

I

“Walking a Tightrope”: Eisenhower and Nonalignment

Every policy is a product of its era, of the ideas, events, and perceptions that shape the time before it is enacted. The Kennedy-era policy of engagement emerged from the debates of the 1950s, not only within the government but also outside of it. It came as both a reaction to and a continuation of the policies of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Third World, policies that were themselves responses to the fall of China to Mao Zedong’s communists in 1949 and the eruption of the Korean War the following year.

As was the case with so many other presidencies, the Kennedy administration held a pronounced sense of the shortcomings of its immediate predecessor, particularly with regard to the Third World. In the eyes of Kennedy and his advisors, Eisenhower had failed to meet a growing Soviet political offensive in Africa and Asia. His secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, compounded the problem with his own stern and highly moralistic pronouncements on the nature of the Cold War. When forced to choose between European allies and postcolonial states, Dulles seemed to favor Europe consistently, at the expense of American credibility in the postcolonial world. The New Frontiersmen thought Dulles disastrously myopic, driven to divide the world between friend and foe. They believed that he had harshly overreacted to Third World nationalism, failing to grasp that it could in fact act to restrict the spread of communism.

The new administration came to office determined not to prolong or repeat what Kennedy’s first undersecretary of state, Chester Bowles, later dubbed the “everyone stand up and be counted” approach of Dulles.¹ Kennedy, wrote his friend Arthur Schlesinger, was bored by “the John Foster Dulles contrast between the God-anointed apostles of free enterprise and the regimented hordes of atheistic communism.”² Undersecretary of State George Ball scathingly

¹ Chester Bowles, *Promises to Keep: My Years in Public Life, 1941–1969* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 250, 478–479.

² Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 298.

recalled Dulles's "Manichean crusade."³ Robert Komer of the National Security Council acidly opined: "Stalin had the same black and white approach to the less developed world that John Foster Dulles did."⁴

There was truth to these complaints, but the New Frontiersmen entered office without giving the Eisenhower administration its full due. Whereas the Manichean image of their predecessors held some validity, it also reflected the acrimonious atmosphere of the 1950s. Eisenhower enjoyed both triumphs and failures in his policies toward the uncommitted states. The former aided the efforts of his successor, whereas the latter left obstacles strewn across Kennedy's path. Eisenhower, moreover, set important precedents for JFK, committing the United States to combat communism in key areas of the Third World, assuming the burdens that Kennedy subsequently promised to bear.

THE EISENHOWER OUTLOOK

As much as any other aspect of his presidency, Eisenhower's policies toward the Third World have generated considerable debate. His interventions in Guatemala, Iran, Indochina, and Indonesia reinforce the image of a hawkish administration, that often mistook Third World nationalism for communism.⁵ Recent scholarship, however, has argued that Eisenhower's approach to the postcolonial world was ultimately more prudent and less ideological than previously believed. Most saliently, H. W. Brands makes the case that pragmatism ultimately trumped ideology in Eisenhower's approach to the key nonaligned states of India, Egypt, and Yugoslavia.⁶ Both theses are tenable and illuminate the distinction between public image and policy. Eisenhower was acutely aware of the dilemmas facing the nonaligned states and was often sympathetic toward them. However, the pattern sketched by Brands does not apply universally, particularly where Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are concerned. In addition, the rhetoric and the public image of the administration created a cloud that Eisenhower's quiet diplomacy never quite dispelled. Brands acknowledges but understates the damage done by administration rhetoric.

John Foster Dulles played a critical role in shaping nonaligned opinion of the administration. Dulles earned an unenviable reputation among the elites of the nonaligned world, seeming to personify what they saw as Washington's

³ George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 174–177.

⁴ First Interview, Robert W. Komer, June 18, 1964, 4, OH, JFKL.

⁵ See Chester J. Pach and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991); Robert J. McMahon, "Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists," *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (Fall 1986), 453–473; Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 119–157; Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 129–135, 149–150.

