



Deposited via The University of Sheffield.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/193563/>

Version: Published Version

Other:

Stevens, S. (2014) Stevens on Rakove, 'Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World'. H-1960s. HNet: Humanities and Social Sciences Online.

Reuse

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND) licence. This licence only allows you to download this work and share it with others as long as you credit the authors, but you can't change the article in any way or use it commercially. More information and the full terms of the licence here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

[Stevens on Rakove, 'Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World'](#)

Review published on Friday, August 8, 2014

Robert B. Rakove. *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 315 pp. \$99.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-107-00290-6; \$31.99 (paper), ISBN 978-1-107-44938-1.

Reviewed by Simon Stevens (Columbia University) **Published on** H-1960s (August, 2014)
Commissioned by Zachary Lechner

Non-Alignment and the United States

The central historical problem that Robert B. Rakove sets out to solve in *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* is how to explain the remarkable transformation in the relationship between the United States and much of the postcolonial world over the course of the 1960s. The assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 was met with genuine grief in many postcolonial states, reflecting the positive and hopeful light in which the United States under Kennedy had been widely viewed. And yet by the second half of the decade, the United States “had come to be seen not as an ally to Third World aspirations but as a malevolent foe. Polarizing accusatory rhetoric unusual in the early 1960s became unremarkable by the decade’s end, emerging as a lasting feature of world politics, a recognizable precursor to contemporary denunciations of the United States” (p. xviii).

This shift, Rakove argues, was a consequence of changes in U.S. government policy. Positive perceptions of the United States in the early 1960s resulted from the Kennedy administration’s pursuit of a policy of “engagement” of the “nonaligned world.” The subsequent souring of relations was a consequence of the abandonment of that approach under Lyndon Johnson. Central to Rakove’s argument is the distinction between Kennedy’s approach to states in the Third World that were “aligned” in the Cold War and those that were “non-aligned.” Common historiographic characterizations of Kennedy’s policy toward the Third World as aggressive and interventionist have failed to appreciate the significance of this distinction, Rakove suggests. In the cases of states that the U.S. government perceived to be already aligned with the West, especially in Latin America and Southeast Asia, the Kennedy administration was intolerant of changes that might endanger that alignment, and pursued forceful interventionist policies—including sponsoring coups and other forms of covert action—to avert that possibility. But with regard to non-aligned states, Kennedy pursued “an ambitious program of outreach” that, though the administration never gave it an official name, Rakove characterizes as a policy of “engagement” (pp. xx-xxi).[1]

Engagement, Rakove argues, had three pillars. First, Kennedy was an avid and adept practitioner of presidential diplomacy: he met personally with the leaders of many non-aligned states during his short period in office, and in many cases succeeded in developing a friendly rapport. Secondly, the Kennedy administration significantly expanded aid to non-aligned states, which—it claimed publicly at least—was offered without political strings. Thirdly, the Kennedy administration made adjustments to U.S. foreign policy, especially on conflicts involving colonial powers, in order to improve U.S.

standing among non-aligned states. Drawing primarily on extensive research in the Kennedy and Johnson presidential libraries and in the records of the Department of State at the U.S. National Archives, Rakove weaves together analyses of American policy toward a range of early 1960s conflicts across Africa and Asia. Some, such as the Congo crisis, are already the subjects of substantial scholarly literatures; others, like the West New Guinea conflict, are probably only familiar to regional specialists. In the latter case, for instance, Rakove convincingly argues that the Kennedy administration was prepared to go “surprisingly far” in challenging an ally, the Netherlands, on behalf of a leading non-aligned state, Indonesia (pp. 112).

How, then, do we explain the ultimate failure of the policy of engagement? In terms of the perennial “level of analysis problem” for students of foreign policy, Rakove positions his study of engagement and its ultimate failure at the level of executive decision making. As discussed below, this does mean that he pays less attention to two other levels also of significance to the historical problem that he sets out to solve: American domestic politics and the international environment.

