

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Nuclear Imperialism: Examining Atomic Test Reactions and UN Intervention in Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, 1957-1966

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Trina Hogg

France's decision to test their nuclear weapons program in the Sahara in 1960 wholly reshaped how the Cold War infiltrated into West Africa. During a time of nation building, Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah urged Ghana and Africa, more broadly, to break ties with colonial powers and rebuke further attempts of what he declared to be "nuclear imperialism" on the part of France. This thesis explores the ways in which Nkrumah navigated this ever-changing landscape, as global politics forced him to maintain fluidity in his response. I argue that from the late 1950s through the 1960s, Nkrumah used nuclear opposition as a political tool to promote pan-African unity, sharpening and wielding it as he entered into continental, intergovernmental, and international political conversations. He did this over the course of his time in office from 1957 through 1966 in three distinct phases. First, I will show how in his early years of leadership, Nkrumah explicitly rejected the French nuclear testing in Africa in 1960, expressing concerns over fallout and the nuclearization of the African continent. Secondly, through 1960 and 1961, Nkrumah embraced the opportunity to express his concerns over the French testing and nuclear

matters in front of the United Nations, influencing their continued denunciation of the nuclearization of Africa. This reliance of the UN as an amplifying body, I assert, faltered as he witnessed the UN complacency in the assassination of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba. Finally, following this loss of trust, Nkrumah continued to advocate for nonproliferation from 1962 through 1966, though he did so on an international level beyond the UN. Over the course of his presidency, Kwame Nkrumah adjusted and sharpened in his anti-nuclear response, with three phases of raising awareness in Africa through pan-African unity, at the United Nations, and lastly to the broad international nonproliferation community.

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Nuclear Imperialism: Examining Atomic Test Reactions and UN Intervention in
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Shelby Bremigan

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APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing History and Philosophy of Science

Director of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religion

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Nuclear Imperialism: Examining Atomic Test Reactions and UN Intervention in Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, 1957-1966

Introduction

On the morning of the 13th of February 1960, Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah awoke to news he knew would arrive but had hoped would never come. In the early dawn hours in the middle of the Sahara, France conducted their first nuclear bomb test despite Nkrumah's efforts to dissuade them. Named *Gerboise Bleue*, this above ground nuclear test, similar to the United States' first ever nuclear detonation, launched radioactive fallout into the desert atmosphere, where concerns over the health and environmental effects of this "death dust" were picked up by Ghanaian newspapers and reported to the general population.¹ In March 1960, he expressed his concerns to his government and offered this address, encapsulating his concerns over the nuclear testing,

The stubborn nature of the new colonialism was evidenced by the explosion of the French atomic bomb in the Sahara against the conscience of mankind and the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The flout of world opinion by France must convince us in Africa that we must stand together to resist imperialism and colonialism in its naked or hidden form. The African peoples will never forgive France for a repetition of the atomic tests in the Sahara.²

This quotation from Nkrumah encapsulates his fervent and complete rejection to the French testing. It speaks to his desire to both unify Africa against the testing, as well as his rejection of

¹ Abena Dove Osseo-Asare. *Atomic Junction: Nuclear Power in Africa after Independence*. (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 19-20.

² Samuel Obeng, "Debate on Government White Paper on the Republican Constitution, 14 March 1960," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 40.

colonialism and imperialism. Lastly, it recognizes the work being done by the UN to combat testing, a mission that Nkrumah would later seek to exploit and influence.

This event triggered the nuclearization of Africa. French testing drew sharp opposition from West Africans on the matter, further complicating the political atmosphere of the 1960s in Africa – a decade that ushered swift and drastic change across the continent. In fact, 1960 was declared “the Year of Africa,” with seventeen nations securing independence in that year, culminating in twenty-seven newly independent nations over the decade.³ These new nations fought for their independence from former European colonial powers. Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah embodied much of this revolutionary spirit and ideology. As a proponent of African Unity and pan-Africanism, he led the African Independence movement, which began with Ghanaian independence from the British Empire in 1957, the first colony in Africa to gain independence. In this capacity, Nkrumah advocated for Africa’s rightful seat at the global table by simultaneously navigating independence and negotiating the terse Cold War nuclear politics between the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union.

These complex nuclear politics began in the aftermath of the detonation of two atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan in early August of 1945.⁴ The Cold War escalated during the 1950s as the United States and Soviet Union both deployed their own hydrogen bomb tests, a weapon larger in magnitude than any atomic weapon.⁵ These newly developed hydrogen bombs, also known as weapons of mass destruction, introduced the idea of mutually assured destruction and became part of a new kind of arms race. This tension continued into the 1960s,

³ Michael Wines. "1960: Africa's Year of Freedom: In One Momentous Year, 17 African Nations Gained Independence from European Colonial Rule. *New York Times Upfront* 142, no. 13 (2010): 24.

⁴ Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 710, 740.

⁵ Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, 768-779.

as events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, brought anxieties to a boiling point between the two opposing powers, before cooling slightly with the passage of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963.⁶ The Cold War decisively shaped global politics, with the United States and capitalism representing one side and the Soviet Union and communism on the other. While many nations chose a side in this conflict, others, like Ghana, chose to remain non-aligned and encouraged newly independent African nations to follow his lead. Nkrumah chose non-alignment in an effort to remain outside of the partisanship of the Cold War, stating that Ghanaian policies were based on their own convictions and that choosing a side would threaten the prospect of a unified Africa.⁷

A quick note for the definitions used in this thesis: I draw from Matthew Heaton's definition of pan-Africanism as "a political message referencing the power and dignity of African peoples and cultures, the need to unite and overcome oppression, and the importance of the process of self-definition."⁸ Furthermore, Abena Osseo-Asare combines the terms of pan-Africanism and African unity, two ideas with many shared values, as a conglomerate pan-African unity.⁹ Lastly, for Nkrumah, non-alignment was simply defined by the decision to not take a side in the Cold War – whether it be with the United States or Soviet Union.

In the past twenty years, the history of Africa in the Cold War has examined aspects of labor, mining, peace activism, and nuclear energy. Nation building remained a complicated process that was further compounded by an international political atmosphere increasingly

⁶ This treaty banned atmospheric nuclear testing among signees.

Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light* (Pantheon Books: Toronto, 1985), 355.

⁷ Samuel Obeng, "Tenth Anniversary of the C.P.P., 8 January 1960," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 4.

⁸ Matthew Heaton, *Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry*. New African Histories Series. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2013), 3.

⁹ Osseo-Asare, 25.

focused on scientific development and nuclear hegemony. In this period, nuclear weapons and developments significantly occupied the global consciousness, extending into Africa during the crucial moment of independence and nation formation. Thus, the themes in this paper illuminate not only the story of nuclearization in West Africa, but also the challenges small and new nations faced in global politics throughout the Cold War.¹⁰

The sources for this thesis are comprised of compilations of Nkrumah's public speeches, collected and published by Samuel Obeng, which show his public response and posturing to a variety of national, continental, and international issues and concerns, as well as his hopes for Ghana. These orations span for most of his presidency, encompassing the period from 1960 to 1965. My methodology in examining these speeches involved chronologically tracing Nkrumah's shifting positions during his time in office, following not only his stance on nuclear weapons, but also on the UN, nonalignment, African Unity, and Patrice Lumumba. In addition to following Nkrumah's recalibration for his different approaches, I noted where he delivered his addresses, as well as to whom he spoke. Most often, he centered around Accra, with occasional trips to other areas of Ghana, such as Kumasi or Tamale. Also captured in his speeches are his international trips, he traveled around Africa for different meetings and conferences as well as to places such as New York, Dublin, and London. These speeches address a wide variety of audiences, from the Ghanaian Red Cross to the UN General Assembly. One of the more common addressees captured in the speeches is the Parliament and Ghanaian National Assembly. Nkrumah's speeches help answer the questions raised in my thesis, as I can clearly examine his public facing response to these events.

¹⁰ For more information about nuclear politics in Ghana following Nkrumah's time in office, see Abena Osseo-Asare's book *Atomic Junction*, particularly chapters 2-6.

In addition to Nkrumah's speeches, I have also drawn from Resolutions passed the United Nations General Assembly regarding the nuclearization of Africa. These show the broad consensus and support for disarmament among its Member States and reflect the influence of Nkrumah on the body. These resolutions are important because it allows us to see the same documents that Nkrumah refers to when he speaks of French disregard of the many UN resolutions in their decision to detonate their weapons. Lastly, some of the material used in this thesis came from the US National Archives and Records Administration, with a particular focus on RG 0306, African Reaction Files. These best illuminate the reactions of not only Nkrumah, which we can see through his speeches, but also the responses of other West African nations. The three sections of this paper encapsulate the clear transition in strategy on the part of Nkrumah.

The leadup to the French nuclear testing and the subsequent detonations between 1958-1966 wholly reshaped how the Cold War infiltrated into West Africa. During a time of nation building, Kwame Nkrumah urged Ghana to break ties with colonial powers and rebuke further attempts of what he declared to be "nuclear imperialism" on the part of France. This thesis explores the ways in which Nkrumah navigated this ever-changing landscape, as global politics forced him to maintain fluidity in his response. I argue that from the late 1950s through the 1960s, Nkrumah used nuclear opposition as a political tool to promote pan-African unity, sharpening and wielding it as he entered into continental, intergovernmental, and international political conversations. Later, I will show how he amended his strategies to incorporate support for increased antinuclear legislation and control. Even though his support of disarmament remained a constant, I will identify three distinct responses that Nkrumah had to nuclear weapons testing. First, I will show how in his early years of leadership, Nkrumah explicitly

rejected the French nuclear testing in Africa in 1960. This denunciation was due to his concerns of nuclear fallout and continued French colonial repression, which manifested in their nuclear imperialism over Algeria and Africa more broadly. Secondly, through 1960 and 1961, Nkrumah embraced the opportunity to express his concerns over the French testing and nuclear matters in front of the United Nations, influencing their continued denunciation of the nuclearization of Africa. This reliance of the UN as an amplifying body, I argue, faltered as he witnessed the UN complacency in the assassination of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba. Finally, following this loss of trust, Nkrumah continued to advocate for disarmament from 1962 through 1966, though he did so on an international level beyond the UN. Under his leadership, Ghana had gained a louder international voice through his work with the intergovernmental organization, but Nkrumah would later amplify that voice by connecting with the international disarmament community. Over the course of his presidency, Kwame Nkrumah recalibrating in his anti-nuclear response, with three phases of raising awareness in Africa through pan-African unity, at the United Nations, and lastly to the broad international disarmament community.

Historiography

Understanding the events and global political climate surrounding Nkrumah helps us better contextualize his response and how these events fit into larger historiographical frameworks. These discussions broadly center around pan-Africanism, nuclear power in Africa, and foreign intervention in Africa during the Cold War. More specifically, while other scholars have weighed in on the French nuclear testing as well as Ghanaian and African anti-nuclearity, my work is the first to examine how Nkrumah navigated global politics with regards to disarmament and the United Nations.