⁶ H. W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947–1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

“Walking a Tightrope”

3

stark, inflexible, Cold War outlook, a worldview providing little sympathy for or understanding of the problems of postcolonial states. They believed that a pro-European bias shaped his policy toward colonial questions. Years after his death in 1959, nonaligned leaders continued to invoke Dulles as the personification of a Manichean Cold Warrior.⁷

Despite this image, Dulles was no admirer of European colonialism. He worried that colonial conflicts might distract states from the looming threat of communism. He described the anticolonial resolutions adopted at the 1955 Asian-African Conference at Bandung as being “in accord with what we feel in our hearts (though we are unable to say them publicly).”⁸ He comprehended that U.S. prestige throughout Africa and Asia rested on “the confidence of the peoples in those areas in our basic and unshakeable devotion” to their right of national self-determination.⁹ Dulles saw himself as an adherent to the American tradition of anti-imperialism, and he perceived the American experience as offering valuable lessons for the postcolonial world.¹⁰

Eisenhower shared these views. He approved of decolonization in principle (although not always in practice) and emphatically believed the United States could and should serve as a natural guide to the postcolonial states.¹¹ He could be surprisingly indifferent to the internal economic policies of nonaligned states, one commonly used measure of Cold War allegiances. In 1956, he responded to warnings about the statist direction of the Indonesian economy by asking how Indonesia could possibly avoid creating a centralized system when it lacked any historical basis for a free-market system. Socialist economics were to be expected from “such immature countries.”¹²

As a question of general principle, Eisenhower and Dulles believed that the United States should respond tolerantly to states professing neutrality in the Cold War, and they incorporated this tenet into their overarching strategy statements. In January 1955, the National Security Council (NSC) released a statement entitled NSC 5501, which elucidated the general outlines of foreign policy for the coming year. This statement, known as the Basic National Security Policy (BNSP), outlined two central principles pertaining to relations with the nonaligned world. NSC 5501 called for broadly aiding “constructive nationalist and reform movements.” Aid was to be allotted “on the basis of the willingness and ability of countries to strengthen and develop their independence

⁷ See, for example Telegram 4793, Cairo to Washington, February 24, 1967, in DOS, *FRUS, 1964–1968, Vol. 18: Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1964–1967* (Washington: GPO, 2000): 767.

⁸ Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, April 29, 1955, in DOS, *FRUS, 1955–1957, Vol. 21: East Asian Security; Laos; Cambodia* (Washington: GPO, 1990): 91–92.

⁹ Letter, Dulles to Julius Holmes, July 13, 1955, JFDP, Subject Series, box 6, “North African Survey,” DDEL.

¹⁰ See, for example, Memorandum, Dulles to Eisenhower, May 14, 1956, in DOS, *FRUS, 1955–1957, Vol. 22: Southeast Asia* (Washington: GPO, 1989): 267–268.

¹¹ William R. Louis, “American Anti-Colonialism, Suez, and the Special Relationship,” in Louis ed., *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 603; Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 131.

¹² Editorial Note in *FRUS, 1955–1957*, 22: 254.

against Communist expansion rather than on their formal alignment with the U.S.” The document forswore the exertion of “pressure” to convert recipients into outright allies. Furthermore, it was incumbent on the United States to alleviate “disputes and tensions” that might undermine “free world strength and cohesion.” Particular attention was needed to “develop long-term policies to deal with deep-seated problems (such as those involved in the evolution of colonial peoples).”¹³

Eisenhower emphasized the positive value of neutrality the following year when discussing NSC 5602, the successor document to NSC 5501. Speaking before the NSC on February 27, 1956, Eisenhower “very forcefully” cited the nation’s own historical neutrality, while noting that it was “erroneous” to charge “that there could be no genuine neutrality in the world between the Communist and the Western nations.” Indeed, in some cases states allying with the United States “often made themselves highly vulnerable to Communist attack.” Ike thought it imperative to define neutrality more precisely: “It should mean a moral, spiritual and, possibly, a political commitment to our side, but not necessarily a military commitment.”¹⁴ Similarly, in a letter to his brother Edgar written the same day, Eisenhower argued emphatically that, whereas “we want every nation we can reach to stand with us,” it would be “a very grave error to ask some of these nations” to announce that they stood with the United States.¹⁵

These statements embodied the president’s confusion on neutrality. Eisenhower was at once both somewhat tolerant and somewhat uncomprehending of the phenomenon. Neutrality in the classical sense requires no commitments – moral, spiritual, political, or otherwise – from its adherents toward belligerents – quite the opposite, in fact. Although he spoke against forcing states to choose sides in the Cold War and argued vehemently that the United States could benefit from accepting neutrality, Eisenhower’s definition of the term was exceedingly narrow, leaving little room for deviations from expected “commitments.” At heart, this statement advanced a stark view of the Cold War. The expectation of “moral” support left scant leeway for uncommitted states to be neutral in thought and deed.¹⁶ Nonalignment, which incorporated an activist agenda, fell further outside the allowed range of behavior.