To his own question—“was this a case where individuals mattered, wherein the changing balance of influence within the executive branch and the transition from Kennedy to Johnson played a primary role in driving events?”—Rakove answers with a resounding affirmative: “the failure of engagement came as a direct consequence of the transition between Kennedy and Johnson” (pp. 256-257). Johnson, Rakove argues, lacked Kennedy’s “interest in the third world and his comprehension of nonalignment” (p. xxv). LBJ’s background as a leading legislator left him with little patience for those who refused to choose sides and with a preference for rewarding loyal allies, predispositions that were further entrenched in the context of the war in Vietnam. Thus, though several non-aligned leaders expressed hopes of meeting Kennedy’s successor, Johnson showed little interest in establishing personal relationships with them, tending to treat meetings instead “as a kind of diplomatic currency, to be tendered to friends and withheld from uncooperative states” (p. 218). The Johnson administration used aid similarly, granting it with “increasingly overt strings” attached (p. 177).

The great strength of *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* is in its analysis of decision making within the executive branch of the U.S. government. Rakove devotes a full chapter to analyzing the “outlooks and personalities” of policymakers within the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Leading members of the two administrations responsible for the day-to-day management of U.S. relations with non-aligned states are categorized as “liberals” (such as Kennedy’s first undersecretary of state Chester Bowles and assistant secretary of state for Africa G. Mennen Williams), who advocated engaging non-aligned states out of a sense of American mission; “pragmatists” (above all, Robert Komer of the National Security Council Staff), who promoted such engagement—especially with the largest and most powerful non-aligned states, such as Egypt, India, and Indonesia—as a geopolitical necessity in the context of the changing balance of power; and “skeptics” (primarily the secretary of state Dean Rusk and Bowles’s successor as undersecretary of state George Ball), who saw fewer advantages to engagement with the non-aligned and were wary of the potential damage to American relations with established allies. The pursuit of engagement, Rakove argues, depended on the shifting balance of power of these groups within the executive branch, as well as on the personality and preferences of the two presidents. The significance of Johnson’s succession of Kennedy to U.S. relations with non-aligned states was thus not only that LBJ’s own inclinations predisposed him against the pillars of Kennedy’s engagement policy, but also that

Johnson's closeness to Rusk shifted the balance of influence within the administration toward the "skeptics" of engagement.

Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World convincingly synthesizes into an overarching interpretation the differences in Kennedy's and Johnson's approaches that have frequently emerged from bilateral studies of U.S. relations with particular states.[2] Nevertheless, Rakove's focus on the level of executive decision making means that at least two other levels of analysis receive less attention in his explanation of the failure of engagement. The first is the level of domestic politics.[3] Rakove concludes his introduction with the observation that "engagement came undone because it was fundamentally incompatible with long-standing popular views" of the Cold War, but, surprisingly, he does not pursue this insight further (p. xxviii). This relative lack of analysis of public and congressional opposition to engagement is presumably justified for Rakove on the grounds that Kennedy was more willing than Johnson to pursue engagement despite the domestic political costs. (Rakove points out that both Kennedy's last press conference and the remarks he planned to give in Dallas on November 22, 1963, included extended defenses of foreign aid against congressional attacks.) In this reading, since domestic politics only influenced policy to the extent that the executive branch was prepared to allow it to do so, analytical attention should be focused on changing attitudes in the executive branch.

At times, however, Kennedy clearly did buckle before congressional or public opposition to his pursuit of engagement. Despite Kennedy's commitment to personal diplomacy with non-aligned leaders, for instance, Rakove notes that the reason that he never met Gamal Nasser of Egypt (one of non-alignment's "Big Three" along with Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia and Jawaharlal Nehru of India) was that the domestic political costs were judged to be too high (pp. 85, 153). But Rakove's focus on executive decision makers means that American public conceptions of non-alignment and its relationship to the Cold War, or of particular non-aligned states or leaders such as Nasser, receive only cursory attention. How those conceptions did or did not change over time, and which specific events, individuals, media, or propaganda operations played particularly significant roles in shaping American public opinion on non-aligned states remain topics for further research. Rakove does devote a full chapter to the question of foreign aid to non-aligned states and the intense battles with Congress that this engendered. But the outlooks, personalities, and interests of the leading Democratic senators who participated in the congressional assault on aid to non-aligned states, such as Ernest Gruening, William Proxmire, and Stuart Symington (each of whom left extensive personal papers now open to researchers), never receive the same sustained analysis devoted to decision makers in the executive branch.

