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SURVEY OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
1955-1956

BY
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AND
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PREFACE

THE present volume in the Survey of International Affairs covers the period from the end of 1954 to the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956. A subsequent volume will deal with the consequences of that act, carrying the story to the end of 1958. Although the period under review saw, among other things, the fall of President Peron of Argentina, the affairs of Latin America have not been included, since they did not, so far as we have been able to establish, contribute at this time in any direct way to the general development of international relations.

What is here presented to the public is the joint work of the two authors whose names appear on the title-page. We have had the benefit of the co-operation of Dr. F. C. Jones, who has provided accounts of events in China, Japan and Korea, which have been of great use to us; and Mr. A. S. B. Olver has contributed the section (pp. 14-21) on Indo-China in Part I. We are also grateful to Miss H. G. Oliver, who has prepared the index, and to Alan Bullock, Dr. Noble Frankland, and the Hon. C. M. Woodhouse, who have read the volume in manuscript and provided a number of useful and constructive comments.

G. BARRACLOUGH

December 1958

ABBREVIATIONS

Cmd.	Command Paper (London, H.M.S.O.)
<i>Documents, 1955</i>	<i>Documents on International Affairs, 1955 or 1956</i> (published by the Royal
<i>Documents, 1956</i>	Institute of International Affairs)
D.S.B.	Department of State Bulletin (Washington, U.S.G.P.O.)
H.C. Deb.	House of Commons Debates
H.L. Deb.	House of Lords Debates
I.C.S.C.	International Commission for Supervision and Control
T.I.A.S.	Treaties and International Agreements Series
<i>U.S. Documents</i> (or <i>American Documents</i>)	<i>Documents on American Foreign Relations</i>

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CONTENTS

PART I

JANUARY-APRIL 1955

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. CONFLICTS IN ASIA	7
Formosa and the Off-shore Islands	7
Indo-China	14
S.E.A.T.O.	21
III. MEDITERRANEAN PROBLEMS	23
The Baghdad Pact	24
North Africa	32
IV. EUROPE	37
The Paris Treaties	37
The Soviet Union and the Eastern Coalition	44
Yugoslavia	54
V. THE UNCOMMITTED PEOPLES AND THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE	57

PART II

MAY-NOVEMBER 1955

VI. INTRODUCTION	69
VII. THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST	78
Cyprus, Aden, Buraimi	79
North Africa	82
Egypt, Israel, and the Middle East	91
VIII. DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE	100
The Saar	101
European Alignments	104
North Africa	107
West German Rearmament	108
Greece and Turkey	109
Spain	110
Scandinavia	111
Conflicting Economic Policies	112
The Netherlands and Indonesia	114

Portugal and Goa	115
Ethiopia and Somaliland	117
Developments in the Commonwealth	118
Korea and Formosa	121
IX. SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY	124
Austria	124
Finland	126
The Far East	128
Yugoslavia	133
Germany	138
X. DISARMAMENT AND THE GENEVA CONFERENCES	150
The Geneva Conference of Heads of Governments	155
Between the Conferences	160
The Foreign Ministers' Meeting	167
PART III	
DECEMBER 1955-JULY 1956	
XI. INTRODUCTION	177
XII. WESTERN POLICIES AND PROBLEMS	188
Asia, the West, and the Uncommitted Nations	191
Western Europe, N.A.T.O., and the Atlantic Alliance	202
XIII. SOVIET REAPPRAISALS	219
The Twentieth Party Congress	222
Eastern Europe after the Twentieth Party Congress	229
Soviet Foreign Policy after the Twentieth Party Congress	241
XIV. EAST-WEST RELATIONS	250
Disarmament Negotiations	253
The German Question	263
Yugoslavia	268
Indo-China	272
The Middle East	275
XV. TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST	281
Cyprus	287
North Africa	290
Jordan, Israel, and Middle Eastern Alignments	295
The Aswan Dam and the Genesis of the Suez Crisis	302
CONCLUSION	311
INDEX	315

PART I
JANUARY—APRIL 1955



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE legacy of 1954 to 1955 was three unsolved problems: Formosa, Indo-China, and in Europe the task of implementing the agreements concluded at Paris in October 1954, by which the German Federal Republic was to obtain the rights of a sovereign state and Western European Union was to become a reality. These were, of course, not the only factors weighing in the international situation at the beginning of 1955; but until they had ceased to be centres of crisis, they dominated the scene to such an extent that it was impossible to foresee how significant the new tendencies were likely to be, which had been making themselves apparent in 1954.