In its final form, NSC 5602 bolstered the language in the preceding year’s BNSP. Again, the drafters eschewed using pressure to make allies of neutral states, but rather recognized that the independence of such governments served U.S. interests. The document further clarified the language regarding colonial conflicts. When faced with disputes between its allies and their colonies, it

¹³ NSC Report, “Basic National Security Policy,” January 7, 1955, in DOS, *FRUS, 1955–1957*, Vol. 19: *National Security Policy* (Washington: GPO, 1990): 24–38.

¹⁴ Memorandum of Discussion, 277th Meeting of NSC, February 27, 1956, *ibid.*: 201–202.

¹⁵ Letter, Dwight D. Eisenhower to Edgar Eisenhower, February 27, 1956, JFDP, White House Memoranda Series, box 4, “White House Correspondence – General 1956 (6),” DDEL.

¹⁶ One case illustrative of Eisenhower’s ambivalence toward conventional neutrality is that of Finland. See Jussi M. Hahnimäki, *Containing Coexistence: America, Russia, and the “Finnish Solution,” 1945–1956* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 139–193.

“Walking a Tightrope”

5

declared, the United States should “use its influence in behalf of an orderly evolution of political arrangements toward self-determination.” The national interest of the United States in engaging “constructive nationalist and reform movements” in colonial Africa and Asia was also reaffirmed.¹⁷

By themselves, the sentiments of Eisenhower and Dulles, along with the pragmatic outlook embodied in NSC 5501 and NSC 5602, might have steered the United States toward relative concord with the nonaligned states. Other priorities, however, trumped these inclinations and propelled the United States and the nonaligned states into far more antagonistic relationships. Foremost among these were the White House’s strategic goals of ringing the Soviet Union with alliances and excluding communism from key regions. These twin imperatives brought deep entanglement in three critical areas: the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. Ensuing regional commitments shaped the geopolitical priorities of the Eisenhower administration and its successors, and brought confrontation with nonaligned states.

“ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS POLITICAL TRENDS”

Between 1953 and 1955, the Middle East emerged as the first arena of conflict between Eisenhower and the nonaligned states, particularly India and Egypt. In 1953, Eisenhower and Dulles grew deeply concerned about Britain’s diminishing influence in the oil-rich Persian Gulf region and sought to shield the area from Moscow’s advance. This drove them to mount a successful CIA-sponsored coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, who lacked their anticommunist fervor and had nationalized his country’s oil reserves.¹⁸ It also led them to look for local allies to share the burden of regional defense.

Of the states in the region, Pakistan most impressed Dulles. After a visit there in May 1953, he deemed it the one country in the Gulf region “that has the moral courage to do its part in resisting communism.” He contrasted it favorably with India, which had criticized the United States on occasion and eschewed any alliance with Washington. Dulles and Eisenhower approved the shipment of arms to Karachi and a subsequent treaty of mutual assistance. U.S. military aid to Pakistan incensed New Delhi, bringing bilateral relations to their lowest point since Indian independence.¹⁹ Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru spoke anxiously about the administration’s expansion of military pacts into the Middle East and Southeast Asia, terming it “a wrong approach, a dangerous approach, and a harmful approach,” jeopardizing both India and the general peace of the world.²⁰

¹⁷ Memcon, 277th Meeting of NSC, February 27, 1956, in *FRUS, 1955–1957*, 21: 201–202.

¹⁸ On this, see Zachary Karabell, *Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World, and the Cold War, 1946–1962* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 63–91.

¹⁹ Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 123–153.

²⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India’s Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946–April 1961* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1961), 94–96.

Egypt, too, objected to Anglo-American efforts to bolster the “northern tier” of the Middle East, particularly after the signing of the Baghdad Pact in 1955, which established a regional security organization that included Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, and the United Kingdom. British participation made the Pact suspect to Arab nationalists such as Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who feared the expansion of the Cold War into the Middle East and Western efforts to build up Iraq as an Arab counterweight to Egypt. Nasser’s opposition displeased the White House, which concluded that he was – to Moscow’s benefit – undermining regional security.²¹

