring "Third World" countries to show the success of the Soviet achievement in the arts, music and on other cultural fronts. These activities complemented the already widespread propaganda against the West and the U.S. liberal democratic system, particularly focusing on the

double standard in the way America treated its citizens of color. While undeniably there were civil rights issues in the U.S. the government found it suitable to present the truth to the world instead of letting the Soviet portray and distort the image of the U.S. and the Western democracy. In July 1954 President Eisenhower asked Congress to allocate funds for Cold War Cultural Exchange. In his request the President declared:

In the cultural and artistic fields... we need greater resources to assist and encourage private musical, dramatic and other cultural groups to go forth and demonstrate that America too can lay claim to high cultural and artistic accomplishments. ... The contribution which such presentations make toward a better understanding of America can scarcely be exaggerated. I consider it essential that we take immediate and vigorous action to demonstrate the superiority of the products of our free enterprise.⁷¹

The jazz program started in 1956, following the authorization by Congress in 1954 that the President Emergency Fund could be used for participation in international Affairs. The fund became permanent through “the International Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act 1956.” That act created the Advisory Committee on the Arts that had the power to recommend participants in the program to the President.⁷² The advisory committee established a musical Panel and the Department of State through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (C.U.) appoint five jazz experts to the panel. This included Willis Conover who was selected in 1967. In 1964, this panel formed a subcommittee to select jazz and folk music groups that will be sent on cultural presentations tour around the world.

When the panel first met in 1954, the objective of the tour was clearly stated by the State Department that is to “counteract Russian propaganda.” Jazz was chosen out of

⁷¹ Lisa Davenport “Jazz and the Cold War” in *Crossing boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora* by Darlene Clark Hine and Jacqueline McLeod eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 286.

⁷² Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War” 286.

information sent by the U.S embassy in Hungary about the success of jazz concert in that country and its popularity among the youth.⁷³ After considering a host of musicians and jazz singers artists, the panel suggested that Dizzie Gillespie go on the first tour abroad. Some artists were eliminated for logistic reasons. Gillespie was judged “intelligent” and “cultivated.” Gillespie and his band were given \$92,000 for a tour to the Middle East that lasted about ten weeks.

The first tours were in the Near East but later on the tours included areas like Russia and Africa. Although, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs indicated in its annual report of 1966 that “it would be undesirable for the U.S. Government to manipulate the arts for political or ideological purposes” the context compelled the Bureau to provide some guidelines for the attendance of the presentations.⁷⁴ The State Department usually targeted five groups of people as audience for these American jazz concerts. These were “young people, students, labor organizations, intellectuals, and the diplomatic corps.”⁷⁵ The expectations of the State Department were that these tours would help fulfill four sub- objective of containment. These were: “1./ to depict the position of African Americans in American life 2./ to promote social discourse between American and foreign diplomats and dignitaries 3./ to increase cultural and diplomatic contacts; and 4./ to foster general good feelings and faith in the United states competence as a world leader.”⁷⁶

While these objectives were carefully studied and designed to make a positive impact on the audience, objective number four seems irrelevant in my judgment. It is

⁷³ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 287.

⁷⁴ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Annual Report to the Congress 1966*, 57.

⁷⁵ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War”.288.

⁷⁶ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,”288.

questionable to argue that people would construct their belief in U.S. as a world leader only from attending jazz concerts. To attain these goals, jazz groups had to choose to engage in a minimum of one among these activities: “a VIP reception with the ambassador of the host country; buffet luncheons; practice sessions and rehearsals; radio interviews; performances for television; performances and receptions with students at universities; jazz workshops, lectures and demonstrations; and informal jam sessions with local musicians.”⁷⁷ Judging by these objectives, the targeted audience and the activities, there is no doubt that the cultural presentations programs were minutely crafted to generate a positive attitude toward the United States abroad. One of the places where this cultural presentation operated the most beside the Middle East and the Eastern Europe was Africa.

The Jazz Diplomacy in Africa

The racial connection between the U.S. and Africa influences the way the U.S. sees and interacts with the continent. In the fifties and sixties, this element became so crucial because it threatened to damage the international image of the U.S. as a world leader. Critiques pointed at the treatment of African Americans, particularly as it was an antinomy to everything the U.S. stood for: democracy, freedom of individuals and all the fundamental rights and civil liberties attached to the person of the citizen in a democratic society. The U.S. domestic situation with increased violence against Blacks and urban problems sharply contrasted with, as Davenport pointed out, the U.S. international leadership in the 1950's.

As America was promoting its positive image as a world leader in the African countries, such violence against black people at home raised serious questions about any

⁷⁷ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 288.

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trust African nations could have in the United States. Race was a sensitive issue especially when dealing with countries whose populations were entirely black, like those of sub-Saharan Africa. This demonstrates how American domestic issues, can at times, develop international repercussions. In the 1960s, African diplomats who were appointed to Washington D.C. were confronted with the problem of segregation that was still lingering in spite of the achievement of local desegregation in many public places like restaurants, theaters. As African diplomats were appointed to the federal capital city, they soon discovered the difficult and sour reality of racial segregations in the U.S. This included the difficulty to find houses for their family and the denial of access to better restaurants or other public businesses. Life became difficult for many of them.

According to Renee Romano “the Metropolitan Club, which admitted most ambassadors for free, refused to allow Africans or Asians to join.” Moreover, he continued, “African dignitaries were also victims of more serious harassment. In 1961, Tesfiya Roba, the second secretary of the Ethiopian embassy, received menacing phone calls, the tires in his car were repeatedly flattened, and large rocks were left on his front steps.”⁷⁸ In normal circumstances the Washington D.C. and suburban Maryland and Virginia police forces were supposed to give a hand in tracking down the culprits. To the dismay of the diplomat, the police gave no response to his request for investigation.⁷⁹ African diplomats believed they were high ranking dignitaries, who deserved, just like their white Europeans peers; the same treatment attached their status. But this expectation could only

⁷⁸ Renee Romano “No Diplomatic Immunity: African Diplomats, the State Department, and Civil Rights, 1961-1964” in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (Sep., 2000), pp. 546-579: Organization of American Historians, 551.

⁷⁹ Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity,” 551.

make things worse as it increased “the likelihood that they may be disrespected by White Americans.”⁸⁰

These types of incidents led to the creation in 1961 of the Special Protocol Service Section (SPSS) within the Office of Protocol at the State Department. Its mandate was to prevent “racial incidents involving African diplomats” however Romano continues, “it quickly took the lead in campaign to pass a fair housing law in Washington D.C., and a public accommodations bill in Maryland.”⁸¹ The SPSS was headed by Pedro Sanjuan, who assessed the growing number of such incidents, feared that its impacts could reach the U.S position and voting power at the United Nations. As the ruling class in the newly independent countries were very close-knit, reasoned Sanjuan, “what affects one or more members of these groups is likely to have a strong influence on the opinions and the attitudes of their governments.”⁸² Whether these concerns were exaggerated was a matter of personal judgment and outlook in the issue. That is how many officials in the administration reacted, they treated these concerns according to their personal judgment and consequently provided no real solution for the problem of the African diplomats. From the State Department’s suggestions of buying “an apartment building to house African Africans diplomats” to Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, making his office available for an African diplomats to come to his personal barber for a haircut, different ideas were expressed as a way to solve the problem faced by African diplomats. President Kennedy himself suggested that African diplomats, who faced discrimination on road or rail trips between Washington and New York, fly instead.⁸³

⁸⁰ Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity,” 552.

⁸¹ Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity,” 548.

⁸² Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity...,” 551.

⁸³ Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity...,” 551.

At international level these kind of incidents were heavily exploited by the U.S adversaries in the Cold War competition: “Chinese propaganda harshly criticized the State Department for seeking to establish a vacation beach for foreign diplomats since most beaches within driving distance of Washington D.C., were segregated.” The Russians could only snatch that opportunity to foster the fact that the United States was trying “to isolate the victims of discrimination” instead of facing the problem. The Soviet press went on saying that while the U.S. propagandists were criticizing other nations for “creating “Potemkin villages” to conceal their internal problems from visitors,” America was the leader in such deceptions.⁸⁴ In the midst of these unfortunate racial incidents, some diplomats were asked to wear their African dresses when going out or to identify themselves as ambassadors before entering a restaurant. These suggestions prompted negative reactions among the African diplomats. Some preferred to be recalled, rather than going through the humiliation of having to identify themselves as diplomats, before being served.⁸⁵

These incidents with African diplomats certainly distorted the image of the U.S. abroad. In counteract the entire negative image African people may have forged out of the communist propaganda on these issues, the State Department found no alternative other than presenting the problem in an alternative light. Jazz diplomacy on the African continent from the cold war perspective was expected then to convey a specific message about the position of African American in the American society. It has become a way to articulate the possibility that America offered the black man to be a successful career man and live a better life. For this reason, starting from the 1960s, Robert H. Thayer, who

⁸⁴ Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity...,” 559.

⁸⁵ Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity...,” 559

was the Assistant Secretary of State for the Coordinator of International Educational and cultural Relations, and the United States cultural affairs officers in Africa emphasized that the Bureau of educational and Cultural Affairs (C.U.) should send performing arts groups to every country on the continent.”⁸⁶ In compliance with the department political agenda, the “performing arts groups had to be racially integrated or consist entirely of African-Americans. In fulfilling those requirements, the Department was trying to convey two messages: 1) America’s sympathy with the freedom struggles of African peoples; and 2) cultural connection between Africa and the America.”⁸⁷

Impact of Jazz diplomacy in Africa

The African public reacted with enthusiasm to jazz tours. Reports from the American embassies stated how diverse the reactions from government officials to students, throughout West Africa were. Following the Cozy Cole concerts the Vice President of the Republic of Niger told U.S. Ambassador that “the Cozy Cole [jazz] group was the most effective weapon against the diatribes [sic] of radio Moscow with obvious reference to the race problem.” The success of jazz concerts in Africa thus created an interconnection between the effort to counter the Soviet harsh criticism of the American race problem jazz, and integrated groups.⁸⁸

One of the challenges in Washington was to suggest the works of African artists or composers to the selected groups. Officials in charge of the jazz policy for Africa knew little about African music or cultures and were not therefore able to suggest any works of African composers. As a solution to this flaw in their policy the panel in charge of the program had to direct some groups traveling to Africa to the Library of Congress to

⁸⁶ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 288.

⁸⁷ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 289.

⁸⁸ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 289.

search for more information about African music. The lack of knowledge about the sophisticated nature of African music and of African audiences led many among the panelists to draw unverified conclusions about the African audiences. Davenport note that they pointed out that “American standards were too “highbrow” of Africa; and while C.U. wanted to reach the “natives with jazz music, some feared that jazz was beyond their ken.”⁸⁹ The consequence of all these preconceived ideas was for the C.U. to endorse percussion and brass ensembles instead of string instruments.

Wilbur DeParis and his band was one of first American jazz bands to have toured for the state department in Africa. “During his tour from March 31 to May 19, 1957, DeParis performed for a momentous event, “the festivities marking the independence of Ghana.” On the impact of the tours, the bureau of educational and cultural affairs note that “the band won friends for the United states, left a “fine impression among’ African people, and gained the respect of Emperor Haile Selassie, who gave each member of the group a gold medal at a special performance.” But the tour had unexpected impact on the common man like the Ethiopian guard who did not believe that African American could have property of their own until he talked to a member of the group who told him, he ‘just bought a new house and owned his own car’.⁹⁰

The Herbie Mann jazz band toured Mali and many other African countries in 1959. But it was Armstrong’s tour in 1960 from October 24th to December 4th, and in part of January 1961, that had one of the biggest impacts on the African public as it led to creating more positive images about of the American race relations in Africa. The USIS post report in Senegal note that “the presentation of the great American Negro artist

⁸⁹ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 290.

⁹⁰ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 291.

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added measurably to the prestige of the United States and at the same time it gave jazz lovers the thrill of a lifetime.”⁹¹ From Mali, the report analyzed Armstrong appearances in the country raised doubt about the socio economic status of Black in America. The report stated that “the spectacle of an American Negro musician leading an orchestra composed of three colored, one white, and one Filipino musician...cannot help but raise doubts in many minds regarding the image of the American Negro propagated here.” All this praise were summed up in the Nairobi’s editorial that called Armstrong “America’s finest ambassador.”

But all was not excitement and acceptance. If jazz has African roots, it also has western or American flavor and taste. So it was still foreign music to many African audiences. Consequently the Bureau was not fully satisfied with the jazz program. Many among the officials of the Bureau shared the thought that the three groups sponsored to Africa did not fully meet the expectations for the program. Some African post reports went in the same direction. For example, the cultural charge at the American embassy in Lagos reported that Armstrong music had “little impressions on Nigerians. They don’t dig him.”⁹²

One of the most successful groups of the jazz tour in the sixties was the Cozy Cole band. Reports from embassies stated that the” the Cozy Cole quintet and revue seemed to triumph wherever it went.” During a period of six months the group performed in about 14 countries and enjoyed special media publicity with the French newspapers, NBC correspondents, and others. Its audience included leaders, spouses of officials and

⁹¹ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 291.

⁹² Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,” 293.

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students while the groups performed also on special occasions like the “Independence Day dinner” in Cameroon.⁹³

Through music and entertainment, the C.U. was able to reach audience in Africa as the continent. It was a good policy at some point to calibrate the diplomacy to the audience and the country by using the racial element to convey a specific message of the chances that America and its ideology and system gives every citizen to self uplift to success, proving that the American dream is achievable by anyone regardless of its ethnic or racial background. Whether these concerts and the interactions artists had with their peers actually fulfill these objective is strongly arguable. So is the full adherence of many among the jazz artists to the government’s objectives in sponsoring the concerts. So far the discussion of the jazz diplomacy gives the impression that the artists adhered to jazz program and were fully supportive of the image of America a land where “ a shared, core adherence to material abundance ultimately transcended differences” that the U.S. government intended to project through their concerts.⁹⁴ But prudence needs to be observed here for such a conclusion is not accurate. According to Frank Ninkovich it is even contradictory to the general apprehensiveness many Americans have traditionally about any government involvement in cultural matters. In his words:

the widespread belief that diplomacy is about power, combined with an underlying suspicion of the state as potential Big Brother, has produced a chronic apprehensiveness about government playing an active role in the promotion of ideas. The absence in this country of a ministry of culture, a commonplace organ in other lands is indicative of an aversion to “official culture.” Americans, with their deeply rooted hostility to the political

⁹³ Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War,”293

⁹⁴Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 255.

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control of ideas, have never been entirely comfortable with a tight governmental link to culture and information.⁹⁵

Perhaps this statement explains the disparities that existed in the course of the jazz diplomacy between the objectives of U.S. government and the way many jazz artists approached the tours. If the State Department objective was to contain Soviet's anti-American propaganda by showing through these concerts, the benefits of the American democratic values, American material success and more importantly how this material abundance was accessible to every citizens, jazz artists used the tours for personal statement about their situation at home, especially black musicians who were denied their rights as artists and citizens.⁹⁶ As Penny Von Eschen explains it the fact that for over two decades “, America was associated with jazz, civil rights, African American culture, and egalitarianism” did not mean that artist obediently accepted to project the image of a free country. These artists rather used the program to identify with the global struggles for freedom. She wrote that:

Musicians were not simply tools or followers of this policy. In the most fundamental sense, they were cultural translators who inspired the vision and shaped its contours, constituting themselves as international ambassadors by taking on the contradictions of cold war internationalism. They called for increased government support of the arts; they spoke freely about their struggles for civil rights; and they challenged the State Department's priorities. They asserted their right to “play for the people.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Frank A Ninkovich, *U.S. Information Policy and Cultural Diplomacy*, Headline series, no. 308. (New York, N.Y.: Foreign Policy Association, 1996), 7

⁹⁶ Von Eschen “ musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and Duke Ellington embraced the tours as opportunities to make claims on a nation that had long denied them recognition as artists, and human and civil rights as African Americans.” *Satchmo Blows up the World*, 250.

⁹⁷ Von Eschen *Satchmo Blows up the World* , 252.

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As long as these disparities between jazz performers objectives and the government goal did not end up in open conflicting collaboration, the jazz program continued its course until its end

After the leisure provided by the entertainment, other burning issues were still to be tackled by the politicians that is the problem of development. If economic and political relations target the elite, the question of improving the lives of many among the populations of the newly independent African countries remained an important challenge to the African leaders. The beginning of the Peace Corps volunteers program in 1961 by the Kennedy administration was part of the American government's effort to help African countries facing those challenges.

The Peace Corps in Africa

In identifying the mechanisms through which the United States promotes mutual understanding with other nations, we listed the great contribution brought by President Kennedy with the creation of the Peace Corps. If the elite enjoyed jazz, students have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and education in the U.S. and other professionals visit America on business tour, the common person in Africa does not have all those possibilities that are offered the elites and the intellectuals. Here volunteerism of the kind that the Peace Corps provides was an enormous opportunity for the U.S. technical assistance in various fields to directly touch a larger portion of the population and improve to some degree their daily lives. This is actually an important source of U.S soft power in Africa. It is probably one of the areas where cultural diplomacy or cultural relations can be seen as effective in the sense that it touches directly average citizens in

remote areas who do not have access to the running water and lack basics to enjoy a decent or acceptable life.

Peace Corps has been involved in the development of the African continent right from the beginning of its operation. In the 1960s, many African nations became independent and they were facing the challenges of development with limited resources, an administration that was in serious need of civil servants, the need to build schools and make education accessible and affordable to many in urban as well as rural areas. On top of these concerns was the vacuum left by European expatriates who were serving in administration, school, health and so on. The primary challenge and thus the primary need of the sixties was education. Peace Corps was able to help many nations facing those challenges by providing an important number of volunteers who served in education. For example in 1965, of a total of 3,131 volunteers sent to Africa, 2433 were serving in education, that is about 78 % of the total. The next field was community action 8% followed by agriculture 5% and health 4% of the volunteers.⁹⁸ That trend would remain throughout the period of the cold war. Education would remain among the top priority as the years went by. As the 1985 annual report indicated it

Volunteer involvement in education dates from the beginning of Peace Corps. About 40% of projected host country Volunteer requests relate to primary education, secondary mathematics, science, and TEFL education. Peace Corps will also respond to increased demand for vocational and teacher training. Teacher training is particularly important since it increases the impact of Volunteer transmittal of skills.⁹⁹

But other development projects requested assistance from the Peace Corps for areas like agriculture, health and rural development. Overall the Peace Corps made an important impact on many populations in Africa. Timothy Maga noted that:

⁹⁸ Peace Corps, *Congressional Report 1965*, 5.

⁹⁹ Peace Corps, *Annual Report 1985*, 16.

The Peace Corps had its greatest impact where Kennedy thought it would be truly a “lost adventure”, Africa. The locations were too remote and the cultures too primitive, he believed, for the Peace Corps to make a difference. He was wrong. In Sierra Leone, for example, the political leadership agreed that “the Peace Corps has shown us a world we never knew existed. Some of us had never seen a truck or lorry or people from the outside who wanted to help us. We had heard of America, but now we know what it means.”¹⁰⁰

Perhaps it was its success that helped the Peace Corps expand its program in Africa. Starting with Ghana and Tanganyika in 1961 other African countries signed agreements with the organization. This could be seen as a success of cooperation and if viewed as a creation of the cold war, the Peace Corps is then a victory for the U.S. by the collapse of the Soviet empire (1991), only a handful of Peace Corps offices were not in operation (Liberia closed in 1990). As of today peace Corps is present in the whole West Africa but because of unstable political situation it is not operative in five countries: Liberia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast (Cote D’Ivoire), Sierra Leone, Bissau Guinea.

U. S. attitude toward African countries moved from indifference to that of full engagement with containment as the background ideology. This background ideology became a rally cry for all the western allies and tempered any frictions they may have in their relations over Africa. Consequently, during this time period, they showed a subtle solidarity which ended with the demise of the Cold War. This prompted scholars like Peter Schraeder to talk about the Cold Peace replacing the Cold War in Africa.¹⁰¹

Containment also shaped U.S. aid, economic and military cooperation with West African countries and many African countries and also led the U.S. to extend its cultural program

¹⁰⁰ Timothy MAGA “Visionary Diplomacy: the Peace Corps and Food for Peace” pp. 51-67 in “*John F Kennedy and the New Frontier Diplomacy, 1961-1963*” (Malabar Florida: Krieger Publishing company 1994), 58.

¹⁰¹ Peter J Schraeder wrote that “Francophone Africa has emerged as the most publicly contested arena of Great Power competition on the African continent” in the years after the end of the Cold War.” “Cold War to Cold peace: Explaining U.S.-French Competition in Francophone Africa” *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 115, Iss. 3 (New York: Fall 2000): 396.

to African countries. In establishing its cooperation with these countries, the U.S. did not approach them based on their relative importance. The following chapters will look at two distinct individual cases of U.S. cultural relations with two West African countries.

CHAPTER 3

U.S. CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH A PERIPHERAL AFRICAN COUNTRY: THE CASE OF REPUBLIC OF BENIN

As the previous chapter showed, within a few years after decolonization, Africa became one of the regions where ideological rivalry opposed the United States and the Soviet Union. Each side exploited different means to establish and promote good relations with the newly independent countries. The United States extended the containment of communism to Africa and thus used among others military, economic or cultural cooperation to project a good image of the western democratic system in the newly independent countries. But the U.S. did not approach African countries on equal basis; some countries, because of their colonial past and the economic or strategic advantage they presented, had more priority in U.S. -Africa relations than others. As argued by Mary Niles African Francophone countries are believed to be on the periphery of U.S. relations with the continent.¹ Despite this status, U.S. still had relations with almost all the francophone countries of Africa including the Republic of Benin.

This chapter will study U.S. cultural relations with Benin from 1960 to 1990, the year of a Democratic Renewal (Renouveau Democratique) in the political history of the country. Benin was recognized as independent state by the United States in 1960 and both countries signed the following year the Economic, Technical and Related Agreement signed at Cotonou on May 27th, 1961.² This document reflects their consensus to mutually determine in which areas they are going to cooperate.

¹Mary Niles Maack "Books and Libraries as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy In Francophone Africa During the Cold War." *Libraries & Culture* 36 (Winter 2001):58-59.

² *Economic, Technical and Related Assistance Agreement*
<http://www.personnelcoop.org/membersonly/Benin.pdf>, August 3rd, 2009.

U.S. and Benin enjoyed good relations till 1974 when the choice of Marxism as an ideological guide signaled the beginning of a period of deterioration that reached its highest point with the end of their diplomatic relations. The post independence political history of Benin is divided in three periods: from 1960 to 1972, 1972 to 1990 and the period running from 1990 onward. Benin became independent as the Republic of Dahomey in 1960. After 12 years of instability On October 26th, 1972 the day of last successful coup, its political history would never be the same again. The new direction in the country launched a series of measures that included that adoption of a new ideology, the change of name from Dahomey to Benin and the revision of the principle guiding the foreign relations of the country. Like many of the former French West African countries (Afrique Occidentale Française, A.O.F.), Benin still had very close ties with France, its former colonial power despite its adherence to the non-alignment movement. As a result of the decision to revise and reorganize its foreign policy, the privileged status of the relations with France was cleared after the putsch of 1972 and in the process the new leaders called for a revision of the first agreements signed with the latter after the independence.

Section I: Benin and its Foreign policy

Located in West Africa, the Republic of Benin formerly known as Dahomey is a small country composed of about 46 ethnic groups. Among these groups are the Yoruba, the Adja, the Fon, the Dendi and the Bariba. Apart from the Adja and the Fon most of the rest migrated from the neighboring states or have simply been the victims of the artificial division brought by the colonization. Benin shares its borders with Nigeria on the East,

Republic of Niger on the Northern side Burkina Faso on the northwestern and the Republic of Togo on the west side.