The second level of analysis that is relatively neglected in Rakove's account is that of the international environment in which American policy toward "the nonaligned world" was being formulated. At the outset, Rakove explains his focus on "the American side of the story": "It is my belief that sustained attention to the personalities, views, and debates of these two administrations is needed to understand the profound shifts in U.S.-nonaligned relations over the course of the 1960s. *In key ways, the challenges presented by nonaligned states in 1965 were not substantially different in character from what they had been in the 1950s.* What had changed over the preceding years were the ways in which they were perceived within the White House" (pp. xxvi-xxvii, emphasis added).[4] Rakove's substantive chapters offer a considerably more nuanced account than this and some of the other similarly stark claims in the introduction and conclusion might suggest. In particular, Rakove

devotes considerable attention to how the emergence or escalation after 1962 of “regional conflicts” (that is, conflicts between postcolonial states, as distinct from “colonial conflicts” involving one or more colonial powers) contributed to the deterioration of relations between the United States and the non-aligned. Regional conflicts that pitted leading non-aligned states against American allies, such those between Ghana and African states including Nigeria and Cote d’Ivoire, between Indonesia and Malaysia, between Egypt and Saudi Arabia in Yemen, and between India and Pakistan, ultimately “added an insupportable burden to U.S.-nonaligned relations,” as U.S. support for American allies strengthened the image of the United States in non-aligned states as a “friend of reaction and neocolonialism” (p. 136). Even in these cases, however, Rakove links this development back to the transition from Kennedy to Johnson, arguing that though regional conflicts seriously strained U.S.-non-aligned relations in the final year of Kennedy’s life, the critical damage occurred after Johnson’s succession and the American “shift back toward allies” as a consequence of Johnson’s very different approach to diplomacy (p. 173).

Rakove is surely correct in characterizing U.S.-non-aligned relations after 1962 as being caught in a “vicious cycle of mutual alienation,” but his focus on the “American side” of that cycle leaves his argument that “the failure of engagement came as a direct consequence of the transition between Kennedy and Johnson” difficult to assess.[5] Rakove tells the story of the rise and decline of relations between the United States and the non-aligned through American eyes and based almost entirely on American sources.[6] (Indeed, Rakove’s prose often reflects the perspective of the American policymakers who are the main protagonists in his account: the rapid spread of unfavorable perceptions of the United States is “dismaying,” a speech by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana is “unsatisfactory,” conflicts in Africa are “baffling,” the United States and its allies constitute the “free” world, and so on [pp. xviii, 140, 144, 172].) As with the American congressional opponents of engagement, for example, the outlooks, personalities, and interests of non-aligned leaders, such as Nasser, Nehru, Tito, Nkrumah, and Sukarno of Indonesia, never receive the sustained analysis devoted to policymakers in the White House and the State Department. How did decision makers and other constituencies in non-aligned states perceive the United States and its engagement policy in the era of Kennedy and Johnson? To what extent were their attitudes and approaches toward the United States shaped by factors other than shifts in American policy?

To take the example of just one leading non-aligned state, Rakove acknowledges that “the forces that doomed Washington’s [engagement] policy toward Ghana had been set in motion long before Johnson took office,” though the implications of this idea for the book’s overarching argument are not explored further (p. 144). W. Scott Thompson’s unsurpassed 1969 study, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State*, provides considerable further evidence for this perspective, however. Like Rakove, Thompson emphasizes the “emotional warmth” with which Nkrumah viewed Kennedy and the role that this played in slowing Ghana’s alienation from the United States. But many of the factors Thompson identifies in his explanation of Ghana’s progressive turn after 1960 away from the West and toward the Soviet Union and of Nkrumah’s increasing identification of the United States as a neocolonial force have little to do with who happened to occupy the Oval Office. Those factors include the growing bureaucratic strength among Nkrumah’s advisers of the “radical wing” of the ruling Convention People’s Party (CPP), the failure of Nkrumah’s plans to achieve a United States of Africa and the role that more conservative newly independent African states played in this, the greater openness of the Soviet Union to radical “bourgeois nationalist” regimes in the postcolonial world in the early 1960s, the assassination attempts against