Focusing on the first historiographical debate, the first conversation surrounds pan-Africanism and reactions to colonialism. With this and the importance of pan-Africanism in Nkrumah's political ideology in mind, Frank Gerits, Jean Allman, and Jeffrey Ahlman's work on Ghanaian pan-Africanism is particularly useful. These historians examine the ways in which pan-Africanism shaped the international political approach of Nkrumah and how he encouraged participation from other African countries in global politics. According to Gerits, Ghanaian non-alignment was rooted in a pan-African world view and can be interchanged with neutralism and positive neutrality, and can be seen as a Monroe Doctrine for Africa.¹¹ He argues that especially following the Congo Crisis, Ghanaian non-alignment became rooted in pan-Africanist ideology as it supported anti-interventionist ideologies.¹² While Gerits argues that the link between non-alignment and pan-African unity increased after 1961, I argue that this connection was actively solidified shortly after the French testing began. As we see below, evidence for this comes from Nkrumah's decision to unite Africa against the testing in March 1960, calling together leaders from across Africa to address his nuclear concerns.¹³

Like Gerits, Allman's work also demonstrates the importance of pan-Africanism in Nkrumah's Ghana and how the goals of pan-Africanism intertwined with anti-nuclear imperialism.¹⁴ She focuses on knowledge production in Nkrumah's Ghana, arguing that it was Africa-centered and Africa-based through the Institute of African Studies.¹⁵ In her argument, she

¹¹ Frank Gerits, "When the Bull Elephants Fight": Kwame Nkrumah, Non-Alignment, and Pan-Africanism as an Interventionist Ideology in the Global Cold War (1957-1966)," *The International History Review* Volume 37, No. 5 (2015): 964.

¹² Gerits, "When the Bull Elephants Fight", 964.

¹³ Samuel Obeng, "Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa, 7 April 1960," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 44.

¹⁴ Jean Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom: Ghana, 1959-1962." *Souls* 10, no. 2 (2008): 83.

¹⁵ Jean Allman. "Kwame Nkrumah, African Studies, and the Politics of Knowledge Production in the Black Star of Africa." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 46, no. 2 (2013): 183.

states that during a time in which global attention focused on the US and USSR, Ghanaian knowledge production sought to transcend Cold War politics and US racial politics.¹⁶ As seen through my own work, Nkrumah clearly had this same goal of moving beyond the divisive Cold War politics of this time. However, while she focuses on his creation of knowledge within Ghana for Ghanaians as a postcolonial tool within the nation, my work focuses on Nkrumah's advocacy for Ghana on an increasingly international scale. Thus, while her work importantly emphasizes the importance of Ghana's internal growth, my research examines how Ghana, through Nkrumah, engaged with a global diplomatic audience by continually engaging with the UN and other international actors.

In another study of Nkrumah's ideas, Jeffrey Ahlman connects these pan-African sentiments to a discussion of violence and nonviolence in Ghana for the duration of the Algerian War. He uses Ghana as a case study to examine how the Algerian conflict – and the nuclear tests there – forced Nkrumah to question his stance of nonviolence and positive action.¹⁷ In his paper “The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana,” Ahlman shows that the violence of decolonization was not simply thrust upon Africa by Europe, but rather deliberated upon and used as a strategy by African nations in order to help gain a place in postcolonial geopolitics. According to Ahlman, particular events such as the Algerian conflict, assassination of the Congo's Patrice Lumumba, the Sharpeville Massacre, and the French nuclear tests in the Sahara challenged Nkrumah's faith in nonviolence, though he maintained this belief throughout his time in office.¹⁸ Ahlman further explores pan-Africanism in his book *Living with Nkrumahism*,

¹⁶ Allman. "Kwame Nkrumah, African Studies, and the Politics of Knowledge Production in the Black Star of Africa" 184.

¹⁷ Jeffrey S. Ahlman, "The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana, 1958–1960: Debating “Violence” and “Nonviolence” in African Decolonization." *Africa Today* 57, no. 2 (2010): 67.

¹⁸ Ahlman, “The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana”, 68-69.

arguing that the increasingly uneven state-citizen relationship within Ghana became constrained in the postcolonial state, eventually affecting the institutions that Nkrumah himself created to put his pan-African vision into practice.¹⁹ Ahlman's arguments complicate the narrative of African unity and positive active and help better clarify the gravity of these nuclear tests as well as helping to better understand Nkrumah's goals of pan-Africanism and how they fit under the larger umbrella of Nkrumahism. While he concentrates on the role of the Algerian war for independence, and its role in Nkrumah's nonviolent, pan-African vision, I focus on a smaller catalyst within this, the French nuclear tests. Nkrumah continued to conform to his non-violent vision, sharpening it with his idea of positive action, as seen through his earliest reaction to the *Gerboise* tests.

The following historiographical trend includes discussions of nuclearity in Africa, a term first introduced by Gabrielle Hecht.²⁰ In this conversation, Abena Osseo-Asare's work focuses on nuclear power in a post-Nkrumah Ghana, and Vincent Intondi writes about anti-nuclearism in the African diaspora. In addition, the articles of Jean Allman and Roxanne Panchasi both focus on anti-nuclear opinions more broadly in West Africa. Most broadly, Gabrielle Hecht's *Being Nuclear: Africans and the Global Uranium Trade*, explores what she terms as *nuclearity* or, "a term...to signal how places, objects, and hazards get designated as 'nuclear'".²¹ In this, she focuses on how Africa fits into the global nuclear economy, though often ways that shadow the colonial and postcolonial politics of African involvement within this structure. Hecht's first

¹⁹ Jeffrey Ahlman. *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana*. New African Histories Series. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2017), 4-6.

²⁰ Gabrielle Hecht, *Being Nuclear: Africans and the Global Uranium Trade*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012), 3-4.

²¹ Gabrielle Hecht, *Being Nuclear: Africans and the Global Uranium Trade*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012), 3-4.

argument regarding the subversive nature of colonial, and later postcolonial politics and ploys for control within the nuclear industry in Africa, echo into West Africa and French testing in the Sahara can be viewed through similar frames.²²

Within the discussion of nuclearity, Allman examines these Ghanaian-led peace and anti-nuclear activism, while Panchasi's research focuses on the discursive international politics and French imperialism during the Algerian War. Allman's work examines anti-nuclear activism within Ghana through the actions of civil rights activists Bayard Rustin and Bill Sutherland, both whom traveled there in order to protest.²³ Here, Allman argues that anti-nuclear imperialism took root in the pan-Africanist movement and that Africa, and indeed Ghana, was once the center of global peace activism. She asserts that this study can serve as a corrective to current globalization and peace studies and goes against existing narratives of Afro-pessimism, a framework that has guided scholarship on Africa since the 1980s.²⁴ My argument builds on anti-nuclear protests in Ghana, Nkrumah's action and his support of the Sahara protest team. While Allman and other scholars focus on West Africa and their relationship to France, my thesis seeks to explore these same events through an international angle by examining the influence and action of the UN and Nkrumah's relationship to it.

In his study of African diaspora, Vincent J. Intondi presents a new argument for the connection of peace history and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States through his examination of African American resistance to nuclear weapons.²⁵ Important to my study,

²² Ibid.

²³ Jean Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom: Ghana, 1959-1962 1." 83.

²⁴ Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom," 83-85.

²⁵ Vincent J. Intondi, *African Americans against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement* (Stanford Nuclear Age Series. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014), 1-7.

Intondi dedicates a chapter to “Civil Rights, Anti-Colonialism, and the Bomb in Africa.”²⁶ Here, he discusses Nkrumah, evaluates him for his positive action strategies and quick response against not only the French nuclear test, but also the Sharpeville Massacre and South Africa’s apartheid policy. Intondi’s work further contextualizes the peace strategies of Nkrumah, as well as linking his ideas and their effects on the African diaspora during the 1960s. While Nkrumah communicated with many of the Civil Rights leaders within the diaspora during his attendance of events such as the 1945 Manchester pan-African conference, my research on Nkrumah focuses on his work of uniting Africa against nuclear weapons, where Intondi studies his influence abroad. In addition, Intondi evaluates Nkrumah’s peace strategies, which he employs with his anti-nuclear position, while my research further connects his positive action to the movement for African unity.

Next, in Roxanne Panchasi’s recently published article that analyzes French nuclear tests in the Sahara and their effect on the Algerian War, she utilizes the term *nuclear-imperial past* in order to examine the rhetorical and political linkages between the some 200 nuclear test conducted by the French in the Sahara and the effects on the region.²⁷ She acknowledges her methodological difficulties of the archive and the disputes surrounding the fraught relationship between France and Algeria, especially over the topic of nuclear issues and she argues that the relationship and its political conflicts and contradictions continue to haunt the two countries.²⁸ In this article, she includes Ghanaian history as she acknowledges the protests that Kwame Nkrumah voiced over these tests, referring to France’s “total disregard of repeated protests by

²⁶ Intondi, *African Americans against the Bomb*, 44.

²⁷ Roxanne Panchasi, ““No Hiroshima in Africa”: The Algerian War and the Question of French Nuclear Tests in the Sahara.” *History of the Present* 9, no. 1 (2019): 84-88.

²⁸ Panchasi, ““No Hiroshima in Africa,” 87.

Ghana”.²⁹ The work of these two scholars helps orient my study in the broader conflict of the Algerian War and the nuclear activism within Africa, with Allman emphasizing citizen activism and Panchasi aiding in the study of the French perspective. My investigation of Nkrumah adds to this historiographical debate by contributing a discussion of how his anti-nuclearism was integral to his support of pan-African unity and how his concerns over this new imperialism shaped his response.

Significant to my own research is Abena Dove Osseo-Asare’s 2019 *Atomic Junction*, an exploration of nuclear power in Africa following the African Independence movement. In her particular focus on Ghana, Osseo-Asare touches on Nkrumah’s resistance towards the French nuclear tests in her first chapter before expanding to examine the nuclear history of Ghana, including its acquisition of a reactor.³⁰ In this book, she argues that postcolonial actors looked to Africa to “fashion science for their countries to claim their equivalent humanity;” however, Africans fought for access to science despite dismissive postcolonial attitudes and shaped policies on science and met global standards as they marched forward.³¹ In her book, she interviews those working in the nuclear industry in Ghana, combining historical, ethnographical, and geographical accounts, examining what she terms as the *afrofutur*.³² Because *Atomic Junction* stretches across Ghana’s nuclear history, the beginning of the book speaks more directly to Nkrumah’s Ghana. Osseo-Asare argues that, “[u]nder the glare of nuclear imperialism, fallout from French bomb tests led Ghanaians to better understand atomic matters and participate in nuclear research even as they were largely outsiders to nuclear power in terms

²⁹ Panchasi, 104.

³⁰ Osseo-Asare. *Atomic Junction*, 1-18.

³¹ Osseo-Asare, 13.

³² Osseo-Asare, 14.

of international prowess.”³³ She also credits the virulent outcry of Nkrumah’s government with increased nuclear monitoring in Africa and states that she believes that French testing largely compelled Ghana to join the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).³⁴ Osseo-Asare’s work closely informs my own research as her study looks into the broader history of nuclear power in Ghana. However, she only focuses on the role of Nkrumah in her first chapter as he worked to establish the Ghanaian Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC), before moving beyond 1966 to discuss nuclear power in Ghana in the following decades. Therefore, this thesis seeks to complicate the years during Nkrumah’s presidency, when he was working to establish Ghana on the international stage.