Benin became officially a French colony in 1894 with a decree of June 22nd, 1894 which organized the colony of Dahomey and its dependent territories.³ Like in many French speaking countries of West Africa, political activities toward self-determination, did not start until the post Second World War. It was after the war that the colony of Dahomey (that was its name then) “acquired direct representation (through a single deputy) in the French National Assembly and its own territorial council in 1946.”⁴ The council was elected by both Dahomeans with French citizenship and the rest of the elite or other people eligible to vote for the representations. With the reforms of 1951 and 1957, the limited number of electorate of the 40’s increased considerably in the 50’s and it “created a powerful territorial assembly.”⁵ The consequence of these reforms, especially the first one was that it forced potential leaders to speak with the rural electorate. Many among them were thus confronted with the obligation of bargaining with local leaders about what could be done to create or improve some facilities in their communities. This led to the rise of ‘clientelism’ in the political practice of the major parties that came out of these reforms. ‘Clientelism’ in politics consist in exchanging “blocks of votes, usually communities or organizations , for valued good such as a school, piped water or pay increase.”⁶ These goods are provided by national politicians using the state resources and channeling them through local or sectional leaders. This exchange in Allen’s words “help to confirm the local leader in his leadership status and

³ Robert Cornevin, *La République Populaire Du Bénin: Des Origines Dahoméennes À Nos Jours*, (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1981), 409.

⁴ Christopher Allen, Michael Radu, et al, *Benin and the Congo* (London; New York: Pinter, 1989.), 21.

⁵ Allen, Radu et al *Benin and the Congo*, 21.

⁶ Allen, Radu et al *Benin and the Congo*, 22.

provides the politicians with votes.”⁷ Clientelism was common among the political parties even after the independence and to a large extent contributed to the instability that preceded the 1972 coup.

Political evolution after the independence

Benin gained its independence on August 1st, 1960 as the Republic of Dahomey with Hubert K. MAGA as the first President of the Republic of Dahomey. In November of the same year a new constitution was adopted. But problem started to arise after three years with strikes and political demands that end up on October 28th, 1963 with a putsch by General Christophe Soglo who controlled the government temporarily before handing power over to the civilians by December 1963. Soglo took it back in 1965 for a period of two years before Commandant Kouandete took control of the country in 1967 after a successful coup and asked Lieutenant Alley to form a new government. On June 26th, 1968 the army decided to hand power to Dr. Emile Derlin Zinsou who was ousted a year after by Kouandete on December 10th, 1969. Three days after on December 13th, Paul Emile de Souza took control of the government but a few months after on May 7th, 1970, a Presidential Counsel was installed. This Counsel was composed of three members: Hubert K. Maga, Justin T. Ahomadegbe, and Sourou M. Apithy. The new formula was to allow each member of that counsel to be appointed President for a period of two years. Unfortunately this solution did not last long enough to prove its efficacy before a new coup was made.

On October 26th, 1972 once again Benin was subjected to another putsch. The “Conseil Presidentiel” the triumvirate composed of three members in charge of governing the country from 1970, was suddenly overthrown by a group of young army led by

⁷ Allen, Radu et al *Benin and the Congo*, 22.

Commandant Mathieu Kerekou. The group quickly formed a transition government, the Gouvernement Militaire Revolutionnaire (G.M.R.), and launched a month after in November 1972 its program, the “Discours Programme” an official document, in which its main agenda was highlighted. Kerekou observes in that speech program:

Dahomean people are proud and love justice. They are rich in natural resources as well as spiritual strength. It is capable of sacrifice and heroism and it is a people that are impatient to take care of its own destiny. Therefore, the only way out for us is that of a New Policy of National Independence.

*(“Le peuple Dahoméen est un peuple fier, épris de justice, riche des ressources de son pays et de son esprit, capable de sacrifice et d’héroïsme, impatient de prendre en main son destin. C’est pourquoi, la seule voie qui s’offre à nous aujourd’hui est celle d’une politique nouvelle d’indépendance nationale.”)*⁸

The coup and the installation of a new government heralded a revolution in how the country was ruled. By declaring that the New Policy of National Independence was the only way, the transition government made a bold move toward change in how the country has been governed since the independence. The main objective of the government was to change the system by changing the men and the structure that supported it. To this end as explained by Major Kerekou, three tasks needed to be tackled by the interim team. As stated in the excerpt below in French, among these tasks were, the articulation and implementation of a policy of self-reliance which reflects a true independence; the reorganization of the economic, cultural and social structures of the country; and a policy of open or universal cooperation with every country without ideological or any other discrimination. More importantly however the first major task of the new team was to assert the authority of the State.

⁸ Mathieu Kerekou, *Dans la Voie de l’Edification du Socialisme, Recueil des Discours de notre Grand Camarade de Lutte le Président Kerekou* (République Populaire du Bénin, Éditions Graphic Africa, 1979), 9.

*Il s'agira de liquider définitivement l'ancienne politique à travers les hommes, les structures et l'idéologie qui la portent.
Compter d'abord sur nos propres forces, sur nos propres ressources, sur l'initiative créatrice des larges masses dans notre lutte pour nous libérer de la domination étrangère, pour développer notre économie et pour donner à notre peuple la dignité et la personnalité d'un peuple libre;
Réorganiser toute la structure économique, culturelle et sociale de notre pays dans le sens d'une libération de la domination étrangère, d'une éradication de la corruption, de la concussion et du népotisme, et d'une plus grande efficacité;
Développer nos relations extérieures avec tous les pays sans discrimination sur la base du respect de la souveraineté... nationale, de l'égalité et de l'avantage réciproque; Affermir l'autorité de l'état.⁹*

Foreign relations were undoubtedly another important matter of concern for the new team. While it did not particularly innovate as far as the basic principles of Benin diplomacy is concerned it did expand on the list of principles and emphasized the need for mutual respect and dignity in its relations with foreign nations:

Dahomey relations with foreign countries must be based on the principles of non-alignment, equality, mutual respect of sovereignty, reciprocal advantages and national dignity."
(*"Les rapports du Dahomey avec les pays étrangers doivent reposer sur les principes de non-alignement, d'égalité, de respect mutuel de la souveraineté, des avantages réciproques et de la dignité nationale."*)¹⁰

Beside, the interim government reassured the international community that it would respect and support the existing regional and international organizations like the Organization of African states and the United Nations. In addition it expressed its solidarity with nations that were still fighting for their liberation, among these countries were Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Vietnam and so on.¹¹ The adoption of the 'Discours Programme' was just one step although a major one in the list of events that materialized the transformation in the ruling of the

⁹ Kerekou, *Recueil des Discours*, 9-10.

¹⁰ Kerekou, *Recueil des Discours*, 14.

¹¹ Kerekou, *Recueil des Discours*, 15.

country. A year after the 'Discours Programme', in 1973, a National Counsel of the Revolution ("Conseil National de la Revolution") was created and the following year that is 1974, a new development occurred in domestic policy. The official ideology that would guide the new revolution was declared that is scientific socialism informed/guided by Marxism-Leninism. This decision has some implications not only on domestic policy but also on the exchanges between the country and the outside world.

In addition to the asserting the authority of the government and identifying the general principles guiding its foreign policy, the interim leaders believed that establishing a strong and successful policy of development requires an ideological orientation. This ideology would galvanize all the effort of development and bring positive changes in the life of every citizen of the country. Furthermore, they believed this ideology would help preserve the dignity of the country and its equality among other nations. That logic led to the adoption of a Marxism- Leninism on November 30th, 1974. This was justified in the National Orientation Speech ('*Discours d'Orientation Nationale*') delivered on the same day which explain why it was important for the country to have an ideology. In his speech, the President declared:

Dahomean men and Dahomean women, to be prosperous, master of its destiny and to be truly powerful, a country needs foremost a well studied political guide that should be followed with the ultimate rigor, in domestic as well as in foreign policy. That is why, for a new beginning of the Dahomean revolution, we have understood the necessity to clearly define our political orientation, that would guide our action...("*Dahoméennes, Dahoméens, pour être prospère, maître de soi-même et réellement puissant, un pays a besoin avant tout d'avoir une ligne politique bien étudiée et qui doit être suivie avec la plus grande rigueur, a l'intérieur comme a l'extérieur. C'est pourquoi, pour un nouveau départ de la révolution dahoméenne, nous avons compris la nécessité de définir clairement notre orientation politique, le guide de notre action...* ")¹²

¹² Mathieu Kerekou, *Recueil des Discours*, 16.

Kerekou concluded that for the aforementioned reasons he solemnly proclaimed this day Saturday November 30th, 1974 that the New Society where life would be good for each Dahomeans citizen would be a socialist society. (*"Nous proclamons solennellement ce jour, Samedi 30 Novembre 1974 que la Société Nouvelle ou il fera bon vivre pour chaque Dahoméenne et pour chaque Dahoméen, sera une SOCIETE SOCIALISTE."*)¹³

Thus socialism was the path and the guide of the revolutionary action was Marxism-Leninism. He explains that Marxism-Leninism was:

a philosophy, a guide for revolutionary action, an instrument of scientific analysis, a rational working method, an exemplary line of behavior in everyday social life, that aims essentially at freeing/franchising the popular mass of any reactionary ideologies and their manifestations in any forms .
(*"Le MARXISME-LENINISME est une philosophie, un guide pour l'action révolutionnaire, un instrument d'analyse scientifique, une méthode rationnelle de travail, une ligne de conduit exemplaire dans la vie sociale quotidienne, qui vise essentiellement libérer les masses populaires de toutes les idéologies réactionnaires et de leurs manifestations sous toutes les formes."*)¹⁴

The implication of socialism as the ideological guide for the development policy was the control by the government of most of the means of production and the economic unit of the country. Right after the adoption of Marxism Leninism by Benin, there was a wave of nationalization of almost all the existing economic units and other vital enterprises of the country that belonged in large part to private operators some of which were American. Not long after the relations with the United States would suffer from this ideological shift while there would follow an increase in exchange with the former Soviet Union.

¹³ Kerekou, *Recueil des Discours*, 19.

¹⁴ Kerekou, *Recueil des Discours*, 20.

The Guiding Principles of Benin Foreign policy

Any current study of the Benin's foreign relations, should consider three major periods: the first 12 years after the independence (1960 - 1972) and the Years of the militaro-Marxist regime (1972 – 1990) and the era of new democracy (1990- onward).

In spite of the many putsches that characterized the first phase (1960-1972) it was still a period of relative continuity in the country's foreign policy, at least in principle. Almost all the government that took power after the several putsches in this period implicitly pledged allegiance to the west and kept special relations with France. Because of the ideological competition of the Cold War many third world countries chose after decolonization, not to identify with any of the leading superpower or their ideology. This position is referred to since the Afro-Asian conference of Bandung in April 1955 as the non-alignment movement.¹⁵ At the independence, Dahomey/Benin has joined that group by making Non-alignment one the major characteristic of its foreign policy. But as Benin, was confronted with the challenges of national development, the choice of non-alignment was seriously weakened by its limited resources. This situation created its dependency on foreign aids and forced the country to rely on France, the former colonizer. France was thus granted a privileged status among foreign partners. As a result there was an unconditional diplomatic solidarity with France, Benin was expected to consult with the French authority on major international issues and align its decision on the French position.¹⁶

Nonetheless following the independence the first President Hubert K. MAGA laid down the main principles of the country's diplomacy on the eve of the celebration of the

¹⁵ Kenneth D. Kaunda, *The Origin and Growth of Non-Alignment*, (Lusaka, Zambia: Neczam, 1971), 4.

¹⁶ Amzat Assani and Thierry C.O. Gnanho, "Point sur les accords de Coopération signes entre la France et le Benin de 1972 a 1992", (Abomey-Calavi : FASJEP U.N.B.), 16-17.

first national day on July 31st, 1961. Those principles were: “mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, equality and dignity of neighboring states and partners; non-interfering in the internal affairs of the states; good neighborliness relations; Peaceful settlement of conflicts, peace-keeping and international security; international cooperation based on reciprocal interests.”¹⁷

Despite the political instability of the first decade after the independence, these principles remained largely unchanged since 1960.¹⁸ However between the coup of 1972 and the adoption of the resolutions of the 1990 national conference the main ideas behind Benin foreign relations derived from the ‘Discours Programme’, a speech program made by the leader of the putsch. The ‘Discours Programme’ called for a new turn in the country’s foreign policy and strongly emphasized the need to do away with diplomacy as it was held before the putsch. The goal of the new orientation was to free the nation of foreign domination which was seen as the primary cause of the Benin’s underdevelopment.¹⁹

Benin foreign policy operated on two main guiding principles from 1972 to 1989: the New Policy of National Independence and the fight against neo-colonialism. In application of the New Policy of National Independence, Benin identified “nonalignment, equality, mutual respect, sovereignty, mutual advantage and national dignity” as key elements of its new foreign policy. In pursuance of this policy many goals were set for national development of the country, and to meet this objective, the country needed more

¹⁷ National Chart of the Republic of Dahomey, edited by the Secretary of States, pp. 17-20, 1961 cited by Raoul Senankpe Ahouangansi, “*Cooperating for Development: Benin-United States Relations Since 1990*” (memoire Maitrise FLASH, DELLCE 2004-2005) 8.

¹⁸ Ahouangansi, *Cooperating for Development*, 8.

¹⁹ Zinsou Donatien Ogoubiyi “*et la domination étrangère sera dénoncée comme “source première de l’arriération de notre pays.” La Coopération Bénino-Américaine* (Abomey-Calavi : FASJEP UNB 1983) ,15.

resources.²⁰ An increase and a diversification in the number of foreign partners became necessary. A matter of fact, Benin thus increased its diplomatic representations abroad from 12, to 18 and ended, as explained earlier, the privileged relations with France.²¹ New countries joined the circle of foreign partners; Benin established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China right after the revolution of 1972, North Korea and the Democratic Republic of Germany in 1973.²²

The new diplomacy had a mitigated success. If it helped broadening the circle of friends and partners, it suffered from the international context of Cold War. The new diplomacy generated some benefits for the country by contributing to its diplomatic expansion. This expansion resulted in more assistance in the field of education mainly in the form of scholarship that helped training the manpower needed for the task of national development. For some analysts "Benin diplomacy knew its hours of glory during the Revolutionary period. Most of the factories were built then. Links with the People's democracies of Europe, the U.S.S.R., China and North Korea were strengthened. More than 2,000 students were trained in those countries."²³ But these gains were only partial and could not help fulfill all the objective of national development. The diversification in partnership partially failed, victim as mentioned earlier of the ideological competition of the Cold War. Few years after the decision to adopt socialism and Benin's relations with many western countries started deteriorating. Despite its non-alignment, the shift in its ideological option of development affected the country's image abroad and caused it to be isolated diplomatically. This made some analysts claim that "Benin diplomacy during

²⁰ Ogoubiyi, *La Coopération Bénino-Américaine*, 16

²¹ Ogoubiyi, *La Coopération Bénino-Américaine*, 17.

²² Ogoubiyi *La Coopération Bénino-Américaine*, 18.

²³ Raoul Senankpe Ahouangansi *Cooperating for Development*, 18.

the Marxism-Leninist political regime (1975-1990) caused serious damages to the country's image, strained its international relations and brought about diplomatic isolation and even its neglect by other countries”²⁴

All in all, the combination of the factors like the Cold War context, the new ideological direction in the country and its diplomatic expansion towards the eastern bloc and other communist countries, created political friction with other nations. For example since Benin became closer to the communist North- Korea, its diplomatic relations with South Korea were ended. Similarly due to some misunderstanding and miscommunication over economic and political matters, its relations with the U.S. suffered severely to the point where the U.S reduced the size of its representation in Benin ²⁵

Benin-U.S. Relations since 1960

Domestic political realities usually influence the way actors interact at international level. This statement applies to the relations between the United States and Benin. In either country, major domestic actors and political climate have influenced the evolution of these bilateral relations. Studying U.S.-Benin relations thus requires that the three phases identified earlier in this chapter be considered. This section will first analyze the political context in which the relations between the two countries evolved before studying the cultural exchanges between the two countries.

The United States and Benin enjoyed fairly good relations between 1960 and 1972. But after 1972 their relations suffered from ideological differences as well as from clashes over economic interests. Benin was recognized by the U.S. Right after its

²⁴ Ahouangansi, *Cooperating for Development*, 21.

²⁵ Ahouangansi, *Cooperating for Development*, 21.

independence and the two countries established diplomatic relations as early as October 1960. In the State Department's Press release No. 596 of October 13th, 1960 we could read:

Immediately upon their attainment of independence in August of this year, the United States entered into diplomatic relations with these nations... In the cases of Dahomey, Niger and Upper Volta, Donald R. Norland, Charge d'affaires resident at Abidjan, Ivory Coast, also presented credentials as Charge on their dates of Independence.²⁶

Nearly a month after their independence, the U.S. upgraded its representation in these ex-colonies to a diplomatic mission with Mr. Borden Reams appointed on October 14th, 1960 as Ambassador to the three Republics of Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, and Dahomey (Benin).²⁷ Ever since, the relations between the two countries followed a normal constant evolution until the crises of the 70's. The following year Benin and the United States signed their first bilateral Agreement which launched their cooperation in every possible area that is still in effect. Many other agreements were signed later on with the U.S. on small or large scale development projects in Benin. The major agreement between the two countries was the *Economic, Technical and Related Assistance Agreement* signed on May 27th, 1961 at Cotonou. Although there is no cultural agreement specifically signed, the spirit of the first article gives enough room for any such cooperation between both countries. It states:

the Government of the United States of America will furnish such economic, technical and related assistance hereunder as may be requested by representatives of appropriate agencies of the Government of Dahomey and approved by representatives of the agencies designated by the Government of the United States of America to administer its responsibilities hereunder, or as may be requested and approved by the

²⁶ *Department of State Bulletin* Vol. XLIII no 1114, October 31st, 1960, 702.

²⁷ *Department of State Bulletin*, 702.

Figure 1. The effect of the *h* parameter on the accuracy of the $\hat{\theta}$ estimator. The figure shows the mean squared error (MSE) of the $\hat{\theta}$ estimator for different values of h (0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.04, 0.05, 0.06, 0.07, 0.08, 0.09, 0.1) and for different values of θ (0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.04, 0.05, 0.06, 0.07, 0.08, 0.09, 0.1). The MSE generally decreases as h increases, and the effect of θ is less pronounced.

Government of the United states of America and the Government of Dahomey.²⁸

Change in the domestic political situation of Benin in 1972 significantly impacted its relations with United States. Between 1972 and 1974 the American government was cautious about the new regime in place in Benin because of the uncertainty and lack of clarity in the new direction in country. However this short period of observation did not prevent the continuation of the American assistance in social and rural development through 1976.²⁹ In 1974 the choice of Marxism triggered an era of crisis that brought changes in the good relations entertained from the independence onward.³⁰

1. / Political Differences

The political differences between the two countries came from their ideological differences. The choice of socialism by Benin as the driving ideology for its development in 1974, caused the American to be distant from the new regime as it has become estranged to the principle of the American democracy. The implications of these differences transpired in their respective views on important international issues like the war in Angola, the Iran situation in 1978, the American military operation in Guantanamo and other sensitive international issues.³¹ Two additional factors made the U.S. adopt a much tougher position vis-à-vis Benin between 1976 and 1982: the

²⁸ *Economic, Technical and Related Assistance Agreement*
<http://www.personnelcoop.org/membersonly/Benin.pdf>, August 3rd, 2009.

²⁹ Benoit C. Arigbo and Etienne D. Doukan “*La Politique Américaine d’Aide Bilatérale au Développement de la République du Benin de 1960-1996.*” (Abomey-Calavi: FASJEP Université Nationale du Benin. 1996-1997), 3.

³⁰ Michel Houndjahoue “Le Différend Américano-Béninois de 1976 à 1983” *Le Mois en Afrique*, 219-220, (Avril-Mai 1984): 25.

³¹ Zinsou Donatien Ogoubiyi *La Coopération Bénino-Américaine* (Abomey Calavi : FASJEP UNB 1983), 63-64.

establishment of diplomatic relations between Benin and the Republic of Libya and the numerous meeting and sessions of ideological indoctrination.³²

The lack of communication resulting from other incident, contributed to the deterioration of the already shaky situation between the two countries. On Thanksgiving Day (November 26th, 1981) two Americans were drunk and were trying to find their way home. Unfortunately they lost their way and entered the military camp of Ghezo at night despite the warning of the guard. The latter shot the two Americans and one of them was injured on his legs. The other was detained for interrogation. The injured was transferred to Europe. They were shot by the guard and one of them was injured. The American ambassador took appropriate measure to fly him overseas without any consultation with the official in Benin. The Benin official did not appreciate the fact that the American was transferred without any further explanation. As a consequence Benin authorities requested that the American Embassy move their venue from the vicinity of the camp. That decision was qualified “unfriendly and unacceptable” by the American government who retaliated with a suspension of its financial assistance to Benin.³³ In addition to that sanction the main instrument of U.S. representation in Benin like the Embassy in Cotonou, the American Cultural Center and the U.S. Agency for International Development office (USAID) Bureau in Cotonou were all closed with the USAID office transferred from Cotonou to Lome (Republic of Togo). The political crises were only one aspect of the issue, other problem arose over American economic interests mainly detained by American companies and individual operating in Benin.

³² Interview with Mr. George TIMANTI 25/07/1996 by Arigbo and Doukan.

³³ Ogoubiyi, *La Cooperation Benino-Americaine*, 71.

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2. / Crises over Economic Interests

These crises developed mainly over issues of nationalization by Benin of American economic interests.³⁴ Following the adoption of socialism in 1974, the government decided to take control of most of the private companies and other business operating in the country. The choice of socialism and Marxism Leninism brought Benin to nationalize the majority of companies (private bank and other business) operating in the country particularly the most vital for the economy. In the process, it also took control of many companies belonging to foreign investors among which four American companies belonging all to the American firms the Texas Company (TEXACO) and Mobil. Other American interest touched by the decision was the 20 % of the share of the bank BIAO owned by American citizens that were seized by the government.³⁵

Other problems arose between the Benin government and the leaders of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, commonly referred to as “the Jehovah witnesses.” Some of their practices and belief were antagonistic with the new regime. Consequently, the government not only forbade the witness to practice their cult and forced their leaders (who were Americans) of the church to leave the country, it also seized almost everything that belonged to the Bible and Tract Society including their estate. An important portion of this belonged to American citizens.³⁶

These incidents had diplomatic repercussions and brought the American government to exercise economic pressures on the government of Benin. Among these was the suspension of any kind of financial, technical or economic assistance to any

³⁴ Ogoubiyi, *La Cooperation Benino-Americaine*, 65.

³⁵ Ogoubiyi *La Cooperation Benino-Americaine*, 65.

³⁶ Ogoubiyi *La Cooperation Bénino-Américaine*, 65.

projects that were initially financed in part by the U.S.³⁷ the American position that was as enforced by the Trade Act of 1974 , was that unless the government of Benin redresses the situation by paying the American companies or citizens what they are due, these projects were no longer to be financed by the U.S. government.³⁸

With such a pressure one hand and the expectation of Benin authorities to improve the relations, the Beninese government finally decided to give back what it took from the witness. But despite that sign of good will, the situation did not improve. It got worse when at the beginning of 1976, “troops forced their way into the American ambassador’s residence.”³⁹ The reason behind this unjustifiable breach in diplomatic norms was the suspicion by Benin officials that the Ambassador’s residence was hiding arms that could be used against the regime.

As a consequence of this series of events, that is the breach in diplomatic norms, the absence of communication and the pressure from U.S. Congress, Benin and the U.S.A suspended their diplomatic relations in 1976. It was only in 1984 that the relations were restored and a new Ambassador, Mr. George Moose was appointed to Benin.⁴⁰

The combination of these factors and the idea that Benin like many francophone countries are on the periphery of the U.S. diplomacy in Africa may prompt many observers to support the claim that the American government did not try to promote the values of liberal democracy by creating a friendly atmosphere between the two nations. On the contrary, in attempting to assist the country to attain its development objectives,

³⁷ Ogoubiyi *La Cooperation Benino-Americaine*, 66.

³⁸ Ogoubiyi *La Cooperation Benino-Americaine*, 67

³⁹ Allen, Christopher, Michael Radu, et al *Benin and the Congo* (London; New York: Pinter, 1989.), 115.

⁴⁰ Benoit C. Arigbo & Etienne D. Doukan “*La Politique Américaine d’Aide Bilatérale au Développement de la République du Benin de 1960-1996.*” (Abomey-Calavi: FASJEP Université Nationale du Benin. 1996-1997), 5.

the U.S. used economic assistance and different programs of exchanges to present the achievement of the American system and persuade (if necessary) the elite of the benefits of the ideals of the capitalist system. These programs created an interface where leaders, elite, students and other professional could witness the cultural and technological achievements of the U.S. system. Most of these are initiated and centralized by the U.S. State Department through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs.

