

HOW TO TRY TO MASK COLONIALISM AND FAIL ANYWAY:  
AMERICAN PROPAGANDA IN NON-COMMUNIST ASIA  
DURING THE EARLY COLD WAR

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A Thesis  
Submitted to  
the Temple University Graduate Board

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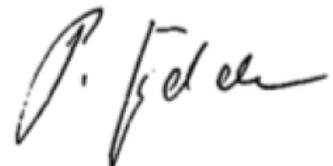
In Partial Fulfillment  
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MASTER OF ARTS

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by  
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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines *Free World* articles covering anticommunism, modernization, decolonization, intra-regionalism, US foreign affairs, US foreign aid, and neocolonialism because the task of popularizing specific iterations of these ideas illustrated the implementation of the ideas formulated in NSC 48/5. Moreover, NSC 48/5 called non-communist Asia the location of “the most immediate threats to American National Security.” My paper seeks to answer the question of how American propaganda in Asia, seen through a case study of *Free World*, tried to accomplish this popularization objective. I argue that the United States Information Agency (USIA) masked America’s neocolonialist intentions and activities in East and Southeast Asia through a rhetoric of anticommunism, intra-regionalism, and modernization.

To Randi and my family,  
I could not have done this without all of you.

I love you.

Ian.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have more people to thank here than I could ever express in words but I will try nonetheless. It is no understatement to say that this Thesis would not exist without the guidance, help, patience, and intelligence of Dr. Petra Goedde. She has helped me with every question I have had since day one even after reading too many “insert citations” at the beginnings of footnotes to early drafts. Dr. Jessica Roney’s insightful and brilliant comments allowed me to strengthen the thesis below in ways I had not even thought of before. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my friends and fellow graduate students at Temple University who debated various arguments I had, helping me to eliminate ones full of holes. Thank you to Ariel Natalo-Lifton, Dr. Silke Zoller, Manna Duah, Brian McNamara, Britnee Smith, Michael Diaz, Lauren Feldman, Eric Perinovic, and Matthias Fuelling. I would not have finished this Thesis without the help of my loving family. My parents, brothers, and sisters-in-law all helped keep me on an even keel. Lastly, my wonderful girlfriend Randi helped me get through this process in more ways than I can count; I love you Randi.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In early April 1954, the United States Information Service (USIS) published an article in its magazine *Free World* which answered its own question rather than let readers decide for themselves. First released in June 1951, *Free World* was a forty-six page propaganda magazine the USIS distributed monthly to East and Southeast Asia. The article itself put forth interpretations of the activities of Western and Communist states in non-communist Asia since the end of the Second World War. Titled “What's the Score in Asia?” the piece asserted two overarching themes. First, it argued that Western, in particular American, efforts since August 1945 had helped advance decolonization and modernization. Second, it argued that communist nations continued to try to recolonize the region and continued to fail to advance modernization. To convince readers to accept these messages, the USIS omitted or downplayed unfavorable information, whitewashed history, and mischaracterized American actions.<sup>1</sup>

The rhetoric of “What's the Score in Asia?” typified *Free World's* portrayal of the Cold War in Asia during the first half of the 1950's. Most importantly, this article showcased how *Free World* tried to mask America's neocolonialist efforts in non-

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<sup>1</sup> “Semi-Annual USIE Report, June 1, 1951 - November 30, 1951,” US Embassy-Manila to State Department, January 14, 1952, 60, 511.96/1-1452, Box 2543, Dept. of State Records (State), Central Decimal Files (CDF) 1950-1954, Record Group (RG) 59, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (NACP); “What's the Score in Asia?” *Free World* Volume (Vol.) 3, Issue Number (No.) 3, 2-5, *Free World* English Folder Vol. III Nos. 1-3, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the United States Information Agency (USIA), RG 306, NACP.

communist Asia behind a veil of anticommunism, virtuously motivated development aid, and virtuously motivated promotion of intra-regionalism. Regarding decolonization, the article whitewashed the history of Western colonialism in the region and patronized its audience for their countries' political maturity since independence. Regarding communism, the article presented communism and communists as anti-nationalist, sadistically motivated, and failing. Regarding development, the article praised American aid and focused on portraying the cooperative nature of development aid projects, implicitly asserting that said cooperation disqualified US aid from charges of colonialism.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \*

The "loss" of China to communism in 1949 influenced America's decision to commit to containment in Asia more than any other event between the end of World War II and 1950. The establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 prompted President Harry S. Truman's administration to codify a new National Security Council (NSC) Policy of containment for Asia. Revised during the following months,

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<sup>2</sup> "What's the Score in Asia?" *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 3, 3, *Free World* English Folder Vol. III Nos. 1-3, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP. It is worth pointing out that the article's characterizations of the Huk Rebellion and the Malayan Emergency were accurate as both were communist insurgencies that had been effectively defeated by 1954. Recent scholarship also confirms this periodization. For the Huks, see Nick Cullather, *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 89-92. For the ending of the Malaysian communist threat to the British colony of Malay periodization, see Danny Wong Tze Ken, "Malaysia during the Early Cold War Era: The War in Indochina and Malaya, 1946-1963," in *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia*, ed. Christopher Goscha and Christian Osterman (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2009), 262.

Truman approved the second draft of the policy as NSC 48/2 on December 30, 1949.

NSC 48/2 established how the United States would contain communism from spreading further in Asia but importantly, did not establish that the United States considered communist efforts in Asia as the most immediate threat to American national security.

Just under six months after the approval of NSC 48/2, the Korean War began when North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950.<sup>3</sup>

During those six months, American foreign policy changed dramatically as the Truman administration considered whether or not to dramatically expand the resources to commit to containment. NSC 68, first presented on April 14, 1950, called for a massive expansion of the American military and nuclear arsenal to effectively execute containment. Additionally, NSC 68 called for an expansion of other tools of containment, such as foreign aid and propaganda. While President Truman did not approve all of NSC 68 until 1951, he approved its conclusions as a statement of policy on September 30, 1950, largely because the Korean War seemed to prove those conclusions. Shortly after,

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<sup>3</sup> For this paper, when I refer to “Asia,” “the Asian Continent,” “Asian,” “non-communist Asia,” or the “Far East,” I will be using the same geographical boundaries as those used in the NSC 48 series. I use these problematic and inaccurate (and in the case of “Far East,” racist) geographic terms purely for continuity between the sources examined and my analysis of them. The NSC 48 series defined “Asia” as “...that part of the continent of Asia south of the USSR and east of Iran together with the major off-shore islands—Japan, Formosa, the Philippines, Indonesia and Ceylon.” NSC 48/2, “United States Objectives, Policies, and Courses of Action in Asia,” Dec. 30, 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS): 1949, The Far East and Australasia, Vol. VII, Part 2 (P2)*, 1215-1220.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v07p2/d387>. See also Paragraph 32 of NSC 48/1, which was unchanged for NSC 48/2, for the NSC’s assessment of strategic import of Asia. NSC 48/1, “Draft Report by the National Security Council on “The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia,” Dec. 23, 1949, Department of Defense, *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), (hereafter *Pentagon Papers*), Book 8, 256.

the armed forces of the recently formed People's Republic of China crossed the Yalu River, part of the northern border between China and North Korea, to fight with the North Koreans fighting the forces of the United Nations Command and South Korea. In response to the Chinese intervention in the Korean War, the NSC began a policy review (read review and if necessary, revise) of American national security policy for Asia. NSC 48/5 was the culmination of that policy review and on May 17, 1951, Truman approved it to officially supersede NSC 48/2. One of the most significant differences between NSC 48/5 and NSC 48/2 was the former's declaration that the US government now considered the most immediate threats to American national security to be located in Asia. This declaration meant the United States had expanded the front lines of the Cold War outside of Europe to include Asia.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> NSC 68/2, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," Sept. 30, 1950, *FRUS: 1950 National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy, Vol. I*, 400. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v01/d129>. For the US officials interpreting the Korean War as confirmation of NSC 68, see Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 54-56, 62. For NSC 48/5 as the culmination of the revision of US national security policy for Asia in response to China's intervention in the Korea War, see Document 50, "Memorandum by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Lay) to the National Security Council, Subject: United States Action to Counter Chinese Communist Aggression," Mar. 21, 1951, *FRUS: 1951 Korea and China, Vol. VII, P2*, 1598-1605, especially footnote 4. For the NSC locating the most immediate threat to US national security in Asia in NSC 48/5, see Paragraph 1, "United States Objectives, Policies, and Courses of Action in Asia," NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia and the Pacific (Asia-Pacific), Vol. VI, Part I (P1)*, 34. While the agency that became the USIA in 1953 underwent a number of name changes between 1950 and 1954, for the sake of simplicity this paper will refer to the agency as the USIA or the USIS. For those name and administrative changes and reorganizations, see Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 37-67, 96-104. For more on the impact of the Korean War on the American propaganda program in Asia see Jason Parker, "Cull notes that the Korean 'crisis underlined the need for an effective information effort.' Jason Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices, US Cold War Public Diplomacy and the Formation of the Third World*

Shortly before the start of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, USIA officials requested approval from President Truman to expand the American propaganda program in the “Far East” (East and Southeast Asia). In the near five years since the end of the Pacific War of World War II, the region witnessed the peaceful decolonization of former European colonies into independent nation states (e.g. Burma, Philippines) as well as witness the successful (Indonesia) and ongoing violent attempts at decolonization (Vietnam, Malaysia). Before the Korean War started, three major armed conflicts between communist, for lack of a better word, rebels/insurgents and non-communist national government or noncommunist colonial government forces were already happening. In British Malaya, what became known as the Malayan Emergency saw communist Malaysians attempting to overthrow the British colonial government and establish an independent communist state. In the Associated States of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, Ho Chi Minh and his Viet Minh fought against French colonial forces to accomplish the same goal in the First Indochina War. And in the Philippines, Philippine communists called Hukbalahaps, or “Huks,” fought against the national forces of the recently independent Philippine national government in what was called the “Huk Rebellion.” The United States, seeking to execute the containment of communism in Asia even before the expansion called for by NSC 68 was approved, wanted to get the newly independent and soon-to-be independent countries of the region to decide to align with the West in the Cold War.<sup>5</sup>

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(New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 220n43.

<sup>5</sup> For overviews of the Huk Rebellion and Philippine decolonization, see Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 48-65, 101-105. For an excellent detailed study of the

This paper examines *Free World* articles covering anticommunism, modernization, decolonization, intra-regionalism, US foreign affairs, US foreign aid, and neocolonialism because the task of popularizing specific iterations of these ideas illustrated the implementation of the ideas formulated in NSC 48/5. Moreover, NSC 48/5 called non-communist Asia the location of “the most immediate threats to American National Security.” My paper seeks to answer the question of how American propaganda in Asia, seen through a case study of *Free World*, tried to accomplish this popularization objective. I argue that the United States Information Agency (USIA) masked America’s neocolonialist intentions and activities in East and Southeast Asia through a rhetoric of anticommunism, intra-regionalism, and modernization.<sup>6</sup>

Until recently, the historiography on US propaganda during the early Cold War has focused on propaganda distributed in Europe. Recent research has examined

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First Indochina War, see Fredrik Lovegall, *Embers of War: The Fall of An Empire and the Making of America’s Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012). For a concise overview of the Malayan Emergency, see Wong Tze Ken, “Malaysia during the Early Cold War Era.” For the decolonization of Burma and the years after, see Matthew Foley, *The Cold War and National Assertion in Southeast Asia, Britain, the United States and Burma, 1948-1962* (New York: Routledge, 2010). For a concise overview of Indonesian decolonization, see Robert McMahon, *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 31-33. For America’s desire to get the “Far East” to align with the West in the Cold War, see NSC 48/2, “United States Objectives, Policies, and Courses of Action in Asia,” Dec. 30, 1949, *FRUS: 1949, The Far East and Australasia, Vol. VII, Part 2 (P2)*, 1215-1220. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v07p2/d387>. For the NSC’s assessment of strategic import of Asia, see Paragraph 32 of NSC 48/1, which was unchanged for NSC 48/2, NSC 48/1, “Draft Report by the National Security Council on The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia,” Dec. 23, 1949, *Pentagon Papers*, Book 8, 256.

<sup>6</sup> Paragraphs 5a, 6d, and 153, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 34, 36, 39. USIA output had to conform with NSC policies, see Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 38.

propaganda distributed in non-communist Asia, in particular East and Southeast Asia. These recent studies showed the “ethnocentrism and cultural solipsism that marred so much of US propaganda.” This paper adds to the recent research on American propaganda in Asia. In one respect, this paper examines how that ethnocentrism and cultural solipsism played out in *Free World*’s rhetorical construction of America’s desired internationalism in East and Southeast Asia.<sup>7</sup>

Much of the previous historiography on print propaganda mostly examined products the USIA did not distribute with, for lack of a better term, scheduled regularity. Nearly all of the previous research regardless of the location of distribution has focused on how American propaganda presented the United States. Recent research from Matthew Phillips and Matthew Foley has examined how American propaganda portrayed, respectively, Thailand and Burma. Recent scholarship from historians such as Andrew Yarrow and Meredith Oyen, not only examined regularly published print propaganda but also examined *Free World* articles. These two historians’ research gave excellent insights on how *Free World* presented the United States, Asian Americans, and Chinese expatriates in East and Southeast Asia in the early Cold War. However, their studies of *Free World* were a part of their broader examination and arguments about histories with which I do not engage. Relatedly, Marc Frey and Justin Hart examined on American propaganda policy for products distributed in Asia during the early Cold War.

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted from Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 169. Recent studies of American propaganda in East and Southeast Asia include Marc Frey, “Tools of Empire: Persuasion and the United States’ Modernizing Mission in Southeast Asia.” *Diplomatic History* 27 (September 2003): 543-568; Hart, *Empire of Ideas*; Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*.

Kenneth Osgood also included a brief overview of American propaganda to Asia in the Cold War under Eisenhower, noting the predominant theme to the region was a strident anticommunism. While their insightful studies did examine some American propaganda products in Asia, Osgood, Hart, and Frey primarily focused on directives and policy issued from Washington DC. I seek to add to the insights from their work by examining policy about more specific issues as well as examining a different product's propaganda about similar and different topics.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Historians who primarily examined US propaganda distributed to Europe during the early Cold War are Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Shawn Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War, 1945-1955* (New York: Praeger, 2001); Laura Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*; Frances Stonor-Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: New Press, 2013.

For historians who studied non-regularly produced print products, see those published from the mid 1990's, with Walter Hixson, up to the late 2000's with Nicholas Cull. See Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*; Lucas, *Freedom's War*; Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency*; Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*; Osgood, *Total Cold War*; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*. Stonor-Saunders' *The Cultural Cold War* (the first edition was published in 2000) stands as one of the few exceptions of this period of examining non-regularly produced print products, as she examined American propaganda magazines distributed by the CIA in Europe.