Nkrumah in August 1962 and January 1964, and the growth of Nkrumah's obsessive fear that the CIA was behind efforts to overthrow him. (We now know from Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin that this suspicion of the CIA was a result of a remarkably successful black propaganda operation by the KGB.)[7]

Can such factors—and others, from the impact of the Sino-Soviet split to the global intellectual history of the concept of “neocolonialism”—be incorporated more fully into the story of relations between non-aligned states and the United States in the 1960s? In some significant cases, including Egypt and Indonesia, governmental archives relating to this period remain inaccessible. But in others, including Algeria, Ghana, Yugoslavia, and Zambia, scholars have recently been able to draw on state archives to analyze the foreign policies of these governments in this period.[8] In almost all cases, there is, in addition, a wealth of contemporaneous newspaper coverage and memoirs, among other sources. The shift Rakove identifies in relations between the United States and the postcolonial world during the 1960s is a striking and significant one. His own U.S.-centric explanation for that transition provides an important framework for other scholars now to situate (and evaluate) his account, as he suggests, “in a broader international history of the 1960s” (p. xxvii).

One central feature of such future international histories will be the very concept of non-alignment. Prompted by the recent “international turn” to focus on movements, projects, and networks that operated outside or beyond the boundaries of individual nation-states, historians are now just beginning to rediscover the significance of the non-aligned and Afro-Asian movements in postwar international history.[9] Rakove explicitly disavows the task of “chronicling the evolution of [the] vast diverse grouping” of states that came to be known as the non-aligned movement. Nevertheless, his “(tentative) examination of nonaligned politics” raises important questions (p. xxvii). Most fundamentally, what did it mean to be non-aligned? Strikingly, though he argues that the distinction between “aligned and uncommitted states ... was cardinal to the Kennedy administration,” Rakove never explains how he defines the “nonaligned world” of his title nor how the Kennedy and Johnson administrations did (p. xxii). The U.S. government's conception evidently differed from that of participants in the first and second conferences of non-aligned countries in 1961 and 1964. Revealingly, Rakove notes that in approving U.S. assistance for the Volta River Dam project in 1961, Kennedy sought a commitment from Nkrumah to “true” non-alignment (p. 179). Thomas Noer concludes from his 1984 analysis of this episode (which Rakove cites but does not directly engage with) that “to most in the [Kennedy] administration there was an ‘acceptable’ form of Third World neutralism. This did not, however, include Nkrumah's outspoken and sustained criticism of American foreign policy or his flirtations with socialism and the Soviet Union.”[10] Clearly, Kennedy was more tolerant of some forms of non-alignment than others, yet the lack of a definition of the “nonaligned world” makes this point somewhat difficult to discern in Rakove's account.

Asked to define “non-alignment” in the recent *H-Diplo* roundtable on his book, Rakove suggests linking it “to formal membership in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and an avowedly uncommitted stance in the Cold War.” Given the second qualification, Rakove notes that despite Fidel Castro's “sincere” embrace of the NAM, he has a “hard time classifying Cuba as truly nonaligned.”[11] This is presumably why American policy toward Cuba—a participant in both the 1961 and 1964 non-aligned conferences and, one might imagine, a limit case for the argument that Kennedy's policy toward the “nonaligned world” was characterized by tolerance and engagement rather than intervention—is omitted altogether from Rakove's account. Like that of the American officials he studies, then,

Rakove's approach is informed by a belief in the idea of a "true" non-alignment that can be distinguished from the self-identified non-aligned status of the participants in the 1961 and 1964 conferences. This is a very different approach from that adopted by Peter Willets in his 1978 study, *The Non-Aligned Movement*: "it is not appropriate for observers from outside to set their own definitions. Non-alignment is the ideology put forward by the states that call themselves Non-Aligned. Cuba and Saudi Arabia are Non-Aligned because they joined in forming the ideology, chose to attend conferences, and were accepted as members of the Movement by the other members." [12]