Section 2: U.S. cultural relations with Benin

U.S. cultural relations program with Benin is characterized essentially by educational exchanges, the International Visitor program and other cultural activities organized under the supervision of the United State Information Service in Cotonou. Complementary cultural activities include the book and audio visual loan service organized through the American cultural centers, currently known as the Information Resource Center.

Apart from technical and economic assistance, another category to consider is visit of American officials to Benin. A simple visit can have an unimaginable impact on the public opinion. During the first decade after the independence there were many official visits from Washington to Dahomey/Benin. The purpose was to reinforce the relations between the nations. These types of visit leave a good impression on the public opinion particularly in an underdeveloped country where the low literacy rate prevents a large portion of the population to access the newspaper and thereby develop a critical appraisal of such visit.

Other sources of influence although very remote and not directly related to any government policy could be the Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's). They project

indirectly some aspect of the American values, either humanitarian or a system of belief, religious or others. Before the nineties they were only a few of these organizations, the political stability brought by the new wave democracy in the 90's has favored the increase in the numbers of foreign NGO's in Benin.

Cultural relations have existed between the United States and the Republic of Benin since 1960. Despite the volatile political situation in Benin in the '60s U.S. educational exchanges still continue and different types of cultural activities were occasionally organized through the mechanism of cooperation in place in the country. These activities were concerts, arts exhibition seminars, exhibits of books on specific topics on the U.S. institutions or lifestyle. The main objective of these activities was to present to the public the different aspects of the American society and way of life. This included new development science and technology or the recent achievement of the U.S. space program. These types of activities are here considered as the sources of U.S. soft power in Benin. They aim of winning the heart and mind of the populations guided many of those activities. Most of all, it was an active effort to create contact zone between the intellectual of the country and the American culture, this was done quite often through the representation of the United States Information Service (USIS).

The United State Information Service

Officially opened in 1961 the American Cultural Center of Cotonou is the place The Cultural center is part of the United States Information Service (U.S.I.S) post and it hosts many activities organized through the sponsoring of the State Department programs of cultural exchange. Apart from the library service it also plays an important role in the

selection of the candidates to the educational exchange programs like the Fulbright Scholarship, the Humphrey .

At its inauguration, the USIS post of Cotonou started with limited operations “as the Post’s principal attention has been focused on locating and readying suitable quarters for an information center.”⁴¹ These programs will upgrade years after to include “program assistance to the local radio station, distribution of press releases, USIS pamphlet and periodicals such as *Perspectives Americaines*, produced by USIS in Leopoldville.”⁴² Film loans and other activities followed a few years after.

The U.S.I.S. post in Cotonou hosts the Cultural Center and has remained operational until the incorporation of the USIA into the State Department. As a result of the recent changes in the administration of the service, the American Cultural Center has changed into an “Information Resource Center.” The Center operates a library and has an English Language Program. It also used to distribute a newsletter “*Afrique-Etats-Unis*’ that informed its readers on current issues in the relations between the U.S. and Africa but particularly between the U.S. and Benin. These types of newsletters help increase the understanding of the U.S. policy and culture by the subscribers, usually students or civil servants. The American cultural Center is one of the cultural facilities that participate in animating the intellectual life in the country. Its policy of free access enables students, civil servants or other professionals to use books that could help enrich their intellectual and professional background. These books cover different aspects of U.S. history, culture and institutions.

⁴¹ Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *International Educational, Cultural and related activities for African Countries South of the Sahara* August 1961,83.

⁴² Department of State *International Educational, Cultural and related activities*, 83.

In 1991, the American Cultural Center in Cotonou had about five thousands volumes and can host up to 94 peoples. 48% of the books it carried were in French while the remainder was in English. The center was carrying about 64 titles of newspapers and magazines and had close to 22,900 visitors in 1991.⁴³ Assessing the cultural cooperation from the perspective of the American Cultural Center, Eudes Enagnon M. Adoukpe notes that it targeted more the elite which has access to as much information on the United States as possible. (*“La diffusion culturelle ici est beaucoup plus orientée vers l’élite intellectuelle, a la disposition de laquelle elle met des informations sur les Etats-Unis.”*)⁴⁴ This assessment is correct, considering the program of educational exchanges with Benin.

Educational exchanges

Unlike other African countries, the United States did not sign a separated agreement in educational exchange with Benin at the independence. The Economic and Technical Assistance Agreement of May 27th 1961 could be easily extended to this area provided that both parties adhere to this extension. Despite this absence of a separate agreement on educational exchanges, the American assistance to Benin is predominantly in education. Either through the Peace Corps volunteers who are teaching math, science or English at high schools in Benin or through the different educational exchanges programs managed through the American Cultural Center of Cotonou.

Since 1960 U.S. educational exchanges with Benin have consisted of three main scholarships: the Fulbright exchange programs, the Humphrey program and the Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills (ATLAS)/ the African Graduate Fellowship

⁴³ Eudes Enagnon M. Adoukpe *“Les Echanges Culturels Internationaux entre le Benin et ses Partenaires en 1991, 3.*

⁴⁴ Adoukpe *Les Echanges Culturels Internationaux, 3.*

Program (AFGRAD) scholarship managed by the Africa-America Institute (AAI). Benin citizens could have access to these scholarships through the U.S. cultural center. They cover many fields and disciplines and most are award for a degree program in graduate studies. The Fulbright scholarship has begun since the sixties. The recent statistics from the Fulbright report shows a total of 104 grantees from Benin between 1949 and 2007.⁴⁵

The Humphrey Program started much later on in 1978 but the first award to a Beninese grantee would not be made until 1984, when the relations between the U.S. and the country became normal again. That year a new U.S. ambassador was appointed to Benin and his arrival actually contributed to an improvement of the bilateral relations between the two countries. The extension of the Humphrey program to Benin can be counted as one of the advantages that came with the normalization of their relations. Compared to other countries the number of scholarship awarded to Benin students and other professionals was minimal. Between 1978 and 1987 for example, the number of grantees from Benin was only 4 while Togo a neighboring country, that is half the size of Benin and who has observed a political line not ideologically colored but favorable to western countries had a total of 8. Between 1984 and 2004, the total number of Humphrey scholarship granted to Beninese citizen was 22.⁴⁶

Atlas/AFGRAD degree program, administered by the African –American Institute, this program started as African Graduate Fellowship Program in 1963 and ran through 1990. That year it was replaced by Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills which would also end in 2003. Together these two programs have helped bring about 96

⁴⁵ Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, *Annual Report 2007-2008*, 70.

⁴⁶ J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board The 41st Annual Report Washington: U. S. Department of State, 2005, 55.

Students to the U.S. for Master's or PhD program at American universities⁴⁷ But U.S. educational assistance was not only limited to scholarships, there were also occasionally professional seminars and workshop organized through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) or other federal agencies. These seminars target civil servants, university teachers or diplomats and are usually led by American scholars or professionals sponsored by the U.S. government.⁴⁸ Other cultural programs between the two countries developed after the appointment of a new Ambassador to Benin in 1984 and a new atmosphere of good relations prevailed notably in the late eighties and early nineties. Thus the two Benin cities have become sister cities with American cities, Ouidah is sister city with Pritchard in Alabama and Cotonou is sister city with Atlanta (Georgia).

U.S. Cultural Activities in Benin

These activities include concerts, exhibition of arts (paintings, photography). Seminars and lectures open to the public can also be included in this category. Concerts here refers to the one sponsored by the U.S. Department of State as part of its cultural exchanges program initiated since 1956. As it is discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation, the jazz diplomacy was an important aspect of the American cultural program abroad. Benin like many other countries hosted many artists sponsored by the State Department. They had the opportunity to present American music like the Negro

⁴⁷ *Generations of Quiet Progress The Development Impact of U.S. Long-Term University Training on Africa from 1963 to 2003*, Final Report 2004 Annex D, Table 1.

⁴⁸ Benoit C. Arigbo & Etienne D. Doukan "La Politique Américaine d'Aide Bilatérale au Développement de la République du Benin de 1960-1996," (M.A Thesis, FASJEP Université Nationale du Benin. 1996-1997, 28.

spirituals, jazz and blues to the public of Benin from the 1960's on. Among them were: The Phoenix trio May 4th, 1966; the Cozy Cole 1963; Golden Gate quartet 1962 negro-spirituals; Southern University Jazz, a jazz band from Louisiana June 22-23rd, 1973; Eddie Clearwater, 1987; Talib Kibwe, 1990. The American cultural center since its inauguration has played a role in presenting some of American artists to the public of Benin. In a country where few American artists produce show the activities of the American cultural center in Benin become very the important not only for the fulfillment of the political agenda of the U.S. government but also to offer the opportunity to the Beninese audience to have a live experience of music they are commercially exposed to.

Peace Corps Benin

The Peace Corps has become over the years, one of the most permanent instruments of the U.S. cultural relations with Benin. Despite the political instability of the sixties or the diplomatic crisis of the seventies, it has remained active even though the number of volunteers and the range of its activities have been affected by that political climate between the countries. The positive note is that it never stopped operating. The work and devotion of the volunteers of the Peace Corps if politically motivated or generated make a big difference in the lives of many people around the world and certainly in Benin as well.

The agreement between the Peace Corps and the government of Benin was signed in 1967. This apparent delay, compared to many other countries in the region, was probably due to the political instability in the country as explained above. The Corps became operational the following year with a group of 26 volunteers making the first contingent group sent to Dahomey/Benin. Peace Corps volunteers are trained before they

are dispatched to their destinations. This gives them the opportunity to learn French but also to learn about the country and acquire basic knowledge for everyday conversation with the rural population. Many would then learn how to speak Fon, Dendi, Bariba or other local language of Benin.

Evolution of the Peace Corps Benin

Since the first group of 26 volunteers in 1968, the peace has been sending constantly volunteers to Benin with the numbers varying each year based on the availability and the request of the government of Benin. However during the years of crisis like in 1978 the number of volunteers serving went down to 2. To these days, between 1967 when the agreement between the Peace and the government of Benin was signed until 2009, 1631 volunteers have served in Benin. Many of them like in most African countries served in education usually teaching math, physics but mainly English at high school. Peace Corps also intervenes in many other areas like health, agriculture or environment.

Making a difference: the Impact of the Peace Corps

Between 1968 and 1990, the cooperation with the Peace Corps has overall been a story of fruitful collaboration. The work of volunteers has made a big impact on the lives of the rural population and in many respects has helped achieve the government's development goals. For example the Guinea worm disease was a real issue in the city of Dassa-Zoume in North Zou (Benin). The local population was happy and relieved to find out that the Peace Corps volunteers assisted by Benin health personnel, were able to wipe out the guinea worm from their village. In recognition of that success, the population organized a recreational activity, song and dance to express their gratitude to the USAID

and the volunteers.⁴⁹ In general the populations of Benin have good impression about the Peace Corps Volunteers. Many among the country population highly impressed by the volunteers getting quickly involved in their social life and them learning successfully how to speak their languages and even taste and eat some of their dishes.⁵⁰ The villagers really appreciate volunteers work and have no problem establishing a relation of trust with them. Benin officials also appreciate their work and wish at times that they stayed longer. Although there have been some moments of crisis, there is overall a positive appreciation of the work of the volunteers "The peace corps activities are appreciated by both authorities and local populations. Most of Benin authorities recognize the use of volunteers and wish that their presence could last longer."⁵¹

The local populations are also satisfied with the volunteers and it is with gratitude and joy that many among them embrace any innovation made through their assistance. One of the most illustrative examples in Benin is that of "the economical furnaces" which has gained a common use all over the country.⁵² The satisfaction reached even the higher level of the sates as the former president of Benin declared recently in a letter to the Peace Corps, "Your Volunteers offer to the citizens of my country a model and another view of what they themselves can contribute to the development of the Republic of Benin. The reports I receive from the people, as well as from the Ministers of my government, bear witness to the need and the durability of Peace Corps activities in

⁴⁹Benoit C. Arigbo & Etienne D. Doukan "La Politique Américaine d'Aide Bilatérale au Développement de la République du Benin de 1960-1996." (M.A Thesis, Abomey-Calavi: FASJEP Université Nationale du Benin. 1996-1997), 43.

⁵⁰Jeanne G. Koudogbo, and Rassiatou Yaya NADJO "The American Foreign Policy throughout the Peace Corps: the case study of Benin" (Abomey-Calavi: DELLCE, FLASH 1992-1993), 79.

⁵¹ Koudogbo and Nadjo, *The American Foreign Policy*, 80.

⁵² Koudogbo and Nadjo, *The American Foreign Policy*, 80

Benin's development."⁵³ These praise and satisfaction cannot easily upstage the problems encountered by the volunteers in fulfilling their duties in Benin.

Problems Encountered

These problems are related to the difficulty of language, the attitude of some volunteers on the field and the fact that the peace is doing a fantastic job assisting the population and yet has comparatively kept at national level a low profile. While overall the impressions generated by the peace corps volunteers among the local authorities, the government and the populations was great it appeared that nonetheless they were areas where things need to be improve and few problem in the collaboration of the volunteers with certain ministries. The authorities express some concerns about the way some volunteers carry out their function "Others come just as tourists and want to be free from all local authorities. Sometimes they disappear for a while from the country for a trip in Ghana, Togo." ⁵⁴

Beside there is a problem of communication with many volunteers. Granted on their training program, volunteers in Benin are taught some of the languages and many are also trained in French. But for class to be taught at high school level, conversational French may not be all that is needed. The result "Most of the Peace Corps volunteers speak poor French and have problems of communication with the populations." ⁵⁵ In classroom, this problem could get even more serious as volunteers are expected to transmit knowledge. It becomes a serious problem for knowledge transmission, especially

⁵³ <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.wherepc.africa.benin&noflash=yes>

⁵⁴ Koudogbo and Nadjo, "The American Foreign Policy throughout the Peace Corps: the case study of Benin," 80.

⁵⁵ Koudogbo and Nadjo *The American Foreign Policy*, 80.

when they have to teach subject like math, physics or natural science in High school.⁵⁶ If communication does not flow well between student and their teachers, there will not be learning and the purpose of the mission may not be reached. The problem is probably addressed by the power-that-be at country level.

Benin Department of Agriculture for example, complained about the lack of collaboration with the Peace Corps. Beside the Peace for a long time has kept a low profile in the country. Many did not know about the organization even though they are working on a daily basis with the volunteer. "In spite of its 25 year-presence in Benin, the Peace corps still remains unknown to many Benin people. Its discretion puts a shadow on its activities and the whole institution is wrapped in secrecy."⁵⁷ This situation changed slightly by the 90's as the peace joined other agencies and organization. To better reach their goal, Peace Corps volunteers should improve their French skills. The Peace Corps in Benin "may seek to organize or sponsor seminars and conferences aiming at getting itself more familiar to Benin people."⁵⁸

As far as the mutual understanding is concerned it is not easy to track down the evaluation of some volunteers and hear about their impressions especially volunteers who served during the time of the cold war. The recent development in web technology however has proved to be very useful as there now many sites on which current volunteers are posting blogs, images and other information that could be enlightening as far as their impression on the country is concerned and how they feel about the whole

⁵⁶Benoit C. Arigbo and Etienne D. Doukan "LA Politique Américaine d'Aide Bilatérale au Développement de la République du Benin de 1960-1996." (FASJEP Université Nationale du Benin. 1996-1997), 43.

⁵⁷ Koudogbo and Nadjo *The American Foreign Policy throughout the Peace Corps*, 81.

⁵⁸ Koudogbo and Nadjo *The American Foreign Policy*, 82.

experience. What have they got from the stay and how were they able to present aspect of U.S. culture.

International Visitors Programs

The activities of the USIS in Benin was also complemented by visits from official and semi official of the U.S. and also some from Benin to the U.S. apart from official state visits, there were many other visits by professional from a variety of walks of life. On most of these trips, they combined leisure and work to have a better understanding of the U.S. and its politics and culture but also to help in some cases American understand better their countries.

The purpose of cultural relations and public diplomacy is to create mutual understanding by facilitating the contact between people. Interaction can create and facilitate communication and communication is viewed as a key instrument in cultural relations. It is in light of this argument that many of the activities sponsored by the U.S. government can be listed. The government brought people, leaders or professional to visit the United States, get familiar with the institutions and understand how it works, the benefits it provides for the citizens and many others. On the part of professional visit and exchange there are four cases that will be studied. These individual were all journalist invited by the state Department on various occasion to visit the U.S. Their impressions reflect the way exchange can influence the opinion of the visitor and create more understanding of the U.S culture, institutions, and lifestyle to the visitor. The following section will relate and analyze the experience of Benin journalist in the U.S. in the sixties and the seventies. They were invited by the State Department as part of the International Visitor Program which brings different personalities from the media and other political

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leaders to the visit the U.S. and see how the institutions and the democratic process work. Usually it is a thirty days trip which helps them see other aspect of the U.S. culture as well. J. Vieyra, Rene Ewagnignon and other journalists from Benin were able to benefit from that program. On their return home they were able to share their experience with their readers.

In 1962, for example, a journalist from Benin joined a group of other media men from francophone West African countries to visit the united state on what can be viewed as professional and cultural visit. In an article published in the daily newspaper of the independent Dahomey "*L' Aube Nouvelle*," Justin Vieyra shares his impressions on the U.S. with the readers. He explained how from Washington they were free to decide on the program of their itinerary in the U.S. and were given all the necessary logistic support to make this happen. Thence they were able to travel to Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Denver, Dallas, Atlanta New Orleans and Cape Canaveral.

On many of these stops, he mentioned how they were welcomed in American families and was particularly impressed by the practice of showing your guests around. It is not a cultural practice in his country and so he found that curious and asked about the rationale behind. He was told that "Americans are proud of their homes because they pay attention to every detail about it from the design to the decoration to the point that they could give the impression that it is the best in the world." ("*Les Américains sont fiers de leurs habitations parce qu'ils mettent beaucoup de soin a les construire suivant des plans qu'ils établissent eux-mêmes, puis a les entretenir.*")⁵⁹

What they did on the trip, his overall impressions rhymes with what the government expected foreigners to know about the U.S. Vieyra reflecting on their visit to

⁵⁹ *Aube Nouvelle*, 18 Aout 1962, 6.

the NASA and other government sites that in normal situations were supposed to be subjected to security restriction said that he believed the fact that they were able to visit those site without any restriction showed that he was visiting a free country. Freedom for the individual made it possible for them to access freely those sites like NASA that were and still are sensitive to the national security of the U.S.

Vieyra thought that visiting the space center, staying on the St. Patrick base in Florida and being allowed to visit other strategically important places without any opposition from the American officials proved to him that he was visiting a “free world”. To him it was only in a free world that officials would let foreigners visit strategic sites like the missile site in Cape Canaveral. If freedom was the most important thing Vieyra retained from his U.S. trip, his compatriot Rene Ewagnignon was amazed by how diverse the county was and he was particularly struck by the symbols of power that seemed to exist in different forms in every city he visited in the U.S.

Rene Ewagnignon was one of the most distinguished journalists from Benin appointed in the sixties with the *Agence Dahomeenne de Presse* (ADP). In 1965 he was one of the twenty five African journalists sponsored by the White House, State Department and many other official American agencies to visit the U.S. for a one month period starting with the inauguration of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Through his account of the U.S. trip is the example of how the U.S. effort to create cultural and good impressions in Dahomey played out. The approach was regional as Ewagnignon was one of the many journalists sponsored by the Government agencies for this visit. We will try here to see how the visit impacted him and his impressions about the U.S system, government and social and professional images.

Starting with the federal capital Washington D.C., they visited three important places and monuments in Washington: the Lincoln, Washington and Jefferson memorial and then went to the Arlington cemetery where they visit Kennedy's tombs. He explained how the capital city was 'invaded by delegates from the 50 states and how despite that busy atmosphere they were able to visit all those monuments and the major building of the capital. He could still recall when visiting the Lincoln memorial the "I have the Dream" speech delivered by Dr Martin Luther King. He found in the size of the Lincoln memorial a metaphor of the magnitude of the Washington march.

*La capitale fédérale était envahies par les délégués des cinquante Etats venus avec leurs folklores pour la parade. A travers tout ce remue-ménage, nous allions visiter les principaux monuments et édifices de Washington: le mémorial de Lincoln ou la désormais célèbre marche des Noirs de l'année dernière était venue s'incliner. Cette marche était à la mesure de la gigantesque statue érigée à la mémoire de l'émancipateur des esclaves.*⁶⁰

January 20th, 1965 was the inauguration day. Ewagnignon and his other African colleagues attended the ceremony. He remembered Lyndon declaration; "Justice requires us to remember that when any citizen denies his fellow, saying, "His color is not mine," or "His beliefs are strange and different," in that moment he betrays America, though his forebears created this Nation."⁶¹ (*"La justice exige que nous nous souvenions de ceci: quand un citoyen quelconque désavoue l'un de ses compatriotes déclarant: la couleur de sa peau est différente de la mienne ou ses croyances sont étranges et différentes, a ce moment-la, il trahit l'Amérique bien que ses ancêtres aient fonde cette nation."*)⁶²

He found their program overwhelming and described as 'full like an egg' (French expressions), rich in meeting and appointment. He was also impressed by the precision

⁶⁰ *Aube nouvelle* 22 Avril 1965, 6.

⁶¹ Johnson Inaugural <http://www.bartelby.com/124/pres57.html> accessed August 7th, 2009.

⁶² *Aube nouvelle* 29 Avril 1965, 3.

which was observed in the scheduling. He reflected that he could hardly explain how he managed to finish the stay alive because of the many places and people he had to visit within such a relatively short period of time. He explains:

Le programme de notre séjour dans la capitale fédérale était plein comme un œuf. Riche en rendez-vous et en conférences, il était également minute avec une précision qui ne souffrait pas de vide. Rien qu'a l'idée de penser au nombre de fois que je suis monte dans notre autobus et en suis descendu, monte dans les ascenseurs, enlevé et mis mon manteau, écoute des exposes et poser des questions, je me demande encore comment j'ai pu terminer debout ce marathon. C'était certainement une façon de nous préparer à affronter le périple qui nous conduira a travers sept Etats des "States".⁶³

The program included trips to many cities, strategic and recreational sites and other typical sites that could reflect the American power in every aspect; military, technological or entertainment. Thus leaving Washington, they headed to Fort Bragg in North Carolina. Fort Bragg (North Carolina): It was one of the military bases of the U.S. but the peculiarity of this basis was that it was created nine months after Kennedy's inaugural. Fort Bragg's mission is described today as "Maintain America's Contingency Corps as a strategic crisis response force manned and trained to deploy rapidly by air, sea, and land anywhere in the world, prepared to fight upon arrival and win."⁶⁴

Fort-Bragg est l'une des nombreuses bases militaires des Etats-Unis, mais elle est d'une importance toute spéciale, et il faut l'avoir vue pour en avoir une idée. Fort Bragg est un groupe unifié créé dans les neuf mois qui suivirent l'investiture du Président Kennedy "Il est doté d'une force d'action rapide, efficace, adaptable et sélective-une force qui donnerait aux Etats-Unis la souplesse lui permettant de faire face aux menaces autres que la guerre nucléaire totale.

The base was led by General Paul D. Adams who was also in charge of the defense force for the Middle East and Africa. He Described dinner for the evening and

⁶³ *L'Aube Nouvelle*, 29 Avril, 1965, 3.

⁶⁴ http://benefits.military.com/misc/installations/Base_Content.jsp?id=3760, accessed August 07, 2009.

noticed Hammond a black musician playing piano (orgue). The following day they went to the *Champs de tir* to watch some the military operation. They observed with interest and fascination the launch of rockets, helicopters shooting and jetfighter launching bombs and so on. It was an operation of iron and fire that cost in those days 250 millions C.F.A roughly 541 thousand current U.S.Dollars. (*"Rockets, hélicoptères mitraillant, chasseurs à réaction jetant des bombes à napalm, bref un carrousel de fer et de feu qui dura une heure, Cout: plus de 250 millions de CFA."*)⁶⁵ Here one could see his admiration and his perception of the U.S power in his description. Apart from the militaristic aspect it is important to notice how he was quick to conclude his analysis with the cost of the operation. If the US can afford that in a single operation then no doubt it is superpower the persuasive aspect of this visit transpires through this impression. After Fort Bragg they went to Cape Canaveral in Florida. He noticed the difference with North Carolina's weather. They lodged at Patrick Air Base and visited Cape Canaveral where there is the NASA launching base. If he was impressed by the military base, in Cape Canaveral his admiration will be go beyond the power of the U.S. it is the recognition of the prowess of science that one could easily feel in his description of the lift off base. He wrote:

Dedicated to the memory of late President John F. Kennedy, former Cape Canaveral is the Operational launch of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launch area of gear in the Atlantic. Like Derrick, launch ramps rise into the sky until a rocket is ready to move towards its mission. Here and there, you could see blockhaus, stations of radio transmitters and receivers, telemetry receivers, radar, hangars mounting gear. It is busy all day and night ratings. Science never stops. (*"Dédié a la mémoire du regretté président John F.Kennedy, L'ancien Cap Canaveral est le centre opérationnel de lancement de la National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) zone de lancement d'engins dans l'Atlantique. Pareils a des Derrick, les rampes de lancement se dressent vers le ciel en attendant une fuse prête à aller vers sa mission. Ca et la, des blockhaus, des stations émettrices-réceptrices de*

⁶⁵ Aube Nouvelle 29 Avril 1965, 3.