Historians who have examined how American propaganda represented the United States include Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*; Lucas, *Freedom's War*; Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency*; Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*; Osgood, *Total Cold War*; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*; Stonor-Saunders, *The*

This paper combines the past trends of examining portrayals of the US with the more recent trend of examining portrayals of Asian nations. Specifically I examine how *Free World* portrayed, or in many cases did not portray, foreign relations between the United States and the countries of non-communist East and Southeast Asia. This paper continues the work of previous historians such as Laura Belmonte and Jason Parker who examined how the United States portrayed its foreign aid in its propaganda. Like previous scholarship, this paper examines anticommunist propaganda distributed by the United States. Unlike previous studies of anticommunist propaganda during the early Cold War however, this paper examines anticommunist propaganda, albeit all from one product, distributed outside of Europe, the UN, or, as Jason Parker recently did, Latin America. In examining American anticommunist propaganda distributed outside of Europe, this paper

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*Cultural Cold War*; Meredith, Oyen, "Communism, Containment, and the Chinese Overseas," in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, ed. Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi (Boston: Brill, 2010), 59-93; Andrew L. Yarrow, *Measuring America: How Economic Growth Came to Define American Greatness in the Late Twentieth Century* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010); Hart, *Empire of Ideas*. It should be noted that Osgood did include a brief chapter section on US propaganda to Asia during Eisenhower's presidency and that Nicholas Cull included a few sections in his book to US propaganda to Asia during the 1950's. Prior to those two however, little research had been conducted on American propaganda to Asia during the early Cold War. Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 114-126; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 66, 123-125.

For historians who have examined how US propaganda portrayed non-communist Asian nations during the early Cold War, see Foley, *The Cold War and National Assertion in Southeast Asia*; Matthew Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2016). For historians who have examined *Free World*, see Oyen, "Communism, Containment, and the Chinese Overseas," 59-93; Yarrow, *Measuring America*. For Justin Hart and Marc Frey's excellent studies, see Frey, "Tools of Empire," and Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, esp. 147-159, 163-172. Most of Hart's *Empire of Ideas* focuses on inter-governmental debates over the role of propaganda in American foreign policy between the 1930's and 1953 and the domestic politics of a propaganda program.

continues Parker, Osgood, and Frey's examinations of anticommunist propaganda in early Cold War Asia.<sup>9</sup>

This paper departs from the previous historiography in a number of ways. For one, this paper focuses not only on how the United States represented itself but also how the United States represented other countries, in this case the nations of East and Southeast Asia. In particular, this paper focuses on how *Free World* represented American foreign relations with the states of East and Southeast Asia. This paper departs from previous scholarship by showing how *Free World's* own topical emphases sheds light on the U.S. response to decolonization and its efforts to convince the countries in

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<sup>9</sup> For previous scholarship on how the US portrayed its aid in its propaganda, see Laura Belmonte, "Selling Modernization: Modernization and U.S. Overseas Propaganda, 1945-1959," in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, ed. David C. Engerman, Mark H. Haefele, Michael E. Latham, and Nils Gilman (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 85-106; Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 37-47, 93-96; Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War*, 119-127; or Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, 147-159, 163-176. Foley does not discuss US propaganda about its aid to Burma in his book but he does show Burmese reactions to US aid actions and efforts in the early 1950's, see Foley, *The Cold War and National Assertion in Southeast Asia*, Chapters 137-151, 159-177. For research on US anticommunist propaganda in Europe during the early Cold War, see for example, Lucas, *Freedom's War*, Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, Osgood, *Total Cold War*, Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, or Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*.

American anticommunist propaganda distributed outside of Europe or the UN has been little studied by previous scholarship. For those who have examined such propaganda to some degree, see Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 54-71, 80-89, 99-102; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 66, 123-125; Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 114-126; Frey, "Tools of Empire," 559-560, 566-568; and Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, 147-159, 163-176. Hart also discussed American policymakers' concerns about communist propaganda and America's counter-message. None of these historians however, offered deeper explanations of how America's Eurocentric and ethnocentric Cold War strategy in Asia played out in American propaganda products in the field. My study seeks, among other things, to help fill that gap and tries to suggest additional explanations for how and why American propaganda to Asia on any subject failed.

the region to align with the West in the Cold War. This persuasion effort, as we shall see later, constituted one of the main goals of the United States National Security Council (NSC) for the region during this period. This paper also examines how the US tried to sell and tried to hide its neocolonialist intentions and efforts in East and Southeast Asia. This paper also examines anticommunist propaganda the US distributed in Asia during the early Cold War.

I bookend this paper's periodization by beginning with the establishment of the People's Republic of China and NSC 48/2 at the end of 1949 and end with the final approval of NSC 5429 and the announcement of the Bandung Conference at the end of December 1954. Gregory Mitrovich has argued, correctly in my opinion, that this period of roughly 1950 to 1954 was the zenith of US foreign policymakers' beliefs in the potential effectiveness of propaganda. This paper is a case study of how the United States tried to accomplish NSC 48/5's goals, a task the USIA almost certainly played a major role in attempting to accomplish. Most broadly, I examine how the United States responded to decolonization and nationalism in East and Southeast Asia during the tumultuous first half of the 1950's.<sup>10</sup>

The following essay examines how the USIA tried to accomplish that task. It is also a case study of American propaganda about decolonization, anticommunism, and development in East Asia during the first three and a half years of *Free World's* publication. I examined *Free World* magazine articles on these topics and used an internal *Index* of the magazine compiled in the 1970's to assign various articles published

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<sup>10</sup> Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 8-14.

between 1951 and 1954 articles to analytical categories of “modernization and development,” “anticommunism,” and “decolonization.”<sup>11</sup>

The body of this thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter Two argues that American propaganda to Asia’s broadest task centered around fostering and popularizing an American internationalism to the region while noting USIA officials decision to execute that task via mischaracterizing American foreign relations. Chapter Three argues that *Free World* attempted to popularize that internationalism via ridicule, boastful claims, and misrepresentation. Chapter Four argues that from 1953 to the end of 1954, American propaganda in Asia became less bombastic in tone not for any altruistic

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<sup>11</sup> *Free World Index: Vols. I-XV, Reg. English Edition*, Free World Index Regular English Edition Volumes 1-15, Box 253, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the United States Information Agency (USIA), RG 306, NACP (hereafter “*Free World Index*,”). The *Index*’s article categories listed here came from the Indexes of the following Countries in the *Free World Index*: Australia, New Zealand (listed as “Australia-New Zealand”), Burma, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea (listed as “Korea”), Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States of America, and Vietnam. This paper also included articles listed under the “Communism” category both within countries’ indexes and in the separate “Communism” Index. Other nations and/or former and current European colonies and/or topics were listed in the *Index* as well (e.g. countries such as India and Sri Lanka, colonies like Macau, and topics like Asian Americans and the United Nations). While such articles are worthy of study, they are somewhat beyond the scope of this paper.

*Free World Index*. All *Free World* articles of all analytical categories I read for this paper were published by the USIS between June 1951 and approximately December 1954. Articles classified as Modernization and Development came from the topic listings “International,” “Industrial,” “Agricultural,” “Economic,” and “Community Development.” Articles classified as Anticommunism came from the topic listings = “International,” “Communism (under country indexes),” “Communism/Refugees (under country indexes),” the “Communism” separately indexed pages. Articles classified as Decolonization and Neocolonialism came from the topic listings “International,” “Military/Defense,” “US Foreign Policy.” I read 43 of 126 total “Modernization and Development” articles; 23 of 40 total “Anticommunist” articles; and 17 of 58 total “Decolonization and/or Neocolonialism” articles.

reasons but to make the rhetoric more persuasive. Chapter Five argues that, with the exception of anticommunism, *Free World* followed the directives' overall plan via downplaying American presence in the region. Following the bibliography there is a brief Appendix listing the exact or approximate dates of publication of every white propaganda edition of *Free World* published between June 1951 and December 1954. It also includes a brief explanation of how I approximated the publication dates of the undated editions of *Free World*.

## CHAPTER 2

### ***FREE WORLD, NSC48/5, DIRECTIVES, GUIDANCES: 1949 – JULY 1953***

Broadly speaking, NSC 48/5 implicitly charged the American propaganda program with popularizing the following: strong and full Western alignment, the creation of a “Pacific NATO,” fervent anticommunism, and an anti-colonialist and pro-modernization image of Western development aid. To go about achieving this task, USIA directives issued during this period advised and instructed personnel to omit, shift emphasis, downplay, and/or mischaracterize information that might make popularizing these themes more difficult. These directives also served the purpose of the USIA trying to mask American neocolonialist efforts in Asia. To convince non-communists to accept America’s neocolonialist efforts during this period, the USIA instructed its personnel to portray these efforts as the path to permanent decolonization and modernity.

*Free World* came about as a result of that pre-Korean War expansion. First approved in the spring of 1950, *Free World*’s initial purpose was to be distributed to a general audience across the countries of non-communist Asia, especially Southeast Asia. Assembled by the staff of the Editorial Office of the United States Information Service (USIS) of Regional Production Center (RPC) in Manila, the USIS released the first issue of *Free World* in June 1951.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Memorandum by the officer in Charge of Public Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Connors) to the Ambassador at Large (Jessup), “Subject: Expanded USIE Program in Southeast Asia,” March 28, 1950, *FRUS: 1950, East Asia and the Pacific, Vol. VI*, 67-68 Document 31. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v06/d31>; “USIE Newsletter No. 1,” June 1951, 18, Ernest A. Keller papers (hereafter Keller papers): Box 3, Folder 29,

Based on currently available archival records, most of the issues of *Free World* examined for this paper had a white propaganda edition and a gray propaganda edition. The difference between white and gray propaganda was the former was attributed to the United States government while the latter was produced by the US government but not attributed to it. In the case of *Free World*, difference was in the publisher of the magazine listed at the bottom of the table-of-contents page; the white edition printed “published by the United States Information Service,” while the gray edition printed “published by the Free Asia Press.” *Free World* articles only included a byline if the article was a reprint from an actual news periodical or if the article was a reprinted excerpt of a statement or speech given by an American or Asian official. This lack of bylines was true for both the white and gray editions of each issue studied for this paper.<sup>13</sup>

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Georgetown University Library, Booth Family Center for Special Collections (hereafter GUBCSC), Washington, D.C.; see also, Howard Oiseth, “Part 1: The Institutional History,” *The Way It Was: USIA’s Press and Publications Service (1935-1977)* (Washington: The United States Information Agency, 1977), 11. “Semi-Annual USIE Report, June 1, 1951 – November 30, 1951,” US Embassy-Manila to State Department, Jan. 14, 1952, 60, 511.96/1-1452, Box 2543, State, CDF 1950-1954, RG 59, NACP. I intentionally used the word “assembled” here. The process by which the USIS assembled the articles of a given issue of a given edition changed around August 1952 when Ernest A. Keller became the permanent Director of the RPC. This new change, covered in more detail in the Introduction, essentially gave greater authority to USIS posts in the region to choose not only what articles would appear in their country’s language edition but also the tone of the articles. Furthermore, under Keller articles went from mostly being written by Editorial Office staff at the RPC to be written equally by USIS staff at other posts in the region and by Editorial Office Staff. See Note 15 for the document containing Keller’s explanation of the process while he was Director.

<sup>13</sup> Theodore B. Olson, “Inspection Report to the Department on The Far East Regional Production Center” May 1953, 2-3, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C. In a response to the Inspection Report, Keller noted that the Inspector’s outline of the monthly assembly process of *Free World* was not a criticism of the process but a codification of the then current process. See Ernest A. Keller, RPC Acting Director to Acting Administrative Officer, “Inspection Report - Far East Regional

Admittedly, the lack of records about detailing the author or authors of the majority of individual articles of *Free World* limits the depth of this paper's textual analysis to a not insignificant degree. Another limitation of my study's analysis and conclusions comes from my own language abilities. Between 1951 and 1954, the USIA published *Free World* in anywhere from 8-10 languages across the region. Of all the languages *Free World* was published in during the period I study below, the only one I am literate in is English. Thankfully, the RPC sent out a "core" edition, which served as a rough draft, in English every month to the magazine's subscribing USIA posts in the region. The posts were expected to translate, and starting after August 1952 to edit, the rough draft into the required language. The posts then sent the revised draft back to the RPC Editorial Office who then sent it to the printing plant of the RPC for printing before the final, translated copy was shipped back to the posts. The rough draft, English-language version of *Free World* that was sent to the posts each month is the version of *Free World* I examined.<sup>14</sup>

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Production Center, Manila," May 29, 1953, 1, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C. The Survey of *Free World* Articles conducted for this paper yielded the finding that nearly all articles had no listed author. *Free World* English Volumes 1-3, Boxes 237-8, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP.

<sup>14</sup> "USIE Newsletter No. 1," June 1951, 18, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 29, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C.; Theodore B. Olson, "Inspection Report to the Department on The Far East Regional Production Center" May 1953, 2-3, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C.; Ernest A. Keller, RPC Acting Director to Acting Administrative Officer, "Inspection Report - Far East Regional Production Center, Manila," May 29, 1953, 1, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C.; Oiseth, *The Way it Was*, 11.

Between June 1951 and at least May 1953, the process by which a *Free World* article came into existence changed. Between roughly June 1951 and August 1952, it seems the RPC Editorial Office wrote the lion's share of the articles, including articles about countries the staff of the Editorial Office knew little about. In August 1952, Ernest A. Keller became the permanent Director of the RPC and decentralized the authorship of *Free World* articles, as would be noted in a response to a May 1953 Inspection Report of the RPC. The report noted that at that time, an article about, say Thailand, was as likely to be written by USIS personnel in Thailand as by the staff of the Editorial Office at the RPC. In all likelihood, by May 1953 *Free World* articles about specific countries were probably most often written by USIS personnel stationed in those countries as the establishment of the USIA in August 1953 brought a restructuring of the entire US propaganda program. This restructuring, which largely followed the recommendations of the Jackson Committee, included granting the most senior USIS personnel in a given country, the country Public Affairs Officer (PAO), most of the authority to decide the tone and content of any US propaganda materials distributed there.<sup>15</sup>

As such, after August 1952, *Free World* authors at the RPC editorial office began allowing USIA personnel stationed in a given country in the region to write *Free World* articles about that country. This authorship change Director Keller noted as a departure

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<sup>15</sup> Theodore B. Olson, "Inspection Report to the Department on The Far East Regional Production Center" May 1953, 2-3, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C.; Ernest A. Keller, RPC Acting Director to Acting Administrative Officer, "Inspection Report - Far East Regional Production Center, Manila," May 29, 1953, 1, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C. For changes brought about by the establishment of the USIA, including a decentralization of responsibility over content and tone, see Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 77-78 and 224n7.

from the previous process by which *Free World* articles came into existence. This statement by Keller suggests that between May 1951 and July 1952, the staff of the RPC Editorial Office wrote the lion's share, if not all, of *Free World* articles, regardless of the extent of those staff members' knowledge about whichever country or topic they wrote. Unfortunately, the currently available archival records does not have records of any kind from the director or staff members of the RPC after Keller left in the summer of 1954. Given that part of the USIA's structuring in 1953 included delegating more decision-making authority over the tone and content of propaganda products to USIA field personnel, I have assumed for this paper that the authorship process under Director Keller's tenure at the RPC editorial office continued until the end of 1954, six months after his departure.<sup>16</sup>

Between May 17, 1951 and the late summer of 1954, NSC 48/5 governed American Cold War strategy in the "Far East" and South Asia. Approved by President Truman on May 17, 1951, NSC 48/5 officially superseded NSC 48/2. Over the following years, country and region-specific paragraphs (e.g. South Asia or Southeast Asia paragraphs) of NSC 48/5 would be superseded by new NSC policies for said regions or countries between May 17, 1951 and the late summer of 1954. That said, the next multi-regional National Security policy approved and of comparable geographic scope to NSC

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<sup>16</sup> Theodore B. Olson, "Inspection Report to the Department on The Far East Regional Production Center" May 1953, 2-3, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C.; Ernest A. Keller, RPC Acting Director to Acting Administrative Officer, "Inspection Report - Far East Regional Production Center, Manila," May 29, 1953, 1, Keller papers: Box 3, Folder 26, GUBCSC, Washington, D.C. For changes brought about by the establishment of the USIA, including a decentralization of responsibility over content and tone, see Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 77-78 and 224n7.