"Non-alignment" was a moving target in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in terms of both meaning and membership. Though Rakove suggests that the Asian-African Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 marked the emergence of the "phenomenon of organized nonalignment" (p. 7, see also pp. xx, 63), this widely heard claim has been repeatedly challenged by scholars over the past five decades, most recently by Robert Vitalis in a spectacular myth-busting article. As Vitalis demonstrates, "the 1961 meeting of Non-Aligned States and Heads of Governments [sic] was not a follow-up to Bandung or its extension. It was its rival." [13] As Rakove does note, the twenty-nine states represented at Bandung (all of the then-independent states in Asia and Africa, plus soon-to-be-independent Sudan and Ghana, but excluding Israel, the two Koreas, South Africa, the Soviet Union, and Taiwan) included several states that were outspokenly aligned, and there was little ideological agreement at the conference. Some participants, including Sukarno, Nehru, and Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, did advance forms of what would come to be known as non-alignment. But efforts to include commitment to "peaceful coexistence" in the ten principles adopted by the conference were unsuccessful. The principles ultimately included both "respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively" (at the insistence of states including Pakistan, a member of the South East Asia Treaty Organization [SEATO] and the Baghdad Pact, and Turkey, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] and the Baghdad Pact) and "abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers" (at the insistence of Nasser). Subsequent statements by participants made clear that there was no agreement on how the contradiction was to be reconciled. [14]

When Nasser and Tito decided in 1961 to call the first conference of non-aligned states at Belgrade, they intended in part to head off Sukarno's efforts to call a second Asian-African conference. Indonesian attempts to organize "Bandung II" continued after 1961, strongly backed by China and Pakistan (neither of which had been invited to Belgrade). Indeed, drawing on American and British embassy reporting, Rakove provides one of the first archive-based accounts of the rivalry between the parallel efforts in 1964 to organize "Belgrade II" (a second conference of non-aligned states, ultimately held in Cairo in October 1964) and "Bandung II" (a second Asian-African conference, eventually planned for Algiers in 1965, but ultimately never held). Although Sukarno's determination to promote Afro-Asian solidarity as an *alternative* to non-aligned solidarity was thus defeated, he nevertheless had some success at Belgrade in his efforts to redefine non-alignment as primarily concerned with the battle against colonialism and neocolonialism.

Long after the first non-aligned conference in Belgrade in 1961, then, the meaning of non-alignment remained contested and shifting. Much further research remains to be done on this issue, but what is clear is that none of the leading advocates of non-alignment understood it as simply the passive abstention from participation in Cold War alliances. Rather, their conceptions involved, with varying degrees of emphasis, such elements as activist promotion of international peace and mediation of

Cold War tensions; support for disarmament; opposition to colonialism and, later, neocolonialism; and concern about unequal economic development. It was this fact that non-alignment always involved more than the word's literal meaning that led Willetts to predict correctly in 1978 that the end of the Cold War would not mean the end of non-alignment. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's comment at the time of the 2006 Non-Aligned summit—she had “never quite understood what it is they would be nonaligned against at this point. I mean, you know, the movement came out of the Cold War”—was, as Rakove has noted elsewhere, “a classic misreading of nonalignment.”[15]

Moreover, Rakove correctly points out that “only with hindsight can we say that the 1961 Belgrade Conference marked the emergence of the NAM” (p. xiii), a point that is often missed, even by the recent critics of the “Bandung-to-Belgrade” origin myth. (Vitalis, for instance, claims that an “actually existing international organization, the Non-Aligned Movement (or NAM), [was] founded in Belgrade in 1961.”[16]) The term “Non-Aligned Movement” appears nowhere in the official documents adopted by the 1961 Belgrade Conference or the 1964 Cairo Conference; the term gained common currency only in the 1970s. And it was only from the third non-aligned conference in Lusaka in 1970 that efforts began to institutionalize the incipient “movement.” The 1961 and 1964 conferences, in contrast, had created no organizational structure—no executive, spokesman, or permanent secretariat—and they did not make provision for regular future conferences (which is why there was a three-year gap between the first and second non-aligned conferences and then a six-year gap until the third). Indeed, though Nkrumah and others advocated the creation of an organized third bloc in the early 1960s, this was rejected by other non-aligned leaders, most notably Nehru, who believed that blocs were the problem, not the solution.