Nonaligned states had, in these instances, obstructed the consolidation of regional pacts. Their actions, consequently, bolstered U.S. suspicions that non-alignment was something exploitable by Moscow, particularly when its adherents opposed U.S.-sponsored alliances. Evidence of a new dynamism in Soviet foreign policy after the death of Joseph Stalin aroused fears that Moscow might gull wavering Western allies into outright neutrality. An October 1955 assessment of NSC 5501 by the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff predicted that Moscow would promote neutralism so as to drive a wedge between the United States and its allies. A National Intelligence Estimate the next month forecast Soviet efforts to advance neutralist policies in “vulnerable areas,” such as Southeast Asia. To senior analysts in the CIA, the Pentagon, and the State Department, the “blurring of the lines which have divided the Communist and non-Communist worlds” and the consequent “trend toward a greater number of uncommitted states” represented “one of the most dangerous political trends” of the 1950s.²²

At heart, the Eisenhower administration held two conflicting ideas about neutrality in the Cold War. In certain regions and situations, neutrality stood to benefit the United States. As a broader philosophy – as nonalignment (or “neutralism”) – however, it menaced the integrity of the new American system of regional alliances. Neutralist sentiment seemed to be something that could be exploited by the Soviet Union. The containment of Soviet power and the maintenance of existing alliances remained Eisenhower and Dulles’s paramount goal in the Third World. Their alliance system depended predominantly on two types of states: European powers and conservative Asian nations – neither of which tended to enjoy favorable relations with nonaligned states. With this imperative, Dulles and Eisenhower saw little advantage in placating neutrals at the cost of unnerving allies. Consequently, disputes related to decolonization and the U.S. alliance system served to divide Washington from the nonaligned world.

²¹ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 38–40; Peter L. Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945–1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 197–200.

²² State Department Paper, “General Comments on NSC 5501,” October 3, 1955, in *FRUS, 1955–1957, 19: 123–125*; National Intelligence Estimate, November 1, 1955, *ibid.*: 131–145.

“Walking a Tightrope”

7

Neither man, moreover, stood prepared to set aside the conviction that the Cold War was a moral struggle. Eisenhower remained amenable to neutrality in a purely geopolitical sense, but still expected truly neutral states to signal their disapproval of communism and Soviet policy. Dulles opined to the president at the end of 1956 that there could not be true neutrality between American and Soviet world orders.²³ He chafed at the silence of nonaligned powers in the face of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and expansionist agendas within their own ranks, which he viewed as Soviet-sponsored.²⁴ Critically, believing that the Cold War was the defining struggle in world affairs, he tended to perceive malicious Soviet influence behind colonial and regional conflicts in the Third World, while understating the salience of local factors.²⁵ The willingness of nonaligned states to engage in these conflicts thus represented an acquiescence on their part to Moscow’s grand design. All this and their open courting of Soviet aid nurtured a belief in Dulles and other Americans that the nonaligned states were guilty of gross hypocrisy. This perception fostered a profound sense of unease on the administration’s part when it confronted the phenomenon of organized nonalignment in early 1955.

EISENHOWER AND BANDUNG

If neutrality in individual cases appeared tolerable to Eisenhower, an organized, activist group of nonaligned states was something else altogether. When the planned Bandung Conference was announced at the end of 1954, the meeting elicited real concern in Washington, but the Eisenhower administration reacted with restraint. Dulles shared the common fear that the conference could easily be manipulated by pro-communist delegations to produce unfriendly resolutions, especially on the ongoing Taiwan Straits crisis, which pitted the United States against the PRC. He worried that China’s foreign minister, Zhou Enlai, would dominate the proceedings, perhaps working to forge a broader anti-Western alliance founded on pan-Asianism and a shared anticolonialism. Dulles also, however, perceived that Washington stood to lose prestige among the attendees if it tried to undermine the conference. Dulles’s reaction to Bandung revealed his own ambivalence about the emerging phenomenon of nonalignment: whereas he felt profound misgivings toward it, he also feared the consequences of actively opposing it. Overruling the recommendations of several advisors, Dulles tellingly chose a middle path.²⁶

²³ Memcon, Eisenhower and Dulles, December 3, 1956, JFDP, White House Memoranda Series, box 4, “Meetings with the President, August–December 1956 (2)” folder, DDEL.

²⁴ Memorandum, Philip Young to Walter Robertson, January 3, 1956, in *FRUS, 1955–1957*, 22: 222–225.

²⁵ Letter, Dulles to Konrad Adenauer, December 27, 1955, in DOS, *FRUS, 1955–1957*, Vol. 26: *Central and Southeastern Europe* (Washington: GPO, 1992): 63–64.