48/5 was the NSC 5429 series, which Eisenhower first approved in the late summer of 1954 and after a policy review later that year, approved again final version in December 1954. USIA directives and country plans all had to conform with objectives of NSC 48/5 since NSC policies governed USIA operations. Therefore, all propaganda distributed by the USIA to non-communist Asia during the period studied below had to conform, at the broadest level, with NSC 48/5 first and then NSC 5429/5.<sup>17</sup>

For American propaganda distributed to Asia Pacific, NSC 48/5 set the scene of the political climate within which the NSC perceived USIA personnel would operate. At the regional, geopolitical level, NSC 48/5 revealed what broader assumptions, interpretations, and goals governed American government officials' (including the USIA) conduct and actions in non-communist South, Southeast, and East Asia. While NSC 48/5 did not state specifically which objectives, assumptions, interpretations, etc. applied to which agencies' operations, we can reasonably assume some of these had applicability to USIA operations.

Implicitly, NSC 48/5 charged the USIE with objectives in Asia whose strategic value it considered as significant as the difficulty of these objectives. More specifically, the objectives USIA operations would help to try to accomplish were considered so strategically significant that the acknowledged difficulty of these objectives was not a

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<sup>17</sup> NSC 48/5, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 33. NSC 48/5's geographic area was "Asia." The next NSC policy to have almost as large a geographic area as NSC 48/5 was NSC 5429. NSC 5429's geographic area was for the "Far East," defined as non-communist East and Southeast Asia. See "Current U.S. Policy Towards the Far East." NSC 5429/5, December 22, 1954, *FRUS: 1952-1954, East Asia and the Pacific, Vol. XII, P1*, 1062-1063. While the USIA Director was not officially part of the NSC, USIA output did have to conform with NSC policies, see Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 38.

sufficient excuse for failure. Broadly speaking, NSC 48/5 implicitly charged the American propaganda program with popularizing: strong and full Western alignment, the creation of a “Pacific NATO,” an anticommunism so strong Asian nations refused to engage with communist parties or nations, and, a nationalist, anti-colonialist, pro-decolonization and pro-modernization image of Western development aid.

NSC 48/5 charged the USIA to create a new regional identity for non-communist Asia, one characterized by total Western alignment, strong anticommunism, use of the Western models of development, and intra-regional cooperation so strong that the Asian nations were footing the majority of the proverbial bill of their modernization. Paragraph 5a, one of the long-term objectives of NSC 48/5, defined “development” in the broadest terms. Paragraph 6d, one of the NSC’s more immediate objectives for Asia, defined most broadly America’s regional objectives in the Cold War’s war of ideas. Paragraph 15e, one of the directives regarding the promotion of a regional security alliance, the “Pacific NATO,” called for the encouragement and support of any example of intra-regionalism. Moreover, it linked said encouragement and support directly to the overall objective for the war of ideas listed in Paragraph 6d. Paragraph 15e and the NSC Staff Study accompanying NSC 48/5 both stated unequivocally that the promotion of mutual defense agreements, and more broadly, the promotion of some sort of regional security alliance, constituted one of the main foreign-policy objectives of the United States in non-Communist Asia. With the word “encourage” in the policy objective, we can be sure that the American propaganda program constituted one of the principal agencies tasked with

achieving that objective. In addition to receiving a broad mandate, the propaganda program also held significant strategic value.<sup>18</sup>

America's Eurocentric national security strategy enhanced the strategic import propaganda had in the Asia-Pacific region. For one, NSC 48/5 refused to commit American armed forces on the ground to ensure containment in Asia like the US had done in Europe. Adding further to propaganda's increased strategic role was NSC 48/5's assertion that the front-line of the Cold War had expanded outside of Europe to include Asia. However, in spite of this new front line, NSC 48/5's refusal to commit additional US armed forces to secure noncommunist Asia and the then upcoming withdrawal of American occupation forces in Japan meant that containment in non-communist Asia would largely be executed by propaganda, aid, and diplomacy. Certainly propaganda's increased strategic role for the region helped drive the expansion of the USIA's budget for the "Far East" region during the decade.<sup>19</sup>

NSC 48/5 acknowledged that while the region's political climate and recent, or in some cases ongoing, history of Western colonialism gave the USIA a difficult task in

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<sup>18</sup> Paragraphs 5a, 6d, and 15e, NSC 48/5, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 35-36, 39; see also Paragraph 7 of the NSC Staff Study attached to NSC 48/5, "Annex 2, NSC 48/5: NSC Staff Study on United States Objectives, Policies, and Courses of Action in Asia," (hereafter "Annex 2, NSC 48/5") *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 42.

<sup>19</sup> Paragraph 44, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 59; Paragraph 1, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 34. For a concise account of USIA budget and staff sizes of four geographic "areas" of newly created USIA, see Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 103. Cull noted that the "Far East" had 1,300 staff (second largest) and a budget of \$2.7 million (third largest but only \$200,000 behind second largest budget). For the growth of USIA's budget for non-communist Asia over course of 1950's, see Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 115.

accomplishing national security objectives, that task could have been much more difficult. The NSC argued “the indigenous institutions of Asia have been surprisingly resistant to communism.” However, the NCS staff added a caveat, warning American officials not to confuse this resistance “with pro-Americanism.” Undoubtedly, the NSC argued, America faced “...a formidable political and propaganda task in establishing relations with Asia on a basis of mutual confidence and common interest, and in influencing the intense nationalism to take a direction harmonious with the interests of the free world.”<sup>20</sup>

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When it came to presenting American military aid, USIA directives and country propaganda plans consistently promoted two themes: non-dependency and permanent decolonization. For the first theme, they claimed American military aid did not create dependency because the aid was a product of a mutual agreement. Secondly, American military aid sought to help guarantee independence and internal stability, thereby ensuring permanent decolonization. Country propaganda plans for both the Philippines and Thailand instructed that all material distributed to those countries cast US military aid as the result of a mutual agreement. The 1951 country propaganda plan for French Indochina not only instructed USIS personnel to connect US military aid with nationalism and anticommunism. For example, it directed staff to argue that the US

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<sup>20</sup> Paragraph 8f2, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 44.

provided military and economic aid to, among other things, “enable the French and the Associated States to resist Communist armed threat from abroad.”<sup>21</sup>

To enhance the appeal of American economic aid, the USIA portrayed it as a catalyst of non-communist Asia’s economic modernization. The country propaganda plans for French Indochina, the Philippines, and Thailand all directed USIS personnel in those countries to portray American economic aid as something which produced tangible benefits that moved the recipient nation towards a particular national goal, be it self-sufficiency, improved standards of living, internal political stability, industrialization, or independence. The 1950 country plan for the Philippines, in effect until late 1952, ordered USIS materials to show tangible economic benefits reaped by Philippine citizens from American economic aid. The 1950 country plan for Thailand ordered output to present American economic aid as something that moved Thailand closer to economic self-sufficiency while simultaneously helping Thailand to maintain its independence. The

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<sup>21</sup> “Special Guidance No. 37: General Guidance on Philippines,” February 28, 1950, 3, *Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances (Subject File, 1951)*, US Department of State Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Policy Advisory Staff (hereafter SOAPA), Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “Special Guidance No. 43: General Guidance on Thailand,” May 24, 1950, 3, *Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances (Subject File, 1951)*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “Propaganda Plan for Vietnam, Cambodia, & Laos,” Apr. 14, 1951, 6-9, *Unmarked Black Binder*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. In October 1952 the Philippines and Thailand guidances would be listed as guidances that needed significant updates or consolidation with other related guidances. See “Cancellation and Revision of Special Guidances” October 7, 1952, 3, Annex C, *Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances (Subject File, 1951)*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. See Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 276 on why Bao-Dai’s regime was considered a sham in the region.

1951 French Indochina country propaganda plan instructed USIS personnel to present American economic aid as something that assisted “indigenous efforts toward stability and prosperity for all the people.”<sup>22</sup>

A reader of *Free World* could have been forgiven for thinking most of the American foreign aid received by their country, or other East and Southeast Asian nations, came in the form of economic aid, not military aid. An examination of the USIA’s *Free World Index* of economic development articles and of articles about East and/or Southeast Asian militaries showed that between 1951 and December 1954, *Free World* published more articles about Asian economic development than it did about Asian militaries. Odd Arne Westad noted that most US aid distributed to the Third World during the 1950’s was military. This discrepancy begs this question: why did *Free World* present US foreign aid so inaccurately?<sup>23</sup>

*Free World* employed this topical emphasis to enhance the appeal of American development aid to the “Far East” by casting it in an anti-colonialist light. In the NSC 48 series, US officials acknowledged that Western military aid was often likely to be viewed by non-communist Asia as a potential ruse for seizing colonial control. A 1951 directive

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<sup>22</sup> “Special Guidance No. 37: General Guidance on Philippines,” Feb. 28, 1950, 2; “Special Guidance No. 43: General Guidance on Thailand,” May 24, 1950, 3; “Propaganda Plan for Vietnam, Cambodia, & Laos,” Apr. 14, 1951, 6-9; “Cancellation and Revision of Special Guidances: Annex C” Oct. 7, 1952, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Most articles in either of those categories included some mention of how US foreign aid was involved. Of the three analytical categories noted in the introduction, Modernization and Development articles were published most often, Decolonization second most, and anticommunism last. See the introduction for my breakdown of the *Free World Index*. The overwhelming majority of US aid to the Global South as military aid, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 26.

about the then yet-to-be passed Mutual Security Act instructed USIS personnel in the “Far East” that US propaganda about the program should emphasize stories involving American economic aid over stories involving American military aid. The directive stated that East and Southeast Asians harbored “doubts and suspicion of U.S. foreign assistance attached particularly to military aid.” East and Southeast Asia’s recent colonial status and Communist propaganda’s frequent accusations of Western military aid as imperialist combined to create a difficult propaganda environment for the USIS. The USIA believed a similar reaction was much less likely for stories about American economic aid programs and therefore, products should emphasize economic aid stories over military aid stories. The USIA appeared to have hoped this emphasis of economic aid over military aid regarding the Mutual Security Program would make the agreement too appealing for non-communist Asia to turn down. This directive reflected US officials’ acknowledgement of the powerful memories of colonial rule still present in the minds of their audience. Within a year, the USIA cancelled this directive and yet, between October 1952 and December 1954, *Free World* continued the directive’s topical emphasis.<sup>24</sup>

Anticommunist directives essentially instructed USIS personnel to, unbeknown to them, patronizingly explain the horrors of communism to non-communist Asia. Between early 1950 and October 1952, USIS personnel in East and Southeast Asia received

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<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 8f1, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 44. For the quoted line and the emphasis of economic aid over military aid, see Paragraph 1 of the General Treatment section of Annex D of Special Guidance 91, “Special Guidance No. 91: Mutual Security Program, Annex D: Far East,” May 23, 1951, 2, *Unmarked Black Binder*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. For the almost voiding of Special Guidance No. 91, see “Cancellation and Revision of Special Guidances” Oct. 7, 1952, Annex C, 1.

instructions to “expose” communism as the new imperialism or the new colonialism or a threat to independence/sovereignty. In instructions for anticommunist message for a specific country and in special guidances detailing specific lines of attack (e.g. Soviet Imperialism), the USIE instructed field personnel to use well-vetted stories of oppression in communist nation-states to “expose” communism. To the USIA’s credit, the directive to use credible accounts of oppression, death, destruction, etc. in communist countries counts as one of the few times between 1950 and 1954 that they stressed any given story’s credibility was as important as the message. While far fewer stories dedicated solely to anticommunism appeared in *Free World* during the first half of the 1950’s in comparison to stories about economic development, the magazine, like other USIA products across the world, had the freedom to follow an indirect approach which allowed for short, Parthian-shot-like jabs at communism in other pieces on other topics. *Free World* frequently deployed this indirect approach during its first two years of publication.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Special Guidances detailing specific lines of anticommunist rhetoric were littered of directives to “expose” some aspect of communism. See for example “Special Guidance No. 55: Soviet Imperialism,” Aug. 24, 1950, 1-5, *Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances (Subject File, 1951)*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “Special Guidance No. 81: Communist Fallibility,” Mar. 10, 1951, 1-4, *Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances (Subject File, 1951)*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. For “expose” and “highly credible” directives, see Paragraph 2j, “Special Guidance No. 37: General Guidance on Philippines” Feb. 28, 1950, 3; Paragraph 2c in “Special Guidance No. 43: General Guidance on Thailand,” May 24, 1950, 2; Paragraph F “Propaganda Plan for Vietnam, Cambodia, & Laos,” Apr. 14, 1951, 10. For the “Indirect Approach” see “Special Guidance No. 81: Communist Fallibility,” Mar. 10, 1951, 4, *Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances (Subject File, 1951)*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP.

US propaganda in the region did not focus solely on popularizing Western alignment, American foreign aid, and anticommunism. It also sought to popularize intra-regionalism, in the hopes of one day it would have enough popularity that a "Pacific Pact" could emerge. Both the NSC 48 series and individual country propaganda plans instructed USIS personnel to publish stories showcasing intra-regional cooperation as an example of an emerging regional consciousness. The country propaganda plans did not instruct USIA personnel to state the purpose behind promoting greater intra-regionalism but NSC 48/5 asserted that popularizing an intra-regionalist consciousness was necessary to the emergence of a regional collective security alliance like NATO, referred to by US officials as "Pacific Pact." As we shall see, *Free World* appears to have attempted to galvanize the desired intra-regionalism more quickly by casting intra-regionalism as a path towards faster modernization and decolonization.<sup>26</sup>

When discussing the subjects of either decolonization or American foreign aid, the USIA directed personnel in the "Far East" to stress that US aid did not create dependency, US supported Asia maintaining independence, and the US supported the eventual independence of then current European colonies. Country plans for Thailand and the Philippines from 1950 instructed USIS staff that one of the main points to emphasize in all content to each country was Thai and Philippine independence. The 1951 country plan for French Indochina instructed USIS personnel to thread the needle of supporting independence without enraging a major European ally. The USIA instructed its staff there

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<sup>26</sup> NSC 48/5, *FRUS: 1951, Vol. VI*, 33-63. For directives on promoting intra-regionalism, see especially "Special Guidance No. 37: General Guidance on Philippines," Feb. 28, 1950; "Special Guidance No. 43: General Guidance on Thailand," May 24, 1950; "Propaganda Plan for Vietnam, Cambodia, & Laos," Apr. 14, 1951.

to state that America supported Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese becoming equal independent parts of the French Union. To further avoid the appearance of colonialism, the USIA instructed its staff in Asia-Pacific that content about American aid received from a Mutual Security Program agreement focus on the economic aid over military aid. The document noted that the audience would likely view this program as a ruse another colonialist power grab by a Western nation.<sup>27</sup>

Between 1950 and 1954, America's Eurocentric Cold War strategy consigned USIA personnel in Asia-Pacific to always have to write propaganda that allowed the US government to claim it supported both decolonization and that it supported the policies of its Western European allies who still remained in control of some portions of their pre-World War II colonial empires. In particular both administrations' proclivity to care more about European views on decolonization in Asia-Pacific than about Asia-Pacific's views on decolonization made the task of selling America as a supporter of decolonization all the more difficult for the USIA. And while USIA products like *Free World* would try to cast communism as the new colonialism threatening Asian self-determination, American diplomatic efforts to get non-communist Asia to align with the West in the Cold War would reveal America's own colonialist intentions.