The final historiographical debate surrounds conversations of foreign intervention in Africa during the era of decolonization. The conversation surrounding decolonization has been largely shaped by historian Frederick Cooper, who published extensively on the topic. Cooper’s further work, namely *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, draws upon a study of particular groups and their political and social projects in the era of decolonization.³⁵ In this, he focuses on the relationship between the French and British and their African colonies and the social history of labor as understood by the European powers and African leadership.³⁶ Lastly, Cooper’s writing on France and French Africa provide context for the nuclear testing, conducted in the then-French territory of Algeria during the Algerian War for Independence.³⁷ Here, he explores the abstract questions of citizenship, nationality, and

³³ Osseo-Asare.

³⁴ Osseo-Asare, 17.

³⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-5.

³⁶ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*.

³⁷ Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship Between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

sovereignty and helps orient the French perspective of my argument. Cooper's scholarship provides a framework through which the conversation of decolonization can be structured. Whereas Cooper utilizes sweeping studies of both former British and French colonial holdings, my thesis pinpoints the efforts of one leader to fight colonialism through the rejection of nuclear imperialism and subjugation.

My research also engages with scholarly conversations concerning foreign intervention in Africa that reveal how as colonialism faltered, the Cold War powers sought to gain new ways in which to control Africa.³⁸ Furthermore, as Elizabeth Schmidt's work has argued, as the Soviet Union began to collapse, so did the support they provided to newly independent nations. This, alongside the increased foreign military presence in Africa during the Cold War provided new support for repressive governments.³⁹ As in this thesis, her work also demonstrates that foreign intervention, generally speaking, tended to exacerbate rather than alleviate conflicts.⁴⁰ This thesis supports her claim the notion that Europe – France in particular – was searching for a new kind of imperialism over Africa, especially giving their tiring hold over their North African territories. Nkrumah's speeches reaffirmed this, as he often accused France of deploying “nuclear blackmail.” Schmidt's research focuses on the power vacuums created by foreign intervention, and as seen through the UN in my own work, did indeed worsen rather than alleviated concern and conflict on the continent.

Bridging the gap between foreign intervention, nuclear power, and arms control, Jacob Hamblin's fourth book *The Wretched Atom* argues that civilian nuclear energy was in fact used

³⁸ Elizabeth Schmidt and Minter, William, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror*. New Approaches to African History; 7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 1.

³⁹ Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa*, 2.

⁴⁰ Schmidt., 2-5.

as a tool to promote state power, diplomatic wielding, manipulation of trade, and the reinforcement of racism and colonialism.⁴¹ In this, he situates the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a new international regulatory body formed to, among other goals, promote Eisenhower's "atoms for peace" slogan.⁴² Hamblin shows how its promise of peace and prosperity through civilian atomic energy belied a reality of dependence, intervention, and control for postcolonial nations. In particular, the fourth chapter of this scholarship, "Colored and White Atoms" examines the "peaceful atom" in Africa and Asia.⁴³ In talking about Ghana, he notes that Nkrumah promoted African unity and positive neutralism, while remaining open and friendly towards socialist ideas – particularly that of the Soviets – drawing ire from the US perspective.⁴⁴ My own research builds on these ideas by examining Nkrumah's reactions and his navigation through these ever changing politics, emphasizing his public speeches. This thesis examines how Nkrumah recalibrated his approach to nuclear imperialism and international bodies, reflecting the pressures exerted on global politics by the US, as studied by Hamblin.

Similar to my thesis, these scholars' work on pan-Africanism, nuclear testing in Africa, and foreign intervention in the continent all represent new areas through which to understand Africa in the 1960s. As the Cold War extended into Africa, the conflict shaped the way newly independent nations in Africa formed. As this happened in Ghana, scholars have sought to show the many ways in which Nkrumah engaged in conversations of pan-African unity and how reactions to colonialism formed throughout the 1960s. They have discussed different ways in which nuclearity has touched West Africa, both from the perspectives of Algeria and from the

⁴¹ Jacob Hamblin, *The Wretched Atom: America's Global Gamble with Peaceful Nuclear Technology*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 6.

⁴² Hamblin, *The Wretched Atom*, 3.

⁴³ Hamblin, 92-94.

⁴⁴ Hamblin, 107.

perspective of the Ghanaian nuclear energy program. Finally, broad histories of foreign intervention and the process of decolonization on the continent were useful in understanding the politics that shaped the continent in broad, sweeping ways. My thesis engages with these conversations by defining how Nkrumah dealt with nuclear matters explicitly and connecting it to broader conversations of pan-African unity - including his interactions with the UN - and discussing his reaction to foreign intervention in Africa.

Development of Nkrumah's Ideologies

In order to better comprehend Nkrumah's ideologies and his reaction to French testing in February 1960, one must first understand Nkrumah's early life. As a young man, Nkrumah galvanized his position of non-alignment and pan-African unity as he received his education abroad. In his formative years as a student, Nkrumah began his education at Achimota College, a government school in Ghana before traveling to the United States in order to attend Lincoln University in Pennsylvania for his undergraduate studies in the 1940s.⁴⁵ He continued onto the University of Pennsylvania for graduate studies, where he remained during the mid and late 1940s and where he participated in conferences and discussions on racial equality, pan-Africanism, and anticolonialism.⁴⁶ This era was defined by changes in the global landscape, as World War I and World War II united black voices and brought about an increase in anticolonial sentiment among colonized peoples.⁴⁷ Nkrumah's introduction to the ideas of Pan-Africanism

⁴⁵ Osseo-Asare *Atomic Junction*, 22.

⁴⁶ Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought and Politics: An African-Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 20.

⁴⁷ John Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonization, 1945-1960*. Critical Perspectives on Empire. (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 37-44.

came in April 1945 when W.E.B. DuBois invited him to a meeting he organized at the Schomburg Library in Harlem, New York. Shortly after that meeting, Nkrumah moved to Britain where he convened with other scholars of Pan-Africanism. This culminated at the pivotal 1945 Manchester Conference, spearheaded by DuBois, and other important African activists such as Jomo Kenyatta, I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, and Ras Makonnen.⁴⁸ DuBois opened the conference with the declaration, “Challenge to the Colonial Powers.”⁴⁹ Following DuBois address, Nkrumah took the stage to deliver his, “Declaration to the Colonial Workers, Farmers, and Intellectuals,” where he called for the unification of colonial subjects of the world.⁵⁰ The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Conference issued resolutions that called for political, economic, and social reform and justice for Africa and the Caribbean; delegates also vowed to reach out towards then still colonized India and Indonesia.⁵¹ The ambitious agenda of the conference was pivotal in connecting anticolonial sentiment across the globe, and served to both reinforce Pan-Africanism in independence movements and lent legitimacy to the anti-imperial rhetoric of the era.⁵² Clearly, this conference influenced Nkrumah’s own calls for unity among all of Africa, which he argued could strengthen the continent to better resist new forms of colonialism that would come post-independence. This call for solidarity among not only Africa, but other post-colonial countries like India and Indonesia, set an example for future conferences and gave legitimacy to their efforts when working as a combined front, rather than small, separate entities.

Ten years after the Manchester Conference, Nkrumah attended the 1955 Bandung Conference, which further shaped his political ideology. Also known as the Asian-African

⁴⁸ Munro, 58.

⁴⁹ Munro, 58-59.

⁵⁰ Munro.

⁵¹ Munro, 63.

⁵² Munro, 73.

Conference, the meeting commenced with an agenda of eliminating European colonialism, white supremacy, and – most notably for this thesis – nuclear weapons.⁵³ As part of the event’s agenda, the conference participants called upon the UN and all concerned nations to prohibit the production and testing of nuclear weapons and advocated for the establishment of international control.⁵⁴ By the conclusion of the conference and beyond, Kwame Nkrumah had become one of the most outspoken participants against nuclear weapons. The Manchester and Bandung Conferences proved influential in aiding Nkrumah’s establishment of his political ideologies, encompassing non-alignment and non-proliferation as well as pan-Africanism and African unity.

Following his time spent abroad and in attendance of these conferences, Nkrumah’s early political career began in 1949, when he led a political split from the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), helping to form and lead the Convention Peoples Party (CPP). The UGCC was an early Gold Coast political party formed in 1947 whose members sought to end British colonial rule and gain independence through legal measures, but whose leadership and major constituency were mainly wealthier elites from the southern portion of the country. In contrast, the CPP’s members tended to be from the lower or working economic classes, and the party members referred to themselves as “verandah boys” in reference to their appeal to the “common man” of the Gold Coast. Nkrumah served on the UGCC’s Working Committee and successfully mobilized younger Gold Coast constituents from the north of the country, who in turn urged his creation of the new, more progressive CPP.⁵⁵ After a series of general national elections that the CPP and Nkrumah decisively won through the mid 1950s, Ghana was granted independence

⁵³ Vincent Intondi, "The Dream of Bandung and the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons." *Critical Studies on Security* 7, no. 1 (2019), 83.

⁵⁴ Intondi, "The Dream of Bandung and the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons." 83.

⁵⁵ George M. Bob-Milliar, “Verandah Boys versus Reactionary Lawyers: Nationalist Activism in Ghana, 1946-1956,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 47, no. 2 (2014): 288-294.

from Britain on March 6, 1957, and Nkrumah became Prime Minister. Three years later on July 1, 1960, the country became a republic, and Nkrumah became the first President.⁵⁶ These political foundations carried over into his tenure of Prime Minister and President and effected how he navigated the global political climate within the larger context of the Cold War.

As leader of the newly independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah internalized and integrated his various educational and political influences as he denounced French nuclear testing. As this brief synopsis has shown, opposition was indeed many years in the making as Nkrumah formulated many of his key ideologies of the 1960s – namely Pan-Africanism and positive action - in the decades prior. These connections were primarily made abroad, attending conferences across many continents before returning to Ghana where he began his political career, ascending the ranks, forming his own party. Perhaps one could say his ultimate test was tangling with the British colonial government, which included spending time in jail, before leading Ghana to its independence.⁵⁷ After independence, he utilized the tenets of pan-Africanism he had engaged with in his formative years and applied them to his position on limiting weapons, and later, complete disarmament. In addition to advocating for disarmament, Nkrumah also saw the value integrating this position with that of African Unity, believing a united Africa would emerge from the independence era more strongly than if separated and detached. Through his tenure, Nkrumah made clear that both he and Ghanaians would be non-aligned, and he called on the United Nations to help all of Africa establish itself as anti-nuclear. Even as his trust in the UN faltered, Nkrumah continued to expand his anti-nuclear stance to be all encompassing, advocating for a world without bombs.

⁵⁶ Botwe-Asamoah, *Politico-Cultural Thought*, 9.

⁵⁷ John Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonization, 1945-1960*, 250.

Chapter One: Advocating for an Anti-Nuclear Africa

In the short time between 1957 when Ghana achieved independence and the early months of 1960 when France began detonating their *Gerboise* series of nuclear tests, Nkrumah developed his ideologies of non-alignment and pan-African unity in his first three years as president. In his many recorded speeches, he expressed his concerns about France and the danger of the radiation the nuclear testing exposed the population of West Africa to, as well as his condemnation of France's continued colonial action in Algeria, and Africa more broadly. The French announcement in 1959 of their intention to test their nuclear weapons in the Sahara brought on resistance from Nkrumah. The harshness of French colonialism in Algeria, later compared to the violence of the British war on the Mau Mau in Kenya, drew disdain from the Ghanaians that became more compounded by France's flagrant disregard towards Nkrumah's original calls for disarmament.⁵⁸ As these proposed tests were announced, anti-nuclear activists began arriving in Ghana, joining together to form a Sahara protest team that attempted to march to the proposed testing site in Reggane, only to be stopped at the Ghanaian border.⁵⁹ Even French leader Charles de Gaulle remarked after the event that their testing was preceded by warnings from the United States and Great Britain about the known dangers of atmospheric testing.⁶⁰ As France continued to prepare for their *Gerboise Bleue* detonation, it became clear to Nkrumah that Ghanaians, and anti-nuclear activists from abroad would not be able to prevent these tests. In this section, I argue that from his inauguration to the middle of 1960, Nkrumah used opposition to nuclear imperialism as a political tool to promote pan-African unity. He did

⁵⁸ Osseo-Asare, 25.