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radio, des postes récepteurs de télémétrie, de radars, de hangars de montage d'engins. On s'affaire de tous les cotes nuit et jour. La science ne connaît pas de temps mort.”)⁶⁶

Through this description of the base, Ewagnignon could help but admiring this culture of technology and praising scientific advancement in general as he noted that science never stops. After Cape Canaveral he and the other members of the crew headed to Nashville in Tennessee.

In Nashville, he visited the Fisk University, an initially black institution (according to his information) that became integrated later on. In Dallas he went to the site of Kennedy assassination and attended the Rodeo show at Fort Worth. Here he admired the cowboy style, the combination of hat, jeans and the whole scenery that reminded him of the western movies. From Texas the group headed to the largest city of the U.S. as he qualified it, that is Los Angeles. There they learnt the city owed its expansion to the railway that brought in many immigrants. He found Los Angeles similar to Cannes (France) with its Palm trees and white painted houses. However if Cannes was the capital of cinema once a year, Los Angeles he wrote was the capital of cinema everyday and the mere idea of visiting Hollywood made him happy (*“Cannes est la capitale du cinéma une fois par an, Los Angeles l'est tous les jours et j'avoue que j'étais heureux a l'idée de pouvoir visiter Hollywood.”*⁶⁷) He was thrilled to have lunch with Charleston Heston (who acted in 'Ben Hur' and "The Cid") and other actor from Hitchcock movies. ⁶⁸ Added to this exceptional opportunity, they visited the Universal Studio, a trip to the Hollywood world of fantasy and the unreal. To complete that experience into the world of amusement and entertainment they went to Disneyland. He

⁶⁶ *Aube nouvelle* 13 Mai 1965, 7.

⁶⁷ *Aube nouvelle* 13 Mai 1965, 7.

⁶⁸ *Aube nouvelle* 13 Mai 1965, 7.

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qualified Disneyland as “*un royaume féérique pour grands et petits*”; *A fairytale kingdom for adult and kids*. A visit to Disneyland for him was a trip to all the countries of the world. He think Disney was so amazing to the point that it cannot be described or narrated you simply have to “*on l’admire, on la savoure et on repart satisfait avec l’impression d’avoir tout vu sur la terre.*” A visit to UCLA and a small city of Merced concluded their trip to Southern California.

From the southern part of the State, they drove to San Francisco. He thought it was the most beautiful and the most original of the United States cities. With its “golden gate” and many other attractions San Francisco was so appealing and charming to him, that it was the American city that would remain in his souvenir for so long. He found the city so attractive that he was not surprised that it was called “the city” by Californians. Sadly he pointed out that the prestige and the charm of the city was if Los Angeles was the capital city of entertainment; San Francisco was the capital of the West. A nickname, he found diminishing for such a cosmopolitan city with so many attractions. They did a bit of tourism in San Francisco before leaving the West cost for Omaha in Nebraska. In Omaha he had a taste of the ‘Omaha steak’ and then visited the Offutt base, home to the Strategic Air Command (S.A.C). It was the center of communication that would centralize all commands for interventions on the U.S. territory in case of crises. He explained that if between the U.S. and the Kremlin, there was a red phone, between the Offut base and the White House there was a big yellow phone: “*C’est la le centre de communications qui répercute les ordres d’opérations immédiates sur le territoire des Etats-Unis. Si la Maison Blanche est reliée au Kremlin par le téléphone [rouge], la base*

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d'Offut (Omaha) est reliée à la Maison Blanche par un gros téléphone jaune."⁶⁹ He thinks that the fame of the steak was widely deserved for cows that are fed with corns produce definitely an excellent meat and tasty meat.

Ewagnignon finishes his article with the then delicate question of segregation and racism and pertinently pointed at the paradox of the race question when it comes to the way America treated Africans compared to the Black from the U.S. He wrote: that "Black Americans are irritated-rightly he added- about what they call the paradox of their white compatriots. This paradox consisted in letting non-American Black people enjoy all the privileges that they, Black Americans, citizens of the U.S. were denied. All it takes for a Black person is to put a towel around his head or a scarf for the people to revere him." Ewagnignon himself was pointed at as example (by Black Americans). They told him that he would find every door was open to him even though he had nothing more than them. This paradox is explained by Ewagnignon as follows:

*Les Noirs Américains qui luttent pour la reconnaissance de leurs droits a l'intégration totale dans la société américaine sont irrités par ce qu'ils appellent – a juste raison d'ailleurs- le paradoxe de leurs compatriotes blancs. Ce paradoxe consiste à accorder aux noirs non américains toute la considération qu'on leur refuse à eux, citoyens du pays. Il suffit, nous a dit l'un d'eux, qu'un noir s'entoure la tête d'une serviette ou d'un tissu pour que l'on fasse la révérence devant lui. Vous par exemple, vous verrez que partout on vous ouvrira toutes les portes qui nous sont fermées a nous autres, et pourtant avouez que vous n'avez rien de plus que nous.*⁷⁰

This was such a delicate question that he had to address and enquire about on his second trip to the USA in 1970, this aspect will to be elaborate here. Both journalists have had a taste of American culture and more importantly witness the cultural achievement of the country. They have shown to a certain degree how the visitor

⁶⁹ *Aube nouvelle* 13 Mai 1965, 7.

⁷⁰ *Aube Nouvelle* 20 Mai, 1965.

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program could be a good propaganda tool or an important element of cultural diplomacy they saw the American power in economy, they saw the military might and witness the way the American system function as some journalist are invited to follow the electoral process. This was a very good learning experience, will it generate any political return? Hard to say but as information tool the mere fact that these journalist were able to publish their articles without any censorship, can be considered a positive return and who knows how many readers would be influenced by those articles. That is one functional aspect of soft power. In their itinerary they were able to visit Cape Canaveral, a symbolic site from the space age. In the next section, we will have a look at how the race also became part of the battle over the image of power.

Power through the Space Race

One of the main characteristics of the Cold war era was the Space race. Since the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin completed the first revolution around the earth in 1961, the race for space has added an extra dimension to the competition between the two superpowers. In 1969, the American Neil Armstrong became the first man to have landed on the moon. In the battle to win heart and mind, technological prowess can be an important asset, especially if one of the goals is to prove the capacity of a country to lead and protect his allies and friends.

There are different ways scientific or technological successes can be shown abroad. Benin like many African countries welcomes occasionally U.S. marine's ships and visitors would be allowed onboard. At times it could be documentaries shown at the cultural center or exhibit of pictures of Shuttles, warship or new scientific discovery. during the space race era, Benin has also welcomed some American astronaut and its

population was given the privilege to see the samples of lunar rocks brought by the Apollo missions. While Dizzy Gillespie showed what the U.S. had in fine arts and music, jazz, Neil Armstrong or Aldrin Buzz could also present other aspects of the U.S civilization. And that is soft power. It would show the leading spatial technology of America.

This is one way to look the exhibition of the lunar stones collected by the team of Apollo 11 from the Tranquility Sea on the Moon Surface. The exhibition was inaugurated on May 28th, 1970 by the U.S. ambassador to Benin Mr. Matthew Looram. The exhibition was visited by official and it remained open to the public for two. Thousands of people according to the news report visited the famous stone that was made accessible them. People reacted differently to the three billion year old piece. Some found it curious to spend billions for just a piece of stone other took it as the symbolism of the conquest of cosmos. The exhibit created a contact zone with the public as well because aside the stone it included pictures of the astronauts and a sample of the flag from Benin (Dahomey) that was taken to the moon and brought back. That was probably a way to convey the message that the exploit of Armstrong was done in the name of all humanity including Benin people.

The projection of the space race through the media was definitely another way to show the U.S. power. This may not have anything to do with U.S government. The general public was also curious about that new dimension in scientific and technological innovation. the attention given by the main press organ to the constant coverage of the evolution of the U.S. space program but also to the Russian program shows a general desire or to know more about recent development in the field. But the celebration of the

heroes of space could also be exploited indirectly for ideological agenda. That was what happened in 1970 when the team of Apollo XII Alan Bean, Richard Gordon and Charles Conrad toured some African countries including Tunisia, Ivory Coast and Tanzania. They were welcomed and treated as heroes, and they had the privilege to meet with presidents and other high ranking officials.⁷¹

The Peace Corps, the international visitors program, educational exchanges; and the different cultural activities organized through the U.S. cultural program in Benin have contributed in giving the Beninese population an idea of the power and the policy of the U.S. But it is difficult to say if this perception of the American power or culture generated enough attraction to the elite or the population. A couple of issues could limit the capacity to generate soft power in Benin. The first is linguistic barrier, the fact that the official language is French can be a hindrance. But if this remark applies for the 60's and the 70's, it may not be applicable for the 90's and after since the technological revolution of the computer has generated an unprecedented interest in learning the English language.

Another problem is the international policy of the U.S. and its behavior in some areas of the world. Crises like the war in Congo and the position of the U.S. in southern Africa seriously influenced negatively any potential cultural programs could show for appealing to Benin intellectuals. If linguistic factor prevented the existence of any type of cultural proximity in Benin, Ghana, presents the advantage of sharing certain cultural proximity because of this same linguistic. The next chapter will study the case of Ghana who by its history and the pioneer role it has played in the decolonization process can be viewed from Washington as a pivotal state in Africa.

⁷¹ *Daho Express*, Samedi 7 Mars 1970.

CHAPTER 4

U.S. CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH GHANA

This chapter studies the evolution of the U.S. cultural relations with Ghana. If Benin is on the periphery of U.S. foreign policy in Africa, Ghana, on the contrary by its colonial history and especially its accession to sovereignty in 1957, attracted attention worldwide and consequently ranked higher in the American diplomacy in Africa. Ghana's importance as a pioneer in sub-Saharan Africa independence, its leading place in cocoa production and perhaps the fact that its first president studied in the U.S. made it one of the pivotal countries for U.S. diplomacy in Africa. This position helped Ghana benefit from the cooperation with America in as many fields as economic assistance, military training, educational exchanges or cultural exchanges.

This chapter will be divided in two major parts. The first section gives background information on the colonial history of the country, its political evolution after the independence finally examines how its foreign relations have evolved since 1957 with a special analysis of Ghana relations with the U.S. The second section studies U.S. cultural relations with Ghana. It looks at the educational exchanges, the volunteer program, the International Visitors program and other cultural activities that characterize U.S. program of cultural relations with the country.

Section 1: The Republic of Ghana

Ghana is part of the Anglophone West Africa. It was home to many powerful kingdoms in the pre-colonial era like the Ashanti kingdom. These kingdom maintained commercial relations with the Muslim kingdom of the interior of the continent but they also had contact with the European merchants who were settling along the southern coastline. Ghana has an area of about 92,000 square miles and is surrounded by three

French speaking countries. In the North it is the current Republic of Burkina Faso, on the east side it shares borders with the Republic of Togo and the Republic of Ivory Coast on its western side.

There are several ethnic and tribal groups in Ghana. The 1960 census showed that the country is composed of more than 100 linguistic and cultural groups.¹ The recent census of 2000 shows that 49 percent of those groups were Akan, 16.5 percent Mole-Dagomba, 12.7 percent, Ewe and 8 percent were Ga-Adangbe.² Because of the colonial past of the country, and to avoid problems that cultural and linguistic differences may cause, English is the official language of communication, used in the government and the formal educational instruction.³

Ghana was known as Gold Coast and became officially a British colony in July 1874 after having hosted Dutch, Danish and other Europeans who settled along the coast and built several castles during the slave trade era. The road to the status of colony was cleared when the British bought the Danish castle at Christiansborg in Accra in 1850 and did the same with their property in Elmina in 1872. But that road was not as peaceful as one could imagine. Being the only European power that remained on the coast the British had to face the antagonisms of the Asante leaders who were uncomfortable with the British settlement. Conflict between them and the British resulted in the British victory. This led to the occupation of the Asante capital Kumasi in February 1874.⁴ That incident opened the way for the consolidation of the British gain that materialized a few months after in the establishment of the British colony of the Gold Coast. The remaining

¹ David Owusu-Ansah *Historical Dictionary of Ghana* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 3.

² Owusu-Ansah, *Historical Dictionary*, 3

³ Owusu-Ansah, *Historical Dictionary* 3

⁴ Owusu-Ansah, *Historical Dictionary*, 6.

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territories under the Asante control were gained by the British in 1896 after an unsuccessful attack of their king against the British army. Thereafter the British were able to annex the northern territories under the governor of the Gold Coast by 1902.⁵

The British colonial rule in the Gold Coast was characterized by the indirect rule and thus relied on the local kings in the government of the colony. After the conquest of the Asante and the annexation of the northern territories, the colonial system promoted the education of the local population with the goal to prepare Ghanaians for the future of the colony. Against its predictions, by the thirties, nationalist sentiment started developing in the colony. The educated Ghanaians felt less and less comfortable with “the colonial government’s overreliance on traditional chiefs in the early decades of the century.”⁶ Many among them believed they should be associated with the government of the colony notably through the emerging legislative councils.

This push for inclusion soon turned into demands for ‘self-rule.’ the members of the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.) , a party organization created after the Second World War, advocated autonomy in the shortest time. Despite this call for independence that formation still welcomed a gradual approach in the achievement of the independence. The former Secretary General of that party Kwame Nkrumah who has become the chairman of the Convention People’s Party (CPP), his own formation, opposed the gradualist approach supported by other members of the UGCC like J.B.Danquah and added a “sense of immediacy to the call for self-government.”⁷ Through its victory in the elections of several legislative councils as well as in the general elections of March 1957 the CPP led the country to the path of independence.

⁵ Owusu-Ansah, *Historical Dictionary* 7

⁶ Owusu-Ansah, *Historical Dictionary* 8.

⁷ Owusu-Ansah, *Historical Dictionary* 8.

Overview of Ghana political history

From the independence to 1992, Ghana like many African countries has gone through many political changes which saw its governments alternate between civilian and military rule several times. Ghana achieved its independence in 1957 with Kwame Nkrumah as a Prime Minister. Notwithstanding the hope that came with it, access to sovereignty came with many challenges not only for Ghana but for the African continent. There was an implicit obligation for the country to succeed in all fields, politically, economically and socially. Nkrumah was aware of that fact and used the necessary tools to make that success happen. Panafricanist, champion of freedom for Africans and the black Diaspora, Nkrumah was ambitious for the development of his country. Among his priorities was education. During the last years of colonization, education was free to all Ghanaian in age of schooling. Not only did Nkrumah continued that policy but he also launched many other development programs social, economic and constitutional reform that transformed the country into a republic and made him the first President of the Republic of Ghana in 1960. Owusu-Ansah traces the root of the problems that led to the destitution of Nkrumah as follows:

Committed to the rapid transformation of the national economy along socialist lines, and politically to the pursuance of a Pan-Africanist agenda toward a free and united Africa, Dr Nkrumah took advantage of the CPP parliamentary majority to pass laws that allowed him extra constitutional room to operate. The preventive Detention Act of 1958, for example, empowered the prime Minister to detain any person suspected of actions prejudicial to the security of the nation for up to five year s without trial.⁸

But problems started soon with Nkrumah and the CPP government. Part of it was how to deal with the legacy of colonialism of indirect rule which allowed the traditional kings and rules to prevail. With the CPP, it became an issue whether to keep that legacy

⁸ Owusu-Ansah, *Historical Dictionary*, 9.

of the colonial administration or to transform the system to suit the new directions of the post independence era. The impasse created by this legacy on hand and the adoption of the Preventive Detention Act on the other caused many among the Ghanaians to have a negative judgment about the CPP government especially on issues of democratic expression, “many in the country felt that the CPP government blocked all the avenues for true democratic expressions.”⁹ The frustrations from these feelings resulted in the military coup of February 24th, 1966 by the National Liberation Council. The government that came out of this coup was supposed to be transitory as it was expected to hand over power to civilians after the revision of the constitution and the investigations about corruption and other problems attached to the previous regime were thoroughly conducted. In 1969 a new civilian government came in power led by Dr. K.A. Busia the Chairman of the Progress Party (PP) who won 104 of the 140 seats of the Parliament. Busia became prime Minister and Akuffo Addo substantive President. But the economic debts from Nkrumah’s years, the Alien Deportation Act of 1969 and the intimidation of the government against the sympathizers of the Nkrumah increased frustration among the military and the population. Consequently, Busia’s government was overthrown in January 1972 by the National Redemption Council (NRC). This military government tried to appeal to the population by taking populist measures in education (giving students book fees, banning tuition fees) while at the same time taking radical measures about the national debt.

But these measures did not prevent the government from facing criticisms and manifestations from civilians. The culmination of the downfall was the Armed Force Revolution Council (A.F.R.C) coup of 1979. This government reigned for only four

⁹ Owusu-Ansah *Historical Dictionary* 10.

months. In 1981, Ghana would return to military rule under the command of Flight Lieutenant Rawlings and the Provisional National Defense Council (P.N.D.C.) facing dire economic conditions with national infrastructure severely damaged. On top of all these challenges, the PNDC had to deal with opposition from the supporters of the previous regimes. From 1981 until the reform of 1992 that led to the fourth Republic, the government of the PNDC had to abort about 13 military coups. Despite all these tough moments, the government was somewhat successful in redressing the national economy and put the country back to a normal democratic system by the early 1990's.

Evolution of Ghana's Foreign Policy

Evaluating the foreign policy of Ghana after fifty years of independence, Ghanaian scholar Kwame Boafo-Arthur notes that there are two major factors that influence Ghana's foreign policy: the type of leadership and the nature of the national economy. These two factors in his views have a strong influence on the country's international behavior.¹⁰ In addition to these two he cautiously underscores the importance of the international context in which the policy is implemented. Boafo-Arthur wrote about Ghana that "the governments of the various periods were influenced by the nature of global politics during the Cold War and the post Cold War periods."¹¹ The character of the leader and the national economic conditions somehow rank higher in his analysis as he wrote: "It must be stated without equivocation, however, that Ghana's pioneering role in African diplomacy, the dynamism of her outward projections, and the recklessness on some occasions especially during the period of nationalist triumphalism had a lot to do with the leadership style and the buoyancy of the economy." He made a pertinent

¹⁰Kwame Boafo-Arthur "Half-a-Century of Ghana's Foreign Policy: An Assessment" in *"Ghana at 50: Government, Politics and Development"* Joseph R.A Ayee ed. (Accra: s.n., 2007), 197.

¹¹ Boafo-Arthur, "Half-a-Century of Ghana's Foreign Policy" 197.

argument to conclude his thoughts that “With diminished economic strength especially after the first military coup, leaders were overly cautious in the mechanisms adopted to protect the nation internationally.”¹²

One argument that seems to stand stronger from Boafo-Arthur’s assessment is the claim about the permanence of the principles posed since the independence. Despite the political instability, Ghanaian foreign policy has remained overall faithful to the guiding principles posed since the establishment of the first republic. Kwame Boafo-Arthur argues that: “the shifting settings both domestically and externally notwithstanding, the core strands of foreign policy orientation did not depart markedly from the foundations laid by the CPP government of Dr. Nkrumah.”¹³

The era of the Convention People’s Party of Nkrumah was one of the best in the history of the country’s foreign relations as it is qualified the golden age of Ghana foreign policy. The Ghanaian diplomacy was deeply shaped by this era and highly influenced by the personality of the President. The foundations of that diplomacy were based on the principle of nonalignment, the commitment to African freedom and many other principles that Kwesi Armah summarizes as follows:

the campaign against colonialism and neo-colonialism; the advocacy of African Unity with the adoption of a common foreign policy; the creation of a Joint African High Command; an African Common Market; and overall continental economic planning including more equitable system of international trade; there was, however, complete acceptance of a mixed economy. There was the belief in Non-Alignment, a Third-Force’ comprising Non-Aligned States which would not depend on East or West and which would yet have a definite and concerted policy of its own. There was, at the United Nations and elsewhere, an assertion of international equality. Finally, Ghana strenuously worked for co-operation

¹² Boafo-Arthur, “Half-a-Century of Ghana’s Foreign Policy” 197.

¹³ Boafo-Arthur, “Half-a-Century of Ghana’s Foreign Policy”, 197.

between the industrialized nations and the poorer states who comprise the great bulk of mankind.¹⁴

All these principles have remained the characteristics of Ghana foreign policy for over five decades of independence, although at times the international context of Cold War and the perception of the country's national interest have caused the leaders not to follow strictly some of these principles.

The major problems of the CPP government was that although declared as a non aligned country and therefore neutral country, the regime's position on some international issues and crises, made many observers question the validity of that policy of neutrality. Nkrumah and the CPP left a country with a catastrophic economic and financial situation that will impact the government of the National Liberation Council that took the power away from him. Because of that economic situation inherited from the CPP, under the National Liberation Council (NLC), the foreign policy of Ghana emphasized economic issues more than others. Boafo-Arthur explains that "there was a marked shift from overly political colorations of Nkrumah's foreign policy approach to economic issues under the NLC."¹⁵ This apparent pragmatism can be explained by the government's search for better solution to the economic problems of the country, the result was the choice of a 'quiet diplomacy' by the NLC.

Following the NLC, the government of the Progress Party (PP) dealt more with economic problem, mainly the question of debt payment. Unsuccessful negotiations with the United Kingdom and the U.S about financial loans led to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Under The National Redemption Council (NRC), the

¹⁴ Kwesi Armah, *Peace without Power: Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 2004), 16.

¹⁵ Boafo-Arthur, "Half-a-century of Ghana's Foreign Policy, 208.

policy adopted by the previous administration about foreign debt was revised. Some of the debts due for payment were repudiated.¹⁶ The following military regime under the leadership of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) ruled only for 4 months and handed the power over to the People's National Party (PNP). The latter was heavily inspired by the CPP of Nkrumah. So it expressed its attachment to international and regional organization like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). But its real challenges came from its failure to coop with political impasse at home and its indecision to turn to the international financial institutions to solve the economic task at hand. Consequently these "institutions lost faith in the government and external financial inflows dried up."¹⁷

The Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) started its ruling with a conflict between two groups inside the party, the radical and the conservative. The radicals were in favor of a foreign policy that would be influenced by the immediate objective of the revolution process while the conservatives who preferred an "immediate western support."¹⁸ Radicals won in 1982 and thereafter the PNDC fraternized with other radical governments like those of Libya and Cuba. But very soon the economic reality of the country compelled the PNDC government to revise its ideological options and its international allies, particularly its Eastern European partners who "failed to "embark on any sustainable economic bailout for the country." After an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Rawlings and the moderate of the PNDC by the radical wing of the party, Rawlings and the rest of the party were able to comfort their position and hasten the negotiations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

¹⁶Boafo-Arthur, "Half-a-century of Ghana's Foreign Policy," 211.

¹⁷Boafo-Arthur, "Half-a- century of Ghana's Foreign Policy," 214

¹⁸Boafo-Arthur, "Half-a- century of Ghana's Foreign Policy,".215.