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<sup>27</sup> "Special Guidance No. 37: General Guidance on Philippines," Feb. 28, 1950, 2; "Special Guidance No. 43: General Guidance on Thailand," May 24, 1950, 2; "Propaganda Plan for Vietnam, Cambodia, & Laos," April 14, 1951, 2, 6. For the overall Mutual Security Program guidance, see "Special Guidance No. 91: Mutual Security Program," May 23, 1951, 4, *Unmarked Black Binder*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. For the statement of the likely interpretation of "Far Eastern" audiences, see Paragraph 1 of the General Treatment section of "Special Guidance No. 91: Mutual Security Program, Annex D: Far East," May 23, 1951, 2.

### CHAPTER 3

#### *FREE WORLD: JUNE 1951 – JULY 1953*

Between 1951 and 1953, stories about modernization projects in the region appeared more often than articles on nearly any other subject. This frequency directly reflected American analysis of the Cold War in Asia, decolonization, and the severity of the challenge posed by communism. NSC 48/2, the policy NSC 48/5 superseded, identified political instability, economic “backwardness,” and economic instability as widespread in non-communist Asian nations. NSC 48/2 stated that economic and political instability created conditions advantageous for the popularization of communism in a given nation. NSC 48/5 maintained this belief. The existence of these domestic insecurities was part of the reason the US considered the threat of communism to be so severe. If those problems could be mitigated or removed, then the threat of “losing” another Asian country or countries to communism diminished. Development aid to non-communist Asia, and propaganda promoting that aid and encouraging Asian nations to accept more, thus represented one of America’s principal methods of containment for the region.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> For articles I classified as “Modernization and Development,” see the Introduction and Note 11 above. For the NSC’s concerns about political and economic stability in non-communist Asia, see Paragraphs 23 and 35, NSC 48/1, Dec. 23, 1949, *Pentagon Papers*, Book 8, 247-248, 257-258. These paragraphs of NSC 48/1 were not changed for NSC 48/2. For NSC 48/5’s continuation of this belief regarding instability, see Paragraph 8g1, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific*, Vol. VI, P1, 45.

I argue that the US utilized the language of nationalism, and the regions fervor' for Non-Alignment and closer intra-regional cooperation to sell US economic and military aid. My research seeks to contribute to how we understand how the US executed propaganda to support its policy interests in the Southeast Asia/Pacific region. *Free World* defined western liberalism and US presence in the region as secondary/disinterested supporters of the East/Pacific and Southeast Asia's postcolonial agenda - nationalism and intra-regionalism. Lastly, during this period *Free World* implicitly attacked communism on two fronts. Firstly, *Free World* attacked its validity as a political economy, arguing it was antithetical to economic modernization, implied human rights abuses, and highlighted seemingly absurd policies. Secondly, *Free World* attacked associations of communism with nationalism and tried to paint communism as the new colonialism seeking to enthrall non-communist Asia. Indeed, *Free World* claimed the threat of this new colonialism was so great that meeting it required unprecedented intra-regional cooperation.

NSC 48/5 acknowledged the difficulty of the task facing American propagandists in the region. In order for the economic aid programs to work as a method of containment, the Asian nations needed to agree to participate in the programs. In order for that to happen, enough Asian politicians, opinion-makers, and the public at large, needed to believe that American aid was non-colonialist. To create this non-colonialist image, *Free World* presented articles about modernization projects that included Western aid using two themes. The first theme emphasized the temporary nature of the programs. The second theme characterized Western economic aid as supplemental to these modernization projects. Part of this second theme included the image that non-communist

Asia was self-modernizing. Western modernization aid therefore could not qualify as colonialist because it did not create dependency.<sup>29</sup>

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During the Korean War, *Free World* modernization articles cast economic aid deals with Western nations as agreements in the best economic interests of Asian states. An early 1953 article promised “A Year’s Training” in the United States would provide Taiwanese technicians with “A Century’s Profit.” The piece claimed the thirty-five technicians’ return represented another link in America’s virtuously motivated economic aid program, “...which aims to give other people the means to help themselves.” The article asserted that the chance to observe and learn techniques and methods was potentially useful to the technicians’ jobs in Taiwan. This article argued that self-interest and integrity motivated US economic aid.<sup>30</sup>

The article attempted to persuade the audience of American solidarity with audience desires for economic modernization and development. American officials, as we have seen, believed that if the USIS succeeded in convincing enough East Asians of this solidarity then Western alignment would follow. The article excluded any information detailing under what agreement this exchange program had been agreed upon, mindful of a widespread, and well-founded, belief amongst non-communist Asia, that accepting aid from the US meant accepting Cold War strings. Rather, the USIS spent most of the article

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<sup>29</sup> Paragraph 8f2, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, PI, 44*.

<sup>30</sup> “A Year’s Training-A Century’s Profit,” *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 4, 30-31, *Free World English Folder Vol. II Nos. 4-6, Free World English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP*.

to promoting the potential and current results of the exchange program to entice other governments to enter into a similar program.<sup>31</sup>

The article sought to counter communist charges that America's aid program was a thinly veiled colonialist policy. It mischaracterized the exchange program as A) one with no strings attached to Western alignment or dependency on the US and B) one that coincidentally had value to the American Cold War strategy. Thus, the piece tried to mask the neocolonialism of an American aid program by selling it as something that could yield potentially massive returns on small initial investments.

Just before the end of the Korean War, *Free World* published an article that tried to persuade its audience that East Asian nations could self-modernize their country's economy by cooperating with other East Asian countries. Titled "Asian Nations Can Work Together," the article wasted no time making its point. *Free World* claimed that the article's title came not from the unlisted magazine writer but from the meeting/conference the article covered. In addition to modernization, the article emphasized that JAYCEE's – which stands for Junior Chamber of Commerce – also facilitated educational development in the region, granting scholarships and running programs for the underprivileged. The piece held up the JAYCEE's International and JAYCEE members as paragons of civic virtue. *Free World* made sure to point out that Western nations had only sent observers to the conference. By downplaying Western

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<sup>31</sup> NSC 48/1, Dec. 23, 1949, Department of Defense, *Pentagon Papers*, Book 8, 249-253, esp. Paragraphs 23, 25, and 27. See the citations of Note 24 above for the NSC's acknowledgement of non-Communist Asia's concerns over attached strings and US aid. For America's constant attempts to attach strings to its foreign aid, see Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 96. "A Year's Training-A Century's Profit," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 4, 30-31.

participation and playing up Asian participation, the article propagated the idea of modernization via intra-regional cooperation.<sup>32</sup>

Overall, articles about modernization projects promoted the idea that development projects done with little Western participation would yield large returns in the form of technical knowledge, new technology, training, equipment, etc. In essence, these articles, sold the model of economic-development-via-international-cooperation as a shortcut to industrialization, and thus, a shortcut to economic modernity. When Western nations did have a presence in the project, *Free World* presented the involved Western aid program as small, temporary, and virtuously motivated. Cognizant of the economic exploitation East and Southeast Asians suffered under the colonial rule of Western Europeans and then Japan and then Western Europeans again, *Free World* attempted to portray American, and Western, economic aid as genuinely motivated to provide self-help for modernization. Thus, in addition to emphasizing the temporary nature of American economic aid, *Free World* also portrayed the aid as something where even minuscule

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<sup>32</sup> JAYCEE is an acronym for, essentially, “Junior Chamber of Commerce/Junior Chamber.” JAYCEE’s were civic organizations all over the world that sought to teach leadership and management skills to young men between the ages of 18 and 35. Women would not be permitted until towards the end of the century and were relegated to “JAYCEE-ettes.” Founded in 1915 in the US, by the early 1950’s a number of JAYCEE chapters existed all over Asia. See “About JCI,” Accessed June 5, 2018. <https://jci.cc/en/about>. It bears mentioning that *Free World*, Vol. 2, No. 7 was the last USIS edition published before the Korean War Armistice. Vol. II, Issue No. 8 was the first Post-Armistice issue published. “Asian Nations Can Work Together,” *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 7, 24-27, *Free World* English Folder Volume II Nos. 7-9, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP.

participation in such programs could yield returns capable of opening the floodgates to economic modernization.<sup>33</sup>

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Korean War era anticommunist articles in *Free World* tried to persuade the audience that communism's intrusive nature was antithetical to their aspirations of nationalism, decolonization, modernization, and regionalism. The propaganda's emphasis reflected US foreign policymakers' beliefs that East Asians did not fully appreciate the threat of communism to their countries.<sup>34</sup>

One of the magazine's earliest anticommunist pieces directly compared land reform efforts in North and South Korea. Published in October 1951, the article consisted of four captioned sketches detailing land reform and the two Korea's. One of the sketches showed a man standing above the farmers of the village pointing at the fields. The other three sketches for North Korea focused on conveying the physical strain of labor in a communist economy, showing farmers physically straining to do their work.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "The return of these technicians is another link in the American program of economic aid which aims to give other people the means to help themselves. The "means" in this case was the chance to observe and learn techniques and methods which the trainees may find useful in their regular work on Taiwan. In today's world, American self-interest demands that other countries be strong and self-dependent." "A Year's Training-A Century's Profit," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 4, 30-31.

<sup>34</sup> A good, concise statement of this belief of US foreign policymakers can be found in Paragraph 47, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, PI*, 60.

<sup>35</sup> "Land Reform," *Free World* Vol. 1, No. 3, 42-43, *Free World English* Vol. I No, 1-12, Box 237, Publications about the United States 1953 -1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP.

Meanwhile, the sketches portrayed South Korean land reform as less physically strenuous, less arbitrary, and as something which produced desirable results. To convey the systemic land reform program of South Korea, showing them in a farming village under a shining sun with agricultural and animal abundance. The first three sketches showed an informative meeting, a farmer receiving his ownership of his land document, and a transaction between a farmer and a government official. The end result of this systemic land reform program came in in the fourth and final caption, showing farmers smiling in their bustling village underneath bright sunshine. The captions to sketches chronicled the large events in land reform projects of the two Koreas between the end of World War II and 1951. These sketches, purportedly drawn by a North Korean refugee artist, employed negative imagery for the North Koreans and positive or neutral imagery for the South Koreans, hoping the audience would adopt the same connotations.<sup>36</sup>

The captions and text of the piece painted communist land reform - and more broadly communist agricultural development – as “a hoax,” where “land-hungry farmers had once again been betrayed by false communist promises.” The first captions cast communist land reform as arbitrary and characterized by heavy taxation. In the end, the magazine argued, “North Korean farmers suffered more under communist land reform than they had under the old system of absentee landlords.” While brief, the text of the article contained a few comments deriding the North Korean land reform program. Yet the contrasting images of the Western and communist models of agricultural development argued more broadly that Western modernization models improved quality

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<sup>36</sup> “Land Reform,” *Free World* Vol. 1, No. 3, 42-43.

of life while communist models reduced the quality of life. In time, these comments transformed into oft-repeated themes *Free World* indirectly deployed during its first two years to discredit and disparage all communist economies.<sup>37</sup>

The article omitted a good deal of context about US-South Korean relations since the establishment of the Republic of Korea in May 1948. For example, while the US government did appear in the piece and it mentioned the US military government of the mid 1940's, the USIS preempted any critique alleging (though the critique would have been correct) dependency of the South Korean government on American economic and military aid by simply omitting any mention of US aid since the end of the US military government in May 1948. David Ekbladh noted that South Korean agricultural development depended heavily on American economic aid. Through these omissions, the article cast South Korean land reform as a program initiated by the US and subsequently executed by the South Korean government.<sup>38</sup>

*Free World* cast the “threat” of communism to the Asia-Pacific region in alarmist terms in articles published during the Korean War. One article published in early 1953 posited in that Vietnam and Cambodia, two nations whose rivalry the magazine described as “legendary,” put aside their respective antipathies because of the threat of communism. To add to the severity of the communist threat, the same article described a visit between

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<sup>37</sup> “Land Reform,” *Free World* Vol. 1, No. 3, 42-43. This article constituted one of the few *Free World* articles published between 1951 and 1954 that directly compared communist and capitalist modernization models.

<sup>38</sup> “Land Reform,” *Free World* Vol. 1, No. 3, 42-43; For South Korea's dependency on US aid after the occupation, see David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 246-294, esp. 254-256, 260, 269, 276-277.

the King of Cambodia and the Premier of Vietnam as “historic.” By crediting “the common menace of communism” as the cause of a “historic visit” which ended a “legendary rivalry” between two “states,” the piece implicitly argued that confronting the severity of the threat of communism required an unprecedented level of “intra-regional” cooperation.<sup>39</sup>

*Free World*'s use of rhetoric the majority of its audience disagreed with (chiefly, that Vietnam and Cambodia were independent nation-states) likely damaged the credibility and believability of the article's central message that two Asian leaders agreed that confronting communism's unprecedented threat required unprecedented cooperation. In particular, the article presented the visit as one between two heads of state of two independent countries and characterized Cambodian communists as “dissidents.” These characterizations attempted to enhance the legitimacy of the then governments of Cambodia and Vietnam and to denigrate Cambodian communists, and more broadly, the Vietminh.<sup>40</sup>

Recent scholarship has showed that such a characterization likely would not have been well received by much of *Free World*'s audience. These castings were unpopular not just in Cambodia and Vietnam, but were unpopular in most of the other countries of

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<sup>39</sup> “A Neighborly Chat,” *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 5, 18, *Free World* English Folder Volume II Nos. 4-6, *Free World* English Vol. 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP.

<sup>40</sup> “A Neighborly Chat,” *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 5, 18. Indeed the idea that Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos were independent from the French was considered false by many officials and citizens in non-communist Asia. This colony status was not just an interpretation, but also a fact as the French would not officially and formally relinquish control until the Geneva Agreement of 1954. See Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 276 on why Bao-Dai's regime in Vietnam was considered a sham.