⁵⁹ Vincent J. Intondi, *African Americans Against the Bomb*, 56-58.

Jean Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom, 84-85.

⁶⁰ Mervyn O'Driscoll, "Explosive Challenge: Diplomatic Triangles, the United Nations, and the Problem of French Nuclear Testing, 1959-1960," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11, no. 1 (Jan 2009), 28.

this first by rejecting the French tests publicly, then through his work of spreading his positive action strategy throughout Africa, and lastly, by taking note of the UN Resolutions and how he could reach out to work with the organization.

Ever-Tightening Opposition: Nkrumah and his Anti-Nuclear Stance from 1957-1960

As we saw at the beginning of this thesis, Nkrumah reacted strongly against both the announcement of French intention and to their testing of their nuclear weapons in Africa. Though he would later pursue a collaborative effort with the United Nations his response between 1959 and 1960 was to publicly and vehemently reject the French decision to test and to gather other African nations in order to discuss his solutions to the issue, which rested in positive action and African unity. Though enigmatic, his orations were often compelling, and Nkrumah's sense of pride for Ghana and African unity is tangible as you read through the volumes. Nkrumah and other African nations had been made aware of the French intention to test in the Sahara and resisted it. These speeches capture his resistance and beginning in 1960 he decried the *Gerboise Bleue* test to the Ghanaian public.⁶¹ I will show through the collection of Nkrumah's public speeches, I will show how his calls for non-alignment and positive action extended beyond Ghana and into Africa during 1960. These sources demonstrate that his actions alone would not curb the French and so he leaned on his newly established goal of pan-African unity in order to spread his message across the continent, encouraging others to take up the fight with him. For Nkrumah, unity was his first solution for fighting back against French imperialism.

⁶¹ Osseo-Asare, *Atomic Junction*, 1-18.

The first instance of Nkrumah addressing the people of Ghana with his thoughts on the nuclearization of Africa occurred shortly before the first *Gerboise Bleue* test in January of 1960. In an address that commemorated the tenth anniversary of the formation of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP), he stated that Ghanaian foreign policy was based upon the ideas of positive neutralism – often called “positive action” by Nkrumah - and non-alignment.⁶² These stances, according to Nkrumah, would allow non-aligned countries to positively interact in global affairs without fear of influence by either the East or West blocs – helping to close the “unfortunate and undesirable gap” between the two.⁶³ Just over a month after the delivery of this address, France tested Nkrumah's position of positive action as they conducted their first test in those early morning hours on February 13, 1960. Nkrumah responded with an address, condemning France's actions and noting that his government would respond by freezing all French assets in Ghana and eventually recall the Ghanaian ambassador to France.⁶⁴ He quickly charged that the actions of France took the form of a new colonialism, something he believed could be countered by a movement towards African unity.⁶⁵ Furthermore, he recognized during this time that France's nuclear actions not only disregarded the will of several West African nations, but also worked against resolution brought forth by the United Nations which called for a cessation of the atomic tests.⁶⁶ In this announcement, Nkrumah called for a strategy broader than positive action – that of African unity – which he championed throughout his presidency.⁶⁷

⁶² Samuel Obeng, “Tenth Anniversary of the C.P.P., 8 January 1960,” *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 4-5.

⁶³ Obeng, “Tenth Anniversary of the C.P.P., 8 January 1960,” 4.

⁶⁴ Samuel Obeng, “French Atom Tests in the Sahara, 13 February 1960,” *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 25.

⁶⁵ Samuel Obeng, “Debate on Government White Paper on the Republican Constitution, 14 March 1960,” *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 40.

⁶⁶ Obeng, “Debate on Government White Paper on the Republican Constitution, 14 March 1960,” 40.

⁶⁷ Obeng, “Debate on Government White Paper on the Republican Constitution, 14 March 1960,” 40.

Nkrumah then proposed a meeting of many African leaders in Accra in order to disseminate these ideas across Africa, furthering his goals of African unity as a pillar in the fight against colonialism and the nuclear imperialism that existed as a result.

A month after the first French test, Nkrumah announced his plans to host a conference among African leaders to discuss a strategy of positive action against the nuclear weapons testing.⁶⁸ This conference marks the height of Nkrumah's unifying actions for the continent. The Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa held in April of 1960, brought together delegates from across Africa to discuss two key issues: France's nuclear weapons testing and apartheid in South Africa, both issues that Nkrumah wished to resolve through peaceful nonviolence or positive action. At this conference, Nkrumah declared, "[i]n spite of several protests to General De Gaulle by the whole of the African continent and the United Nations General Assembly against exploding an atomic bomb on our continent, the French Government arrogantly exploded this nuclear device on our soil."⁶⁹ Concerns about these nuclear tests extended beyond an anxiety of new forms of colonialism in the independence era as Nkrumah spoke of the radiation and its potential to be carried more than 700 miles from the detonation site north of Ghana.⁷⁰ Furthermore, inaccurate prediction on behalf of French scientists as to the extent in which radioactive fallout could blanket the region only added to the anger and anxiety expressed at this conference. Adding legitimacy to his claims for concern, Nkrumah informs his audience about the teams of international scientists – from Ghana and

⁶⁸ Obeng, "Debate on Government White Paper on the Republican Constitution, 14 March 1960," 40.

⁶⁹ Samuel Obeng, "Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa, 7 April 1960," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 44.

⁷⁰ Samuel Obeng, "Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa, 7 April 1960," 46.

Africa more broadly, as well as Britain, the United States, and Canada who arrived in West Africa to assist with monitoring and testing samples.⁷¹

Nkrumah's solution at this collaborative conference was to encourage positive action: peaceful, yet forceful protestations against the testing, following the example set by Gandhi in India. Two examples of this were the freezing of French assets in Ghana, as well as setting up training centers across Ghana in order to educate people in the technique of positive action.⁷²

While France's De Gaulle argued that it needed nuclear weapons to defend against other nuclear powers, Nkrumah pushed back against his sentiment, stating,

[w]e are not freeing ourselves from centuries of imperialism and colonialism only to be maimed and destroyed by nuclear weapons. We do not threaten anyone and we renounce the foul weapons that threaten the very existence of life on this planet. Rather we put our trust in the awakening conscious of mankind which rejects this primitive barbarism, and believe firmly in positive non-violent action.⁷³

The language in this speech marks Nkrumah's most thorough discussion of his stance against nuclear imperialism, where he advocates for Ghanaian protests, including a mass non-violent procession towards the testing area, part of the aforementioned Sahara protest team.⁷⁴

This non-violent protest has been examined in the history of nuclearity in West Africa by Jean Allman. In her article, she argues that anti-nuclear imperialism took root in the Pan-Africanist movement, particularly in Ghana, and that Africa was once the center of global peace activism.⁷⁵ The French tested their second nuclear weapon in the *Gerboise Blanche* test shortly before to this conference in the beginning of April 1960, further ignoring the UN

⁷¹ Obeng, "Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa," 46-48.

⁷² Obeng, "Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa," 47-48.

⁷³ Obeng, 49.

⁷⁴ Obeng, 48.

⁷⁵ Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom," 84-85.

General Assembly and calls from African leaders which followed the first detonation in February. Nkrumah's anger about the *Gerboise Blanche* is heightened during this time, likely due to a combination of factors – the continuation of French testing despite his efforts, as the Positive Action Conference and second nuclear test took place within a week of each other and the sheer size of this detonation, which was three times the size of the Little Boy bomb dropped on Hiroshima.⁷⁶

Nkrumah reacted to the French plans by demanding they abstain from using their Algerian colony as a testing site. When they failed to do so, he shared his concern and outrage with the Ghanaian people, exposing the fact that France had disregarded both him and the United Nations. From his rise to office in 1957 to the testing in 1960, Nkrumah used his strategy of positive action to push forward in his fight against the nuclearization of Africa and he saw the benefits of unity as many countries gained independence.

Nuclear Imperialism as a New Colonialism: The Response of African Unity

While Nkrumah's initial anti-nuclear rhetoric struck a chord among Ghanaians, French tests also began to meet new resistance among broader membership within the movement towards African unity. This movement was part of a collaborative goal formed by Nkrumah and one of his advisers George Padmore, which advocated for an Africa that would be united after the fall of colonialism instead of one that fractured into smaller and weaker states.⁷⁷ George Padmore was a communist author and journalist who spent the latter years of his life in Accra and worked closely with Nkrumah to shape his policy of pan-

⁷⁶ Allman, 93.

⁷⁷ Matteo Grilli, "African Liberation and Unity in Nkrumah's Ghana: A Study of the Role of "Pan-African Institutions" in the Making of Ghana's foreign Policy, 1957-1966 (PhD diss., Universiteit Leiden, 2015), 45.

Africanism within the CPP. Nkrumah believed that unity and positive action would strengthen Africa against this new form of French imperialism.

Nkrumah established his strategies of African unity for fighting the French testing early in his career and maintained it throughout his presidency. As discussed above, he called the Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa in 1960 in order to unite other African countries in the resistance against the French testing and to prevent future action, advocating that African unity move forward under the auspices of positive action and non-violence, which were at the forefront of Nkrumah's political ideology.⁷⁸

As Nkrumah intertwined African unity with his belief in non-alignment and disarmament, other West African countries followed his lead and mounted their own resistance to the testing. In Liberia, the *Daily Graphic* reported protests against the testing, stating the country's leadership had sent a second protest note to the government of France following continued testing.⁷⁹ In *The Voice of Ethiopia*, the Sudanese delegate Mr. Hassan was reported as "issuing a strong protest...against the proposed French nuclear tests."⁸⁰ Nigeria also joined in the protests, reporting that the Acting Premier of Eastern Nigeria, Dr. Okpara issued a statement saying a French test would be considered an, "unfriendly act equivalent to open hostility."⁸¹ Nigerian resistance continued and later that year, the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa traveled to the United Kingdom in order to speak

⁷⁸ Samuel Obeng, "Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 45.

Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom," 84-85.

⁷⁹ "Liberia Protests Against Test," *The Daily Graphic*, July 16, 1959. From the US National Archives, African Reaction Files: 1956-1967. RG 0306, Folder 1.

⁸⁰ "Proposed Sahara Tests Go to UN," *The Voice of Ethiopia*, July 30, 1959. From the US National Archives, African Reaction Files: 1956-1967. RG 0306, Folder 1.

⁸¹ "Nigeria is Alarmed Over Sahara Test," *The Voice of Ethiopia*, July 14, 1959. From the US National Archives, African Reaction Files: 1956-1967. RG 0306, Folder 1.

with British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan in an attempt to gain support for Nigeria's anti-nuclear stance.⁸² These nations, at varying forms of independence during this time, increased the quantity of African nations and voices calling for a stoppage to the nuclear testing, strengthening the movement.