USA-Ghana Relations

The United States was one of the first countries to have recognized the independence of Ghana in 1957. Signs of that recognition are listed as follows:

On March 5, 1957, one day prior to the attainment of formal independence, the State department announced that the U.S. Government "has officially recognized the new state of Ghana, which becomes independent and a member of the British Commonwealth on 6 March." This recognition of Ghana's independence was enhanced by (1) the Senate's confirmation of Wilson C. Flake as U.S. Ambassador to Ghana on May 20, 1957, (2) the United States' support of Ghanaian's application for membership of the United nations, and (3) two Congressional and one state legislative resolutions congratulating Ghana on the attainment of Independence.¹⁹

The symbolism of that freedom gained which resembles the U.S. experience as a colony was certainly an opportunity to create close ties between the two Countries. This effort was shown in the trip made by Vice-president Richard Nixon from March 3-10 to the festivities of the Ghanaian independence. When leaving Ghana, the vice-president declared "The United states by sending this delegation to the ceremonies is indicating its support and its friendship for this new nation as it enters into the activities in which it will engage in the years ahead as an independent member of the British Commonwealth."²⁰ That support will come few years after in forms of bilateral agreements signed between the two countries. These agreements covered a wide range of areas including educational, technical, military cooperation and so on. Ever since, despite occasional differences and divergence on economic issues or international problems, the two countries have managed to find ways and means to contain these differences and maintain their diplomatic relations over the past fifties years. Two main issues tested U.S. relations with

¹⁹ Adapted from Armah, *Peace without Power*, 180-181.

²⁰ Armah, *Peace without Power*, 180.

Ghana, the economic issues related to the Volta project and the suspicion by different Ghanaian government of the clandestine intervention of the CIA in Ghanaian internal affair.

Starting from the early sixties, the good relations between the U.S. and the Nkrumah government were going downhill, putting the major project that could symbolize successful cooperation between the two countries, the Volta River project, into serious doubt. The suspicion of the United States about the nonaligned countries made them hesitant about financing the Volta dam project. Other factors added to this suspicion. By the end of 1961, Nkrumah started travelling to many eastern European countries his minister of trade and labor also brought an important delegation to Moscow, coming back with a lot of “promises of financial aid and technical cooperation with apparently no strings.”²¹ The following year the Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev came to Ghana on official visit. All these factors contributed to changes in the course of the relations between the U.S. and Ghana created some defection from companies who were involved in the sensitive Volta project. The American participation in the project was becoming more and more critical because of the suspicion that the regime was moving leftward. For historian Roger Gocking, the Crisis in Congo contributed to this shift in Nkrumah’s position.²² But Kwesi Armah did not fully share this interpretation that Nkrumah was moving leftward. He argued that Nkrumah’s visit to the east had a diplomatic motivation: “What the United States did not understand was that one of the most important reasons for Nkrumah’s visit to the East was the ardent desire of the Ghana Government that China should have a normal diplomatic relations with the United

²¹ Roger Gocking, *The History of Ghana* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005), 131.

²² Gocking, *The History of Ghana*, 131.

States; and that socialist countries must do all in their power to lessen the cold war.”²³

According to him Nkrumah was also trying to break the concept of bipolarity as it rest on a very shaky and risky stability of power where any miscommunication among the nuclear powers would be fatal to the world and Africa particularly.²⁴ A successful break of bipolarity for Nkrumah was the admission of China to the United Nations, and the improvement of its relations with the U.S. Eventually with the assistance of President Kennedy, the American companies were able to finance the Volta project not before the communication between Washington and Accra has been severely damaged.

After the coup that overthrows Nkrumah, the following government (NLC) managed to keep good relations with the U.S. The N.L.C government was in good terms with the U.S. but the situation in Vietnam did not make things easier for them. A country that has supported decolonization and has been a vocal adversary of any imperialist intervention in the “Third World” would be at odds with its own principles if cautioning what came to be known as a war against communism. The NLC saw itself in a dilemma because of its support for the United States in the Vietnam War. Pressures from the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) forced the NLC to change its position and align with most African countries on the issue of the Vietnam War.²⁵

After the NLC government, Ghana went through a series of putsches that affected its international relations and did not provide the kind of stability needed to envision a durable policy of development. Such was the case of the 1981 coup that brought the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) led by Jerry Rawlings to power.

²³ Armah, *Peace without Power* 184.

²⁴ Armah, *Peace without Power* 184.

²⁵ Gocking, *The History of Ghana*, 149.

In 1982 the year after Rawlings' government came to power, the American Ambassador reassured the Ghanaians that the relations between the two countries would continue as it has been in the past. Mr. John Smith declared in an interview that "the ties of friendship are not easily broken." For the past 26 years, he noted, the United States had been a "consistent donor of food, technical assistance and economic aid to Ghana."²⁶ Similarly Ghanaian officials reassured the U.S. of their readiness "to maintain and strengthen the good relations between the two countries both in the economic and political fields within the framework of her policy of non-alignment."²⁷

These statements were full of hope and confident in the nature of the relations between the two countries. But subsequent events created a climate of suspicion similar to the one that prevailed in the last years of the Nkrumah regime.²⁸ The Government of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) was divided between radical and conservatives. Radicals were more inclined to enter relations with radical states while the conservatives advocated relations with the western. The victory of the radicals by 1982 led Ghana to get closer to radicals regimes at international level. This was the beginning of the tension with the U.S. as Gocking explains, "Ghana's links with Libya and support for Cuba and Nicaragua inevitably incurred the displeasure of the United States, and the C.I.A. clandestinely supported counterrevolutionary groups operating in neighboring countries like Togo, the Ivory Coast, and Nigeria."²⁹

This C.I.A. involvement did not improve the situation between Ghana and the USA. Gocking found a parallel with the Nkrumah's last years because more and more,

²⁶ *Ghana News* vol. II no 2 February 1982, 2.

²⁷ *Ghana News* Vol. 11 No 5 May 1982, 3

²⁸ W. Scott Thompson "Nkrumah's attitude towards the United States changed from suspicion to hostility." *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966*; (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1969), 300.

²⁹ Gocking, *The History of Ghana*, 205.

there was paranoia about the activities of the agency in the country particularly in helping dissident to the Rawlings regime. He explained how:

Tensions reached a high point in 1985 when a network of local CIA agents was uncovered in Accra and eight Ghanaians were “denationalized” and exchanged for a Ghanaian agent who had been arrested in Washington. Shortly afterward, four U.S. diplomats were expelled from Ghana for activities that “were wholly unacceptable and not conducive to good relations between Ghana and the U.S.” The United States responded by terminating aid to Ghana and announcing that Ghana was no longer a serious candidate for further the U. S. aid.³⁰

Somehow by 1987 these relations started to improve. As a sign of this improvement, three Ghanaians were arrested and tried in the United State for plotting a coup against the government of their country.³¹ In addition to this factor, the new changes brought to international relations, with Glasnost and Perestroika in Russia the internal problem of Soviet who retreating gradually from the international engagements prompted the government of Ghana to launch the process of democratization in 1992.

Section II: U.S. Cultural relations with Ghana

Like Benin, U.S. cultural relations with Ghana operated on a diversity of cultural activities sponsored by the State Department, educational exchanges, the International Visitor program and the volunteer program. If these activities were the main sources of U.S. soft power in Ghana, it is also important to mention that the presence of an important African-American community in the country and the linguistic factors facilitated the existence of cultural proximity with the U.S. making the exchanges with Ghana in different cultural arenas perhaps one of the most dynamic and consistent on the continent. But time constraint and the focus on official exchanges do not permit to touch on the contribution of the African-American community in Ghana to the U.S. soft power.

³⁰ Gocking, *The History of Ghana*, 205.

³¹ Gocking, *The History of Ghana*, 206

This section will thus study the different activities organized through the cultural exchange with Ghana and the role of the United State Information Service in the country. It will also look at the International Visitor program and particularly analyze how the reactions of former participants to the program show the influence of exchanges on their perception of the U.S. and its culture. Quite often while these participants praise the country for the grandeur of its civilization, they also notice some of the discrepancies that exist between the projected image of the country and the actual reality.

The United State Information Service (U.S.I.S.)

A central agency in the presentation of U.S. policy and culture abroad, the USIA plays a catalytic role in the U.S. cultural diplomacy by facilitating and coordinating the different cultural program run by the Department of States. Before the independence, Africa was viewed as marginal by the U.S. officials and thus initiating programs of exchanges with that part of the world was not an idea highly entertained in Washington. As Mary Niles put it, officials preferred to focus on containment in the 'nonaligned nations in Europe and Asia.' But a few among African countries hosted American libraries before the independence and these were mostly Anglophone Africa. The Ghana bureau was one of the first to have been established in Africa south of the Sahara; it was set up in 1955 in Accra.³² In 1960, the Accra U.S.I.S. post was carrying about 7,000 books with an annual attendance of the library around "40,000 out of which 34 represent students."³³ Exhibition, motion pictures and other visual media plus printed magazines like *American Outlook* were used to present America and the various aspects of its

³² Mary Niles Maack, "Books and Libraries as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy In Francophone Africa During the Cold War," *Libraries & Culture* 36 Winter 2001, 69.

³³ Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs *International Educational, Cultural and related activities for African Countries South of the Sahara* August 1961, 111.

culture to Ghanaians.³⁴ The magazine carried “stories and pictures on cultural activities in America.”³⁵ Other programs included lecture, seminars and conference but also music program targeting students and faculties.³⁶

Today the Post has been restructured, the USIA has been incorporated into the State Department in 1999 but its services are still continued. As far as the USIS post in Ghana is concerned, it has remained operative but the name of the Cultural service has changed, as it is the case in many overseas representations, into the Information Resources Center (I.R.C). The mission of the Ghana service is described as “serves the U.S. mission to Ghana by providing Ghanaians with timely, accurate information on American politics, news and opinions, government, society, history, and culture, and on U.S. policies affecting the bilateral relationship.”³⁷

The new Center has a relatively low volume of circulating books in the library, only 3,000 books compared to 7,000 in 1960. Perhaps the recent development in information technology explains that reduction of over fifty percent in the number of circulating books. In addition to these books, the center also offers to its visitors and members “50 print periodicals, 350 videos – including feature films -- and 35 CD-ROM.” Additionally it also provides access to online databases to its users, these include according to their site, “full-text periodical databases such as Factiva, Lexis-Nexis, First Search and Ebscohost. Through these databases the IRC has up-to-the-minute access to

³⁴ Department of State, *International Educational, Cultural and related activities*, 111.

³⁵ Department of State *International Educational, Cultural and related activities* 111.

³⁶ Department of State, *International Educational, Cultural and related activities* 111

³⁷ <http://ghana.usembassy.gov/irc.html> August 10th, 2009

the full text of over 10,000 magazines, newspapers, wire services, and other information sources.”³⁸

The center remains, as it shows through these activities, the contact zone between the American culture and the people of the host country. The U.S. Information Service (USIS) is in charge in host countries of coordinating most of the cultural and educational program of the Department of state. Clearly as it appeared here the US cultural diffusion through the USIS and the IRC target the elite, as they are likely to play a leadership role in shaping the future of the country.

Educational Exchanges

Ghana has enjoyed good relations with the U.S. in educational exchanges. As early as 1962, the United States and Ghana signed an *“Agreement for Financing Certain Educational Exchanges Programs.”* The objective of the agreement stated in its introductory paragraph was “to promote further mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States of America and the Ghana by a wider exchange of knowledge and professional talents through educational activities.” According to the first articles both Ghanaian and American citizens would benefit from the funds made available under the agreement. Those funds will serve “(1) Financing studies, research, instruction, and other educational activities: Of or for citizens and nationals of the United States of America in Ghana, and; Of or for citizens and nationals of Ghana in the United states of America: and (2) Financing visits and interchanges between the United states of America and Ghana Students, trainees, teachers, instructors and professors.”³⁹ That agreement is now inactive, however its existence evidences the fact that Ghana was one

³⁸ <http://ghana.usembassy.gov/irc.html> August 10th, 2009.

³⁹ Article 1, *Agreement for Financing certain Educational Exchanges Programs Between the U.S. and the Republic of Ghana* Signed at Accra January 24, 1962.

of the first beneficiaries of U.S. assistance in Education. The history of Ghanaians studying in the USA goes back to the first president of the country. This evolution is summarized here from the U.S embassy in Ghana *Amannee*:

Ghanaians began traveling to the United States for university education in the early 1900s: as we all know, Kwegyir Aggrey attended North Carolina Central University in the 1920s, while Kwame Nkrumah attended Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania in the 1930's. These pioneers led Ghanaians to recognize that U.S. higher education has much to offer to nation-builders. In the 1950s, Cocoa Board provided U.S. scholarships, and in the 1960s and 1970s, the AASPAU and AFGRAD programs, funded by the U.S. government, opened the door wider. By the 1980s, however, these government financed programs had given way to private financing, leaving Ghanaians to find their own way to international higher education. That the number of Ghanaians studying in the States has continued to grow by leaps and bounds is testimony to the high value placed on education, and the resourcefulness and determination of Ghanaians.⁴⁰

The ASPAU and the AFGRAD are both managed by the Africa American Institute. The ASPAU is the shortest for The African Scholarship Program of American Universities and it run from 1961 to 1975. In total it brought about 1600 students from 34 African countries to the U.S. enrolled in Bachelor's degree.⁴¹ The African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) is also run by run by the Africa-America Institute. The AFGRAD operated from 1963 to 1990 and was replaced by the Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills (ATLAS) that was operated until 2003. Together, the AFGRAD and the ATLAS brought more than three thousand Africans to the United States among these, 215 Ghanaians participants making Ghana the leading country in Africa followed by Nigeria 203. Another important exchange program between the U.S. and Ghana is the Fulbright Scholarship. From 1949 when

⁴⁰ Nancy Keteku "Educational advising services Through the U.S. Embassy, *AMANEE* November/December 2003. 3.

⁴¹<http://www.aaionline.org/Programs/AfricanScholarshipProgramOfAmericanUniversities.aspx>, August 10, 2009.

the program started to 2004, 284 Ghanaians students have got the Fulbright scholarship to the U.S. at the same time the number of Humphrey Fellows is 86. These numbers do not include research scholars, lecturing scholars or teacher exchange program that are all part of the Fulbright exchange program.

Cultural Presentation Activities

Under this heading, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange include the exchange of artists, musicians, sports coach and other related activities. Most of the events sponsored through this program were all managed through the United States Information Service in Accra. The Annual Report of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs of 1961 shows that cultural activities of this category were already organized by the USIS in Ghana as early as 1956: "William Warfield, baritone, 1956; Wilbur de Paris jazz band, 1957; Ruggiero Ricci, violinist, 1957; Florida A& M university Theatre group, 1958; Camilla Williams, soprano, 1958; Westminster Singers, 1959; Herbie Mann Jazz Group, 1960; Holiday on Ice, 1960; AAU track Team, 1956 and 1959."⁴² As it this report shows, not only music but sports, theatre and other fields were exploited by the USIA to promote good relations Ghana. The program continued through the entire Cold War and is still operating in the post Cold War era under other denominations. The jazz diplomacy brought other famous artists like Louis Armstrong to Ghana in the 60's who performed. Interestingly, the Armstrong tour in Africa was one of those instances where, soft power went hand in hand with soft drink. One of the ads for

⁴² Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State *International Educational, Cultural and related activities for African Countries South of the Sahara* August 1961, 110.

Armstrong ran like “Pepsi Bring you Satchmo” or as quoted by Penny M. Von Eschen “You Like Satchmo. Pepsi brings you Satchmo. Therefore, you like Pepsi.”⁴³

Like Armstrong, Gene Kelly, an American film star, dancer, and singer, was sponsored in 1964 by the United States Information for a 4 day visit to Ghana.⁴⁴ The program of his stay included performance in Ghanaian cinema and many lectures at the School of Music and Drama. Ghanaians appreciated Gene Kelly’s performance at the Orion Cinema so much to the point where Mr. Kojo Bostio, then Minister of foreign Affairs did not hesitate to say “Well done” as way to congratulates him.⁴⁵ A trivial yet very telling detail on this tour was the presence of Mr. Mark Lewis, Director of the United States Information Service in Ghana, with Gene Kelly on various occasions during his tours.

Exchanges in Sports should also be added to complete this tableau of the State Department’s sponsored activities. Unlike Benin where this type of activities are not common, Ghana was beneficiary of this program that, among others, brought in Ghana professional players for informal and friendly games between American teams and Ghanaian teams. Between March 19th and 25th 1968, for example, four American tennis men were in Ghana. On their trip sponsored by the U.S. government James McManus, James Osborne, John Pickens and David Power all members of the U.S. Davis cup, engaged in informal matches, showed some demonstration of their skill as players and more importantly instruct Ghanaian players on different techniques and style of the game. All these activities, added to the presence of a sizable African American community in

⁴³ Penny M. Von Eschen *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz ambassadors play the Cold War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004) 67.

⁴⁴ *Daily Graphic*, January 21 1964, 4.

⁴⁵ *Daily Graphic*, January 25, 1964

the country would create in the long run better conditions for cultural proximity with the U.S.

Visits and Other Type of Exchanges

The American cultural relations with Ghana follows the "two way traffic" Principle. If it allows American lecturers, entertainers and sportsmen to visit Ghana, it also helps bring Ghanaians from different walk of life to the U.S. The already rich activities of the USIS posts and the Educational exchanges are complemented by other exchanges programs like the International visitor program sponsored by the State Department and other federal agencies. This Visitors' program allows the selectees from many countries to visit the U.S. for few weeks and travel across the country from coast to coast. This enables them to interact with the American people and share with some of them information about professional experience while getting from others first hand information on the American culture and institutions. This kind of interactions with the American people is part of the aim of the programs and its success is depends on how sustained these contacts between foreign citizens and Americans have remained over time. Visitors are not only expected to acquire knowledge, they are also encouraged to discover the multi-facets of the American culture and society and know more about the American people and its institutions, after all out of this information come the understanding that would ultimately participate in the construction of a peaceful world. This knowledge about the U.S. would help them construct their own judgment about the American society and thereby discerning between the false images presented through propaganda and the actual reality. This is one of the areas where cultural relations are expected to be effective and influential. Most of the visitors are involved in some

decision making process in their respective countries and any bad experience in the U.S. may leave them with a negative impression that could affect U.S. relations with these countries. Similarly the success of a single visit to the U.S. could yield positive result especially facilitating negotiation between the two countries. Because impressions are personal and thus subjective they are not easily accessible unless recorded in post program evaluations. While these documents may exist, our effort to acquire them did not yield positive result because of time, financial and logistic constraints.

The following lines show the alternative to these evaluations and constitute the impressions of two Ghanaian journalists who were selected by the Department of State to participate in the International Visitor program in the 1960's. Their impressions here seem more reliable for not being conditioned by official administrative guidelines that sometimes limit the freedom participants have in expressing their true feelings.

Mr. Eddie Agyeman was an editor at the Ghanaian newspaper 'Daily Graphic' and Mr. K. A. Sarpong is a legal practitioner in cape coast and a free lance journalist. Both have benefitted from the State Department programs at different period and both have experienced America through those exchanges program. These two journalists show two complementary sides of the importance of the program. Mr. Agyeman during his stay in the U.S. was attaché to an American newspaper, the "Jersey Journal" and uses that opportunity to enlighten the reader about Ghana his country but also about the African continent in general. His article entitled "*The Accurate Picture of Ghana*" was republished in the *Daily Graphic* in Accra.⁴⁶

In that article, Mr. Agyeman first presented his country, Ghana and explained its policy of "positive neutrality and non-alignment." Ghana he wrote "is friend to all and

⁴⁶ *Daily Graphic*, November 23rd 1965, 5.

enemy to none.” He explains how his country like many other of the emerging African countries, was more preoccupied by the question of development instead of being involved in “international bickering or involving itself with any of the power. Mr. Agyeman traces the roots of misconception about Ghana to foreigners who visit the country and spend only few hours in the best hotel, ‘sipping scotch.’ For him such a shortsighted attitude came from the uncompromising stand the country took against colonialism and his achievement in a short period of time after the independence.

Agyeman put the question in a larger racial perspective and argued that “Ghana has proved the falsity of the notion held by many people that the black man is incapable of managing his own affairs.” He pursued that the country was constantly under attack in the western press for “not owing automatic allegiance to the west.” In choosing to judge international issues on their merit, Ghana according to Agyeman ‘asserted its maturity as a nation.’ He finishes the article by listing some of the achievements of the country since its independence and qualified those achievements of ‘phenomenal.’ Among others he mentioned how Ghana was doing fine in education with a special emphasis on adult learning. He also noted to the readers how women were holding important office in the post independence Ghana. He wrote “women are accorded equal opportunities in Ghana they are found in almost every field of activity.” The rest of the article was about the economy, the industry and the important Volta River project. Considering the limited knowledge that the average reader in the U.S had about foreign country this was a laudable effort. The challenge back then would have been to question most of the claims made in the article. He appeared more subjective in the end when he wrote that “As a small country, Ghana cannot afford the high price of entertaining a multiplicity of

political parties and their attendants' squabbles."⁴⁷ This kind of claims fit in the context of that period and does not apply anymore for Ghana or any other African country in this new era of democratic governance. It is to credit of Agyeman however to have attempted to present his country differently than what has been portrayed by foreigners. If he helped the American readers know more about his country, his compatriot K.A Sarpong would share his experience in the U.S. with Ghanaians readers nearly six years after him.

Mr. K. A Sarpong was invited by the United States Department of States to witness the American election but also to get acquainted to the American way of life. On his return, he published "American Legend" in the same newspaper, reported on his experience and how he viewed the U.S. In this article he gives his thought and impression on the American achievement in many areas and reflects on the system and the extraordinary civilization human beings were able to create. His take on the experience seems to reveal to him that the success of America came from the natural resources and the human being action. From coast- to-coast trip to a visit to Disneyland, Sarpong praise the American success and pointed at the ethnocentrism which transpired in the deliberate way in which other people are denied relevance in individual life and public space. He started his analysis with the comparison of two symbols at a legendary place where the world of yesterday coexists quite artificially with those of today and tomorrow. That fascinating ability to bring different worlds together can only be observed in one place that participates so naturally in the history of the American legend: Disneyland.

Sarpong thus started the story of his experience of the U.S. and its system with Disneyland. What a curiosity it would be for an African to see his continent portrayed in

⁴⁷ *Daily Graphic*, November 23rd 1965, 5.

a country like the U.S. That curiosity can hardly leave anyone indifferent. That is perhaps what explains Mr. Sarpong choice of 'Jungle Africa' as his first ride. About Disney and the ride he comments that "The meticulousness and the detailed treatment given to this centre remind one of a trait in the American character-efficiency. Natural situation are created in artificial forms and true to form good old Africa does not miss a place in Disneyland."⁴⁸

Sarpong could not help but notice the grandeur of the American civilization through the view of Disneyland and perceive how American self define or project their self image and culture. He wrote: "America is a land of superlatives. They define their achievements in terms of the world of the world; the tallest building in world, the biggest building in the world, the richest man in the world and they select their own citizens and proclaim them as the champions of the world of sports." No doubt he seems to perceive here a certain sense of pride with some whiffs of arrogance. Everything in his interpretation shows that if it is American, it is certainly the best.

From those preliminary views of the whole sight, Sarpong took his reader to the ride. He asked "And what do we see in 'Jungle Africa' in Disneyland? One is invited to see the head hunters of Africa and to see and to hear the crushing noises of the wild life. The lions of Africa, leopards etc... who hampered and hamstringed the civilizing missions of the Christians who claimed to have first penetrated the heartland of Africa and to have "discovered" large areas and note, not that those areas were inhabited." He explained that everything was electrically operated and that "The Americans are good at harnessing electricity! And nothing more bears testimony to than a visit to 'Beautiful America' at Disneyland."

⁴⁸ *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 8.

Beautiful America in contrast “shows in vivid form the American experience- the world of electricity and the almost sweeping changes wrought by it; the American genius for creation and what have you? The whole gamut of the American legend of success and victory, a legend that is not shared by any other people in the world is on display.”⁴⁹ The ride and the show express two contrasting messages according to him. “Jungle Africa” seems to portray the lack of civilization that characterizes the African society before the European arrived while “beautiful America was a celebration of the American genius. Sarpong argued that “appreciated in its right proportions and perspective, the contrast does illustrate a point. It illustrates that the Americans deny the relevance or even the existence of historical experience of peoples with which they have become involved.”⁵⁰ That last sentence referred to Africans and their continent. But what Mr. Sarpong overlooked in his reading of the Jungle Africa Ride’s symbolism is that may not reflect the view of most Americans. However his argument may become more compelling owing to the lack of knowledge about Africa among the general public. Thence the ride may be giving an inaccurate and obsolete view of Africa.