South, East, and Southeast Asia. At the time of the article's publication, France had not granted independence to either Cambodia or Vietnam or even Laos. France did not grant independence until the close of the Geneva Conference of 1954. Moreover, few Asian nations regarded the Associated States of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos as independent. Therefore, we can reasonably assume most *Free World* readers rejected the article's message.<sup>41</sup>

Lastly, the piece mischaracterized the Cambodian campaign against Cambodian Communists. Since France still controlled the Associated States, then the King's anticommunist campaign constituted a component of the larger French-directed war effort in Indochina rather than the campaign of an independent government. The piece claimed the Vietnamese Premier complimented the Cambodian King "on the excellent campaign he was waging against the dissidents in his state." Yet by early 1953 the French war effort depended almost entirely on US aid.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Goscha, "Choosing Between the Two Vietnams," in Goscha and Osterman, *Connecting Histories*, 221, 226-227, 229; Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 193, 198, 206, 275-276, 290, 300, 370, 440, 445; McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 35, 60; Lawrence, "Recasting Vietnam," in Goscha and Osterman, *Connecting Histories*, 19; The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Geneva Accords," Encyclopædia Britannica, February 12, 2016, accessed May 27, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Geneva-Accords>.

<sup>42</sup> Goscha, "Choosing Between the Two Vietnams," in Goscha and Osterman, *Connecting Histories*, 221, 226-27,229; Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 193, 198, 206, 275-276, 290, 300, 370, 440, 445; McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 35, 60; Lawrence, "Recasting Vietnam," *Connecting Histories*, 19; The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Geneva Accords," Encyclopædia Britannica, February 12, 2016, accessed May 27, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Geneva-Accords>. For the Premier's compliment quote, see "A Neighborly Chat," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 5, 18. For the forty percent figure, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 62; Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 311.

In late 1952 or early 1953, *Free World* published an article which tried to cast the French Indochina war as an anti-colonial conflict with French and Vietnamese forces seeking to ensure the freedom of the Associated States of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos from communism. The article, titled “Future Admirals of Vietnam,” told a story about naval cadets at the then new Vietnamese National Naval School at Nhatrang. Proclaiming the cadets brought “. . . alive old traditions of Vietnamese naval skill,” the article invoked two heroic figures of Vietnamese independence and Vietnamese naval history: Gia Long and Tran Hung. Having cast the Vietnamese National Naval School at Nhatrang as the institution creating the modern-day successors of Gia Long and Tran Hung, *Free World* imbued the program with a nationalist aura.<sup>43</sup>

To create this nationalist and anti-colonialist image, *Free World* used equivocal descriptions of the parties involved. After the invocation of two heroes of Vietnamese independence, *Free World* delivered the Cold War framework, “Today, Vietnam’s national leaders once again are building naval strength. Faced by an internal enemy with alien backing, they know this strength is necessary to protect the country’s two-thousand-mile coastline and its many internal waterways.” Rather than say “Vietminh” or

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<sup>43</sup> “Future Admirals of Vietnam,” *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 3, 10-11, *Free World* English Folder Vol. II Nos. 1-3, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP. First, the article invoked Gia Long, the first emperor of the Nguyen Dynasty. He not only unified Vietnam for the first time in over three centuries at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Gia Long,” Encyclopædia Britannica, March 30, 2016, accessed May 27, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gia-Long>. Second, the article invoked Lord General Tran Hung, the military leader who played a crucial role in repelling all three of the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty’s unsuccessful invasions of Vietnam in the thirteenth century. The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Tran Hung Dao,” Encyclopædia Britannica, November 30, 2016, accessed May 27, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tran-Hung-Dao>

“Vietnamese communists backed by Chinese/Soviet communists” the article described Ho Chi Minh’s Vietminh as “an internal enemy with alien backing.” This deliberate characterization attempted to cast the war against the Vietminh in a framework of Vietnam’s national leaders versus rebels rather than a Cold War framework of Communists versus “Free World” or an East versus West. By labeling Chinese military assistance to the Vietminh as “alien backing” of an “internal enemy” of “Vietnam’s national leaders,” the piece cast Chinese military assistance as foreign intervention in Vietnam’s internal affairs. This image implicitly conflated aid received by the Vietminh from China with China’s earlier intervention in the Korean War.<sup>44</sup>

Notice too how the article described the officials in charge of the naval buildup as “Vietnam’s national leaders.” These characterizations attempted to cast the perception that this new Academy, presumably part of a larger naval buildup, amounted to a nationalist continuation of Vietnamese naval history. By obfuscating the French officials responsible for the origination and the execution of the naval buildup and by construing the French Indochina War as an internal conflict between rebels backed by a foreign power against “the national leaders of Vietnam,” the article attempted to convince its readers to conflate anti-communism and Westernized military modernization with Vietnamese nationalism.<sup>45</sup>

The article’s big omissions were that Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos still existed as French colonies and that the French war effort increasingly depended on US aid. A

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<sup>44</sup> “Future Admirals of Vietnam,” *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 3, 10-11.

<sup>45</sup> “Future Admirals of Vietnam,” *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 3, 10-11.

number of scholars have noted that by at least late 1952, American military assistance constituted forty percent of French expenditure. Obviously, American and French officials were never going to disclose that the French war effort in Vietnam had become dependent upon, by the time of the publication of this article, American military assistance. Why? American officials remained cognizant throughout the entire French-Indochina War that much of the rest of the world viewed the French war effort as colonialist. The obfuscation and omissions about the naval buildup allowed *Free World* to cast the buildup as a decolonization project with a nationalist motive. Thanks to their use of vague, but technically accurate, language, USIS could claim *Free World* reported accurately and had not propagandized - via lying or misleading - anything about the story.<sup>46</sup>

In trying to conflating communism with colonialism, the USIA attempted to cast the French war effort in Indochina as an anticolonialist endeavor and not an attempt of reasserting imperial control. Furthermore, this article's construction of military modernization/military buildup as "necessary" to protect a nation even from an "internal enemy," combined with the article's closing sentence that the most fulfilling part of the program for the cadets came from the "knowledge that they were helping to protect their

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<sup>46</sup> For the forty percent figure, see Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 311 or McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 62. For information on US aid to French Indochina in the early 1950's, see also Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 253, 341-342, 366, 388, and 759n11. For Vietnamese views of Ho Chi Minh as a Nationalist, and on the Vietnamese's widespread disbelief in French declarations of granting independence, see Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 193, 300, 445. Previous scholarship has shown that many Asian and American officials viewed the French War effort as colonialist, see for example, the McMahon and Lovegall citations in this note as well as Goscha, "Choosing Between the Two Vietnams," in *Goscha and Osterman, Connecting Histories*, 207-237, esp. 221, 227, 229.

country's independence," asserted to the audience that the ability to protect a nation's independence required a modern military, which required military modernization programs if such a military did not exist. Thus construed, the article linked Western-modeled military modernization programs with decolonization and anti-communism and painted communism as colonialist by noting the Vietminh had "foreign backing."<sup>47</sup>

In the spring of 1953, *Free World* published an article that attempted to use a recent pledge of mutual defense between the Philippines and Taiwan to popularize and promote mutual defense agreements between two non-communist nations as anti-colonialist security alliances. This article's propaganda techniques, and the image said techniques created, typified *Free World* articles on security alliances published during the Korean War. The article told the story about the Taiwanese Air Force reciprocating an earlier goodwill mission by the Philippine Air Force and the resulting mutual defense pledge. By highlighting two Asian nations who agreed to such an agreement, *Free World* tried to give such treaties a nationalist aura by casting them as a step towards ensuring permanent decolonization.<sup>48</sup>

Despite its brevity, the piece employed a number of propaganda techniques to present a specific interpretation of the significance of the mission. In offering a specific image of security alliances, American policymakers hoped to popularize bilateral and eventually multilateral security alliances so that the Pacific Pact called for in NSC 48/5

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<sup>47</sup> "Future Admirals of Vietnam," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 3, 10-11.

<sup>48</sup> "Flights of Friendship," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 6, 20, *Free World* English Folder Vol. II Nos. 4-6, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, RG 306, NACP.

could come into existence. The techniques employed cast security alliances between both Asian nations and Western powers and between Asian nations as agreements that would ensure permanent decolonization.<sup>49</sup>

The article's strategic value centered on the story offering a nationalist, anti-colonialist/democratic image of the US Mutual Defense Program (MDP) to counter the colonialist image created by the stated motivations behind the refusal of India, Burma, and Indonesia. Between the beginning of the MDP in 1951 and the spring of 1953, American diplomatic efforts failed to persuade India, Burma, and Indonesia to enter into an MDP agreement and accept the attached strings of a dependent and aligned relationship with the US, and by extension, the West. While India and Burma agreed to the program, both succeeded in acquiring the aid without having to agree to Section 511a, which attached strings of dependency to the aid. In Indonesia, the pro-American Sukiman Cabinet secretly agreed on January 5, 1952 to the MDP agreement, including the acceptance of Section 511a. Shortly after that, the secret got out and press and legislative outrage over the acceptance of Section 511a successfully pressured the Sukiman Cabinet to renege on the agreement and then resign in disgrace in late February 1952.<sup>50</sup>

In Thailand, center-left and left-leaning Thai press outlets increasingly viewed US military aid as the source of the ability of the increasingly oppressive and unpopular Phibun government to remain in power. By the spring of 1953, knowledge of other

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<sup>49</sup> Paragraph 15e, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, PI*, 39.

<sup>50</sup> For Burma and India's refusal of Section 511a of the agreements, see Mason, "Containment and the Challenge of Non-Alignment," in Goscha and Osterman, *Connecting Histories*, 61-63.

rejections of Section 511a and the Phibun government's ever more oppressive policies helped popularize a colonialist image of any MDP agreement that included Section 511a, and by extension US foreign aid in general, in Bangkok and the region. At the time of the article's publication then, the USIS likely believed that they urgently needed to convince non-communist Asia to accept a different image of Section 511a, of MDP's, and of American foreign aid in general.<sup>51</sup>

This article presented security alliances as actions that would further secure every participating nation's ability to maintain its independence. Conscious of East Asian concerns regarding military aid and security alliances, *Free World* offered quotations from East Asian officials who made statements that towed American propaganda directives. In this article, USIS quoted the then Philippine Air Force chief, Colonel Benito Ebuena. The Ebuena quote provided readers with the significance of the mission – specifically that it constituted a representation and step towards nationalism, decolonization, anti-colonialism, democracy, and not an accepted colonialism – to the audience. The article continued, stating “Pledging their countries to the support of “one principal idea-freedom,” both leaders expressed their readiness for mutual defense, should the need arise.” By putting “one principal idea-freedom” in quotes, the article made the phrase appear to come from an official document thereby imbuing the pledge with a nationalist aura.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War*, 98, 123.

<sup>52</sup> The Ebuena quote from the article stated “...Colonel Benito Ebuena, Philippine Air Force Chief, said: ‘This exchange of visits is doubly significant because it will not only foster closer relations between our two countries, but will also strengthen our efforts to uphold the principles to which we of the democracies stand dedicate.’ Pledging their

But perhaps the article's most important technique in casting the pledge in an aura of genuine nationalism and support of decolonization came from the piece's omissions. In particular, the article abstained from casting the deal in a Cold War framework. Another conspicuous absence was the article's lack of information of any Western influence and/or role in facilitating, encouraging, or dictating either and/or both countries to do the agreement. The final sentence of the piece noted that the Philippine Colonel "was especially impressed" by the growing number of aircraft factories in Taiwan. However, the piece omitted information about the cause, likely US military aid, of the growth of aircraft factories in Taiwan.<sup>53</sup>

The most likely reason for the exclusion of this information was that American military aid to Taiwan had significantly financed the observed growth in airplane factories. Several scholars have noted that during the 1950's, at least during the first half of the decade, the economies and militaries of both Taiwan and the Philippines depended on American military and economic aid. At the time of this article's publication, both nations had become economically and militarily dependent upon American aid.<sup>54</sup>

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countries to the support of "one principle idea—freedom," both leaders expressed their rediness for mutual defense should the need arise," "Flights of Friendship," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 6, 20-21.

<sup>53</sup> "Flights of Friendship," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 6, 20-21. No rhetoric in the article cast the pledge as part of the Cold War.

<sup>54</sup> For Taiwan's dependency, see Nick Cullather, "'Fuel for the Good Dragon: ' The United States and Industrial Policy in Taiwan, 1950-1965. (The United States and the Third World: A Symposium)." *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 1 (1996): 1-26. For Philippine dependency see McMahan, *Limits of Empire*, 58-59.

## CHAPTER 4

### DIRECTIVES, GUIDANCES: AUGUST 1953 – DECEMBER 1954

With the signing of the Korean War Armistice on July 27, 1953 and the establishment of the United States Information Agency (USIA) as a federal agency independent from the State Department in August 1953 the propaganda war in East and Southeast Asia, and indeed throughout the rest of the world, appeared different to US propaganda and national security officials. Overall, US propaganda officials believed they suffered more losses than victories in the propaganda war since 1950. In an effort to stop losing and start winning the war of ideas, US propaganda officials retailored their messages to make them more appealing. Starting in the summer of 1953, USIA propaganda policies instructed personnel to obscure America's regional presence more, castigate Communism more stridently, and herald the imminent end of colonialism.<sup>55</sup>

In essence, the key change from in this period is the USIA consciously making a greater effort to better tailor its messages to their non-communist Asian audience's political beliefs. For propaganda materials dealing with decolonization, beginning around roughly August 1953 State-USIA Guidances stopped portraying it as a gradual process

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<sup>55</sup> For America's overall propaganda goals for East and Southeast Asia, Paragraphs 5a, 6d, and 15e, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Vol. VI, P1*, 35-36, 39; See also Paragraph 8f2, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 44. For an excellent and concise overview of the changes to the American propaganda program brought on by the establishment of the USIA in August 1953, see Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 77-78, 224n7. For US assessments of changing nature of Cold War propaganda war in 1953, see for example Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*; Osgood, *Total Cold War*; Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*; Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*.

which would be completed in the near future as they had the previous two years. Rather, the guidances instructed personnel to portray decolonization as, in the case of French Indochina, nearly complete, or in the case of British Malaya, about to begin in earnest now that the communist insurgents were no longer a threat. For anticommunist propaganda the guidances offered USIA personnel the option of greater leeway to disseminate anticommunist rhetoric more hostile than the previous two years rhetoric. As we shall see later, *Free World* appeared to decide to take that leeway and in August 1953, their anticommunist rhetoric became more direct in its denigration of communism in its gray propaganda editions. From both a qualitative and quantitative standpoint, guidances about US aid and security alliances emphasized tailoring rhetoric to the intended audience's political proclivities more so than anticommunist or decolonization guidances. Aid and alliance guidances instructed USIA staff more often per guidance to consider the intended audience's political beliefs and then tailor rhetoric accordingly. Additionally, each guidance on aid and security alliances provided more detailed instruction on how to tailor the rhetoric to the intended audience than anticommunism or decolonization guidances.