Following the middle of 1960, Nkrumah would take this support from fellow Ghana citizens, the anti-nuclear activists gathered there, and other countries and colonies in West Africa to argue his case against the French testing and their broader colonial control to an international stage – which was met with its own set of global and Cold War complications. The support he received from his forging connections with African unity, as well as his insistence upon positive action made him the perfect voice to advocate for Ghana and Africa to the United Nations, shaping how they responded to the nuclear tests.

Early UN Action Regarding the Proposed Gerboise Series

As this set of actors on the ground in West Africa and Ghana maintained their resistance towards the scheduled test and Nkrumah increasingly sought ways to unify Africa against this new imperialism. Over the course of these early years, Nkrumah began by opposing the nuclear testing due to concerns of fallout reaching Ghana and increased his anti-nuclear imperialism rhetoric as he perceived this testing as new forms of colonialism on the part of France. As he formulated his opposition, he used his unifying position to bring together leaders from across Africa in order to educate and promote positive action and non-alignment, hoping a unified Africa would be stronger than the new or still colonized groups on their own. Throughout this

⁸² "Nigeria Anti-Test Team Now in UK," *The Daily Graphic*, September 18, 1959. From the US National Archives, African Reaction Files: 1956-1967. RG 0306, Folder 1.

time, the UN also passed resolutions requesting France to refrain from testing, and Nkrumah began to view them as a platform where he could promote his similar ideas, creating a stronger foundation from which he could resist these tests. In order to understand how Nkrumah's interest in the UN was originally piqued, I will first examine their earliest Resolutions that called for the stoppage of the Saharan detonations.

The United Nations was developed in attempts to keep peace in the post-World War II era. The first General Assembly Resolution passed in 1946 with the mission of encouraging peaceful uses of atomic energy and the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.⁸³ From here, the UN's General Assembly continued to support nuclear disarmament and they opposed the French testing. The UN felt that a French nuclear weapons test would compromise a voluntary testing moratorium established between the US, USSR, and Great Britain since November 3, 1958.⁸⁴ However, even as they acknowledged France's plans to test in the Sahara, the UN passed their first resolution on the topic, Resolution 1379 entitled, "Question of the French Nuclear Tests in the Sahara." This document recognized that French-controlled Algeria would provide France with a location in the Sahara to test their nuclear weapons. In this first resolution, released roughly three months ahead of the testing of *Gerboise Bleue*, the UN outlined their own concerns for a test of French nuclear power. The UN utilized their work in Geneva to curb the use of nuclear weapons on an international level.⁸⁵ In this

⁸³ "Milestones 1941-1950: General Assembly First Resolution" accessed 13 November 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/history/milestones-1941-1950/index.html>.

⁸⁴ Mervyn O'Driscoll, "Explosive Challenge: Diplomatic Triangles, the United Nations, and the Problem of French Nuclear Testing, 1959–1960," 29.

⁸⁵ United Nations General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, 20 November 1959, "1379 (XVI). Question of French Nuclear Tests in the Sahara," 3-4.

Attempts of international control of nuclear weapons had been made previously. Bernard Baruch, Wall Street financier, presented a heavily edited version of the Acheson-Lilienthal Report to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC) on June 14th, 1946, known as the Baruch Plan. This proposed international control of nuclear weapons with heavy stipulations of inspection which was later rejected by the Soviet

document, the UN calls for the suspension of the testing of nuclear weapons as a whole, noting that some had voluntarily suspended their weapons testing at this point.⁸⁶ The UN's ultimate thrust of the document read that they "1. Express grave concern over the intention of the Government of France to conduct nuclear tests [and] 2. Requests France to refrain from such tests."⁸⁷ In summation, the creation of this document predates Kwame Nkrumah's requests of further UN intervention and largely focuses on the UN's goal of the international control of nuclear weapons. The UN released this Resolution as Nkrumah struggled to halt the French nuclear testing through his ideas of positive action and through the Sahara protest team of anti-nuclear activists. The UN's advice for France to refrain from the testing certainly caught Nkrumah's attention and initiated his interest in the organization, as he realized they were both working toward a shared goal. Moving forward after the testing, Nkrumah would strive to work with the UN on the subject of French testing and the denuclearization of Africa.

This section has examined the reactions of Nkrumah and other West African leaders to the French nuclear testing. During this time, Nkrumah declared Ghana's non-aligned status and did everything within his power to stop the tests. While his strategies of pan-African unity drew the continent together to resist this nuclear imperialism, it was the UN that would ultimately be Nkrumah's next stop in his fight for non-proliferation. Next, I will show how Nkrumah's work with the UN forever changed his approach to not only the nuclearization of the continent, but also foreign intervention in Africa.

Union's Adrei Gromyko and marked the end of the American attempts of international control. For more information, see Alice Kimball Smith's *A Peril and a Hope: The Scientists' Movement in America, 1945-47*, The University of Chicago Press, 1965.

⁸⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, 20 November 1959, "1379 (XVI). Question of French Nuclear Tests in the Sahara."

⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, 20 November 1959, "1379 (XVI)."

Chapter Two: Nkrumah's Embrace of the UN and Complications in the Congo

As 1960 continued, the scale of Nkrumah's strategy to combat the French testing began to change. Following his unifying Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa, his role in the calls for a denuclearized Africa was elevated to a new international audience. In September of 1960, he traveled to New York give an address at the United Nations Headquarters. Thereafter, Nkrumah notably increased his reliance on the United Nations to assist as he returned to Ghana, hopeful for change. This change did come as the UN offered broader support—reflected in their issuance of more General Assembly Resolutions—of Nkrumah and West Africa in their increased pressure on France to desist in their nuclear testing. However, as this section will show, by the end of 1961, Nkrumah's support of the UN was blighted by their involvement in Africa as they intervened beyond the Sahara and into the heart of the Congo.

Between 1960 and 1961, Nkrumah presented many public facing thoughts on the United Nations and how they were a potential tool in securing the abatement of the French testing. This section will examine Nkrumah's original commitment to the UN, followed by a discussion of their General Assembly Resolutions, and lastly a study of how their actions in the Congo changed Nkrumah's opinions in Ghana. Though anti-nuclear sentiments echoed throughout West Africa during the 1960s, Ghana provides a rich case study in the analysis of an African reaction that helped forge these UN declarations. Nkrumah's speeches during this time will again provide and insight to his connection with the UN and a time in the beginning of their relationship when his faith in their ability as an international organization. His speech at the UN highlighted his concerns and they internalized these and reflect his considerations in their later Resolutions regarding the nuclearization of Africa.

The UN through the Eyes of Nkrumah

As 1960 progressed, Nkrumah increasingly incorporated the UN into his vision about ending France's nuclear testing. He traveled to Dublin in May 1960 in order to address the United Nations Association, where he encouraged them to continue to involve newly independent African countries and advocated for their presence to oversee a peaceful transfer of power.⁸⁸ Nkrumah further recommended that the UN adopt his policy of positive action, which he had just explicated and endorsed at his Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa the month prior. He warned the UN about the continuing colonial presence in Africa, calling on Algeria and South Africa as examples where a patron-client relationship had been established in order for an external power to continue to exert control over the region, and noted that Ghana's solution of positive neutrality involved the elimination of this patron-client relationship.⁸⁹ Lastly in this speech, he explained that the majority of the global population did not live in a country that possessed nuclear weapons and he urged the UN to help this population take steps to ensure that these four nuclear powers did not "toy with the fate of mankind."⁹⁰ In classic Nkrumah style, he recommended that the UN set up a specialized committee chosen by the Member States in order to confer with the US, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France and ensure that they move towards and then remain on the path of peace.⁹¹ In this, Nkrumah also saw a place for a greater representation of China, Afro-Asian countries, and African countries within the UN and advocated that Ghana have a seat at this table and a place in the movement

⁸⁸ Samuel Obeng, "To the People of Ireland, 18 May 1960," Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 59.

⁸⁹ Obeng, "To the People of Ireland," 60-62.

⁹⁰ Obeng, 68.

⁹¹ Samuel Obeng, "Toward World Peace, 2 June 1960," Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 72-73.

towards peace.⁹² Throughout 1960, the UN remained a strong presence in Nkrumah's rhetoric as he continued to use Ghana's position as a Member State to confer legitimacy of his claims and advocate for the voices of not only Ghana, but of Africa and the larger Global South in world politics. His concerns, that eventually did appear in later UN Resolutions, reflecting their internalization of his suggestions to wield nonviolence and positive action towards France.

As the summer progressed into the fall, so did France's use of the Algerian Sahara as a testing ground. During this time, the Ghanaian government worked to create a new republican constitution, which was adopted and instituted during the first half of 1960. Even during this time of internal change for Ghana, Nkrumah took the opportunity to reiterate his concerns. As he addressed his new Parliament, he maintained that Ghana's foreign policy would be that of positive neutralism and non-alignment, which he hoped would continue to represent African politics on the global stage.⁹³ Throughout this time, he maintained his faith in the UN, stating that Ghana would adopt any positive policies that would safeguard world peace and told his government that they, along with other governments of Africa, would continue to persuade France from testing nuclear weapons on African soil and decry the arms race writ large.⁹⁴ In addition to these statements, Nkrumah also called on the African continent to unite and form a third non-nuclear bloc, which he described as a "war preventing force," disallowing nuclear testing or the formation of external military bases on the continent.⁹⁵ Nkrumah recommended that these newly independent countries, Ghana included, take a vested interest in promoting

⁹² Obeng, 73.

⁹³ Samuel Obeng, "First Meeting of the Republican Parliament, 4 July 1960," Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 93.

⁹⁴ Obeng, "First Meeting of the Republican Parliament, 4 July 1960," 94.

⁹⁵ Obeng.

peace, allowing these countries to construct themselves both economically and socially and forming governments that are independent from colonial and imperial forces.⁹⁶

Nkrumah's speeches in this period continued on the path that he set in the beginning of 1960 – resisting the new colonialism of France, uniting Africa, and increasingly reaching out to and proffering his support of the UN. Clearly, I argue, he placed his faith in their ability to institute his many recommendations. For example, that fall he traveled to New York in order to speak in front of the United Nations Assembly and in his address there, he continued his rhetoric of positive action and non-alignment, continuing to protest French testing in the Sahara. Here, he discussed key ideas and issues pertaining to African unity, from Apartheid South Africa, the Algerian War, the Katanga Province of the Congo, and the nuclear testing in the Sahara. In his address, he called upon the UN to take responsibility in the fight against colonialism and imperialism, and implore its member states to grant independence for their African colonies, noting that possession of colonies was incompatible with membership in the UN.⁹⁷ In this speech he advocates strongly for UN intervention, clearly believing at this point he would need the help of the larger, multinational organization if he wanted to accomplish his goals of preventing nuclear weapons in Africa, and encouraging disarmament on a global scale.⁹⁸ Seizing his opportunity to give his thoughts on the matter, he recommended that the UN set an armament capacity for the nations that possess nuclear weapons and that they foster technical discussion surrounding the containment of nuclear weapons.⁹⁹ Because Nkrumah wished to pursue non-proliferation in Africa, he also recommended that no African State enter into an alliance with

⁹⁶ Obeng, 94.

⁹⁷ Samuel Obeng, "At the United Nations, 23 September 1960," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 157.

⁹⁸ Obeng, "At the United Nations, 23 September 1960, 170.