Beyond the show and the ride, Disneyland itself is a celebration of the American success. That success is apparent in the American character according to him. In his quest for a legitimate answer to what nourishes the legend of success and victory in the American character, Sarpong explained that as a nation, America has never tasted defeat. His view of the U.S. is that of a

Country with an unbelievable reservoir of human and natural resources and coupled with the character of its citizens for self-application, the will to succeed and take on the challenges posed by nature and may be by sheer patriotism? They have achieved economic progress of fantastic

⁴⁹ *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 8.

⁵⁰ *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 8

magnitude. Motivation? That is part of the answer. Exploitation? You do not need a Marxist analyst to tell you this. It is part of the American system.⁵¹

No other evidence could support these claims he contended, other than the American cities he visited. Each of them bears witness of the American success and power in different fields. If you were to consider fantastic economic progress, take a city like New York. Sarpong observed: “Flying over New York City by night is the incarnation of beauty and couple it with a cruise around it and the skyscrapers unfold themselves threatening the flying aero planes: or take a ride on the metro to see the underground network of railways. It is a testimony to that trait in the American character of hard work and imagination.”⁵² He referred to other cities and what they have of specific symbolism in the overall American civilization: the steel mills in Pittsburgh for him are a symbol of the power of steel in the American system. O’Hare International Airport with the volume of its activities is “perhaps the busiest in America or in the world.” San Francisco with its Golden Gate is the most beautiful city. More interesting is his views of Los Angeles. He depicted it as the city “where oil leaks from the backyards of houses.”⁵³ How accurate is all this perception, is a matter of personal judgment. It is apparent here that Sarpong despite some criticism could not hide his admiration for the country and its civilization.

If “the space center with what it entails is an insignia of the unlimits of the human ingenuity,” Washington D.C. was the symbol of power in many aspects with the white house, the legislative body in the Capitol and the pentagon “the embodiment of the almost unlimited power of the military Brass. Such power, no doubt engenders fears from

⁵¹ *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 8.

⁵² *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 9

⁵³ *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 9.

the civilian and temptation from the 'man in charge.'" Sarpong found mainly the temptation to use that power arrogantly "the temptation to react violently with American fire power against the sneaking communists" coming in to destroy the beautiful institutions of beautiful America" lives with those who have been entrusted with their guidance.

Peace Corps Ghana

This section studies the beginning, evolution and impact of Peace Corps Ghana. It is almost inconceivable to study the relations between the United States and Ghana without mentioning the Peace Corps. The Organization would rank among the first agencies that promote mutual understanding between the people and the government of Ghana and the people of the United States. In 1961 when the Peace corps was created, the Cold War was at its highest point, with the Space Race and the battles for the newly independent countries of Africa. Ghana was one of the first hosts of the Program with the signature of the agreement of July 19th, 1961.

Not only did Ghana enjoy the title of the first sub-Saharan African country to have gained independence, it also enjoyed the title of the first country in the world to have welcomed the Peace Corps volunteers on August 31st, 1961. on September 12th, of the same year, Ghana also added to the series of first, when "Tom Livingston, Peace Corps Volunteer, French teacher took up his teaching post at Ghanata Secondary School, Dodowa, on September 12, 1961." According to Samuel George Ayi-Bonte, a Peace Corps Ghana staff, he was officially "'designated by the Peace corps as the First Volunteer in Field."⁵⁴ Peace Corps Ghana has remained since a stable instrument in the United States relations with the country. From that historical moment on, Peace Corps

⁵⁴ Samuel George Ayi-Bonte *Peace Corps Ghana- 30 Years of Commitment and Service*, 4.

has been involved in the process of national development in Ghana, helping the country to face the difficult challenges left by the departure of the colonial administration and the vacuum left by many of the British expatriates working in the country. Other countries have suspended their programs, What is striking in the case of the Peace Corps Ghana is that despite the period of political instability and economic uncertainty, the peace Corps has remained active without any suspension of its operations. It has continued its activities without any major problem. One may ask what explain this success. In retrospect it may be related to the attitude and devotion of the volunteers or the quality of the management of the organization on. The volunteer were probably able to do fulfill their obligations with dedication and seriousness this could explain the fact that the organization keeps operating. Once selected, before being dispatched to the field, volunteers are trained and taught some of the local languages most commonly Twi.

Volunteers intervene in different fields but education seems to be the number one priority. Assessing Peace Corps evolution after thirty years of activity, George Ayi-Bonte notes that “all through these arduous 30 years of service, Peace Corps service in the education sector has stood supreme”⁵⁵ But the priorities of the government did not remain the same over the years. Peace Corps involvement in the development of Ghana has followed the evolution of the country and the needs expressed by the government over the years.

Evolution of Peace Corps Ghana

In the sixties, the main challenges of the Republic of Ghana were education. "We must concentrate all our efforts on education" declared Kwame Nkrumah in July 1961,

⁵⁵ Samuel George Ayi-Bonte, *Peace Corps Ghana- 30 Years of Commitment and Service*, (obtained from Peace Corps Ghana), 45.

"It is only through universal education that we can give our people the full opportunity to develop their latent abilities and intelligence."⁵⁶ The government has decided then to make it free and accessible to all Ghanaian in age of schooling. To meet such a challenge for a nation that was only three years old would require foreign assistance since the number of teachers available could not meet the expectation the program. In this context, the peace volunteers were more than welcome despite the suspicion created by the cold war context on the real motivation of the volunteers. It was in that context that the group of 50 volunteers came in Ghana on August 30th, 1961. Part of their first assignment was to teach physics, chemistry, math, history, and geography, Latin, French or English in Ghanaian high schools.⁵⁷ The success of those pioneer volunteers led to the request of more volunteers by the Ghanaian government in the years after. 100 volunteers were asked for in high school and 35 more for vocational and adult learning. The remaining teachers that are destined for technical and vocational subject were "scheduled to teach geology, carpentry, auto mechanics and similar subjects."⁵⁸ Teaching will remain part of the program with extension to other fields. The decade in retrospect was in general

The seventies were a decade of transformation and changes in the Peace Corps. In the beginning of the seventies, Joseph Blatchford brought a policy known as "New Directions" to the Peace Corps. This policy advocated recruiting Peace Corps that were "more experienced, more highly skilled." Such a caliber was not easily available. The consequence was a decrease in the number of volunteers available but certainly this would mean the few recruited would be more effective on the field.

⁵⁶ Peace Corps *Presentation of FY 1963 Program* United States Congress June 1, 1962, 75.

⁵⁷ Peace Corps *Presentation of FY 1963 Program* , 76.

⁵⁸ Peace Corps *Presentation of FY 1963*, 76

With the new direction, Peace Corps Ghana also went through its own change and adaptation. One could argue that the new cooperation brought to the management in Peace Corps Ghana in the seventies was one of the valuable and most constructive moves that help established the corps as one of the most vital element of north south cooperation

Peace Corps Ghana in the seventies also went through some transformations.

Three major developments occurred in the life of Peace Corps Ghana. According to Samuel Ayi-Bonte, "There were three very significant events in the life of the peace in Ghana at that time. The policy of 'bi-nationalism' was implemented. "Bi-nationalism" meant recruiting host country nationals to team up with their American counterparts in the management of the Peace Corps and in the support of Volunteers in the field."⁵⁹

Another development was the Pre-training service that was transferred to Ghana in June 1970. With that transfer, "the first totally in-country training program was mounted in Ghana,"⁶⁰ an American company was a consultant of this program. In 1971, a Ghanaian company POINTER limited became the first Ghanaian contractor to handle all the logistic of the pre-service training of the volunteers in Ghana. POINTER handled it until 1976 when the Peace Corps decide to use the expertise of experienced volunteer to conduct 'in-house training.' By the end of the 1980's, "Ghana had developed and demonstrated such admirable capacity for training that it became necessary to look for an institution within Ghana to take over full responsibility for Peace Corps Ghana training programs."⁶¹ No doubt all these development help stabilize Peace Corps Ghana and contribute to its success and continuity despite economic problems or political instability.

⁵⁹ Ayi-Bonte, *Peace Corps Ghana*, 9

⁶⁰ Ayi-Bonte, *Peace Corps Ghana*, 9

⁶¹ Ayi-Bonte, *Peace Corps Ghana*, 9

The '80's came with its lot of economic and political problems. There was military coup in 1981 and the economic situation of the country was not fairing very well. This confronted the Peace Corps with new challenges in terms of recruitment and maintaining the volunteer on their duty as shown in the Annual Report "Expansion in FY 1983 and beyond will be dependent on the policies of the new government and the precarious economic situation in the country. The shortages of many basic commodities and lack of service place unusual hardships On Peace Corps volunteers and make the provision of administration and program support especially difficult."⁶²

But regardless of those difficulties, the Peace Corps continued its activities, diversifying the field of intervention of the volunteers. The Federal year 1983 annual report of the agency states that "New projects were begun in rural and village development, agricultural and animal traction, community preventive health, dam building and irrigation development."⁶³ Almost a third of the volunteers serving in 1982 were directed to project related to those fields. Throughout the eighties as in the past, education would still be one of the focal areas of intervention of the volunteers. There would be some expansions though. From general education, some volunteers were dispatched to "pilot project to teach practical agriculture and to develop school projects in junior secondary and vocational education."⁶⁴ This is a good sign of the evolution from the education and geological field that were the main field of intervention of the Peace Corps in the sixties. Volunteers are now more involved in rural areas, intervening in agriculture, health. In some of these communities they were able to establish "beekeeping and soap

⁶² Peace Corps, *FY 1982-1983 Annual Report*, .51

⁶³ Peace Corps *Federal Year 1982-1983 Annual Report*, 51.

⁶⁴ Peace Corps, *Annual report 1986*, 39.

making enterprises, built wells and fish ponds, trained farmers in animal traction, planted farms with fuel-wood and fruit trees, and constructed a blacksmith foundry.”⁶⁵

Making the Difference: Impact on the Country and on the Population

Peace Corps contribute to education of many Ghanaians and also help the government improving the life of many Ghanaians living in rural areas by working on different community project and participating in the education of many Ghanaians. As Elizabeth Hoffman For example, “between 1961 and 1991, 675,000 Ghanaians, equivalent to roughly five percent of the 14 million populations, had American teachers.”⁶⁶ That is an important number considering the impact these people will have on the development of their country. It makes the contribution of the Peace Corps in Ghana hard to estimate. Aside education Peace Corps also contribute to improve life in rural area. An example of how Peace Corps contribution to the improvement the life of rural population is given in this report of the accomplishment of Peace Corps Ghana at the end of the eighties :

Twelve volunteers trained over 140 villages nursery workers and, through extension activities, contacted over 70 village s with a total population of 35,000 people. ‘Ten volunteers provided assistance in health education, latrine construction, hand-dug wells, spring catchments, and rainwater harvesting. One volunteer is working on guinea worm eradication. Fourteen volunteers provided technical assistance in carpentry and home building.’⁶⁷

The impact of Peace Corps can be felt in many areas and the recognition Many Ghanaians would acknowledge the contribution of the Peace Corps Ghana to the development of the country. Recognition of this role was expressed in different laudatory

⁶⁵ Peace Corps, Annual report FY 1986,.40.

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman *All you need is love: The Peace Corps and the spirit of the 1960s*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press.1998), 179 cited in Julius A Amin. “The Perils of missionary diplomacy: The United States Peace Corps volunteers in the Republic of Ghana” *Western Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 23, Iss. (Pullman: Spring 1999.): 45.

⁶⁷ Peace Corps, *Congressional Report FY 1990*, 37.

terms. One of the areas Peace Corps Volunteers worked in the sixties was in the field of geology. George Ayi- Bonte an insider of the Peace Corps note that it was one of the areas that is the least known to the public is the field of geology. By 1963 Peace Corps volunteers were about 23 Peace Corps geologists. This was an important number as it was “enough to offset any shortage of geologists that had been created by the mass resignations of the British Geologists during the period 1962-63. After that, other Peace Corps Geologists joined the Geological survey for a period of about 10 years i.e. 1963-73.”⁶⁸ Not only did they contribute to the shortage of manpower, G.O. Kessey the director of the Geological Survey said about the Peace Corps geologist that “these young men had a sense of mission and went about their duties with determination. They demonstrated quite a capacity to achieve something for themselves and for the benefit of Ghana. I was indeed happy with them.”⁶⁹ The same satisfaction could be noted at the Ghana Institute of Journalism. The director of the Institute notes that they will cherish forever the Peace Corps who offered their services to the Institute. He remarked how the volunteers’ contribution “helped to establish a firm foundation for the teaching of Public relation, Advertising and English at the Institute. Past Students who passed through their hands testify to a very high level of dedication, commitment and responsibility. Their teaching colleagues found them ‘pleasant.’

Impact on Volunteers: An Example of Mutual Understanding

Part of the objective of the Peace Corps was in: “Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; helping promote a better

⁶⁸ Ayi-Bonte, *Peace Corps Ghana*, 46.

⁶⁹ Ayi-Bonte *Peace Corps Ghana*, 46

understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.”⁷⁰ Any assessment of the volunteers’ work should ultimately include even if it for a short moment how successful they have been in bridging the gap that may have existed between them and the community they were serving. This would rank among the success story of the Peace Corps experience. The Peace Corps story is not only that of helping achieving the development objective of the host country. The cultural aspect of this type of cooperation was the promotion of mutual understanding between the two nations that are interacting through the volunteers. Therefore , in assessing its impact, an important attention should be paid to how influential was the peace corps experience in changing the views of Ghanaian about the U.S. or how the presence of the Peace Corps among Ghanaians has influenced their perceptions of the Ghanaians society and their culture and institutions.

Apart from fulfilling their duty, the Peace Corps aims at promoting mutual understanding between people and nations as well. In the case of Peace Corps Ghana, the story is not that of the number of Ghanaian students taught by the volunteers, alone. By itself, this figure is no doubt an incredible contribution of the volunteers to the difficult task of nation building and the challenges of national development in Ghana. Education is absolutely one of the major tools of development and the Peace Corps Ghana has made its contribution. The type of relations or bond developed from the experience is an essential part of the outcome of the program.

⁷⁰ <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=Learn.whatisper.mission>

The first group of volunteers in Ghana in Julius Amin's analysis was not able to create that type of relations. Reflecting on this group, he claimed that they were assigned a challenging task.

Service in Nkrumah's Ghana was one of the most challenging Peace Corps sites in the 1960s. The delicate political situation combined with volunteers' naïveté produced mixed results. Their ignorance of international politics was an added factor. They were good teachers but poor diplomats. Even after Nkrumah was ousted in 1966, the volunteers failed to show leadership in development. There were perils in allowing Peace Corps volunteers to perform jobs designed for career diplomats.⁷¹

This analysis is probably dictated by the era Julius focused on in his study. They were many challenges Volunteers had to face in those years. Among those were the suspicion that they were secrets agents, the racial violence of the civil rights movement that many could not explain to Ghanaians, and the war in Vietnam. All these events were not meant to make daily interaction with Ghanaians easy for the volunteers. As a result many volunteers failed to interact socially with Ghanaians as these excerpts from their evaluations show:⁷²

One volunteer wrote about her stay in Ghana "I regret I don't have more contacts....I'm not getting to know Ghanaian masters well either. I regret that, too. My only contact with Ghanaians is with students."⁷³ Another volunteer found the Ghanaians difficult to interact with; he commented "The Ghanaians are hard to get to know. It's a long time before they'll invite you to their home."⁷⁴ Perhaps the last remark explains better why such interaction was not easy. The Volunteer wrote: "It's nice to talk about

⁷¹ Julius A Amin. "The Perils of missionary diplomacy: The United States Peace Corps volunteers in the Republic of Ghana" *Western Journal of Black Studies*. Pullman: Spring 1999. Vol. 23, Iss. 1, 46.

⁷² All excerpts are adapted from Julius A Amin, *The Perils of missionary Diplomacy*, 44.

⁷³ Richter, R. (1965). *Ghana: Overseas evaluation*. National Archives, Washington D C. cited in Julius A.Amin, *The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy* 44.

⁷⁴ Peters, C. (1962). *Preliminary Evaluation Report on Ghana*. National Archives, Washington D.C 1962, p. 2 cited in Julius A.Amin.44.

getting to know Ghanaians but when you have nothing in common, it's hard. It's much easier to talk to other Peace Corps people who have lots in common with you." ⁷⁵

If Julius Amin Sees shortcoming in the achievement of other aspect of the Peace goals, Ayi-Bonte as an insider, pointed at some success stories that could stand as a partial fulfillment of the promises of the idea of behind the peace corps. On a social level the Peace Corps experience also led to the development of some love stories as Ayi-Bonte reported. There were love affairs between volunteers or mixed couple (Ghanaian-volunteers). Some volunteers met, dated and end up getting married. But the story did not end there. Ayi-Bonte note that "The adventurous male Volunteers broke through the cultural barrier and took upon themselves Ghanaian wives. Some bold and daring Ghanaian young men cautiously entered the arena and got themselves Volunteer wives."⁷⁶

Peace Corps volunteers despite the difficult political environment in which many of them perform their duty the experience also makes a difference in the life of the volunteers. Two former volunteers share their experience in Ghana. Jeffrey Worthington served the Peace Corps in Ghana 1977-1979 .his assignment was to teach chemistry at Kpando secondary school in the Volta region. Jeff recalls how within a year he acquired local habit as far as his diet is concerned. He could recall "Sometime into the first year, I began a daily ritual of eating fufu for lunch at the "Always Always Chop Bar," near the lorry park in Kpando. Wanda, the owner of 'Always, Always', presided over a large bowl of soup. The price included the fufu and soup and additional charges were made for the meat. The meat was usually grasscutter, a large rodent similar to nutria. A typical hunk of

⁷⁵ Peter C., 2 cited in Julius A. Amin. 44.

⁷⁶ Ayi-Bonte, *Peace Corps Ghana* ,33

meat was a large cube tied with plant fiber and it often included the skin with some fat. Eating meat was a real treat.”⁷⁷ If Jeffrey remembers, the fufu dish, Don Peirce shares the learning experience and the development of character that he acquired while serving in the Volta region.

Don Pierce served in Ghana between 1989 and 1990. He was among the first group of “Small Enterprise Development” volunteers the Peace Corps had. Don recalls how his experience with the local woodcarvers in the Vakpo area (Volta region) helped him professionally: “My time there helped me gain great patience and understanding and has made me a better leader and manager. Also gained a great understanding of what other people of the world are up against.”⁷⁸

Another positive contribution of the Peace Corps experience in Ghana is that a former volunteer in Ghana Ron Marson of Canby in Oregon. Mr. Marson taught math and general science in Ghana. His experience in helping teacher at the Anloga training College to teach science without a lab led him to look for locally available materials as alternative. Upon return to the U.S. Marson developed his ideas and created the TOPS⁷⁹ learning system. Mr. Ayi- Bonte explained “GLOBAL TOPS” is a science education program designed, developed and published by RPCV [Returned Peace Corps Volunteer] Ron Marson of Canby, Oregon, has been adopted by the Ghana Education Service (1990) for use in all 38 teacher training Colleges throughout the country to develop their science education.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/Jeffrey_Worthington August 2, 2009.

⁷⁸ http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/Don_Pierce accessed August 3rd, 2009

⁷⁹ See also http://www.topscience.org/info/about_us.html, February 16th 2010.

⁸⁰ Ayi-Bonte, *Peace Corps Ghana*, 33.

Some Peace Corps volunteers, because of their experience in Ghana, have been going back or sending teaching materials to the areas or schools they served in. This example of a lasting bonds between ex-volunteers and their past host community is an important achievement of the Peace Corps mission. Perhaps one area where the U.S. soft power could be said to be effective would be in the type of cooperation developed and maintained by the Peace Corps since its inception in the sixties. The Peace Corps Ghana is one of the success models on continent which started with hesitancy and suspicion with the Ghanaian leaders but ended being a successful model of bilateral cooperation with consistent number of volunteers deployed in every year or every other. The success of the Peace Ghana has probably encouraged or influenced other countries to eventually sign agreements with the American Organization.

CHAPTER 5

THE PROMISES AND THE LIMITS OF U.S. SOFT POWER IN AFRICA

This chapter will address four points, how do Benin and Ghanaian cultural relations with the U.S. compare, what were the main characteristics of the strategies of soft power, how did the cultural relations program influence U.S. cooperation with these two countries in other word what were the gains for each party and finally what were the main challenges to U.S. soft power in Africa.

Benin, Ghana and the U.S: two bilateral relations.

U.S. cultural cooperation with Benin and Ghana during the Cold War followed the same characteristics, except that Ghana because of historical and other cultural factors enjoys some privileges in the amount of funding and in the number of exchanges with the United States The comparison between Benin and Ghana reveals that the scale tilts in Ghana's favor. In 1961 one year after the independence of Benin and four years after the independence of Ghana, the number of students from Ghana studying in the U.S. for the academic year 1960-1961 was 160 students. For the same period of time there was only one student from Benin attending college or University in the U.S.¹ Five years after, in 1965-66 the number of Fulbright students from Ghana to the U.S. was 6 for the academic year and 0 for Benin. The cumulative for the period 1949 to 1966 was 62 for Ghana and 1 for Benin.² That trend was continued throughout the Cold War and in some years the difference was even much higher. These differences in number confirm the idea that

¹ Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs *International Educational, Cultural and Related Activities for African Countries South of the Sahara* August 1961, 40.

² Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Annual Report to Congress on the International Educational and Cultural Exchanges Programs Fiscal Year 1966*. Table 1.

former French colonies are on the periphery of U.S. policy.³ The reason advanced for this state of affair was the cultural ties that still prevailed between francophone Africa and France. Other than these differences in figures, in terms of conception and practice there is no real difference in the U.S. approach, almost the same strategies have been used to promote good relations with either one of the two countries. These were bilateral agreements, educational exchanges, International Visitor Programs, the presence of American Information Service in each country. The same mechanisms of cultural cooperation that were used in other parts of the world were used in both countries with some cultural or linguistic adjustments depending on the colonial past of the country and the interest at stake. Politically, whether peripheral or pivotal, the containment of communism was still the dominant criterion in allocating American assistance. This leads us to make some generalizations about the use of U.S. soft power in Africa.

Characteristics of U.S. cultural strategies in Africa

From the cases of Benin and Ghana, the sources of U.S. soft power present certain characteristics. It is important to mention however that these characteristics may not all apply to a single source at the same time. U.S. cultural strategies in Africa were elitist, they included technical assistance and volunteerism and finally were conditioned by the political situation in the receiving country and its effectiveness depends largely on the international behavior of the American government.

U.S. strategies of cultural relations in Africa were largely elitist in conception and in delivery. The cultural program targeted groups who were likely to shape the destiny of

³ Mary Niles Maack, states for example that "*Because of their close economic and political ties with France, the Francophone states in Africa were certainly on the periphery of the ideological struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union.*" "Books and Libraries as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy in Francophone Africa During the Cold War." *Libraries & Culture* 36 (Winter 2001): 58-59.

each country or those who would be playing a leadership role in any aspect of the domestic as well as international life of Benin or Ghana. Chapter II's discussion of the Jazz diplomacy in Africa, showed that among others students, civil servants, officials were targeted for the audience of the concerts. The same observation can be made about the allocation of scholarship to citizens of Benin and Ghana that is it is highly competitive and thus restricted to certain category of people. One thing to mention about the U.S. educational exchange with the Fulbright is that it grants scholarship only for graduate studies. Such is the case in Benin for example, unlike most scholarship granted by the eastern European countries who would include undergraduate studies. Students, professional or civil servant were the primary beneficiaries of American scholarships or the privileged in experiencing American culture through media, newsletters, libraries and cultural presentations programs. Aside any subjective judgment, this elitist approach in cultural diffusion is quite logical, especially in areas where there is a high rate of illiteracy and where access to education was difficult to the majority of the population. Therefore any effective approach to cultural diffusion and development policy has to rely on the helping agents that intellectuals and political leaders were. Appealing successfully to the hearts and mind of the elite would guarantee an influence of national or international policy of the country and pave the way for a more favorable climate of negotiations or cooperation in any field. Prospect for such outcome seemed to have appeared in the sixties when the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange assessing what was done so far and making some projection about the U.S.-Africa relations in 1966 observed:

For future U.S. relations with the new African states the presence of exchange program alumni in positions of responsibility in their respective

governments will be helpful in securing understanding if not agreement. In one of the African countries during the reporting year, three men who have been in the United States in International visitor grants were elevated to important posts in the government—one becoming Minister of Internal Affairs, another becoming Minister of Health, and a third being made deputy minister of Foreign affairs.⁴

This is a promising effect of the educational exchanges with Africa, for people to negotiate much easier when they understand each other than when they have little in common and are coming from two completely different backgrounds. Promoting cultural ties and mutual understanding will help reduce differences by bringing parties to negotiation to the middle ground, this can be achieved through education. A successful stay in the U.S. could create a lifetime bonds with these alumni, making the cooperation between the two agents, easier and possible. In targeting the elite in this type of exchange, the government is also adopting the ‘trickle-down approach’ according to which the transformation of public attitude would come from the top (elite) to the bottom (the rest of the population).⁵ But the elite were not the only agents of change used in this type of cooperation. African leaders were also courted through technical assistance and aid program with the end of persuading them of the good intentions of the U.S. and its people.