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Yet during the period covered in this chapter, USIA officials were far more "audience-conscious" in their directives regarding security alliances and/or foreign aid than they were for directives about anticommunism or neocolonialism and decolonization. A directive concerning the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) between the United States and South Korea informed USIA personnel that only domestic and South Korean audiences should receive full coverage of the Treaty while other audiences in the

region could receive coverage denoting the signing of the treaty and nothing else. The directive argued that only those two audiences could “profitably be given full coverage.” Concerning output about French operations in Vietnam in October 1953, another directive instructed USIA to keep two audiences in mind: metropolitan France and citizens of the then Associated States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. An early 1955 directive told USIA personnel to respond to stories about the removal of US military equipment from Vietnam only in areas where the political climate required mentioning the removal, adding a directive to downplay the removal significantly if such a scenario in such a place arose. FE-106, issued on April 15, 1954, provided an excellent example of the increase in the depth of details of audience perceptions the USIA instructed its personnel to consider. FE-106 also yielded insight into the relationship between gray propaganda and audience, with a directive instructing personnel to favor gray propaganda due to the delicacy of the issue in a certain country, in this case South Korea.<sup>56</sup>

In addition considering the audience’s political perceptions more, USIA directives ordered personnel to present US bilateral security alliances as augmentations to regional

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<sup>56</sup> “FE-28: Signing of Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of Korea, October 1,” Sept. 29, 1953, 1, *Information Policy Statements Book #1 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “FE-42: French Union Military Operations in Indochina,” Nov. 2, 1953, 2, *1953 B*, State Department, Box 199: News Policy Notes, 1/1/51-2/8/54, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “FE-176: Possible Removal of Surplus U.S. Military Equipment from Viet-Nam,” Jan. 4, 1955, 1, *1955*, State Department, Box 207: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1955 and Infoguides, 1953, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “FE-106: Implementation of the Mutual Defense Assistance agreement with Japan and Reactions thereto in Various Far Eastern Countries,” Apr. 15, 1954, 1, 4, 5, *1954-A*, State Department, Box 204: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1954-1955, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP.

security and nation-state security, rather than solely augmentations of nation-state security. Regarding the American and Japanese MDT, the USIA told its personnel to assert to its audience that the treaty represented another link in a chain of bilateral security alliances that would ensure the security of the Pacific area by further enlarging the defensive umbrella. USIA directives regarding the Taiwan-US MDT of late 1954 instructed personnel to make similar broad claims. One of the first directives about SEATO ordered the USIA to emphasize the determination of the treaty's members to protect the treaty area.<sup>57</sup>

During this period, USIA officials struggled to reach a consensus on what image USIA materials should present of American foreign aid to the region. Although directives about US foreign aid were more audience-conscious than before, the image of US foreign aid USIA personnel had to present fluctuated between August 1953 and the end of 1954. In November 1953, one directive instructed USIA personnel to present US military aid to Taiwan as an "augmentation" of the Taiwanese Armed Forces. Five months later FE-106 instructed USIA staff to admit that US foreign aid did not qualify as a panacea/cure-all for a given national economy, noting that in spite of "considerable" economic aid from the United States, the Japanese economy faced serious difficulties. Six months after FE-

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<sup>57</sup> "FE-106: Implementation of the Mutual Defense Assistance agreement with Japan and Reactions thereto in Various Far Eastern Countries," Apr. 15, 1954, 2, 4; "FE-167: Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of China," Dec. 1, 1954, 1-2, 1955, State Department, Box 207: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1955 and Infoguides, 1953, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; See also page 1 of FE-167's attachment. "FE-172: Manila Pact Meeting of Foreign Ministers," Dec. 30, 1954, 2, 1955, State Dept., Box 207: State Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1955 and Infoguides, 1953, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP.

106, FE-159, intended more to be used for background than to be disseminated, argued that American economic and military aid had “partly diminished” the threat of communism to the “Far East.” One month after FE-159 and seven months after FE-106, FE-164 directed USIA personnel to implicitly argue that expanded programs of US military and economic aid similar to the one just signed by South Korea and the United States, could “strengthen and rebuild” an Asian nation. Similar to the Mutual Security Program Special Guidance from Section 1 above, FE-164 suggested a near-future scenario where economic aid propaganda could be distributed but military aid propaganda might take a backseat or be omitted. On January 4, 1955, a directive instructed the USIA to downplay or omit from products any discussion of US military aid to Vietnam. A week later however, a new directive told staff to characterize US aid to South Vietnam as “unselfish.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> “FE-51: Transfer of Naval Craft by the U.S. to the Republic of China,” Nov. 11, 1953, 1, *Information Policy Statements Book #I 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “FE-106: Implementation of the Mutual Defense Assistance agreement with Japan and Reactions thereto in Various Far Eastern Countries,” Apr. 15, 1954, 5; “FE-159: Talk by Mr. Everett P. Drumright, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Before the Foreign Service Institute, October 18, 1954,” Oct. 26, 1954, 9, *Information Policy Statements Book #II 1954*, State Department, Box 204: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1954-1955, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “FE-164: Agreement with the ROK RE U.S. Military and Economic Aid Programs,” Nov. 17, 1954, 1, 3, *1955*, State Department, Box 207: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1955 and Infoguides, 1953, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. For the 1951 Special Guidance on the Mutual Security Program, see Note 24. “FE-176: Possible Removal of Surplus U.S. Military Equipment from Viet-Nam,” Jan. 4, 1955, 1; “FE-179: Propaganda Campaign to Counter Communist Charges of U.S. Intervention in Vietnam,” Jan. 11, 1955, 2, *1955*, State Department, Box 207: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1955 and Infoguides, 1953, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP.

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Between August 1953 and December 1954, the USIA's anticommunist directives reflected the agency trying to match America's neocolonialist policy objectives with their audience's political inclinations. While the anticommunist directives for this second period reflected the USIA's overall efforts to be more conscious of their audience's political inclinations than before while simultaneously continuing to try to persuade their audience to subscribe America's paternalistic and neocolonialist policy goals for the region. To counter neutralism's growing popularity, anticommunist rhetoric disparaged more harshly communism. The increase in vitriol also likely was a response to communist pr victories in being more associated with nationalism than western internationalism. To make the anticommunist pieces more believable, USIA instructed personnel to not attribute these pieces to the US government. While the USIA during this period appeared more willing to disseminate more hostile anticommunist rhetoric than before, at the same time the agency retreated from attributing any anticommunist rhetoric to the US.

A prominent trend of *Free World* after August 1953 was an increased willingness, in comparison to the previous period, to use and disseminate more vitriolic anticommunist rhetoric. This increased willingness to disseminate more vitriolic rhetoric appears at odds with the witnessed reluctance of the USIA to publish anticommunist rhetoric with official attribution. Conscious that publishing this more vitriolic anticommunist rhetoric without attribution to the US government may make the rhetoric more believable to the audience, *Free World* appeared to decide to publish all anticommunist articles in the gray edition of the magazine. In preparation for the

upcoming fourth anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1953, the USIA received a guidance instructing staff to use output to denigrate the Chinese government as oppressive, brutal, and cruel. The overall purpose of those lines of attacks, according to the guidance, was to disparage China's image. An April 1954 guidance about America's policy towards China instructed personnel to, in essence, disseminate a laundry list of allegations (a good deal of which likely had considerable truth to them) about the Chinese government's oppressive actions and policies since taking power. However, the frequent warnings of caution over tone and recommendations to make indirect references both show that the USIA had become more aware of their audience's political sensitivities and sought to adjust for them. As we will see, *Free World's* writers took policymakers up on this greater leeway for more vitriol.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Indeed between 1953 and the end of 1954, the USIA published almost no anticommunist articles in the white edition of the magazine. See the table of contents of the available gray and white editions of Volume 2, No. 8 through Volume 3, No. 8, *Free World, Free World English, Free World English Volumes 2-3*, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP; "FE-26: Charges Concerning Extent of USSR Involvement in the Korean War," Sept. 25, 1953, 1, *Information Policy Statements Book #1 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; "FE-106: Implementation of the Mutual Defense Assistance agreement with Japan and Reactions thereto in Various Far Eastern Countries," Apr. 15, 1954, 5; "FE-168: Communist Violations of the Geneva Agreements with Regard to Indochina," Dec. 3, 1954, 1-2, 1955, State Department, Box 207: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA 1955 and Infoguides, 1953, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. See also "FE-102: United States Policy towards Communist China" Apr. 6, 1954, 5, 1954-A, State Department, Box 204: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA 1954-1955, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; "FE-30: October First, Chinese Communist National Day of Celebrations," Sept. 30, 1953, 2-4, *Information Policy Statements Book #1 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; "FE-102: United States Policy towards Communist China" Apr. 6, 1954, 2.

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Between June 1951 and July 1953, USIA directives regarding decolonization portrayed an overall image of decolonization as something coming down the road. In this portrayal, decolonization was portrayed as a goal that Western nations were making progress towards and which would be completed in a few years. Between August 1953 and the end of 1954 USIA directives typically instructed USIA personnel to portray decolonization as imminent.

In September 1953, a guidance directed the USIA to use Emperor Bao Dai's call for the creation of a National Assembly for Vietnam as, in combination with other "favorable developments" in Franco-Laotian and Franco-Cambodian relations, as the last piece of evidence needed and now acquired to discredit the Vietminh and Ho Chi Minh as soldiers fighting a war of decolonization and independence and nationalism. Obviously, the so so-called assurances of independence from the French the USIS intended to be use as the main evidence of the imminence of decolonization. To help maintain the argument of decolonization's imminence, the USIA also downplayed any complications in the decolonization process in Indochina that appeared disadvantageous and even received instructions to mention such developments only if necessary.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "FE-25: Bao Dai's on a National Congress read by Prince Buu Loc (September 20, 1953)," Sept. 22, 1953, 2, *Information Policy Statements Book #I 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; "FE-33: Developments in Negotiations between France and Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos," Oct. 9, 1953, 2, *Information Policy Statements Book #I 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. FE-33 was an update to FE-25.

Directives from this period also showed the USIA instructing its personnel to, via downplaying or omission, avoid giving even the slightest appearance of neocolonialism when presenting American activities in the region. For instance, in the 1953 Philippine Federal Elections, then President Quirino publicly, but not through formal documentation, charged the US with interfering in the election to help then Secretary of Defense Ramon Magsaysay become President. A Guidance issued in response instructed the USIA to provide no explanations other than the response from the Ambassador in the hope that the story would go away. During the election campaign, the US embassy in the Philippines was under clear instructions to say nothing lest they give even the appearance of interfering. Quirino was looking in the wrong place, as today it has been known for some twenty years that the famous CIA spymaster Edward G. Lansdale helped Magsaysay's presidential campaign.<sup>61</sup>

American interference in the election went beyond just Lansdale. It also included backing the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). *Free World* essentially labeled NAMFREL a grassroots movement. Even if Quirino lodged a formal protest, the

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<sup>61</sup> For full chronicling of Quirino's charge, see "FE-14: Philippine National Elections," Aug. 24, 1953, 1, *Information Policy Statements Book #1 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP and "FE-52: Quirino's Accusation of U.S. Intervention in Philippine Elections," Nov. 20, 1953, 1, *Information Policy Statements Book #1 1953*, State Department, Box 205: State Department Policy Information Statements for USIA, 1953, 1958, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP. For US interference in the 1953 Philippine Election, see Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 104-22, esp. 108, 112-5, and 121-2. Cullather noted that while Lansdale's efforts to help Magsaysay were significant, they were unnecessary as Magsaysay obtained enough support on his own to obtain a comfortable margin of victory. Of importance to this paper is not the fact that US interference occurred, even though it proved unnecessary.

USIA was ready to disguise it via omission, as a guidance told personnel that in that event, agency products should make note that Quirino lodged a protest but should not elaborate on the charges he might make. Additionally, after the Geneva Accords, the USIA received guidances to avoid creating an image of diminishing French influence or of rising American influence in Vietnam.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “NAMFREL: NAMFREL is [a] Philippine organization dedicated to insuring free and fair election procedures. It will meet in Manila August 14-17. Meeting should be given factual coverage in output to Philippines, making clear organization’s purposes but avoiding any implication NAMFREL is US creature or US is mixing in Philippine politics. No comment necessary,” “News Policy Note (NPN) 0812-1150: NAMFREL,” Aug. 12, 1953, 1, *Untitled Brown Folder*, State Department, Box 199: News Policy Notes, 1/1/51-2/8/54, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP; “Citizens in Action,” *Free World* Vol. 1, No. 4, 6-9, *Free World* English Vol. I No. 1-12, Box 237, Publications about the United States 1953 -1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP; “FE-52: Quirino’s Accusation of U.S. Intervention in Philippine Elections,” Nov. 20, 1953, 2. See also the guidances cited in note 60 above.

## CHAPTER 5

***FREE WORLD: AUGUST 1953 – DECEMBER 1954***

Between August 1953 and December 1954, *Free World* articles on modernization emphasized the idea that non-communist Asia was largely in the process of modernizing itself. Additionally, they emphasized said modernization occurred primarily because of intra-regional cooperation with minimal development aid from the West. The first article examined below typified stories that presented this image of economic modernization in non-communist Asia. Modernization articles published during this period promised economic benefits with far greater specificity than they had during the first two years. These articles significantly downplayed American, and other Western countries', involvement in modernization projects in non-communist Asia. They cast American aid's contribution as, at most, supplemental. Yet at the same time American modernization aid continued to rise and create greater dependency on those who accepted the aid with its attached strings of alignment and dependency.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> For the US nearly always attempting to attach strings to its aid to the Global South, see Westad, *Global Cold War*, 96. In Thailand during the first half of the 1950's at least, the Phibun government and more specifically the military's ability to remain in power relied upon American military aid to maintain power. See especially Phillips, "As a result, the rebellion...increasingly a figurehead," *Thailand in the Cold War*, 123. Phillips also noted that "While US aid to the Phibun government continued to rise, therefore, American propaganda sought to distance the USIA from the current regime, recognizing that the aspiration of Thai communities to political and economic independence was deeply imbedded," Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War*, 124. It is worth mentioning that Phillips showed that US propaganda started this distancing process theme in late 1952, Phillips *Thailand in the Cold War*, 123-125. For a concise overview of US-Thai relations and aid in the early 1950's, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 54-56. It bears mentioning that Phillips noted that US economic aid to Thailand deepened continued to deepen during the 1950's, especially after the overthrow of the Phibun

In addition to *Free World* articles promising more specific economic benefits after the Korean War, they simultaneously played up the notion that East Asian governments ran their modernization programs themselves. A late 1954 article attempted to speak to the growing popularity of intra-regional cooperation as means to achieve modernization without significant superpower intervention by claiming a Thai development project had regional applicability. The first half of the article detailed how an international Council of non-communist Asians reached the decision to convert unsold surplus fish into fishmeal via a fishmeal processing industry. The article spent most of the second half listing the benefits, both economic and nutritional, provided by a fishmeal industry. The list also included benefits for humans and livestock. One of the boldest promises claimed that the presence of a worldwide market for fishmeal meant that the existence of commercial plants opened “a new field to investors, aiding individuals and in turn, the prosperity of a fish-producing country.”<sup>64</sup>

In comparison to the specificity of the promised nutritional value, USIS equivocated on the promised economic benefits. Some of the economic benefits listed by

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regime in 1957, see Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War*, 145. For Philippine dependency on US economic aid, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 56-59 and Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 2-3. See in particular Cullather’s notion that US aid helped establish and maintain the “crony capitalism” he describes, correctly in my view, as the Philippine economic system. It bears mentioning that Cullather does not argue the Philippine government had neocolonialism imposed upon them and passively and unwittingly accepted it in the early Cold War. Rather, he argues, they exercised agency and chose when to accept neocolonialist measures and when to not accept them and successfully resist them.