Among these new tendencies two stood out. The one was the growing inclination to question, in the light of the thermonuclear revolution, the postulates underlying policy. The other was the increasing coherence of a 'third force', belonging neither to the communist nor to the anti-communist camps, in the form of the 'neutralist' or 'uncommitted' powers of Asia, which had already met in April 1954 and had made their influence felt at the Geneva conference of the same year. But it would be a mistake to exaggerate the significance of either factor at this stage. The confused debate on the strategical consequences of thermonuclear warfare was far from producing practical results, and the new association of Afro-Asian peoples was still only in the making. Not until the Bandung conference in April 1955 was it evident that it had become a factor, the influence of which other powers could no longer afford to ignore.

It is true that, for anyone looking back over the past twelve months, there was little doubt at the beginning of 1955 that tensions had relaxed. But the result was rather a hard-won breathing-space than any new initiative in the direction of affairs. The atmosphere of the 'cold war' still prevailed; and although the fear that it might turn overnight into a 'hot war' may in retrospect seem to have been exaggerated, it was real enough at the time. The doctrine of 'instant and massive retaliation', which had caused such stir when enunciated by Mr. Dulles early in 1954, had given way before the end of the year to President Eisenhower's policy of studied moderation, and most people in the American camp endorsed his view that the only way forward was 'the hard way' of steadiness and patience.¹ But

¹ '... We owe it to ourselves and to the world to explore every possible means of settling differences before we even think of such a thing as war. And the hard way is to have the courage to be patient, tirelessly to seek out every single avenue open to us. ... We must, on the other hand, be steady and refuse to be goaded into actions that would be unwise' (*N.Y. Times*, 3 December 1954).

this was a change in tactics, rather than in the principles and direction of policy. Hence western diplomacy, in so far as it was united under American leadership, showed little sense, in the closing months of 1954, of the need for new thinking and new methods. The old, and (as some people were beginning to think) obsolescent, policy of 'containment'—the policy of constructing a series of alliances, and at the same time of securing a series of bases around the perimeter of the communist world for the American B. 47 bomber force, with its relatively limited range of operations—still held sway. The truce in Indo-China in August 1954 was followed not by a *détente*, or even an attempt at *détente*, but by the hurried negotiation of the South-East Asian treaty and the formation of S.E.A.T.O., and by the mutual defence pact between the United States and Chiang Kai-shek. Almost simultaneously the Balkan treaty was concluded, and the diplomatic manœuvres were inaugurated which led, early in 1955, to the Baghdad pact. But it was in Europe that the disinclination of western policy to break away from old formulas was most plainly evident. Here, the implementation of the Paris treaties hardened into a trial of strength between the American and the Soviet blocs, and as such it was pursued, with little regard for long-term consequences, as an objective to be put through at all costs for its own sake. The intention, on the western side, was to create stability by constructing a firm line of defence on all vulnerable fronts against communist Russia and communist China; but, in fact, instead of stabilizing the situation, these expedients gave rise to new problems which played a major role in international relations in 1955.

The fundamental reason why western diplomacy clung to its traditional patterns after the Geneva conference of 1954 was scepticism whether, in spite of outward signs of flexibility, there had been any fundamental change in communist policy, either in Europe or in the Far East. Ever since the death of Stalin in 1953 there had been speculation and talk of a *détente*; but little effective relaxation occurred as a result of the advent of the Malenkov régime in Russia. It was still the official view in the west that Soviet policy was directed towards weakening and dividing the western governments, as a prelude to aggression; and the Soviet proposals for disarmament during 1954 were treated as manœuvres with this end in view. Talk of a new era of 'competitive coexistence', taking the place of the cold war, became more common as the year progressed; but even at the year's end, to judge from their actions, governments were thinking in terms of 'positions of strength'. Experience had not yet driven home the lesson, which was to emerge during the months to come—and which, even then, was only learnt reluctantly—that supposed 'positions of strength' at this stage were in fact (as the famous chess master, Richard Réti, had long since pointed out) positions of weakness and focuses for counter-attack.