Technical assistance was also part of the American government’s strategy to promote good relations with African countries. This type of assistance came through scholars, university professors and others. But in the case of third world countries and Africa in particular, the use of volunteers was a modest way to diffuse American knowledge in science and technology. In creating the Peace Corps, Kennedy thought of a

⁴ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Annual Report to Congress on the International Educational and Cultural Exchanges Programs Fiscal Year 1966*, 16.

⁵ Frank A Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 11.

different type of cooperation for an area that lacks all the technical and economic development that the Western European had before the war and which facilitated the implementation of a Marshall Plan type of cooperation. We have seen in the previous chapters how Peace Corps volunteers have contributed to the education of the hundreds of thousands of Africans while participating at the same time in the national endeavor of their host countries to improve the living conditions of their populations. Volunteers were able to bring innovation and adaptability in their daily task meanwhile attempting successfully or not to create lasting friendship with the populations they were professionally involved with. Some were able to have a grasp of the local culture but may not have been able to project an American lifestyle. In some cases however the work of the volunteers was severely conditioned by the local political situation and the general climate of cooperation between the host country and the United States.

Looking at the example of the Peace Corps may suggest that U.S. cultural exchanges were philanthropic. Such idea would be wrong and deceiving as there were not and will probably never be philanthropic. It was part of the overall U.S. foreign policy despite early attempts at the program's inception to separate the cultural program goals from the foreign policy objective. In both Benin and Ghana the two governments experienced this fact regrettably. In 1974 after the socialist ideological orientation in Benin, the cooperation with the U.S deteriorated. At the highest point of the political crisis between the U.S. and Benin, not only did the number of Peace Corps drop to 2, its fields of intervention were reduced exclusively to education between 1981 and 1982.⁶ Another consequence of change in ideological orientation was that the office of the

⁶ Benoit C. Arigbo and Etienne D. Doukan "La Politique Américaine d'Aide Bilatérale au Développement de la République du Bénin de 1960-1996." (M.A Thesis, Abomey-Calavi: FASJEP Université Nationale du Bénin. 1996-1997), 41.

United States Agency for International Development (U.S.A.I.D) was closed and moved to a different country for about ten years. Similar sanctions could be noticed after the putsch of Jerry Rawlings in Ghana in 1981. The relations between the two countries gradually deteriorated and the U.S. suspended its aids as a result of number of misunderstanding on domestic and international issues. This shows how cultural relations are highly conditional by political relations and can be manipulative in some situations.

Some sources of U.S. soft power in Africa were essentially manipulative in the sixties especially on racial issues. This was a sensitive issue in the U.S.-Africa relations, first because of the U.S. support for the apartheid system in South Africa, and second because of African-American facing civil rights issues in the U.S. in addition to these two considerations was the situation of African diplomats in the U.S. With all these three aspects combined, racial issues became an international and a diplomatic issue. More importantly in U.S. international standing and particularly in its relations with the newly independent countries of Africa, it became a really embarrassing question to deal with. How do you change the perception of the United States as country of racial segregation that denies civil rights to its citizens of colors and support the apartheid system in South Africa to the image of a country of democracy and freedom, where opportunities are within grasp to all its citizens? One of the key solutions found aside domestic political reforms was the use of jazz diplomacy as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Jazz diplomacy was suggested by Adam Clayton Powell an American Congressman based on his participation in the Conference of the Non Aligned Countries' of Bandung in 1955. Clayton made a praised intervention at the conference projecting the U.S. as an example for the newly independent and non-aligned countries to follow in terms of nation-

building. He stressed “the gains made by African Americans, including his own rise to Congress as the grandson of slaves; and said that other nations should look to the U.S. as a model for solving their own ethnic divisions.”⁷ Building on his intervention His intervention at the conference and after he returned home, his meeting with President Eisenhower, the government decided to rethink its ‘overseas racial strategy’ in sending Black Americans as goodwill ambassadors.⁸ Thereafter the jazz diplomacy took a more elaborate turn. The idea of sending African American abroad as representative of the government or other federal institutions was extended to foreign affairs as well. African Americans were appointed as ambassadors in African countries following in the post-independence years. The objective was to counter the popularly held apprehension on U.S. racial policy and thus convey a message of progress about racial relations in the U.S. In Benin the first black Ambassador was Mr. Clinton Knox who was appointed in 1964. As a proof those racial concerns in Africa was an important issues in African diplomacy, responding to Mr. Clinton, the late President of Dahomey Sourou-Migan Apithy pointed at the responsibility of U.S. in international peace and added that “*les Etats-Unis conséquents avec leur politique d’égalité raciale, peuvent mener, s’ils le voulaient, une action vigoureuse auprès du Gouvernement de Pretoria, qui mettraient un terme au régime odieux de l’Apartheid.*” (Consequent with its racial equality policy, the United States could take vigorous actions against the government of Pretoria that would put an end to the odious regime of apartheid.) Reading the symbolism attached to the nomination of Mr. Knox as Ambassador to Dahomey the newspaper commented that “*la présence d’un homme de ‘couleur’ comme Ambassadeur des Etats-Unis au Dahomey*

⁷ Elliot Bratton, ‘Jazz and the Cold War’, *Crisis*, February/March 1998, 16.

⁸ Bratton, ‘Jazz and the Cold War,’ 16.

témoigne de la détermination du Gouvernement Américain, a assurer aux hommes de couleur les mêmes droits, les mêmes possibilités et libertés qu'a leurs compatriotes blancs."⁹(The presence of a man of 'color' as Ambassador of the United States shows the determination of the American Government to guarantee to men of color the same rights, the same opportunities and freedoms as their white compatriots).

But as the years passed by and Dahomeans traveled more and more to the U.S., some of the visitors became confused and less admiring about America. Even more, it is the position of the francophone Africa in overall American diplomacy that some of them started questioning. Alexis Gnonlonfoun was one of the Beninese journalists sponsored by the State Department to tour the U.S. in 1966. Reflecting on the racial issue and the African independence after his return home he wrote:

From private contacts I was able to make, beside the official program, I came to realize that the independence of African countries generated a great interest among Black Americans; not because of the attention it was given in the black media but for other reasons. The creation of new diplomatic missions in Africa, allowed the Government of the United States to employ a certain category of Black Americans in Africa. And that tactic was only a screen, that serve the purpose of showing Africans that the much debated racial segregation was not that crucial[in the U.S.].

*"Des contacts que j'ai pu prendre en dehors du programme officiel, je suis arrive a comprendre que l'indépendance des Etats Africains suscitait un grand intérêt chez les Noirs Américains, non seulement a cause de la place que lui consacrait la presse noire, mais aussi pour d'autres raisons. La création de nouveaux postes diplomatiques en Afrique, permettait au gouvernement des Etats-Unis d'employer une certaine catégorie de Noirs Américains en Afrique. Et cette tactique qui sert de paravent n'est autre chose que de démontrer aux Africains que la ségrégation raciale dont on parle n'est as pour autant cruciale."*¹⁰

His view of the American program was distorted by the realization that there was some dichotomy between what was projected outside and what the actual situation in the

⁹ "Nouvel Ambassadeur des U.S.A" *L'Aube Nouvelle*, Samedi 22 Aout 1964, 1.

¹⁰ Alexis Gnonlonfoun, "Mon Voyage aux Etats-Unis: la Ségrégation Raciale", *L'Aube Nouvelle*, Dimanche 18 Septembre 1966, 2.

country was. Gnonlonfoun unlike the other journalists listed in chapter three¹¹, concluded his article with the thought that the U.S. policy toward Africa was not free from Cold War ideological competition. He also noted how in the administration, the importance given to each colonial power in American diplomacy was different and this influenced how their former colonies (now independent countries) were regarded in Washington. He analyzed that *“à Washington, on estime que les pays Africains de langue anglaise devraient être plus proche de la Grande Bretagne que du Marché commun, ou que les pays d’expression Française ne mériteraient pas la même attention que ceux de la langue Anglaise.”* (“In Washington, it is held that Anglophone African countries should be closer to the Great Britain than that they should be to the Common market, or that the French speaking African countries do not deserve the same attention as the Anglophone.”) Gnonlonfoun developed different feeling and impression from his trip to the U.S. He probably enjoyed the trip but could not get over the idea that there was some ideological agenda to the program. This made him feel uncomfortable about the whole international situation of that time.

But these views should not overshadow the benefits that come from this policy. Although manipulative sometimes, cultural relations did help developing nations like African countries to cope with some burning issues of national development, and also help them maintain the dialogue with developed nations thereby preserving good relations with superpowers in general and the United States in particular. For the U.S., apart from the negative image developed abroad on its race relations policy, the International Visitor program has generated positive comments and admirations which suggest that it was successful in showing a different image of America, its citizens and

¹¹ See Chapter 3 for Justin Vieyra and Rene Ewagnignon reports on the U.S.

institutions, its successes and powers to foreigners. These results can be counted as some of the first gains of the cultural programs.

Did Cultural Relations Generate U.S. Soft Power in Africa?

Arguing that cultural policy could counter balance a situation created by political misunderstanding and ideological differences would be crediting this source of influence with too much power, especially if the expectations is an immediate change of attitude from the targeted beneficiaries. At the same time negating any influence or long term impact of cultural exchanges or activities on both countries, the donor and the beneficiary, would be underestimating what cultural exchanges can achieve over a certain time of period.

It is doubtless that in the long run, programs like the educational exchanges, the international visitors program and other cultural activities will produce some positive result in terms of influence. This section will reflect on both programs, assessing how they have contributed to the effort of mutual understanding and especially the promotion of good relations between the U.S. and African countries. Considering all the competition from the Eastern Europe and the communist anti-American propaganda, no doubt that from the sixties until the crisis of Angola in 1975 or the end of Apartheid in South Africa in 1990, some of the impressions many people around the world held about the United States of American was that of an imperialist power that denied basic civil rights to some of its citizens.

It was thus an objective of the cultural program to help change these negative impressions people constructed about America. Through the educational exchange programs as well as the International visitor programs, Africans and foreigners were

given the opportunity to make their own judgment on America, its people and its system. They were given the means to travel around the country and encounter Americans from different walk of life and different background. Quite often these visitors would reflect back on their experience when they return in their home countries. The first signs of the effectiveness of this policy in Africa, came with a report from State Department in 1966.

This report states:

The effect of the exchange program in creating a more understanding attitude toward the United States was noted in a number of African countries whose policy of “nonalignment” usually precludes such understanding. In Dahomey, for example, a prominent lawyer, as well as a newspaper owner and editor, had articles in the Dahomean press describing in favorable terms various aspects of American life of which he had gained direct knowledge as Department of State grantee. In general U.S. embassies in Africa reported improved cooperativeness and understanding by participants in the Department’s international visitor and educational exchange projects.¹²

The experience of Mr. Sarpong from Ghana, Vieyra , Gnonlonfoun and Ewagnignon from Benin as studied in chapters 3 and 4 supports to some extent this assessment made by the Bureau. Although their articles made no mention of their thinking before the trip, their writings were quite indicative of a certain overall change of perception of the U.S. after they returned home. As cultural experience about a country tend to be like reading a book, most of the visitors took America as an open book to read and draw their own conclusions whether negative or positive. Officials in Washington were aware of the fact that everything visitors saw may not please them or that some realities may be shocking to them. But the most important thing for these visitors was to understand it as American reality and treat it accordingly. In 1960 for example when Robert Thayer was welcoming the first group of African student to the U.S, he made the

¹²Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Annual Report to Congress on the International Educational and Cultural Exchanges Programs Fiscal Year 1966*, 16-17.

students aware of the fact that they would see many things that may be shocking to them.

He addressed the students as follow:

We are not perfect in spite of what they may tell you in any orientation courses they give you, but we are human beings in the same way that you are human beings. We have the same capacity for joy and sorrow, for love and hate, for pleasure and anger as you have. Some of us you will like and some of us you will not like, but the important thing is for you to understand us and for us to understand you; and your coming here and living among us for the months ahead is going to make this possible.¹³

This was an honest and pragmatic way to break any myth they might have constructed about life in America before their arrival. Although the stay of the Ghanaian and the Benin journalists was comparatively shorter, this remark could also apply to their experience in the U.S. from their description of their visit we could speculate here that if Justin Vieyra, Rene Ewagnignon or Mr. Sarpong from Ghana were asked after their stay what they think America was, their responses would certainly vary. But many of these responses would converge toward the idea that the U.S. is a country of wealth and freedom, a country of success, diversity and also a country of paradox.

On the image of a wealthy nation, almost all of the journalists studied referred to America as a rich place. They may have referred to this in different terminology, but overall each one recalled an anecdote, or a detail that suggested that America was a wealthy nation. For Justin Vieyra he was really impressed by how they made everything possible for them during his stay. He wrote *“lorsqu’il vous arrivera d’être invité aux Etats-Unis, on vous dira: “Etablissez vous-meme votre itineraire, voici des dollars, voice des interpretes, allez...” je trouve cela exceptionnel”*¹⁴ (when you get a chance to be invited to the United States, you will be told: “set yourself an itinerary, here is some

¹³ *Department of State Bulletin* October 10th, 1960 vol. XLIII No1111, 560.

¹⁴ *Aube Nouvelle*, 18 Aout 1962, 6

dollars, here are some interpreters, go ...” I find this exceptional.”). Perhaps one of the lasting effects of the trip was his impression on the American freedom. He read this freedom in the fact of being allowed to visit strategic sites without any restriction, it was an opportunity you can only have in a country where freedom and democracy exist he believed. He also saw the beauty of America in the scenery and parks in Washington D.C. He wrote: *“les bâtiments y ont un style quoique toujours massifs. Quel charme de découvrir presque tous les mille mètres un parc vert et reposant, un jet d’eau.”*¹⁵ (The buildings there are always of a massive style. What a charm to discover at almost every thousand meters a green and resting park, a fountain.”) For Vieyra, America is a rich and beautiful place where people enjoy freedom of movement. This seemed like the image of America he would propagate after his stay.

Beauty and power characterized Mr. Rene Ewagnignon’s image of America. From the Omaha steak to the importance of time in the American life, from Washington D.C. to Los Angeles or San Francisco, he could not help but contemplate the diversity of the country but also the genius that is behind the achievement of the American civilization. The military bases were among the sites that impressed him the most for the operation they witnessed but also for the cost of a simulation exercise of a real military operation. That cost which reached hundreds of thousand dollars convinced him of the economic power of the country because a country should be rich in order to afford spending a tremendous amount of money just for operations of simulation. The military demonstrations were to add to his already held idea about power, the American capabilities of protecting its citizens and the free world. Ewagnignon shared some of Gnonlonfoun’s ideas on the subject of the treatment of African Americans in the U.S.

¹⁵ *Aube Nouvelle*, 18 Aout 1962,6

However unlike his compatriot it was more in comparison with Africans. He found that black Americans were right in criticizing the American government for showing a certain paradox which consisted in letting Africans access places that were denied to black Americans. He tried to find an answer to that paradox but was not able to get proper explanations.

Sarpong from Ghana also constructed a different image of America after his stay. For him America was a country of success explained by a certain work ethic, a country of wealth and power, efficiency, grandeur but also a society of consumers. This last aspect according to him was shown through the performance of "Beautiful America" at Disneyland. He wrote "The Americans are good at harnessing electricity! And nothing more bears testimony to this than a visit to 'Beautiful America' at Disneyland." Disneyland obviously left a great impression on him as the design of the theme park symbolized to him the success and the legend of America. He wrote that "The meticulousness and the detailed treatment given to this centre remind one of a trait in the American character-efficiency."¹⁶ He described America as "a land of superlatives", and saw in the Pentagon and other administrative building in Washington, the idea of power, particularly fire power that if viewed and analyzed in the context of the Vietnam War can only generate some concerns about the temptation of power in the U.S. Viewing a country of success Sarpong tried to explain that success and found that it was in the character of the American, as reflected in his will to succeed and self-application. In his words, America was a:

Country with an unbelievable reservoir of human and natural resources
and coupled with the character of its citizens for self-application, the will
to succeed and take on the challenges posed by nature and may be by

¹⁶ *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 8.

sheer patriotism? They have achieved economic progress of fantastic magnitude. Motivation? That is part of the answer. Exploitation? You do not need a Marxist analyst to tell you this. It is part of the American system.¹⁷

These different excerpts reveal that contact with American culture can generate good impression although a correlation between the impression and a favorable attitude in terms of cooperation cannot be guaranteed. An idea of a rich America could eventually help sustain the belief that siding with the west in the international cold war context could be more beneficial than maintaining good Relations with the Russians. all the problems of development could be solved adequately. This a subjective response to a foreign policy program and it help figuring out how information can be processed at the grantee level and speculate on the long term return in negotiation or cooperation.

From these personal experiences, one may see the complementary character of the program. It showed the beauty of America as civilization and the capability of the United States as a world leader and this was undeniable as all the site visited were just part of the evidence that tell it all about America as a powerful world leader. When talking about the U.S as a superpower we should be in mind that it is not only military or economic. The country is in leading position in other strategic areas as well. Through these visits, the foreign participants have the opportunity to discover the other aspects of the U.S power. Here soft power becomes a support for economic, military, and cultural powers. It helps create a certain awareness of the real “hard” power of the U.S. this was evidenced in the visits to military bases and strategic sites like the lift off bases of Cape Canaveral in Florida, the Offut bases and Fort Bragg. But these visits were only thirty days long. They help give an idea of the U.S culture but these ideas and impressions may not be as

¹⁷ *Daily Graphic*, March 13, 1971, 8.

accurate as the one constructed over a longer period of time. The fleeting character of these programs limit the possibilities of a deep experience of America time wise even though that disadvantage was compensated by money and the number of places visited through the programs. Likewise its relative brevity was complemented by much longer programs like the educational exchanges.

The impact of educational exchanges programs on grantees reveals the long-term benefits of the U.S. educational exchanges with Africa and its positive returns for American diplomacy in Africa. Many former Fulbright students have been to apply successfully the knowledge acquired in the U.S at home. Many were also able to keep contacts with their American teachers, friends, professional colleagues with whom they have had the opportunity to interact while on their study stay. The Fulbright scholarship is among the leading American educational exchange programs. For the nearly fifty years of existence it has made an incredible impact in terms bringing Americans and foreigners together and creating academic, professional development or mutual understanding among them. It is a program that brings people from different background together in a way that shows how a peaceful world would be like. For its fortieth anniversary the program has made an assessment of its activities and key advantages of the Fulbright programs were summarized in its annual report in 1986. As general as the findings of this report may be a large portion of it is still applicable to the African countries. The Fulbright scholarship has made some positive impact around the world and in Africa as well. There is no study conducted specifically on the countries we have selected as cases here. But the Board of Scholarship makes annual assessment of the numbers of grants awarded by country and cyclical evaluation of the impact of the program. Thus in 1986,

in celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the program, five major impacts have been identified. They summarize well what have been achieved on global scale by the program and as in the report put it; those impacts show that the U.S. citizen's tax money has been used for good purposes.

The first impact is about knowledge and understanding of other nations, the board notes that “the program has done much to build our knowledge of foreign peoples and languages, and thus to contribute to an intellectual context for policy debates in the United States. It has also improved the quality of foreign scholarship about the culture, history, and the government of the United States.”¹⁸ On that impact the board notes how the Fulbright encourages and was successful in promoting the teaching of American Studies as a discipline overseas. It adds that “Approximately 20 percent of the grants in any given year are likely to be for persons who will study, teach or do research in that discipline.”¹⁹ The Fulbright program was also influential in the field of inter-university cooperation. The reports stated that “The program has fostered institutional relationships between American and foreign universities. Both research and teaching in the United States and abroad have benefited from these networks, and on occasion, ties that began with the Fulbright grants have blossomed into formal agreements on sharing resources, developing joints projects, or sponsoring regular exchanges of faculty and students.”²⁰ Thirdly, the report also stated that the Fulbright program was influential in promoting the American model of University in foreign countries chiefly in introducing “key American educational concepts, such as interdisciplinary collaboration and methods of University administration” to foreign educational system through “exchange and training programs,

¹⁸ Board of Foreign Scholarships, *Annual Report* December 23rd 1986, 16.

¹⁹ Board of Foreign Scholarships, *Annual Report* December 23rd 1986, 16.

²⁰ Board of Foreign Scholarships, *Annual Report* December 23rd 1986, 16.

of which the Fulbright is sometimes only a small, but often quite a crucial part.”²¹ On the fourth impact, the board mentioned how the Fulbright program has been instrumental “in introducing American concepts and methodology” in disciplines like the social sciences to Third World countries particularly. Finally one of the most important achievements over the four decades examined was the success gained in the field of mutual understanding and creation of mutually beneficial professional, academic or social friendship between Americans and students or participants from other countries. According to the report “the program has provided an opportunity for future U.S. and Foreign leaders to forge long-lasting bonds of friendship. This is perhaps the most subjective and immeasurable goal of the program, but many individual ‘Fulbrighters’ would rate it as the most important. The network of friendships that each participants form becomes an important link between the personal and professional lives of that individual and those whom he or she has come to know.”²² These findings are very encouraging and show that investment in educational exchanges is not money wasted. We may not be able to make a conclusive claim here about the harmony that seems to exist between the United States and many African nations in the post cold war era. However we could to speculate that the educational exchanges with the continent for the past forty to fifty years have something to do with it. As former grantees have come to be in charge, relations with the U.S. have greatly improved. The achievement of the Fulbright program justifies its continuation to these days. But the Fulbright is not the only program that deals with educational program with Africa.

²¹ Board of Foreign Scholarships, 16-18.

²² Board of Foreign Scholarships, 18.

Perhaps one of the most effective programs apart from the Fulbright, is the one is the African Graduate Fellowship program AFGRAD and the Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills (ATLAS) administered by the Africa American Institute (AAI). Through the AFGRAD and the ATLAS the U.S brought many African students to the American Universities for degree programs. Cosponsored by the United States Agency for International Development, (U.S.A.I.D.) in partnership with other organizations, the program ran from 1963 through 1990. The goal of the fellowship was explained by the Institute as to respond “to Africa's need for highly-trained professionals to play leadership roles in the continent's newly-independent governments.”²³ According to the AAI, the USAID “sponsored this effort as a means of training future African leaders, as well as accelerating economic and social development throughout Africa. The project provides fellowships to qualified Africans for undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate training on university campuses in the United States.”²⁴ In 1990 when the program was terminated it was replaced by the ATLAS who ran from 1990 to 2004.

After nearly forty years of involvement in the education of manpower for African countries and the end of both program it was the right thing for the Institute to conduct with the assistance of the USAID a survey on how the program made a difference in the life of the students and their countries. Different questions were addressed and many aspects were considered but they were all related to the professional and the personal life of the grantees. Together the AFGRAD/ATLAS brought about 3,200 Africans to the United States during their forty years of operation. Out of this number according to the survey 90 percent returned home , a very good result due to the fact that poor economic

²³ USAID Project No. 698-0455 *Capturing the Results of 30 Years of AFGRAD Training: Evidence of Change in Individuals and Institutions Across Africa* Final Evaluation Report December, 1995

²⁴ USAID Project No. 698-0455 *Capturing the Results of 30 Years of AFGRAD Training*, 1995,

conditions in many countries discourage their grantees from returning home. If that were the case, the expected impact of the program would not be able to be attained. Upon return the majority have become leaders in their field, some take decisions that will affect other people's professional and private life and ultimately it is the learning experience that would have made a big difference in how they view the U.S. What is important to draw from this finding in the frame of this project is how ideas retained from the U.S could be influential in Africa. That is the essence of the exchange program.