⁹⁹ Obeng, 171.

other military, stating that an alliance would endanger Africa further in the event of a nuclear conflict. Another request Nkrumah made of the United Nations was to provide oversight of these potential military alliances by vetting the treaties of any new Member State.¹⁰⁰ After informing the UN and its delegates of his proposals and requests of them, Nkrumah turned his attention directly to the French testing, denouncing it and stating, “[w]e have no doubt that France chose the Sahara to demonstrate to African States their political weakness. This nuclear blackmail brings home forcibly to the independent African states the importance of creating and maintaining their solidarity against any attacks upon the peace and security of the African continent.”¹⁰¹ Nkrumah uses the phrase “nuclear blackmail,” to accuse France using their nuclear tests to demonstrate to their colonies that newly independent nations in Africa were politically weak. Nkrumah admonished allies of France for not dissuading their use of the Sahara for testing, and for militarily assisting them, rather than offering up their own nuclear testing sites for France to use.

This important speech represents a culmination of Nkrumah’s ideas during the middle of 1960. Here he couples his concerns – France’s continued imperialism, the nuclear testing, and proliferation into Africa – with his hopes that the UN will listen to the voice of Ghana and its other new Member States and intervene in the Sahara. Nkrumah’s rhetoric also exemplifies the unequal global power dynamic during the Cold War and embodies his hope that the UN would amplify his concerns and condemnation of larger and more established nations for not denouncing France themselves.

¹⁰⁰ Obeng, 171.

¹⁰¹ Obeng, “At the United Nations,” 172.

What Nkrumah did not know was that some established nations, namely Britain and the United States of America, struggled with the fact that France was planning atmospheric testing. However, none of these complications were disclosed to a third world leader like Nkrumah, leading him to interpret their muted reactions as complacency and inaction.¹⁰² In his 2009 article, historian Mervyn O’Driscoll addressed these issues of British and American non-intervention, noting the complicated circumstances that surrounded their reactions to the French nuclear program and how they wished to minimize protests against France from the international community, including Nkrumah. In the months leading up to the *Gerbiose Bleue* test, Britain’s Prime Minister Harold MacMillan found himself in an uncomfortable position – caught between wanting to appease France and De Gaulle in order to assist with British acceptance into the European Economic Community (EEC) and not wanting to upset recently independent African nations, many of who were members of the Commonwealth.¹⁰³ Furthermore, in the month prior to the testing, the US and Great Britain became increasingly subject to blame for the French tests in the eyes of these West African countries. Britain dispatched scientists to their then Nigerian colony, placing monitoring stations across the county, though this did little to quell the distrust.¹⁰⁴ The United States also struggled in choosing an appropriate reaction, acknowledging the growing body of non-aligned nations in the UN and also wanting to avoid becoming conflated with France’s nuclear program, giving the prominence of their own.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² O’Driscoll, “Explosive Challenge: Diplomatic Triangles, the United Nations, and the Problem of French Nuclear Testing, 1959–1960,” 52.

¹⁰³ O’Driscoll, 30-31.

¹⁰⁴ “‘Now France May Drop Hydrogen Bomb’ Says Headline in Lagos Newspaper,” February 16, 1960. From the US National Archives, African Reaction Files: 1956-1967, Nuclear Test Reactions, RG 0306, Folder 1.

¹⁰⁵ Mervyn O’Driscoll, 31-38.

From his perspective, Nkrumah saw nations such as Britain and the US as being detached from the actions of their allies and deaf to concerns raised by himself and other Africans. This further frustrated him, as he placed the blame for the creation of nuclear weapons on these nations and then watched as they disregarded safety, implicating the whole of the globe in concerns over nuclear catastrophe. Nkrumah's presentation at the United Nations provided a broad, global audience with whom he could share his ideas, concerns, and recommendations. It was a place where he could reiterate his dissatisfaction with the French and their choice of nuclearization and advocate for the many newly independent African countries that he hoped to unite. Next, I will examine the resolutions put out by the United Nations during 1960 and 1961.

UN Resolutions Following Nkrumah's Recommendations

Following his address to the General Assembly in New York, Nkrumah called on their support of the denuclearization of Africa. While all of Nkrumah's sometimes lofty ideas could not practically be included in all UN resolutions, their subsequent resolutions did continue to reflect Nkrumah's anti-nuclear stance. On the surface, they too strove to create a more equitable Cold War atmosphere, despite their inability to enforce them. In December of 1960 the UN General Assembly gathered during the end of the year in order to address the conflict with the French in Algeria as well as continued recommendations on nuclear issues. Two of the new resolutions passed at this fifteenth session embody Nkrumah's ideology, Resolution 1576 and 1578, both dealing with nuclearity.

The first document, Resolution 1576 "Prevention of wider dissemination of nuclear weapons" begins by "[r]ecognizing that urgent danger that now exists that an increase in the number of States possessing nuclear weapons may occur, aggravating international tension and

the difficulty in maintaining world peace.”¹⁰⁶ The UN further encouraged any nation that had produced nuclear weapons not relinquish their control over these weapons to any other nations and that they halt their own nuclear manufacturing programs.¹⁰⁷ This resolution changed from the 1959 nuclear Resolution 1379 by recognizing that more nations were at this time producing their own weapons and that their tactics would need to be adjusted to account for the potential of one nation manufacturing nuclear weapons for another. These resolutions reflected Nkrumah’s concerns of further nuclear imperialism as well as his apprehensions for global world peace. In his speech to the UN, Nkrumah shared concerns over not only the French testing, but also his budding concerns of global nuclear proliferation. The UN resolutions that followed his speech echoed these non-aligned sentiments of Nkrumah.

In the same General Assembly Session, the UN also passed Resolution 1578, which addresses the, “suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests.” This resolution speaks more directly to Nkrumah’s communications with the United Nations. Here, the UN states that they were, “[c]ontinuing to bear in mind the profound concern evinced by all peoples of all countries regarding the testing of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons.”¹⁰⁸ The ultimate thrust of this particular resolution called for any nation with nuclear capabilities disclose the progress of any nuclear negotiations with the UN Disarmament Commission and to report the results of any negotiations with the UN. This followed Nkrumah’s advice from his speech to the UN where he recommended they work to examine the treaties of any incoming Member State as well as

¹⁰⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, 20 December 1960, “1576 (XV). Prevention of the Wider Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons,” 3.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, 20 December 1960, “1576 (XV). Prevention of the Wider Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons,” 3.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, 20 December 1960, “1578 (XV). Suspension of Nuclear and Thermo-Nuclear Tests,” 4.

monitor the actions and treaties of any nuclearized Member State, reporting to their relevant committees. As Nkrumah asked the UN to keep working on helping reduce and remove the French testing in the Sahara, they obliged by continuing to address nuclear nations, requesting they submit their nuclear negotiations to the organization in order to aid in oversight.

As France continued to test their nuclear program in 1960, Nkrumah continually voiced his support for the UN and their role in helping ensure a denuclearized Africa. In doing so, he emerged as a voice for Africa within the United Nations, and he advocated for the pursuit of these Resolutions through positive action.¹⁰⁹ As he worked with the organization, Nkrumah reported becoming “greatly heartened” that UN support was essential for large areas of the continent as it transitioned into individual nations.¹¹⁰ While the UN Resolutions show how they reacted in calling upon France to stop their nuclear testing, Nkrumah’s influence can be seen through his contact with the UN both directly and indirectly, and his use of their policy to secure his goals. However, this support and collaboration between Nkrumah and the United Nations would become strained as 1960 turned into 1961, following the UN intervention in the Congo Crisis.

The Complications in the Congo

At first, it might seem odd that a conflict in a nation not possessing or directly threatened by nuclear proliferation could so greatly influence Nkrumah’s relationship with the UN. However, from almost the beginning of the conflict, the UN and its members’ actions in the Congo sowed seeds of distrust for Nkrumah. Though he has previously encouraged UN

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Obeng, “Africa’s Challenge, 6 August 1960,” *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 121-22.

¹¹⁰ Obeng, “Africa’s Challenge, 6 August 1960,” 124.

intervention in Africa to aid in the stoppage of the French tests, Nkrumah would soon come to believe that UN intervention was perhaps not always the best course of action. This came to a bursting point with the assassination of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba, when Nkrumah declared his trust in the UN had dissolved. Potentially fearing the same fate himself, the UN oversight, or lack thereof, in the Congo allowed for the death of Lumumba and forever alienated Nkrumah from the organization.

The Congo, with one of the most tortured colonial histories under the exploitation of King Leopold II of Belgium, gained independence on July 1, 1960 with the election of Patrice Lumumba, their first Congolese leader after the colonial period.¹¹¹ Shortly after, discontent broke out in Katanga Province, the primary mining area of the Congo, and Lumumba appealed to Ghana, the Independent African States, and the United Nations for assistance.¹¹² On September 14, 1960, a military faction from Katanga Province led by Colonel Joseph-Désiré Mobutu – an informer for Belgian and American surveillance of the Province – removed Lumumba from his position as Prime Minister in a coup d'état.¹¹³ Following that, on November 17, 1960, the UN General Assembly denied Lumumba's credentials to lead the Congo in favor of a rival leader, and on January 17, 1961, Lumumba and two compatriots were assassinated by Belgian soldiers and Katangan police officers.¹¹⁴

These tragic events can be traced through the speeches of Nkrumah. Through these, we can trace how an assassination in another country undermined his trust in the UN within a matter

¹¹¹ Samuel Obeng, "The Congo Situation," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 222.

¹¹² Obeng, "The Congo Situation," 222.

¹¹³ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Patrice Lumumba*. Ohio Short Histories of Africa. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014), 11.

¹¹⁴ Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Patrice Lumumba*, 11-12.

of months. As we saw previously during 1960, Nkrumah clearly believed the UN would benevolently intervene, unlike the often-violent colonial conflicts that preceded this era of decolonization. Nkrumah supported Lumumba, offering help from Ghana and closely following the situation in the Congo. The first speech regarding this came in August of 1960, when he spoke on the Congo Situation, which he viewed as a threat to world peace.¹¹⁵ In this speech, Nkrumah decried Belgium-supported discontent in the Katanga Province of the Congo and their refusal to cooperate with the UN, whose presence was requested by Lumumba.¹¹⁶ Shortly after this first assessment of events, Nkrumah delivered a second speech in mid-August of 1960, which reaffirmed the Ghanaian faith in the UN and its ability to intervene in the Congo.¹¹⁷ Nkrumah laid out three ways in which he believed the United Nations should intervene. He first stated that the UN duty is to assist the Government of the Congo, and secondly, that the UN forces in Africa should be composed of African troops – Ghanaian troops had been dispatched to help in the Congo situation – and lastly that there was a real danger of the re-establishment of colonialism in the Congo if a quick solution could not be reached.¹¹⁸ Nkrumah spent his tenure in office fighting not only for nuclear disarmament, but also for the end of colonialism across Africa. After further evaluating the Congo Situation, Nkrumah delivered yet another speech to further share his thoughts on the matter. He affirmed that given the urgency of the situation, Ghana and other independent African States needed to work to support independence in the

¹¹⁵ Samuel Obeng, “The Congo Situation (1), 6 August 1960,” *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume I* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 141-145.

¹¹⁶ Obeng, “The Congo Situation (1), 6 August 1960,”

¹¹⁷ Samuel Obeng, “The Congo Situation (2), 17 August 1960,” *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume I* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 145-147.