<sup>64</sup>Quoted in “More Profits for the Fishermen,” *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 8, 2-5, *Free World* English Folder Vol. III Nos. 7-9, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP.

the article included the broad statement “a plant and related activities aid the economy. (Before the Chumphorn plant, the area was hard-hit by falling rubber engine markets).” Yet in comparison to *Free World*'s Korean War era modernization pieces, even broad statements like that represented a marked increase in the specificity of promised economic benefits. This change to more specific, grander promises – still vague enough to ensure readers did not set expectations the US might fail to meet – to be gained from Western modeled development programs qualified as the USIS deciding to be more propagandistic about these very programs. For *Free World* to propagandize more at a time when the Eisenhower administration ordered USIA personnel elsewhere in the world to lessen the propagandistic tone of their content reflected the administration's growing sense of urgency over the alignment of East and Southeast Asia.<sup>65</sup>

Yet in presenting a modernization project in Thailand as run largely by the Thai government with nonintrusive, supplemental American economic aid, the USIS mischaracterized the nature of American-Thai relations regarding modernization. By devoting most of the text of the article to repeated statements about the Southeast Asian origins of the committee and by simultaneously downplaying Western participation via three brief references, the article recast modernization programs in the region. To highlight the regional applicability claim, *Free World* bookended the article with appeals

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<sup>65</sup> “More Profits for the Fishermen,” *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 8, 4-5; for the growing concern of both Truman and Eisenhower administrations, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 43-49, 62-68. For the Eisenhower administration's shift from bombast to persuasion, see Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 75-77, 204; Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 98-102. For the Eisenhower administration's growing sense of urgency over East and Southeast Asia, especially after the Korean War, see Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 54-64.

to it. In this new image of modernization programs, *Free World*, at most, portrayed American development aid as supplemental and nonintrusive support given to help East Asian nations modernize. With this new image, *Free World* argued that an economic aid deal similar to Thailand's would allow other East Asian nations to improve their citizens' quality of life nutritionally and economically.<sup>66</sup>

The article presented Thailand's economic modernization as proceeding under the direction of the Thai government with little to no Western involvement. *Free World* would apply this image of Asian modernization to nearly every country in the "Far East" after the Armistice. In this article, *Free World* emphasized in the first half of the piece that an international, Southeast Asian committee had studied and reached the conclusion to recommend establishing fishmeal industries to create this self-run image. The article furthered the "self-run" image by downplaying Western involvement by relegating it to two short references. The omission of any information detailing how Thailand acquired the two fish oil presses from the US also enhanced the self-run image. With Western involvement downplayed and the regional applicability claim, the article arguably attempted to mislead the audience to think that their own country might only have to ask the United States for a few fish oil presses in order create their own fishmeal industry. The omission and regional applicability claim, however, begged the question: if this industry was so easy to establish in Thailand and required little Western involvement, why did other Southeast Asian countries not already have a similar program?<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "More Profits for the Fishermen," *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 8, 2-5.

<sup>67</sup> "More Profits for the Fishermen," *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 8, 2-5.

In all likelihood, the fish oil presses Thailand acquired from United States constituted a small part of a much larger modernization aid agreement which involved accepting attached strings. Previous scholarship has shown that East and Southeast Asian governments remained wary of large economic or military aid agreements with Western powers during the first half of the 1950's. In particular, previous research has shown that many Asian officials worried these deals might create dependency. Phibun's government, however, either accepted this possibility in order to receive the aid or they did not care about the possibility of becoming dependent. Numerous scholars have noted that in the 1950s, Thailand's modernization depended on American modernization aid. American military aid also enabled the Phibun government to maintain power. Historians of US-Thai foreign relations have noted that the United States attached Cold War strings to its aid deals with Thailand and Thailand accepted them. The current historiographical consensus argues that domestic political factors, in particular the Phibun government's desire to remain in power, served as the primary motivation behind Thailand's acceptance of American military and economic aid. Thailand's lackluster devotion to the anticommunist programs of SEATO and overall lukewarm participation in SEATO during its early years illustrated difference in fervor between American and Thai anticommunism.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> I agree with the current historiographical consensus. For a concise overview of the Nasti and Sukiman Cabinets as well as the regional apprehensions about US foreign aid, see Mason, "Containment and the Challenge of Non-Alignment," in Goscha and Osterman, *Connecting Histories*, 53-62; for the growth of Thai skepticism of US aid, USIS response to that skepticism, and Phibun government's growing dependency on American military aid, see Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War*, 6, 97-99, 122-127, 131; for a concise account of US-Thai relations in the early 1950's and for Thailand's lackluster participation in SEATO, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 54-56, 69-70. For a

American propagandists at *Free World's* editorial office at the USIS' Regional Production Center (RPC) in Manila acknowledged the existence of East and Southeast Asian antipathy towards dependency-creating economic aid agreements with any country, in particular with the West. Conscious of this antipathy, *Free World* avoided providing specific details when the time came to report on the circumstances surrounding the supplemental American modernization aid in post-Armistice modernization articles. Like the fishmeal industry piece, other, similar *Free World* articles often omitted the information about what conditions allowed for the supplemental economic aid of Western nations, especially the US.<sup>69</sup>

*Free World's* favored presentation of Western economic aid between August 1953 and December 1954 portrayed it as supplemental in scope and as motivated by the desire of the participating Western nation to help the recipient achieve their nationalist and economic aspirations. In this portrayal, *Free World* argued that economic aid deals with the West did not qualify as Western alignment. Instead, it cast such agreements as cooperation with another nation of the "free world" undertaken in the pursuit of Asian desires of permanent decolonization and modernization. This construction implied that its small scope precluded US aid from creating dependency. *Free World* also cast US

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comprehensive study of Thai dependence on American aid during the early Cold War, see Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and the Military Government in Thailand 1947-1958* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997). Both Phillips and McMahon drew extensively on Fineman's excellent study.

<sup>69</sup> Paragraph 56, Annex 2, NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 63. For documentation of USIS's awareness of East and Southeast Asian antipathies in the 1951 Special Guidance on the Mutual Security Program, see Note 24 above.

economic aid to specific Asian economic modernization programs as supplemental parts of a much larger, government-run modernization projects. Thus, *Free World* cast the acceptance of Western economic aid as an act in the best economic interests of non-communist Asia and as agreements in line with Asian desires for development. Thus, we see that through omission and obfuscation, *Free World* masked the neocolonialist strings attached to American economic aid to Thailand.

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As we have seen, during the Korean War, *Free World's* anticommunist rhetoric emphasized communism as an intrusive, oppressive form of government. The first issue published after the Armistice witnessed the first in a eight to nine month long anticommunist campaign in the magazine with significantly more hostile rhetoric than any piece published during the war. The reason the magazine waited until after the war to begin a stridently hostile anticommunist campaign will remain unclear for the time being due to classification and reorganization related issues at NACP. However, a number of factors could plausibly cause this increased hostility.

Of the entire period covered in this essay, *Free World's* anticommunist rhetoric reached the peak of its hostility around March 1954. That issue included an article which conflated the leadership of China, in particular Chairman Mao Zedong, with the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang Di. The first page of the article claimed that Chinese ex-patriots all over the world increasingly equated the rule of the communists with the rule of the first Emperor, a man whose rule these same ex-pats regarded as tyrannical. The second page identified a claimed similarity between both men's stated motivations for ruling China. The third page conflated the slave labor used by the first emperor to

create the Great Wall of China with the labor system of Mao's government. The fourth and final page featured four captioned sketches that likened the "thought-suppression" methods of the Qin Shi Huang Di with indoctrination techniques employed in Mao's China, decrying the communist methods as the techniques of "modern tyrants." *Free World* excoriated these methods as the "vilest effort to destroy China's cultural tradition" since Qin Shi Huang Di's infamous "Burning of the Books and of the Scholars." In equating Mao Zedong with Qin Shi Huang Di, *Free World* called Mao a modern-day tyrant.<sup>70</sup>

With the Geneva Conference set to begin less than two months after the publication of this article, with China's status as the most recent non-Soviet, non-Middle Eastern Asian state to become communist, with China's geographic proximity to non-communist East, South, and Southeast Asia, and with the Korean War ending in an armistice instead of a unified Korea, USIS officials likely saw themselves as losing the propaganda war in East Asia. To compensate for this perceived defensive stance, it seems *Free World* decided to devote most of its anticommunist articles published during the second half of 1953 and early 1954 to discrediting communism as a form of government, as an economy, and as an ideology. Rather than try to discredit communism by lambasting communist laws as absurd and anti-modernity, as the magazine had during its first two years, *Free World* intensified the vitriol and hostility of its anticommunist rhetoric.

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<sup>70</sup> "Tyranny's Father," *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 3, 21-24, *Free World* English Folder Volume III Nos. 1-3, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP.

The new image of communism emphasized oppressive acts committed by communist party leadership in China and North Korea. To discredit communism, *Free World* explicitly lambasted it as brutal, oppressive, exploitative, tyrannical, and antithetical to modernity. Discrediting communism by employing more hostile and vitriolic rhetoric also served to further American efforts to prevent Asian nations from pursuing neutralism in the Cold War. Indeed, US policy implied US officials believed that if non-communist Asia could be convinced communism would not aid in the achievement of their aspirations of decolonization, regionalism, and modernization, then they would align with the West or at least distance themselves from communist states.<sup>71</sup>

An article published in September 1953 embodied the new overtness of *Free World* anti-communist articles. The two-page article included a single photograph and a series of eight sketches purportedly drawn from memories of “communist brutality and arbitrary rule” communicated to *Free World* by fishermen who recently fled their village in the Pearl River Delta. To support the claim of brutality, the captioned sketches posited that fishermen who failed to meet their catch quotas received brutal punishment. Another caption offered further evidence of brutality and arbitrary rule, positing that the communist officials imposed a rule on the fishing village that the wives and children of the fishermen would remain onshore while the fisherman worked as hostages. The first three sketches excoriated the fishing village’s economy under communism, calling it

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<sup>71</sup> American officials’ paternalist disregard for Asian non-alignment is well summed-up by their earlier description of Asia’s view of this idea as “Illusions of neutralism.” See “Special Guidance No. 91: Mutual Security Program, Annex D: Far East,” May 23, 1951, 2, *Unmarked Black Binder*, SOAPA, Box 202: Special Foreign Information Policy Guidances 7/50 to 1/1952, Special Guidances 1950-1960, RG 306, NACP.

exploitative and, also implying that it forced the fishermen in the village to live in a constant, unbreakable poverty. This significantly more overt hostility in *Free World's* anti-communist rhetoric seems likely to have been most immediately caused by the end of the Korean War, as this article appeared in the very first post-Armistice issue. This greater hostility continued to the last issue published before the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, with a number *Free World* articles directly lambasting communism as antithetical to modernity.<sup>72</sup>

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Between September 1953 and December 1954, *Free World's* articles about East Asian governments' military modernization projects downplayed Western involvement. *Free World* often relegated references of Western military aid to a single mention in an article. Like articles about Western aid in modernization programs, the magazine portrayed American military aid as nonintrusive, small, supplemental, and barely involved. Additionally, *Free World* often argued that this military aid sought to ensure Asia's nationalist aspirations of permanent decolonization. During this period, articles about security alliances also received the same portrayal as articles about military aid. *Free World* obscured the presence of US military aid even more so than it had during the first two years. At the same time *Free World* was portraying American military aid as

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<sup>72</sup> "Escape! Chinese Fisherman Flee Communist Brutality," *Free World* Vol. 2, No. 9, 30-31, *Free World* English Folder Vol. II Nos. 7-9, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP. Assuming, as I have, that the USIS published every issue on the first of the month, then the May 1954 USIS edition of *Free World* was published on May 1, 1954, six days before French defeat at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954.

less and less involved, the Eisenhower administration was increasing American military aid to non-communist East and Southeast Asia.

An article on a Cambodian military modernization program, published in May 1954, offers a representative example of how *Free World* went about conjuring its new image of American military aid. Titled “Together for Cambodia,” the article covered the training received by the Cambodian officer candidates at the Khmer Military School. Like other post Armistice articles about East Asian governments’ military modernization programs, this piece portrayed the Cambodian modernization project as proceeding under the control of the governments of East Asia with very little Western aid involved. Yet in the months surrounding the Geneva Conference that this theme appeared in *Free World* military modernization articles, the Eisenhower administration began increasing America’s military aid to Southeast Asia, especially Vietnam.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> ““Together for Cambodia,”” *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 4, 31-33, *Free World* English Folder Volume III Nos. 4-6, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP. For America’s deepening commitment of military aid to the French war effort in Indochina, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 62-63; Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 242, 253, 256-258, 267, 271, 283, 284-286, 311, 341-342, 346, 366, 388-389, 408, 414. For Phibun government’s dependency on US military aid, the growing unpopularity of the Phibun government and the USIA’s efforts to respond to the growing unpopularity, see Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War*, 123-125. For a concise examination of Burma’s non-alignment and concerns over American aid, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 52. For a more detailed examination of American Aid to Burma, see Foley, *The Cold War and National Assertion in Southeast Asia*, 136-151, 165-170. For US military aid as the Achilles Heel in US-Indonesian relations in the early 1950’s, see Mason, “Containment and the Challenge of Non-Alignment,” in Goscha and Osterman, *Connecting Histories*, 51-52. For US-Aid to South Korea during the Korean War, see Lovegall, *Embers of War*, 469 or Ekbladh, *Great American Mission*, 127-142. For Philippine dependency on US aid for at least the duration of the Korean War, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 57-58. For Philippine-US aid negotiations and Magsaysay’s ability to negotiate the terms of Filipino dependency, see Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 100-107, 117-121. For Taiwanese dependency on US aid, see Cullather “Fuel for the Dragon,” 1-26.

The only mention of any Western aid in the article came in the description of one of the curriculum items of the two officer training courses that the Khmer Military School provided, noting that both of the training courses included classroom and field instruction in the use and maintenance of American and French weapons. The article downplayed Western aid in two ways, first with the relegation of Western military aid to a single mention in the entire three-page article. Second, it downplayed Western aid by attempting to marginalize Western aid by burying the reference as one training course in a list of other training courses taught at the School. In this construction, Western military aid only contributed the weapons these future officers and non-commissioned officers would presumably use. The article implied that Western military aid could therefore not qualify as colonialist or imperialist since, in this case, it was only a technical aid contribution and was not responsible for the existence and function of the school.<sup>74</sup>

With Western military aid's role marginalized, the article spent the majority of its time lauding the Khmer Military School by emphasizing the rigor of its two officer courses. *Free World* used the rigor of these courses as characteristic of the school, which qualified it as a "modern" Military School. The article noted that the classroom studies included non—military subjects such as math, history, geography, and French. The officer candidates' education also included "rigorous field work." To help prove the argument that the school created competent officers, *Free World* detailed the School's "rigid entrance requirements," and "high scholastic standards." Additionally, the article pointed out the school held re-examinations during both officer-training courses to

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<sup>74</sup> "“Together for Cambodia,”” *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 4, 31-32.

maintain the high scholastic standards of the entrance requirements. This emphasis seems to have been intended to create the image that the strenuous training regimen, which produced competent officers, qualified the School as modern.<sup>75</sup>

A series of photographs accompanied the article and helped emphasize the nonintrusive image of Western aid. Unlike military aid pieces on East Asian military modernization projects or security alliances published during the Korean War, this article's photos showed only Cambodians. Articles published during the Korean War had occasionally showed white officers instructing young Asian cadets. Altogether, the text and photographs of the article presented an image of the Khmer Military School producing well-trained, intelligent, and competent officers for the Cambodian military. These officers would, as the opening noted, "train together, study together, in order to lead together the defense of their country's prized independence." With the opening of the article establishing the framework and purpose of the school, the subsequent detailed account of the School linked military modernization to maintaining independence. In so doing, *Free World* linked military modernization, supplemented by Western aid, to ensuring permanent decolonization. With Western aid downplayed to the point of barely participating in the project, we see *Free World* attempting to co-opt non-communist Asia's postcolonial aspirations of military-modernization-through-intraregional-cooperation to make Western military aid more palatable to the audience.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> "'Together for Cambodia,'" *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 4, 31-33.