That this was so was due, in the first place, to the persistence of the un-

settled issues enumerated above, which made it difficult, if not impossible, to abandon postures and advance from positions adopted in different circumstances some considerable time previously. Of these issues that which most directly threatened peace was the conflict which had flared up over the small islands held by the Chinese Nationalists between the Chinese mainland and Formosa. But on other fronts also, in South-East Asia and in Europe, the western powers were scarcely less apprehensive. Although active warfare in Indo-China had ceased, the deterioration in the western position in the preceding period was such that to most people the halt in the communist advance had the appearance of *reculer pour mieux sauter*, and it was generally believed that the authority of the west was damaged beyond repair. Whatever the position in Laos and Cambodia, few contemporary observers believed that the situation in South Vietnam could be stabilized, and the beginning of 1955 found the western powers bracing themselves to meet a renewed communist thrust, if not by open hostilities at least by 'subversion' and internal pressure. In Europe, also, the rejection of E.D.C. had been a serious reverse for those who planned to erect a European bulwark against the communist bloc. Although brisk and agile diplomacy had rapidly produced an alternative in the form of the Paris agreements, it still remained an open question whether they could be enforced in view of the misgivings and hostile reactions in France and Germany. The ratification of the Paris agreements was not a foregone conclusion at the beginning of 1955; but until they had been ratified, in the view of the western governments, further progress was impossible. The Middle East alone among the fronts between east and west seemed relatively quiescent, and the Anglo-Egyptian agreement for the evacuation of Suez, which was concluded in October 1954, appeared to hold out hopes of a peaceful evolution; it was, as events were soon to show, a false and delusive lull, and those who took heart from it were confusing the smooth diplomatic surface with the deeper currents in international affairs. By April 1955, when the Bandung conference met, it was clear that the peoples inhabiting the eastern and the southern shores of the Mediterranean were preparing themselves to play a positive and active part.

The present section, therefore, deals in the first place with the backwash of 1954—with the specific issues which had confronted the world in that year without finding settlement. But it is not for that reason merely preliminary. The way these questions were handled in the following months, and the type of solution they found, set the stage and helped to determine future attitudes. The experience, between January and April 1955, of what was possible and what was not possible, or no longer possible, affected both specific calculations and the more general climate of affairs in both the communist and the anti-communist camps. These considerations alone justify a careful survey of what took place; but we

must not make the mistake of supposing that the precise issues around which action crystallized are the whole story. From this point of view, international politics may be likened to an iceberg, of which the visible portion is the least. What was going on below the surface was as important as what was exposed to full view; and here we should emphasize the ferment among the 'uncommitted' peoples of Asia and Africa, which was soon to find expression at Bandung. Of all that happened in this period it may be that, on a long-term view, nothing was of more lasting importance than the Bandung conference. After April 1955 a world which had deluded itself into believing that it was finally polarized into two irreconcilable blocs, was forced to radical rethinking. By adding a 'third force', Bandung recast the framework of international affairs and placed old problems in a new context; it broke the deadlock which had paralysed the world since the first atom bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

CHAPTER II

CONFLICTS IN ASIA

Formosa and the Off-shore Islands

OF the problems remaining unresolved at the beginning of 1955 the dispute concerning Formosa and the off-shore islands was probably the most likely to lead to war. The equivocal position in the Formosan straits was the result both of long-standing factors and of more recent events: on the one hand the continued existence in the area of two Chinese authorities with conflicting claims, and on the other, a marked increase in the number of hostile incidents in the autumn of 1954, which had immediately created the possibility that the great powers might become involved. But behind this situation were factors more deeply embedded in the international situation. In particular, there was the underlying consideration, in American policy, that Formosa and the Pescadores constituted an essential element in the United States defence system in the Pacific, and that any action which indirectly weakened them—for example, in regard to the Chinese off-shore islands—must be resisted. Furthermore, the position in Formosa could not be isolated—at least in American thought and planning—from the situation elsewhere on the Asiatic perimeter of the communist and anti-communist worlds. The outcome of events in Indo-China, after the fall of Dien Bien Phu in the summer of 1954,¹ strengthened American resolution to resist from the outset any further signs of communist infiltration. This attitude, without doubt, underlay the signing of the Manila treaty on 8 September 1954.² The result was that when, in the autumn of 1954, tension increased in the region round Formosa, and was accentuated by bellicose outbursts of charges and counter-charges from Peking and Taipeh, the United States was quick to see a new danger-spot developing, which required new measures. What these new measures were was seen when, on 1 December 1954, it was announced that the United States had concluded a mutual security alliance with the authorities in Formosa. This statement, following upon the signing of the Manila treaty in the previous September, had every appearance of greater American involvement in the area, perhaps in conjunction with a forward policy. This was certainly the way in which, after several years' hostility between the United States and China, the treaty was interpreted in Peking. At the beginning of 1955, therefore, Chou En-lai's hostility to the United States as the ally of Chiang Kai-shek was augmented by hostility to the United States as such.³

¹ Cf. *Survey*, 1954, pp. 18 sqq.

² *Ibid.* pp. 73 sqq.

³ In this connexion it may be recalled that the United States had not recognized the Peking