This, combined with the strikingly different composition of the participants in the 1961 and 1964 conferences, makes it complicated to refer, as Rakove frequently does, even to a lower-case “nonaligned movement” in the early 1960s. The number of full participants in the non-aligned conferences increased from twenty-five at Belgrade to forty-six at Cairo. This was not only because more states had won independence in the intervening three years. In 1961, the postcolonial world was deeply divided, especially by the Congo crisis. The final list of participants at Belgrade primarily reflected the wishes of Nasser and Tito, and excluded a significant number of non-bloc states in Africa and Asia. Within Africa, all of the more radical Casablanca Group of states attended, but none of the more conservative Brazzaville Group. Two Arab states, Jordan and Libya, were excluded.[17] By 1964, however, the divisions of 1961 had been, to some degree, overcome, especially as a consequence of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity in May 1963 and the first Conference of Arab Heads of State in Cairo in January 1964. Membership of either of these groupings was treated as an automatic qualification for participation at the Cairo Conference.

Did American policy toward Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Dahomey, Jordan, Liberia, Libya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, or Togo (all independent by 1961) change in any significant way because they participated in the Cairo Conference of non-aligned states in 1964, despite not having participated in the Belgrade Conference three years earlier? Presumably not. Indeed, Rakove suggests, intriguingly, that after the 1961 Belgrade Conference there was “a gradual cessation of [U.S. government] efforts to comprehend nonalignment as an international phenomenon” and a “shift to bilateral approaches” (pp. 63-64, 83). This leaves open the question, however, of to what extent bilateral American policy toward each of

these states was influenced by their participation (or not) in non-aligned conferences, and to what extent it was shaped by the interactions in each case of a range of other factors.[18] Those other factors might include, for instance, American ideas about “neutralism” (the term, Rakove notes on *H-Diplo*, that American policymakers persisted in using), in its “true” and other variants; about race (the significance of which in American policy in this period toward Africa has been explored by Thomas Borstelmann, toward India by Andrew J. Rotter, and toward the Bandung Conference by Matthew Jones);[19] about postcolonial nationalism (not an issue, of course, in the case of one of the leading non-aligned states, Yugoslavia); about political and economic systems (both issues, Noer shows, raised in the U.S. negotiations with Nkrumah on the Volta River Dam project); and about the range of other political geographies and solidarities that characterized this fluid moment in international history.

As former colonies rapidly gained their independence between the 1940s and the 1960s, the leaders of the new states were engaged in what Vitalis calls “a multifront war of position” to establish which particular geographies and solidarities would define the postcolonial era. The Asian-African Conference at Bandung and the non-aligned conferences of 1961 and 1964 were only three of the series of “sometimes rival, sometimes simply orthogonal convocations” that characterized this competition.[20] Others included the first Conference of Independent African States in Accra in 1958 (conceived by Nkrumah and his adviser George Padmore as a means of asserting pan-African solidarity as an alternative to Afro-Asian solidarity); the Casablanca, Brazzaville, and Monrovia conferences of rival groupings of African states in 1960-61; the founding meetings in Bangkok of the Association of Southeast Asia in 1961 and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 1967; the founding conference of the Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa in 1963; the Conference of Arab Heads of State in 1964; and the various efforts to form an “Islamic Pact” that culminated in the founding of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Rabat in 1969. The story becomes even more complex when we consider in addition the various non-governmental convocations and groupings in the same period, such as the Afro-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity Organisation, founded in Cairo in 1957; the All-African People’s Conferences of 1958, 1960, and 1961; and the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966.

The writing of the history of most of these international and transnational projects is in its infancy. The nature of the various projects, how they related to each other, to the Cold War, and to the United States and other great powers; why some did not survive and others did; and how those that did survive changed over time, are all subjects for research by future scholars. Such research will enhance our understanding of the nature of what Frederick Cooper has called the “possibility and constraint” of the era of decolonization and, ultimately, of how we arrived at our contemporary world order.[21] *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* is a detailed study of one aspect of that vast and complex history. The questions it raises will inform future efforts to tell other components of the story.

Notes

[1]. Unlike Rakove, in this review I use the hyphenated forms for “non-aligned” and “non-alignment” since these were the forms that were most widely used in the 1960s, including in the official documents of the first two conferences of non-aligned countries in 1961 and 1964.