²⁶ Jason Parker, “Small Victory, Missed Chance: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference and the Turning of the Cold War,” in Kathryn Statler and Andrew Johns eds., *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*

In a meeting on January 7, 1955, several of Dulles's colleagues – most notably his brother, CIA Director Allen W. Dulles – advised him that Bandung was likely to be a “rigged conference” intended to generate anticolonial resolutions directed against the United States and its European allies. Allen Dulles and others advised working with pro-Western invitees to delay the gathering. The secretary shared their trepidation. He feared that the meeting could create a “very solid block of anti-Western votes in the United Nations.” He did not, however, recommend attempting to stall the event, instead advising that the United States ask friendly governments to neither accept nor decline invitations, pending a study of Bandung's objectives. Dulles essentially adopted a wait-and-see attitude.²⁷ With apparent frustration he wrote:

We wish that the conference were not held; but if it is to be held, we must try to get the best representatives of friendly countries to Bandung, and they must be armed with the best available information.... We cannot afford to be simply negative, but if we are unduly constructive we might help the sponsors.²⁸

Broader Cold War concerns soon intruded. Escalating tensions in the Taiwan Straits heightened the significance of Bandung. Dulles feared that the conference could sanction a more aggressive Chinese policy; he also hoped that coordinated action by friendly attendees might serve to constrain Peking with a resolution calling for a negotiated solution.²⁹ The unwanted conference now posed both dangers and opportunities. As it became clear that the conference would occur as planned, Dulles consulted extensively with friendly invitees.³⁰

As it happened, Bandung witnessed neither a harmonious meeting of the new states of Africa and Asia nor any great forward step for international communism. Invitations had been based on geography, not Cold War non-alignment. The attendees represented a wide spectrum of opinion and included dedicated U.S. allies such as Japan, Turkey, and the Philippines on the one hand and the PRC on the other. Other nations, notably Iran, Iraq, and Ceylon, brought strong anticommunist leanings to the table. Sub-Saharan Africa was barely represented. India backed the conference in hopes of attracting international support for what Nehru termed the principles of Panchsheel: noninterference and peaceful coexistence. To Nehru's consternation, this agenda faced strong resistance from outwardly aligned and anticommunist states. Ceylon's prime minister delivered an impassioned condemnation of Soviet repression in

(New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 153–174; Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism*, 110–118; Matthew Jones, “A ‘Segregated’ Asia?: Race, the Bandung Conference, and Pan-Asianist Fears in American Thought and Policy, 1954–1955,” *Diplomatic History* 29, No. 5 (November 2005), 854–862.

²⁷ Minutes of Meeting, January 7, 1955, in *FRUS, 1955–1957*, 21: 1–5; DOS, *FRUS, 1952–1954*, Vol. 12: *East Asia and Pacific, Part 1* (Washington: GPO, 1984): 1085n.

²⁸ Minutes of Meeting, January 18, 1955, in *FRUS, 1955–1957*, 21: 11–16.

²⁹ Memcon, Dulles and Sir Roger Makins, April 7, 1955, in DOS, *FRUS, 1955–1957*, Vol. 2: *China* (Washington: GPO, 1986): 453–455.

³⁰ Circular Telegram 401, Washington to Various Missions, January 25, 1955, in *FRUS, 1955–1957*, 21: 23; Parker, “Eisenhower and Bandung,” 156–162.

“Walking a Tightrope”

9

Eastern Europe. Turkey, Iran, and Iraq – all recent signatories to the Baghdad Pact – offered staunch defenses of their choice to align. The conference declaration emphasized the brotherhood and common struggles of the Afro-Asian peoples, but the ideological disunity of the attendees was clear to diplomatic observers.³¹

Dulles declared victory, as the PRC had failed to marshal the attendees in support of its policy against Taiwan. He told Eisenhower on April 29 that he had originally thought the conference “was going to be dominated by Zhou. Actually, it turned out that the conference was dominated by a group of friendly Asian nations who believed in association with the West.” The final document had been largely agreeable – even its statements about colonialism resonated with what Dulles and Eisenhower privately believed.³² Dulles attributed U.S. success at the conference to the cooperation of existing friends and allies, who had checked Nehru’s advocacy of nonalignment. The staunch anticommunism of the Ceylonese and Turkish delegations reassured him that he could count on African and Asian opposition to Soviet influence or to the emergence of a neutralist bloc. In a concurring report, the Operations Control Board observed that “the free world scored a considerable substantive success” at Bandung.³³