After thirty years of AFGRAD, the report of the field interview on the impact of the American training show how the skill and learning acquired have made a significant impact. For example it influenced the higher education in Ghana. The report mentions how "At the University of Ghana, AFGRAD alumni have been instrumental in adopting the U.S. style semester and course module system as well as new teaching methods, such as case study."²⁵ Other influences that can be traced back to the U.S training includes the use of visual aids in classroom. According to the report, "overhead projectors and slides, are more prominent in classrooms" now thank to the American experience²⁶. Similar influences can be noticed in Mali where the AFGRAD alumni have made 'small but significant contributions and technical innovations in their professions..' one of the areas where this innovation was noticeable was in the "Introduction and dissemination of American approaches and techniques in animal epidemiology via a decentralized government extension service."²⁷ At a more personal level Mrs. Dinah Brandful is an AFGRAD alumna from Ghana explains how her U.S experience influenced her. After a Master in food science from Michigan State University in 1982 she returned to her

²⁵ USAID Project No. 698-0455 *Capturing the Results of 30 Years of AFGRAD Training*, 1995 Annex 9, 1.

²⁶ USAID Project No. 698-0455 *Capturing the Results of 30 Years of AFGRAD Training*, 1995, 35 .

²⁷ USAID Project No. 698-0455, Annex 9, 3.

country in 1983. She explained that she continued with her previous work but joined the government's Customs Excise and Preventive Services (CEPS) Department in 1985. On how her experience in the United States was she wrote "My study in the U.S." she explained " gave me a different positive attitude and equipped me with different skills and ethics such as hands on approach, confidence and assertiveness as well as insisting and fighting for my rights as a citizen."²⁸ By transferring these qualities of confidence and assertiveness, she is introducing certainly some innovation in her work and adding something new. This is not to mean that people are not assertive in African countries. But there some character of the African that may not be expressed at work for cultural or social reasons. So behaving differently from those norms would not sound Ghanaian, this may help her to be more productive at work but it could backfire and create clashes at work.

The Challenges posed to U.S. Soft power in Africa

The reactions of international visitors studied in the previous show that the American experience left many among the visitors with good impressions although some had a mitigate view of the country. Having analyzed the gains of the strategies of cultural relations for either partner (American, Ghana or Benin), in the previous paragraphs, it is important to address here the question of what prevent good relations from being constructed after a successful visit, or long-term stay in the U.S.

One of the questions raised about cultural relations is its effectiveness in creating better conditions for entertaining good relations between two countries. In the context of the ideological struggle of the Cold War, it is legitimate to ask whether educational

²⁸ U.S. Agency for International Development , *Generations of Quiet Progress: The Development Impact of U.S. Long-Term University Training on Africa from 1963 to 2003*, 2004, 28.

exchanges or the international visitor program influence African elite in expressing their preference for a specific ideology.

Before trying to answer that question let's quote Matsuda Takeshi who, talking about the object of cultural interchange wrote that it was "the totality of the beliefs, attitudes, and opinions of the whole population." It facilitated "the exchange of knowledge between nations and dealt with the problem of trying to influence a population's attitudes so that its political behavior might change."²⁹ If the motivation behind the cultural relations program was to change the attitude of a whole population as Matsuda Takeshi observes, then perhaps cultural relations in Africa did not fulfill its promises in Africa especially during the Cold War. The numerous students who studied in the U.S., and the many visitors sponsored by the State Department were not able to make a big difference in their respective countries' domestic life to the extent of prevent the change in ideological option. Otherwise, there would not have been all those putsches noticed in the history of Benin and Ghana for example and in other African countries. More curious observation was the fact that many regimes turned Marxist Leninist in the seventies. Why such a gap between the expected goal and the result obtained? This is not an easy question to answer. Part of the answers could be related to some flaws in the idea of soft power as a means of foreign policy. It seems that the politics of the cultural relations have worked with some fallacies or misconceptions about the delivery of the programs. Building on Takeshi thought, we would assume that the ideas of soft power on the African continent worked with the principle that winning the hearts of and minds of the African elite and leaders would make liberal democracy inroad in African countries

²⁹Matsuda Takeshi, *Soft power and its Perils: U.S. Cultural Policy in Early Postwar Japan and Permanent Dependency*, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), 101.

much easier and pave the way for loyalty to the western allies, thereby stopping communism from having any sort of influence. The problem with this idea is that it apparently seemed to be based on the assumption that the African elite might accept without any critical judgment, anything that is western or American for that sake. Such approach would be totally miscalculated. As Kazuo Ogoura, the president of Japan Foundation Center for global Partnership, remarks on Soft power he stated:

The problem with this idea, however, is that it views things from the perspective of the party exercising power. Seen from the viewpoint of the party being influenced by the power, the question of whether accepting the power accords with this party's own interests is likely to be a far more important consideration than the attraction of the power. Here we must keep in mind that sovereign nations in the international community act not on the basis of likes and dislikes but in accordance with their own interests.”³⁰

As pertinent as this remark is, the way it is phrased, suggests the denial of preference in the choice of a state, or to be precise, Kozuo is arguing that a state preference is not emotional but instrumental and therefore does not operate according to mental or emotional norms. But the mere fact that a state is attached to a particular interest shows the source of its “feeling” or preference. Therefore a state would ‘like’ what is in its best interest or ‘dislike’ what is not in its best interest. It is this logic that was missing in the general policy of soft power or cultural relations with African countries after the independence. There appeared a certain denial of the ability of African nations to know what was in their best interest, and many cooperation policies operated ideological battle in mind while minimizing the real needs of African nations. In trying to win the “hearts and minds of the elite”, they may have won the heart but not the mind.

³⁰ Kazuo Ogoura, “*The Limits of Soft Power*”
<http://www.cgp.org/index.php?option=article&task=default&articleid=341#> (accessed July 16th, 2009)

Maybe this is what explains some gains for Marxism on the continent by the end of the mid seventies as Duigan and Gann noticed:

By the end of the 1970s, Marxism-Leninism had made considerable gains. More than forty thousand troops-East German, Soviet, but mainly Cuban-were deployed in Africa to support Marxist-Leninist governments. The new regimes of Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, the People's Republic of the Congo, and Benin all claimed to be based on Marxist Leninist principles...Nevertheless, the balance of power has begun to change in Africa. Marxist-Leninism, far from being an exiles' creed, had become a continental challenge to the West.³¹

Although this development on the continent could not be solely attributed to the failure of the cultural cooperation with the west or the U.S. one may wonder what makes the western type of society lose its appeal for some African countries. The challenges that came in the way of cultural relations with African countries had probably historical roots. After the independence African countries were new to the world system as Emerson Rupert observed it³² and because many countries were granted independence through negotiation especially the French colonies their relationship with the former colonizer overshadowed their international personality. Consequently their level of receptivity to American ideas in the field of politics, arts and other development related fields was relatively much higher. But within few years, problems of internal economic, social, and political development started putting more pressure on African governments.

Many were in needs of resources to face these challenges of national development. Technical assistance and economic cooperation with the west was certainly helpful but not enough to meet all these demands. Consequently many governments felt the need to look for other funding sources. Meanwhile the international context of Cold

³¹ Duigan, Peter and L.H. Gann. *The United States and Africa: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.), 293.

³² See Chapter 2 of this dissertation, pp 104-5.

War limited the flexibility many third world countries and African countries particularly had in choosing their development partners. The realization of these limits to the expression of their international personality had caused some states to turn red. Since the communists also had a policy of assistance with relatively lower interest, a cooperation which brought thousands of African students to the Soviet Union and China or other Eastern European countries, African countries started reconsidering the way their interest should be defined. What was the allegiance to the west bringing and how was its impact on the national development policy? Figuring out the response to these questions would perhaps give a clue on the change in the ideological option that occurred in the late seventies.

Another reason could be related to the behavior of the western allies on issues that are part of the cornerstones of the many African states. These were the situation in South Africa, the war in Angola, the situation in the former Rhodesia, in short countries that were still fighting for their liberation from foreign domination. U.S. or other western European countries policies on these issues were usually brought about differences and sometime antagonism with African leaders. The result was that African intellectuals and some leaders have become disillusioned with the west. So despite the chance of generating enough soft power, U.S. cultural relations in this context could not counter the negative impression created by the behavior of the United States at international level. Julian Amin³³ alluded to this fact when he discussed the ordeal of the volunteers in Ghana who were asked all sort of questions about American policy in Vietnam and the civil rights movement and so on. He wrote about the volunteers difficulties in Ghana, stating that “Even Ghanaian students were not immune from the constant suspicion of the

³³ See chapter 4 on U.S.-Ghana Relations

volunteers. They had been informed that the volunteers were "technical experts from neocolonialist nations." Ghanaians bombarded the volunteers with questions such as: "You are not a spy, are you?"³⁴

The international engagement of the United States and its intervention in some conflicts like Vietnam or the Congo crisis quickly distorted the image of the U.S. and remove any good intention African leaders or intellectual may have read in U.S. policy. This situation was perilous to American Soft power on the African front. Many gestures would become suspicious and volunteers would be regarded as CIA agents. The end of the Cold War and the rise of new democracies in Africa have now contributed to good relations with Africa. Good governance has become the rhetoric in the relations between both parties (that is the U.S. and African countries).

All is all it appears that Soft power is strongly dependent on other type of powers. On its own it cannot do much unless, it is given the proper time, like a plant to grow. But as it responds to political realities, the limited terms of politicians in power may not help them believe in its impact. Even Kennedy himself did not believe in the power of the Peace Corps especially as a means to contain communism. But history has shown how much difference it can make in people's life around the world.

³⁴ Julius A. Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy: The United States Peace Corps Volunteers in the Republic of Ghana" *Western Journal of Black Studies*. Pullman: Vol. 23, Iss.1, (Spring 1999):

CONCLUSION

Drawing on the concept and theory of soft power, this dissertation has studied the evolution of U.S. cultural relations with West African countries from the independence of Ghana until the fall of the Soviet Union. It has shown how the U.S. program of cultural relations was gradually extended to the African continent in the post independence years. This extension was partially due to the growing influence of the soviet communism in Africa and the inclination of many early African leaders like Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Modibo Keita, Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania¹ toward socialism. The cultural program was thus part of the overall U.S. government strategy to counter the rising influence of the Soviet Union in Africa. As such it can be viewed as the American response to the Soviet Union and other communist countries cultural activities in sub-Saharan Africa and therefore considered one of the means used to contain the extension of communism in Africa. By contextualizing the study in the era of cold war, the dissertation has shown how emphasizing cultural and educational exchanges helped increase U.S soft power by somewhat presenting a better image of the country, its culture and institutions on the continent.

The dissertation has also shown how the extension of the Cultural program was concomitant to the general change in U.S. attitude toward Africa. That change of attitude was reflected in the evolution of its policy from indifference to the acknowledgement of Africans' aspiration for self-rule before materializing in full recognition of the independence of many African countries in 1960. Consequently Africa gained more visibility in U.S. foreign policy after the independence, a visibility that was reinforced by

¹ Wilbert J. LeMelle, "The OAU and Superpower Intervention in Africa" *Africa Today*. Denver: Third Quarter 1988. Vol. 35, Iss. 3-4; 23.

the creation of the United Nations (U.N.).² Since their admission to the U.N. as independent and sovereign states, African countries became potential influential actors of the post war international relations. African leaders, intellectuals have become subjects of 'courtship' or conquest by most of the super powers particularly the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Either of these two countries developed specific policies and strategies to create sympathy, friendship abroad but also used coercion at times to prove that his country had a better ideological system and its capacity as a world leader.

The American effort to win the hearts and mind of Africans passed through the Fulbright exchange programs, the A.S.P.A.U., the AFGRAD/ A.T.L.A.S students exchange programs and other cultural activities like the Jazz diplomacy. The creation of the Peace Corps Volunteers program in 1961 added another dimension to the sources of U.S. soft power in Africa. Through their activities across the continent, Peace Corps volunteers have touched the hearts of many among the rural populations of Africa by helping them improve their daily life conditions. In addition to these programs, this project also studied the international visitors program sponsored by the State Department. Through the experience of Rene Ewagnignon, Justin Vieyra , and Alexis Gnonlonfoun all journalists from Benin on one hand and Eddie Agyeman, K.A. Sarpong two Ghanaians journalists on the other, it showed how participation to this program shaped the selectees' perception of the United States and its culture. The above mentioned visitors enjoyed their stay and have had first hand analytical look at the U.S., its institutions, its culture, and its values and paradoxes where necessary. Their analysis and positive impressions about the U.S. show how cultural relations can positively contribute

² Wilbert J LeMelle "Another major interest of the superpowers was to win diplomatic support from the new African states for their respective foreign policy objectives, as debated and pursued at the United Nations and in other international fora."23.

to effectively increasing U.S. Soft power in Africa. Almost all of these participants saw in the U.S. a country of diversity with multiform and multifaceted powers. These positive reactions of participants partially justifies why the program continued throughout the Cold War and beyond.

But although the U.S. program continued throughout the Cold War and beyond, it was not impactful enough to prevent many African countries from being tempted by communism or the Marxist ideology, especially in the seventies. For these countries, liberal ideas seemingly were not welcomed and consequently the model of liberal democracy like the American system did not have a particular appeal to them. This lack of appeal could be explained by a combination of domestic as well as external and international factors. Among the domestic factors, the necessity to solve the problems created by the policy of national development forced many African countries to look for external sources of funding different from western European countries. This led many to turn towards the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The international factors that affected the appeal of liberal democracy included the international behavior of the American and other western nations' government. The support of apartheid in South Africa, the Vietnam War caused many countries to revise their unconditional allegiance to western liberal democratic ideas. Consequently western ideas were refuted in the name of anti-imperialism, anti-apartheid and sometime non-alignment slogans. As a consequence socialism has exerted a growing appeal on many Africans leaders and intellectuals since the first decade after the independence that is the decade of 1960 – 1970. However, as explained in this dissertation, if the first governments of African imbued with the nationalist spirit of the decolonization era were more inclined toward

socialism they did not necessarily welcomed the class struggle notion of Marxism. On the contrary, the adoption of Marxism by many countries like the Benin (1974) and Ghana in the following decade shows some political success for the Soviet Union and the communist countries, a success that nearly contradicted any assertion about a possible correlation between soft power and effective containment of communism in Africa.

The choice of Marxism by Benin and Ghana negatively affected their respective cooperation with the U.S. The economic problems of the late 80's forced these two countries to abandon their ideological option and to turn toward international financial institutions that were largely influenced by western capitalist countries. Among other conditions, these institutional posed as conditions to sign the Structural Adjustment programs with them, the recognition of their rights to all political organization and civil rights and freedom to all the citizens of the countries. These external pressures combined with internal strikes and demand for more freedom paved the way for the beginning of the African third wave of democracy. In addition to economic problem, there was the symbolic impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union as an entity in 1991. With these two events, it was an important page of the history of the international order that came out of World War II that was turned. The consequences of this change of the 1990's were somewhat similar to the consequences of the Second World War that brought the U.S. and the Soviet Union to the international scene as two Superpowers. Unlike the Second world war the changes of the 90's left the U.S. as the only survivor of a war that has used ideas, symbolism, arts and at time bullets to proclaim the superiority of a particular ideology.

All in all, the American cultural relations were elitist, manipulative at some point but ultimately it did contribute somewhat to the development of manpower necessary for the construction of the African nations. Cultural relations may not have been as effective in containing communism in a short time period but through its educational exchanges, the program contributed particularly to the rise of a new leadership in many African countries following the changes of the 1990's. In the explanations of Professor John Igue from Benin, this new leadership of Africa was mainly liberal with western education:

“After 1990 the intellectual elites emerged as a political force, this time as liberals, mainly from international institutions and American and French business schools. These people took on important political responsibilities, either as presidents of republics or as prime ministers. Notable examples are the presidents Abdou Diouf (Senegal), Paul Biya (Cameroon), Albert Zaff (Madagascar), Alpha Oumar Konaré (Mali), Tijane Kabba (Sierra Leone), John Kufuor (Ghana), Helen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia) and Nicéphore Soglo (Benin).”³

While this statement bears enough truth to it, attributing this inclination to liberalism only to their western education and stay could appear too reductionist and simplistic. Nkrumah studied in the USA and Nyerere studied at Edinburgh in England yet both them showed some sympathy to socialism. The western educational experience and the stay in the U.S. and other western countries are only part of a group of factors that led many African states to realize the necessity to abandon socialism or communism and embrace a democratic system based on the American or European model. As mentioned above the collapse of the Soviet Union and the economic conditions that forced most these nations to turn toward the institutions of Bretton-Woods compelled many of them

³John O. Igué, “A New Generation of Leaders in Africa: What Issues Do They Face?”, *Revue Internationale de Politique de Développement* [En ligne], 1 | 2010, mis en ligne le 11 mars 2010. URL: <http://poldev.revues.org/139> Accessed May 27th, 2010.

to revise their ideological option. Quite often the adoption of the Program of structural adjustment was subordinated to the promise of democratization and liberalization of the political system.

It was in this context that in 1990, Benin held its national conference and adopted toward the end of the year a new constitution which defines the country as a democracy and highlights the main. In 1992, Ghana also adopted a new constitution commonly referred to as the constitution of the fourth Republic. These 90's constitutional reforms saw American ideas of democracy successfully incorporated in many constitutions in Africa. These were moments when the American constitution became a source of U.S. Soft power for the theory of separation of power and the concept of check and balances have been incorporated in many of these new constitutions that came out of the process of democratization. The choice of a presidential type of government and the limitation of the president's terms to two have all become the norms.

The 1990 constitution of Benin for example inspired from many foreign constitutions among which the American constitution. One of the examples of the American influence is the separation of power and the limitation of presidential terms. Article 41 of the constitution defines the role of the President and article 42 clearly states that the President is elected for a term of 5 years and that can only be renewed once:

Article 41 : Le Président de la République est le chef de L'Etat. Il est l' élu de la Nation et incarne l'unité nationale.

Il est le garant de l'indépendance nationale, de l'intégrité territoriale et du respect de la constitution, des traités et accords internationaux.

Article 42 : Le président de la République est élu au suffrage universel direct pour un mandat de cinq ans, renouvelable une seule fois.

En aucun cas, nul ne peut exercer plus de deux mandats présidentiels. ⁴

⁴ *Constitution de la République du Benin* http://www.gouv.bj/IMG/pdf/la_constitution.pdf accessed July 19th, 2010.

The same provision can be seen in the Ghanaian constitution of 1992 which defines in article 57. (1) the role of the president “There shall be a President of the Republic of Ghana who shall be the Head of State and Head of Government and Commander-in Chief of the Armed Forces of Ghana.” In article 66 (1) The constitution defines and limits the president’s term: “A person elected as President shall, subject to clause (3) of this article, hold office for a term of four years beginning from the date on which he is sworn in as President. (2) A person shall not be elected to hold office as President of Ghana for more than two terms.”⁵

With democracy wave sweeping over the continent, African countries seemed to have completely put behind any experience of socialism or Marxism Leninism, a system that did really find its ground on the continent as in it did in other places. At the same time that democratic reforms was on its way in Africa, two developments raised questions about the future of governments’ role in transnational cultural activities and the use of culture as a source of Soft power. The first development is the incredible advance in information and communication technology followed by a global consumption of the American popular culture and the second is the disappearance of the Soviet Union as the rival of the U.S. From the eighties onward the global spread of the American popular culture did not spare the African continent. In urban areas as well as in rural areas, jeans, hip hop, coca cola and all the possible symbol of American consumerism are gaining more popularity. In addition to that popularity of the American culture there is an unprecedented development in information technology that combined with the effect of globalization forces observers to ask if the role government in transnational cultural

⁵ *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992*
http://www.judicial.gov.gh/constitution/chapter/chap_8.htm accessed July 19th, 2010.

relations is still necessary. Today the world has reached a level of development in the field of communication unimaginable a decade ago, relegating the importance of human agency in delivering cultural relations nearly to a second plan. This raises a question about the relevancy of the role of government, in this case the U.S. government in the cultural relations.

On another level all along its history the American program of cultural relations had to contain either directly or indirectly the negative propaganda of hostile power. It was the case in the late thirties with the growing influence of the Nazis. The war forces the politics of U.S. cultural relations to readjust the program and even create separate agencies like the Office of War Information which role was purely informational and propaganda on the real purpose of the American participation in the war. After the War the program had to adapt to the Cold war context and participate indirectly to the containment of the Soviet and other communist countries cultural influence in the Third world and in Africa particularly. But in 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed as an entity putting an end to the cold war with its ideological competition. That disappearance of the Soviet Union prompt the question whether the U.S. program of cultural relations is still relevant as source of soft power. Isn't there a certain loss of purpose for U.S. soft power in Africa? With all the changes of the 1990's and the subsequent development in the world and specifically in Africa what could possibly be the best avenue for U.S. soft power on the continent in the post Cold War era? If there is effectively a loss of purpose, what then should be the next frontier for the American soft power in Africa? With the new development brought in U.S. relations with the world in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, will the next goal be the prevention of the rise of radical Islamism on the

continent? As far as Africa is concerned what should be the reorientation of the U.S. program since the communists are now gone? As China is developing a new type of economic cooperation with African countries, will this new cooperation be a threat to the U.S. and its transatlantic allies in Africa? Is China the next power to contain in Africa? These are very important questions that cannot be fully answered in this project. It is somehow necessary to observe that the importance or the use of soft power in Africa should not always be seen in terms of foreign power to contain. Should that be the case, there is a high possibility that changes in the stake in Africa will likely lead to a cyclical loss of purpose for the use of soft power on the continent and it will therefore create a cyclical lack of objective in U.S. foreign policy on the continent.

A new international context usually calls for a new policy of cooperation among nations. Despite the fact that there are still some shortcomings, Africa is evolving slowly toward full democratization. For this process to complete, a new type of partnership needs to be built between foreign powers and African countries. In the post cold war Africa, the stake is less about ideology and power game than it is about education, the commitment to helping the new democracies on the continent to fight against poverty, to create a reliable health system that is accessible to every citizen and to implement and support strong institutions that help sustain good governance and democracy. For a cultural policy to be effective in Africa and generate enough soft power, it has to be devoted to promote good governance and democracy on the continent.

For this to happen, a lot will depend on how African states are viewed by the U.S. and mainly what kind of commitment the U.S. has in helping African develop themselves. The creation in 2004 of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) by

the U.S Congress and the approach adopted by this organization to solve the problems of the beneficiary countries is a promising avenue for the future of U.S. soft power on the continent. Among others, the MCC organization support projects in as diverse areas as agriculture and irrigation, water supply and sanitation, access to health, anticorruption initiatives, land rights and access, and access to education.⁶

With U.S. image abroad severely damaged since the invasion of Irak in 2003, presenting an alternative image of U.S. power abroad was a challenge for the new administration that came after George Bush. The advent of the Obama administration with its new rhetoric about change and a new type of foreign policy helped project a better image of U.S. globally. The mere fact that he was the first African-American president brought back more credibility to the American system and created an exceptional pride in Africa. Not only his African heritage as mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation is important for U.S. soft power but his stress on good governance and the particular importance he recognized for Africa and African countries heralds better relations between the U.S. and Africa. In his speech in Ghana for example Obama notes the interdependence among all the nations of world including those of Africa and stressed that African countries could impact world affairs just like any other country, developed or less developed would on international affairs. He declared that “I do not see the countries and peoples of Africa as a world apart; I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world -- (applause) -- as partners with America on behalf of the future we want for all of our children. That partnership must be grounded in mutual responsibility

⁶ Millennium Challenge Corporation, <http://www.mcc.gov/mcc/about/index.shtml> accessed July 20th, 2007.

and mutual respect.”⁷ Obama identifies four major areas that his administration will focus on in building a partnership based on mutual respect and mutual responsibility with African countries, those are: “democracy, opportunity, health, and the peaceful resolution of conflict.”⁸ By fighting for policy implementation rather than containing a foreign power, U.S. policy in Africa has made an important shift from the days of the ideological competition of the Cold War to embrace a new direction that likely will influence its sources of soft power on the continent. Will this be more effective than the approach of the containment?

⁷ Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament, <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/July/20090711110050abretnuh0.1079783.html&distid=ucs#ixzz0dgTqEPGW> accessed September 30th, 2009.

⁸ Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament, <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/July/20090711110050abretnuh0.1079783.html&distid=ucs#ixzz0dgTqEPGW> accessed September 30th, 2009.

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