¹¹⁸ Obeng, “The Congo Situation (2), 17 August 1960,” 146.

Congo and their new Prime Minister Lumumba.¹¹⁹ Within this, Nkrumah cautioned the UN, stating that the organization may become discredited if they allowed themselves to be used as a cover to actions contrary to the support of Congolese independence.¹²⁰

Following Nkrumah's monitoring of the Congo Situation, he delivered his speech to the UN on the 23rd of September, shortly after Lumumba's power in the Congo became curtailed by Col. Mobutu's. Here, Nkrumah's tone changed as he urged the UN to assist in the Congo, but warned the organization that they must be careful to not set a precedent of negative intervention in Africa.¹²¹ He condemned UN failure to preserve law and order in the Congo and credits this failure with their inability to distinguish between legal authorities and law breakers, namely Lumumba's government versus the forces led by factional leader Mobutu.¹²² Furthermore, he criticized the UN for embarrassing Ghanaian forces in the Congo for their inability to recognize the Lumumba government as legitimate.¹²³ Due to what Nkrumah perceived as UN failure in the Congo, he advocated for the situation to be handled by Independent African States, perhaps under the blanket of the UN. As Nkrumah's dissatisfaction was rejected by the UN, he quickly lost faith in their ability to safely and adequately intervene in the Congo situation. For Nkrumah, the UN had lost sight of the fact that Lumumba's government called their organization into the Congo to help re-establish order, and instead, they took actions that undermined Lumumba and supported the Belgian-backed faction in the Katanga Province.

¹¹⁹ Samuel Obeng, "Solution to the Congo Problem, 8 September 1960," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 153-155.

¹²⁰ Obeng, "Solution to the Congo Problem, 8 September 1960," 156.

¹²¹ Obeng, "At the United Nations, 23 September 1960," 177.

¹²² Obeng, "At the United Nations, 23 September 1960," 160.

¹²³ Obeng, 160.

This position was solidified in a speech in Ghana in December 1960. There, he told the Ghanaian people of the events that recently transpired, leading to Lumumba's house arrest at the end of the year.¹²⁴ In this speech, Nkrumah echoed his earlier statements which called for the UN to forcibly bring law and order to the Congo and to respect Lumumba's government. By this point, Nkrumah knew that Ghana and other independent African states had supported the UN's action in the Congo, and had been left "bitterly disappointed."¹²⁵ His disappointment stemmed from the UN's failure to follow their own policy of a non-interventionist attitude, something Nkrumah claimed was disregarded when Lumumba was prevented from occupying his position as the legal Prime Minister of the Congo.¹²⁶ The solution for this state of the Congo was to completely disarm all of Mobutu's forces and any other non-UN actor within the country, at least in the mind of Nkrumah. This was disregarded by the UN and they continued to undermine Lumumba's legitimacy.

Unfortunately, the escalation of events in the Congo did not end positively. On 14 February 1961, Kwame Nkrumah delivered a speech announcing the death of Patrice Lumumba. In his announcement, Nkrumah stated,

[a]bout their end [referring to the death of Lumumba and the other two Congolese men assassinated alongside him] many things are uncertain but one fact is crystal clear – they have been killed because the United Nations, whom Patrice Lumumba himself, as Prime Minister, had invited into the Congo to preserve law and order, not only failed to maintain that law and order, but also denied to the lawful government of the Congo all other means of self-protection.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Samuel Obeng, "The Congo Situation, 15 December 1960," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 222-230.

¹²⁵ Obeng, "The Congo Situation, 15 December 1960," 224.

¹²⁶ Obeng, "The Congo Situation, 15 December 1960," 226.

¹²⁷ Samuel Obeng, "The Death of Patrice Lumumba, 14 February 1961," *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 2* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 15.

This speech clearly shows Nkrumah's complete loss of trust in the United Nations and their ability to intervene in Africa. While he began 1960 by placing his trust in the UN, within a year the continuation of French testing and the assassination of Lumumba combined had forced Nkrumah to reconsider the Ghanaian relationship with the organization. While Nkrumah would never completely excise the UN from his rhetoric, he continued with his speeches, mentioning the international organization infrequently. However, while the assassination of Lumumba left Nkrumah distrustful of the UN and other foreign intervention in Africa, he continued to value non-alignment and the cessation of French testing. The organization that Nkrumah sought out in order to help amplify his ideas only a few short years before could no longer be trusted. It is likely Nkrumah could clearly see at this point that that he could not trust any other neo-colonial nation.

From the middle of 1960 spanning to the beginning of 1961, Nkrumah's stance on nuclear testing and the French *Gerboise* program underwent the most significance change during the course of his presidency. Initially, he had goals and an agenda for disarmament in his speech at the UN, and he hoped he could make the most difference in the case of the nuclearization of Africa. While this proved to be moderately successful – the UN internalized many of his recommendations and continued to push for nuclear disarmament and reiterated to the nuclearized nations these requests from its Member States. The French continued to disregard the Resolutions and test in the Sahara until 1966. Moreover, full international control of nuclear weapons was and has never been achieved.¹²⁸ This disappointment was compounded by the Congo Crisis, further demonstrating to Nkrumah that the UN did not always intervene in Africa in ways that supported these newly independent nations, but instead sided with colonial powers.

¹²⁸ Panchasi, "“No Hiroshima in Africa,” 84.

Moving forward from 1961 and through 1966, these realizations reshaped Nkrumah's strategy, as he embraced new ways to promote his anti-nuclear stance for the remainder of his presidency.

Chapter Three: Nkrumah Joins the International Call for Global Disarmament

In the earliest years, Nkrumah had used his public speaking engagements to decry French testing, advocate for African unity, and reaffirm his confidence in non-alignment and positive action. Following the Congo Crisis and the UN's decision to intervene on behalf of the Katangan Province, Nkrumah's reduced reliance on the UN is demonstrated through a notable decrease in his calls for their assistance in his speeches. However, while his relationship with the UN soured during his presidency, he continued to recalibrate his response of anti-nuclearism, by broadening his stance to encompass a whole rejection of any nuclear weapons by 1966. However, following Nkrumah's break with the UN, they continued to release General Assembly Resolutions which reflected the ideas expressed by Nkrumah, though he no longer engaged with the organization in as great of a capacity.

Nkrumah's fluid anti-nuclear stance through the 1960s

Nkrumah advocated his ideas and hopes for disarmament to both national and international audiences. When he arrived back in Accra in 1960, he gave an address to the Red Cross Society, asking if the members were prepared for a challenge for peace, given that he saw the alternative as nuclear war.¹²⁹ Throughout his multiple calls for non-alignment in Ghana, he told his audience of the many talks he had with the Soviet Union's Khrushchev, insisting they

¹²⁹ Samuel Obeng, "To the Red Cross Society, 18 October 1960," Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 1* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 189-90.

most certainly wanted peace rather than war, but never admonishing the Soviet Union for its critical role in the Cold War.¹³⁰ He did rebuke the United States, though not for their nuclear armories, but for their inability to move past their fear of Soviet communism and towards talks for peace.¹³¹

Though he took fewer opportunities to discuss nuclear matters in 1962, it is clear that the memories of France's "nuclear blackmail" remained embedded in Nkrumah's thoughts. At the opening of the Accra Assembly in June 1962, he noted the UN's concurrent attempts to draft a treaty for large scale disarmament. He shared his primary concern, that the stockpiling of nuclear weapons in an effort to "negotiate from strength," would almost certainly lead towards war, and that mankind was in peril.¹³² Furthermore, Nkrumah spent this lengthy address congratulating those who have helped protest nuclear warfare, from the scientists to the leaders, writers, and religious leaders.¹³³ Lastly, he reiterated his desire for Africa to be established as a non-nuclear area, free from testing and military bases.¹³⁴ This commentary from Nkrumah reaffirmed his support in global disarmament, and his new strategy to pursue these goals separately from the UN.

The following year, Kwame Nkrumah began to shift his rhetoric and discussions away from – and became increasingly critical of the UN and US notable in three ways. Firstly, he expanded his discussions of keeping Africa free of nuclear imperialism, now including the

¹³⁰ Obeng, "To the Red Cross Society, 18 October 1960," 190.

¹³¹ Obeng, 190.

¹³² Samuel Obeng, "Opening of the Accra Assembly, 21 June 1962," Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 3* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 110.

¹³³ Obeng, "Opening of the Accra Assembly, 21 June 1962," 115.

¹³⁴ Obeng, 134.

uranium mined from the continent, flowing into powering weapons for foreign governments.¹³⁵ Next, he addressed nuclear conflicts happening outside of Africa, first asking for world leaders and the United Nations to assist in the conflict surrounding Israel in the Middle East, and himself calling for a nuclear moratorium in the area.¹³⁶ From the Middle East, he turned his attention towards Cuba and the United States, admonishing the Cuban Missile Crisis for coming so close to nuclear conflagration. He urged the two nations to come to a settlement and make appropriate restitutions in order to come to a peace, stating that, “nuclear weapons hang like the Sword of Damocles over the head of mankind.”¹³⁷

In 1963, the nuclearized nations adopted the Partial Test Ban Treaty, which limited atmospheric and under water nuclear testing, signed by US and USSR, but not France. Its ratification did not go unnoticed in Ghana. As Nkrumah again opened the National Assembly, Nkrumah remarked that though this treaty was a step towards disarmament, more steps needed to be taken towards complete disarmament.¹³⁸ He also celebrated the United Nations shortly after on the 18th anniversary of the organizations founding, stating that despite the many shortcomings, it proved a useful instrument in reconciling differences among nations and mobilizing world public opinion notable drawing on the passage of the 1963 Test Ban Treaty as evidence of this.¹³⁹ This brief support was notably reduced from his early admiration of the organization, and reflected Nkrumah’s acknowledgement of the relevance of the test ban treaty.

¹³⁵ Samuel Obeng, “Conference of African Heads of State and Government, 24 May 1963,” Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 5* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 30.

¹³⁶ Samuel Obeng, “Ratification of the O.A.U. Charter, 21 June 1963,” Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 5* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 71.

¹³⁷ Obeng, “Ratification of the O.A.U. Charter, 21 June 1963,” 71.

¹³⁸ Samuel Obeng, “Opening of the National Assembly, 15 October 1963,” Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 5* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 114.

¹³⁹ Samuel Obeng, “United Nations Day, 24 October 1963,” Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 5* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 126.

Moving into 1964 and 1965, Kwame Nkrumah continued his support of disarmament, though at times he appeared less critical about issues of French testing as he once was. In these later years, Nkrumah did continue to participate in conversations surrounding global nuclear politics, albeit outside the UN. In a joint meeting between Ghana and China hosted in Accra, Nkrumah spoke in a speech to Ghanaians of coming to an agreement with the Chinese diplomats that both nations should strive for peace and disarmament.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, they agreed that if at all possible, a treaty towards international cooperation, disarmament, and the removal of nuclear stockpiles should be adopted by a global audience.¹⁴¹ 1964 also brought about evidence of a changing nuclear environment. Nkrumah gathered with other leaders from the non-aligned countries in Cairo, noting the success that came with the Partial Test Ban Treaty, in an attempt further negotiations among nuclear powers, while continuing to express that the fight for a non-nuclear future was far from over.¹⁴² Sharing positive news at this conference, Nkrumah confirmed that four years after he made the request, France had begun to withdraw all of its military bases from Africa and he hoped other colonial powers would follow in the same vein.¹⁴³ This positive outlook did not continue for all of 1964; however, as later that October Nkrumah announced that he learned of the first successful Chinese nuclear test on that day. He described receiving the news with “misgiving and disdain”, though still acknowledged the achievement of China which broke from his normally harsh condemnation of any nuclear testing.¹⁴⁴ As the

¹⁴⁰ Samuel Obeng, “Joint Ghana-China Communique, 16 January 1964,” Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 4* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 9.