[2]. For one such example, see Andy DeRoche, "Dreams and Disappointments: Kenneth Kaunda and the United States, 1960-1964," *Safundi* 9, no. 4 (October 2008): 369-394; and Andy DeRoche, "Non-alignment on the Racial Frontier: Zambia and the USA, 1964-68," *Cold War History* 7, no. 2 (May 2007): 227-250.

[3]. See also the comments in Matthew Jones, review of *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*, by Robert B. Rakove, *Journal of American History* 100, no. 2 (September 2013): 598.

[4]. For Rakove's further gloss on this specific claim after another reviewer took issue with it, see Robert B. Rakove, "Author's Response," *H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews* 14, no. 39 (July 8, 2013): 27, <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIV-39.pdf>.

[5]. *Ibid.*, 28. See also Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*, 134.

[6]. In addition to his extensive research in American archives, Rakove also draws on some European sources, primarily materials in the U.K. National Archives, but also—though less frequently—on materials from the French and East German foreign ministry archives. On "sources left unconsulted," see also Rakove, "Author's Response," 29-30.

[7]. Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 435, 582n22.

[8]. See, for example, Jeffrey J. Byrne, "Algiers between Bandung and Belgrade: Guerilla Diplomacy and the Evolution of the Third World Movement, 1954-1962," in *The Middle East and the Cold War*, ed. Massimiliano Trentin (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 11-28; Jeffrey S. Ahlman, "Road to Ghana: Nkrumah, Southern Africa and the Eclipse of a Decolonizing Africa," *Kronos* 37 (November 2011): 23-40; Rinna Kullaa, *Non-Alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe: Yugoslavia, Finland, and the Soviet Challenge* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012); Svetozar Rajak, "No Bargaining Chips, No Spheres of Interest: The Yugoslav Origins of Cold War Non-Alignment," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2014), 146-179; DeRoche, "Dreams and Disappointments"; and DeRoche "Non-alignment on the Racial Frontier."

[9]. Recent scholarship has focused especially on the Asian-African Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955. See, for example, Cary Fraser, "An American Dilemma: Race and Realpolitik in the American Response to the Bandung Conference, 1955," in *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988*, ed. Brenda Plummer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 115-140; Jamie Mackie, *Bandung 1955: Non-Alignment and Afro-Asian Solidarity* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2005); "Bandung/Third Worldism," ed. Hee-Yeon Cho and Kuan-Hsing Chen, special issue, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6, no. 4 (December 2005); Matthew Jones, "A 'Segregated' Asia? Race, the Bandung Conference, and Pan-Asianist Fears in American Thought and Policy, 1954-1955," *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 5 (November 2005): 841-868; Antoinette Burton, Augusto Espiritu, and Fanon Che Wilkins, "Forum: The Fate of Nationalisms in the Age of Bandung," *Radical History Review* 95 (Spring 2006): 145-210; Roland Burke, "'The Compelling Dialogue of Freedom': Human Rights at the Bandung Conference," *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (November 2006): 947-965; Jason Parker, "Cold War II: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Reperiodization of the Postwar Era," *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 5 (November

2006): 867-892; Kweku Ampiah, *The Political and Moral Imperatives of the Bandung Conference of 1955: The Reactions of the US, UK and Japan* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2007); Shu Guang Zhang, "Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence': China's Diplomacy toward the Geneva and Bandung Conferences, 1954-55," *Cold War History* 7, no. 4 (November 2007): 509-528; See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008); Christopher J. Lee, ed., *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010); Antonia Finnane and Derek McDougall, eds., *Bandung 1955: Little Histories* (Victoria: Monash University Press, 2010); and Quinn Slobodian, "Bandung in Divided Germany: Managing Non-Aligned Politics in East and West, 1955-63," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 4 (2013): 644-662. Non-alignment has so far received relatively less recent attention and the best works remain those produced by journalists and political scientists from the 1960s to the 1980s (see note 13 below). Recent studies include: Ann Lane, "Third World Neutralism and British Cold War Strategy, 1960-62," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 14, no. 3 (September 2003): 151-174; Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), esp. 95-104, 207-223; James G. Hershberg, "'High-Spirited Confusion': Brazil, the 1961 Belgrade Non-Aligned Conference, and the Limits of an 'Independent' Foreign Policy during the High Cold War," *Cold War History* 7, no. 3 (August 2007): 373-388; Itty Abraham, "From Bandung to NAM: Non-alignment and Indian Foreign Policy, 1947-65," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 46, no. 2 (April 2008): 195-219; Kullaa, *Non-Alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe*; Byrne, "Algiers between Bandung and Belgrade"; Mark Atwood Lawrence, "The Rise and Fall of Nonalignment," in *The Cold War in the Third World*, ed. Robert J. McMahon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); John R. Lampe, "Yugoslavia's Foreign Policy in Balkan Perspective: Tracking between the Superpowers and Non-Alignment," *East Central Europe* 40, no. 1-2 (2013): 97-113; and Rajak, "No Bargaining Chips, No Spheres of Interest." Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné, and Nada Boškovska, eds., *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) was forthcoming at the time this review was written.