<sup>76</sup> "'Together for Cambodia,'" *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 4, 31-33.

However, this article and others from this period that discussed Western military aid's presence in East Asian nations misrepresented the level of Western, in particular American, military aid. Likely published in early May 1954, this piece came out during the then recently convened Geneva Conference and the then ongoing Battle of Dien Bien Phu. By early May 1954, all parties viewed the French defeat as imminent and with that defeat would come the collapse of French control over Indochina. Western and Asian officials alike maintained their belief in this immanency in spite of the fact that US military assistance bankrolled approximately eighty percent of the French war effort in Vietnam as of early 1954. For the months prior to this article's publication then, the French war effort depended on American military assistance. If the French war effort in Indochina depended on US military aid, then in all likelihood, so too did the French colonial government's military modernization programs like the Khmer Military School.<sup>77</sup>

The article itself, inadvertently, exposed this dependence when it noted the Cambodian officers learned how to operate American and French weapons. Thus *Free World* defeated its own effort to downplay Western military aid and cast it as supplemental rather than dependent by choosing to identify the weapons Cambodian officer candidates trained with as French and American weapons. The fact that the article noted that the officers had to, in their coursework, learn the language of their colonial masters also likely damaged the article's presentation of the School as a program that

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<sup>77</sup> Front Cover, *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 4, *Free World* English Folder Vol. III Nos. 4-6, *Free World* English Volumes 2-3, Box 238, Publications about the United States 1953-1999, Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP; Lovegall, *Embers of War*, Chapters 19-20; McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 63.

would help protect “the country’s prized independence.” Finally, during this period, *Free World* lauded these government military modernization programs as projects effectively improving national militaries. However, we have also seen how *Free World*’s attempts to bury the presence of Western aid at times came back to bite them.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> ““Together for Cambodia,”” *Free World* Vol. 3, No. 4, 31-32.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Compared to propaganda the USIA distributed in Europe, USIA material in East and Southeast Asia had to attempt to make its arguments more subtly. Whether or not the USIA succeeded in achieving that greater subtlety requires further study; that said, this paper suggests that USIA appeared to have failed on that front. The requirement for more subtle messaging derived primarily from USIA's assessment of their audiences in Asia. More specifically, this need came from the ongoing decolonization process, insurrections, and widespread nationalism, the region's geographic proximity to China and Russia, and the growing geopolitical and strategic significance US officials attached to East and especially Southeast Asia. Kenneth Osgood noted that USIA activities in Western and Central Europe amounted to an exercise in alliance management. This paper has tried to show that USIA, specifically *Free World*, propaganda in Asia functioned as an attempt in alliance-building.<sup>79</sup>

Between 1951 and 1954, *Free World* tried to sell America's neocolonialist efforts as international cooperation and tried to convince non-communist Asia to adopt a strident anticommunism and align with the West in the Cold War. In spite of changes to the presentation of these ideas, neither *Free World* nor any other propaganda product in the region succeeded in achieving the propaganda objectives laid out in NSC 48/5. A number of diplomatic embarrassments during the first half of the 1950's – Burma's cancellation

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<sup>79</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 109.

of US economic aid, India and Burma's acceptance of Mutual Defense treaties without the neocolonialist Section 511(a), Indonesia's gravitation towards non-alignment, the growing unpopularity of US aid in Thailand, and the slow economic growth of South Korea in spite of millions in US aid, the lack of, beyond Thailand and the Philippines, Southeast Asian participation in SEATO, and the announcement of the Bandung Conference at the tail end of 1954 – all combined to tarnish, diminish, or question the prestigious image with which the United States began the decade.

In particular, the announcement of the Bandung Conference – a meeting of formerly colonies of European powers – at the end of 1954 showed that while an intra-regionalist consciousness was growing amongst non-communist Asian nations - the Conference's subsequent declaration representing the first iteration of what became the non-aligned movement - that consciousness was missing a few characteristics US policymakers desired. For one thing, the declaration of Bandung lacked a commitment to a strong alignment to the West. It also lacked a commitment to an intra-regional multilateralism which was unilaterally anticommunist, as desired by NSC 48/5. Moreover, throughout the first half of the 1950's US officials viewed neutralism and/or nonalignment as a victory for communism. By American officials' own definition of victory and defeat for either side in the Cold War propaganda war, Bandung represented a defeat for the West and a victory for the East.<sup>80</sup>

This interpretation of neutralism as essentially a public relations victory for communism derived from a key underlying assumption of American officials during the

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<sup>80</sup> Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, Chapters 2-3; McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, Chapter 3; NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FRUS: 1951, Asia-Pacific, Vol. VI, P1*, 36, 39.

early Cold War. To US officials, neutralism was an illusion; put another way, it was a foreign policy that would never succeed in a Cold War world. Thus the existence of neutralism such as that displayed by the Bandung Conference Announcement, the treaty negotiations of India, Burma, and Indonesia for Mutual Defense Program aid, and the minimal participation and joining of Southeast Asian nations to SEATO meant the region remained politically unenlightened about communism. In the context of that interpretation of those events, NSC 5429/5's decision to not only continue disseminating the same themes US propaganda had been spreading the previous four years but to in fact double down by intensifying that dissemination suggests American foreign policymakers viewed non-communist Asia, except Thailand and the Philippines, as politically unenlightened.<sup>81</sup>

Viewed in this context, US officials' decision to intensify American propaganda about the same themes of the previous years to the region in spite of a decline in the nation's image and reports from all over Southeast Asia testifying to American propaganda's ineffectiveness begins to make more sense. In this paternalist view, US national security officials did not decide to ignore all of the evidence of the failure of the themes of the past half-decade. Rather, US officials would have argued that their decision to intensify output represented the correct (from a geopolitical standpoint and propaganda standpoint) solution to the failure of the past half-decade. The propaganda failed because the USIA had not disseminated enough material to adequately spread and popularize the

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<sup>81</sup> For NSC 5429/5's "develop and make more effective" directive for US propaganda to non-communist East and Southeast Asia, see Paragraph 6f, NSC 5429/5, Dec. 22, 1954, *FRUS: 1952-1954, East Asia and the Pacific, Vol. XII, P1*, 1067.

key ideas of anticommunism, Western alignment, western-modeled development, and a Western-modeled intra-regionalist security alliance.

The decision to intensify America's propaganda program in East and Southeast Asia reflected a broader trend of American officials' growing concern with the region as the front line of the Cold War. Previous historians have already showed this growing concern on a number of occasions and this paper adds to that historiography. This paper suggests that 1953 did not witness a toning down of American propaganda to East and Southeast Asia. Instead, the opposite occurred: US propaganda to the region intensified its vitriol and its obfuscation after 1953.<sup>82</sup>

Beginning in the late summer of 1953 and ending just prior to the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954, *Free World's* anticommunist propaganda, as this paper showed, distributed more direct and more hostile rhetoric than the magazine had between 1951 and the late summer of 1953. Starting around the late summer of 1953 and continuing past the French defeat to the end of the year, *Free World's* obfuscation of the presence of the United States in the affairs of non-communist Asian nations increased. At the same time however, the United States under the Eisenhower administration was pouring more and more money in to aid programs, creating in some cases greater

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<sup>82</sup> For the growing preoccupation of US propaganda and national security officials over Southeast Asia over the first half of the 1950's, see for example, Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 64-71, and 89-101. For Parker's examination of American propaganda outside either Europe or Asia in the early 1950's, see *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 81-89. Jason Parker also argued that the "toning down" occurred with the establishment of the USIA in August 1953 while the rest of the pre-2010 historiography argued the "tone-down" occurred shortly after Dwight Eisenhower's administration came into office. Of the previous scholarship, see for example Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 98-102 and for Parker's periodization, see *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 76-78.

dependency, to the region. In particular, *Free World* depicted Western presence in Asian modernization projects as barely involved, allowing the magazine to argue Western aid's small size as evidence of the near approaching end of colonialism and as evidence of Western commitment to anticolonialism. This greater obfuscation of Western presence represented *Free World* intensifying its effort to mask American neocolonialist efforts in the region.<sup>83</sup>

NSC 5429/5 remained US national security policy for East and Southeast Asia for nearly five years after its approval in late December 1954. Ultimately, that intensification failed over those five years. No additional Southeast Asian or East Asian nations joined SEATO and the Philippines and Thailand would prove lackluster participants.

Additionally, both Bandung occurred and non-alignment continued to grow in popularity during the second half of the 1950's. By the end of the 1950's even the USIA itself admitted that, at least, its anticommunist rhetoric over the course of the decade had failed to achieve its objectives of popularizing anticommunism. Moreover, US aid would continue to grow to the region and America's neocolonialist efforts with said aid became subsequently harder to hide and spin. In the end then, American paternalism about their perception of non-communist Asia's perception of communism fueled continued aid and continued efforts at establishing dependent relationships. As a result, America's continued efforts to respond to the perceived problem likely served to further entrench

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<sup>83</sup> For America's growing commitment to the region, see McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 223-225.

the region more firmly into non-alignment, just like America's early decade efforts in Indonesia had.<sup>84</sup>

As the directives showed, USIA officials in East and Southeast Asia recognized that persuasively selling their messages to the region meant tailoring them to be more believable to the audience. Records showed that USIA and State Department directives and guidances instructed personnel to account for the widespread anticolonialism and nationalism and tailor products and messages in ways that would not put off the audience. One such suggested method was emphasizing economic aid given by the US more than military aid given by the US. That tailoring could also entail omitting details about an event in one country while reporting those omitted details to another country. In spite of the various cosmetic changes, big and small, *Free World* made to its portrayals of American foreign aid, foreign policy, and regional politics, the magazine, like other products in the region, appears to have failed to persuade much of its audience that

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<sup>84</sup> NSC 5913 superseded NSC 5429/5 in September 1959. See NSC 5913/1, September 25, 1959, *FRUS: 1958-1960: East Asia-Pacific Region, Cambodia, Laos, Vol. XVI*, 134-144. McMahon described the participation of Thailand and the Philippines as lackluster. McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 69-70. The popularity of non-alignment eventually grew into the formal declaration of the non-aligned movement in September 1961. For the date of the founding, see Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices*, 147. For the USIA's end of decade assessment, see Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 113-126. For America's growing commitment of aid to the region, see for example Ekbladh, *Great American Mission*, 127-142, or McMahon, *Limits of Empire*, 75-103, Osgood noted that Kathryn Statler and Marc Frey argued that US psychological operations in South Vietnam had "unmistakable characteristics of empire building." See Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 120, 400n22. The studies Osgood cites are Kathryn Statler, "Building a Colony: The Eisenhower Administration and South Vietnam, 1953-1961," *Managing an Earthquake: The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, ed. Andrew L. Johns and Kathryn C. Statler (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 101-123 and Frey, "Tools of Empire." For Mason's argument about America's efforts in Indonesia in the early 1950's see Mason, "Containment and the Challenge of Non-Alignment," in Goscha and Osterman, *Connecting Histories*, 39-67.

America's neocolonialist efforts in the region were not neocolonialist. And yet when senior propaganda officials in both administrations acknowledged the occurrence of this failure, they concluded that the problem lay not in the substance but the presentation of the message.

This inability to recognize that the problem lay in the substance of the message and not the presentation of the message reflected American propaganda officials' paternalistic view of their audience. This paternalistically caused blind spot also helps explain why *Free World's* rhetorical changes to its portrayals of development, modernization, decolonization, American foreign policy, communism, and regionalism were cosmetic rather than substantive. Put another way, this paternalism undergirding American propaganda policies to East and Southeast Asia explains why the image *Free World* cast of American foreign aid appears to change very little during its first three and a half years of publication. The very fact that USIA officials experimented with different portrayals during this period showed that these officials likely believed that the newly created image could plausibly succeed. Indeed, the Eisenhower administration's decision to intensify the same propaganda themes that had failed for the past half-decade epitomized how fervently American foreign policymakers believed their paternalistic views of the Cold War in Asia.

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## APPENDIX

### APPROXIMATE *FREE WORLD* PUBLICATION DATES

The following table lists the approximate, or in some cases exact, month of publication of the issues of *Free World* released between Volume 1, Issue Number 1 (June 1951) and Volume 3, Issue Number 8 (December 1954). Unless the front cover listed what month the USIS released the issue, then I approximated the timing of the publication of an issue using. Typically, I found an event mentioned somewhere in the issue that had a date easily verified. From there I examined the language used in the article, looking for the use of past or future tense, to determine if the event had occurred or would occur in the future. From there I could approximate by counting backwards or forwards one month per issue to the approximate month the issue in question was released by the USIS. If an article spoke about the event in present tense, I assumed the issue was released the same month as the event. While I am uncertain if this periodization is true for the gray editions of *Free World*, I have assumed it does for this thesis.

<b>Approximate or Exact Publication Dates, <i>Free World</i>, USIS Manila Editions, June 1951 – December 1954</b>		
<b>Volume</b>	<b>Issue Number</b>	<b>Date* (*=Approximated date)</b>
1	1	June 1951
1	2	July 1951
1	3	October 1951
1	4	November 1951
1	5	December 1951
1	6	January 1952*

Approximate or Exact Publication Dates, <i>Free World</i> , USIS Manila Editions, June 1951 – December 1954		
1	7	February 1952*
1	8	March 1952*
1	9	April 1952*
1	10	May 1952
1	11	June 1952*
1	12	July-August 1952*
2	1	September-October 1952*
2	2	November 1952*
2	3	December 1952
2	4	January 1953*
2	5	February-March 1953*
2	6	April-May 1953*
2	7	June-July 1953*
2	8	August 1953*
2	9	September 1953
2	10	October 1953
2	11	November 1953
2	12	December 1953
3	1	January-February 1954
3	2	March 1954
3	3	April 1954
3	4	May 1954
3	5	June-July 1954
3	6	August-September 1954

<b>Approximate or Exact Publication Dates, <i>Free World</i>, USIS Manila Editions, June 1951 – December 1954</b>		
3	7	October-November 1954
3	8	December 1954