¹⁴¹ Obeng, “Joint Ghana-China Communique, 16 January 1964,” 9.

¹⁴² Samuel Obeng, “Peace and Progress, the Conference of Non-Aligned States, 7 October 1964,” Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 4* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 57-58.

¹⁴³ Obeng, “Peace and Progress, the Conference of Non-Aligned States, 7 October 1964,” 62.

¹⁴⁴ Samuel Obeng, “Air Force Day, 24 October 1964,” Selected *Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 4* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 69.

nuclearized 1960s continued, Nkrumah made clear that his and Ghana's stance on nuclear weapons were in opposition of their development and testing. Drawing on influence from the global anticolonial and pan-African movements, he shaped his position in global politics, giving a voice not only to Ghanaians, but to many other newly independent African nations as well. He increased his anti-nuclear stance, vehemently resisting the French testing before expanding to adopt international non-proliferation.

The Continuing UN Resolutions

Between 1961 and 1965, the UN issues three subsequent resolutions that continued to embody the goals of Nkrumah. While he notably reduced his support of the United Nations, they continued to release the General Assembly resolutions at the annual sessions. These resolutions were in fact the most forcefully direct in their convictions towards the nuclearization of Africa and addressed many of the concerns Nkrumah had addressed over the course of his presidency, and when the French testing first began in 1960. Even though Nkrumah had excised his public support of the UN, Ghana remained a Member State and the influence of Nkrumah's ideas continued to be seen in their Resolutions.

The United Nations followed their resolutions from 1959 and 1960 with Resolution 1562, "Consideration of Africa as a Denuclearized Zone" in November 1961.¹⁴⁵ This document gives much more consideration to Africa than Resolution 1379, as well as drawing upon prior UN Resolutions that called for disarmament. This record states

[r]ecognizing the need to prevent Africa from becoming involved in any competition associated with the ideological struggles between the Powers engaged in the arms race, and particularly, with nuclear weapons... [the UN] calls upon Member States

¹⁴⁵ United Nations General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, "1652 (XVI). Consideration of Africa as a Denuclearized Zone." 1063rd Plenary Meeting, 24 November 1961, 1.

(a) To refrain from carrying out in Africa nuclear tests in any form; (b) To refrain from using the territory, territorial waters or airspace of Africa for testing, storing or transporting nuclear weapons; (c) To consider and respect the continent of Africa as a denuclearized zone¹⁴⁶

This resolution followed a bulk of French testing in the Sahara and considers other factors such as the effect of fall-out and the spread of nuclear weapons, particularly into Africa.¹⁴⁷ The UN also acknowledged the nation building occurring in Africa during this time. This transitional document acknowledged the French testing and its detriment to Africa and the broader globe. It also reflected Nkrumah's influence on the UN, despite his eschewing of them in the beginning of 1961. However, the UN's efforts ultimately proved fruitless as France failed to heed to their declarations, despite its membership within the UN.

The next document directly addressed the French testing: Resolution 2033, "Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa."¹⁴⁸ The 1965 release of this document followed continued nuclear testing on the part of France as well as the agreement between the United States and Soviet Union to discontinue atmospheric testing through the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty.¹⁴⁹ In this document, the UN finally recognized its work with the Organization of African Unity and their own call for the denuclearization of Africa as well as their opinion that adherence to this would aid in the complete disarmament of nuclear weapons globally.¹⁵⁰ In their calls for global disarmament, the UN expresses concerns of the production and manufacture of nuclear weapons

¹⁴⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, "1652 (XVI). Consideration of Africa as a Denuclearized Zone.", 1.

¹⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, "1652 (XVI). Consideration of Africa as a Denuclearized Zone.", 1.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations General Assembly, First Committee, "2033 (XX). Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa." 1388th Plenary Meeting, 3 December 1965, 1.

¹⁴⁹ "Limited or Partial Test Ban Treaty (LTBT/PTBT)," The Atomic Heritage Foundation, last modified June 10, 2016, accessed December 8, 2019. <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/limited-or-partial-test-ban-treaty-ltbtptbt>.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations General Assembly, First Committee, "2033 (XX). Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa," 1.

be kept from continuing in Africa on the behalf these newly independent nations. In the latter part of this Resolution, the UN also urged that the Organization of African Unity of which Nkrumah was a founding member, to take their own measures to ensure the denuclearization of Africa and that, “the Secretary-General...extend to the Organization of African Unity such facilities and assistance as may be requested in order to achieve the aims of the present resolution.”¹⁵¹ This document reflects the impact of African nations more strongly than their previous resolutions, by recognizing the importance of their opinions and objectives in previous years. This increased African participation was clearly tied to the position originally expressed by Nkrumah as it advocated for a fully denuclearized Africa, and the removal of all new forms of nuclear imperialism on the continent.

For the remainder of the French testing in Algeria, Nkrumah softened his criticisms of the United Nations, recognizing their more recent support for the removal of foreign testing and military bases within Africa, as well as their continued resolutions regarding the nuclearization of Africa. As noted in the prior section, Nkrumah recounted the success of the UN in 1963 as they celebrated United Nations Day and the eighteenth anniversary of the organization in Accra.¹⁵² By this time, the Partial Test Ban Treaty had been established and Nkrumah continued to encouraged action to pursue complete disarmament.¹⁵³

At the end of 1961, Nkrumah still loosely cooperated with the UN, though in a capacity that was more limited than before Lumumba’s assassination. By 1965, it appeared Nkrumah had possibly re-earned some trust in the organization, when he stated in a speech to the National Assembly in Accra that, “in spite of its imperfections, the United Nations is the surest guarantee

¹⁵¹ UN General Assembly, “2033 (XX). Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa,” 1.

¹⁵² Obeng, “United Nations Day, 24 October 1960,” 187-188.

¹⁵³ Obeng, 187-188.

for world peace.”¹⁵⁴ As he had throughout his presidency, he reevaluated in his support for the United Nations, at times believing cooperation with them could solve many of his problems and at later times questioning their role in intervening in Africa. He opposed nuclear proliferation throughout the entirety of his career, first calling for France to not utilize the Sahara for the testing grounds, and later supporting complete global disarmament and promoting international, cooperative control of nuclear power.

Conclusion

Nkrumah’s tenure as the first leader of Ghana lasted from when he led the country to independence on March 6, 1957 until February 24, 1966.¹⁵⁵ During this time, he championed pan-African unity as well as non-alignment and the denuclearization of Africa. He, for all of his efforts, worked to unite the nations that were granted independence as anticolonial movements swept across the continent in the 1960s. His lofty global vision for nuclear disarmament was not the only focus during the last years of his presidency – in 1964 he transitioned Ghana to a single-party government and declared himself president for life under the CPP.¹⁵⁶ From then on, relations between Ghana and the Soviet Union improved, leading France, the United States, and the United Kingdom to tepidly support the removal of Nkrumah and his government in favor of replacing it with a pro-Western one. In February that coup d’état came to fruition, when the National Liberation Council led by J.A. Ankrah overthrew Nkrumah while he was at a meeting discussing Vietnamese peace in Beijing.¹⁵⁷ While this coup was the first of five coups in

¹⁵⁴ Samuel Obeng, “Bright Future for All: Opening of the National Assembly, 12 January 1965,” *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Volume 2* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1997), 77.

¹⁵⁵ Osseo-Asare, 96.

¹⁵⁶ Osseo-Asare, 97.

¹⁵⁷ Osseo-Asare.

Ghanaian history, it can certainly be argued that no government or party would pursue as fervent or revolutionary agenda as adopted by Nkrumah and the CPP. His removal from power reflected the volatility of this era as the tempering of the radical hopes that shaped African politics during the 1950s and 60s also cooled across the continent leading into the 1970s.¹⁵⁸

Despite these events that surrounded the end of his presidency, Nkrumah and his policies left a legacy on nuclear legislation in the post-colonial world following the conclusion of his political career. In February 1967, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, or the Treaty of Tlateloco was signed by Latin American and Caribbean nations.¹⁵⁹ This treaty prohibited the testing, use, manufacture, and acquisition of nuclear weapons within Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, this legislation safeguarded and instituted a control system for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.¹⁶¹ Long following Nkrumah's death, his dream of a denuclearized came closer to fruition when in 1996, the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (ANWFZ) was signed and later ratified in 2009.¹⁶² Also referred to as the Pelindaba Treaty, the aims of this document align with many of the stated policies in the Latin American counterpart. The ideas within the ANWFZ are reflective of Nkrumah's calls and are based upon gathers held between heads of state during his presidency.

While this project on Nkrumah's changing nuclear stance through the course of his time in office sheds light on his domestic and international policies, some questions on the topic

¹⁵⁸ Ahlman, 206-07.

¹⁵⁹ J. Craig Barker and John P. Grant, "Tlatelolco, Treaty of." *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of International Law*, 2009.

¹⁶⁰ Barker, "Tlatelolco, Treaty of."

¹⁶¹ Barker.

¹⁶² "African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty," The International Atomic Energy Agency, <https://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/treaties/african-nuclear-weapon-free-zone-treaty-pelindaba-treaty>.

remain for future research. An in-depth examination of archives on the continent would reveal the reaction of other West African nations and non-proliferation during the Cold War in Africa. In addition, further research on the Algerian perspective and their reaction to Nkrumah could be a fascinating avenue. Nkrumah's actions and reactions exist at the intersection of global nuclear politics where many actors influenced change. This complex global landscape presented navigational challenges for a leader of a small African country but provided a rich study of the nuclearization of Africa in the history of science.

This thesis has shown the interconnectedness of Nkrumah's antinuclear imperialism and anticolonial sentiments and rhetoric, arguing that he often implemented the former in support of the latter. I have covered the events in Ghana from 1957 through 1966, focusing on the actions and reactions of then-President Kwame Nkrumah in both his domestic and international speeches on a crisis that began with France's decision to test their nuclear weapons on African soil. The first section of my argument surveyed Nkrumah's quickness to decry the French testing from the moment it was announced in the late 1950s to the middle of 1960, as he called on the United Nations for assistance and their General Assembly Resolutions. From here, I showed how Nkrumah and the United Nation's positive relationship from 1960 to 1961 quickly became undermined as events transpired in the Congo Crisis. Due to the assassination of Lumumba, I show how Nkrumah severely reevaluated his own relationship with the UN and their choice to support the colonial powers in the region over African sovereignty. These events became a turning point in Nkrumah's engagement with the UN, particularly in the extent to which he was willing to engage with and call on the UN to intervene in anti-nuclear matters. The third part of the thesis examined the remaining years of Nkrumah's presidency, from 1961 through 1966 and showed how he expanded his position with regards to nuclear weapons – transitioning from

supporting an anti-nuclear Africa to supporting global disarmament following the passage of the 1963 Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This shift away from the United Nations and into broad international nonproliferation reflected his maneuvering in international politics, breaking the challenging partisanship of the Cold War, and challenging the nuclear hegemony of the United States.

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