The “success” at Bandung had not altered the administration’s ambivalence toward nonalignment; it continued to fret that neutralist sentiment, now legitimated by the conference, could penetrate the U.S. alliance system. If Zhou had not dominated the conference, he had still struck many observers as its most charismatic and impressive participant.³⁴ Nonalignment continued to evoke a sense of unease, and Dulles was not content to leave the leadership of the postcolonial states to the likes of Nehru or Sukarno. In November, he discussed with British Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan the possibility of staging a “Bandung Conference in reverse.” Bringing together postcolonial and European attendees, this counter-conference would have aspired to develop a comprehensive plan for decolonization. Notably, Dulles asked Rockefeller Foundation President Dean Rusk to study the proposal further, although no conference was ever held.³⁵

The administration’s post-Bandung confidence, moreover, contributed to the administration’s belief that it could count on states to be both notionally neutral and broadly sympathetic to the West. This contributed to serious missteps in the following year. Events in 1956 played a disproportionate role in shaping the image of the Eisenhower administration among the nonaligned

³¹ G. H. Jansen, *Nonalignment and the Afro-Asian States* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 182–225.

³² Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, April 29, 1955, in *FRUS, 1955–1957, 21*: 91–92; Memcon, Dulles and Turkish Counselor Savut, May 4, 1955, *ibid.*: 94–95.

³³ Memorandum, “Bandung Conference,” OCB Staff, May 12, 1955, White House Office, NSC Staff Papers, 1948–1961, OCB Central File Series, box 86, OCB 092.3 (File #2), DDEL.

³⁴ Memorandum, Roy P. McNair to H. S. Craig, May 13, 1955, *ibid.*

³⁵ Letter, Dulles to Winthrop Aldrich, January 9, 1956, in John Foster Dulles Papers, Subject Series, box 7, “Policy of Independence for Colonial Peoples,” DDEL; Memcon, Dulles and Harold Macmillan, November 16, 1955, *ibid.*

leaders, overshadowing the more careful diplomacy practiced in the decade's final years.

NEUTRALITY AND MORALITY

No act brought Dulles greater notoriety in the nonaligned world than a statement he made at the commencement exercises of Iowa State College in Ames, on June 9, 1956. In an address entitled "The Cost of Peace," which broadly surveyed the goals and methods of U.S. foreign policy, he commented on the value of Washington's forty-two active treaties of alliance:

These treaties abolish, as between the parties, the principle of neutrality, which pretends that a nation can best gain safety for itself by being indifferent to the fate of others. This has increasingly become an obsolete conception and, except under very exceptional circumstances, it is an immoral and shortsighted conception. The free world today is stronger, and peace is more secure, because so many free nations courageously recognize the now demonstrated fact that their own peace and safety would be endangered by assault on freedom elsewhere.³⁶

This was just a short passage in a commencement address, but Dulles's brief shot at the nonaligned states was heard around the world. It cemented into place an image of American contempt for the attendees of Bandung.

Dulles had not set out to offend the nonaligned states, but rather to reassure allies. The Eisenhower administration faced a delicate predicament: in trying to remind allies that their support was valued, it had inadvertently insulted nonaligned states. Dulles also directed his statement toward a domestic audience. As Brands has observed, Dulles and Eisenhower often made complementary statements on foreign policy: Dulles, acting as the lightning rod, played to the conservative base, whereas Eisenhower was the more amiable, moderate spokesman for administration foreign policy.³⁷ Indeed, Ike had previously expressed his understanding of why states would plausibly choose neutrality in the Cold War:

Now today there are certain nations that say they are neutral. This doesn't necessarily mean what it is so often interpreted to mean, neutral as between right and wrong or decency and indecency.

They are using the term "neutral" with respect to attachment to military alliances. And may I point out that I cannot see that this is always to the disadvantage of such a country as ours.³⁸

Notably, Eisenhower promised that a fuller statement on the question of neutrality was to be delivered by Dulles in Ames a few days later. In all likelihood,

³⁶ DOSB, Vol. 34, June 18, 1956, 999–1000; "Dulles Shifts on Neutrality," *The Washington Post*, July 12, 1956, 8.

³⁷ Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism*, 306–310.

³⁸ *Public Papers of the President: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington: GPO, 1957), 555.