[10]. Thomas J. Noer, "The New Frontier and African Neutralism: Kennedy, Nkrumah, and the Volta River Project," *Diplomatic History* 8, no. 1 (January 1984): 78.

[11]. Rakove, "Author's Response," 28. See also Rakove's reference to "truly uncommitted states," in Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*, 34.

[12]. Peter Willetts, *The Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of a Third World Alliance* (London: Frances Pinter, 1978), 44.

[13]. Robert Vitalis, "The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah and Other Fables of Bandung (Bandung)," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 277. Other accounts that in various ways challenge or complicate the Bandung-to-Belgrade narrative include: Peter Lyon, *Neutralism* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1963), 47-48; G. H. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), esp. 223, 280; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 62-64; David Kimche, *The Afro-Asian Movement: Ideology and Foreign Policy of the Third World* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1973), esp. 73, 89-91, 96-97; Willetts, *The Non-Aligned Movement*, esp. 3-14; B. D. Arora, *Indian-Indonesian Relations (1961-1980)* (New Delhi: Asian

Educational Services, 1981), esp. 53-90, 151-166; Robert A. Mortimer, *The Third World Coalition in International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 6-22; John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 118-128; Abraham, "From Bandung to NAM"; Kullaa, *Non-Alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe*, esp. xiv, 3, 16, 177; and Lawrence, "The Rise and Fall of Nonalignment," 143-144. For an account that notes that "there has been some debate as to whether or not Bandung was a prelude to the Belgrade meeting" but nevertheless concludes (implausibly) that it was "in Bandung that the concept of the Non-aligned Movement was conceived," see A. W. Singham and Shirley Hune, *Non-alignment in an Age of Alignments* (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1986), 67-68.

[14]. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment*, 214-215, 221-222; and Kimche, *Afro-Asian Movement*, 72-73.

[15]. Willetts, *The Non-Aligned Movement*, 233; and Rob Rakove, "Taking Nonalignment Seriously," *Foreign Policy*, August 27, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/27/iran_non_alignment.

[16]. Vitalis, "The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah," 261-262. See also, for example, Kullaa, *Non-Alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe*, 177; and Lawrence, "The Rise and Fall of Nonalignment," 144.

[17]. The exception was Libya, which was not invited. Libya had attended the Casablanca Conference, but had subsequently distanced itself from the Casablanca Group, and had attended the Monrovia Conference, from which the other members of the Casablanca Group stayed away.

[18]. I am drawing here on Ryan Irwin's question in his own review, "whether [American] policymakers actually had a worldview on nonalignment or interlocking opinions about race, development, and neutrality that interacted as the world changed around them during the early 1960s." See Ryan Irwin, review of *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*, by Robert B. Rakove, *H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews* 14, no. 39 (July 8, 2013): 6, <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIV-39.pdf>. See also Hannah Gurman, "In Search of a Postcolonial U.S. World Order," review of *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*, by Robert B. Rakove and *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order*, by Ryan M. Irwin, *Reviews in American History* 41, no. 4 (December 2013): 749-750.

[19]. Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Jones, "A 'Segregated' Asia?"

[20]. Vitalis, "The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah," 262, 267.

[21]. Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (July 2008): 167-196.

Printable Version: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=38806>

Citation: Simon Stevens. Review of Rakove, Robert B., *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*. H-1960s, H-Net Reviews. August, 2014. **URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=38806>

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).