

ANTI-COMMUNISM AND IDEALISM:
THE PEACE CORPS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
IN THE THIRD WORLD, 1960-1966

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to uncover the political motivations behind the creation of the Peace Corps in the United States. While many historians attribute both anti-Communism and idealism as impetuses behind the founding of the Peace Corps, an important trend in the relative importance of these factors *over time* remains unexplored. This thesis uses primary source documents to show how the United States perceived the importance of the Peace Corps in containing Communism during the organization's formative years. After its establishment, however, a sense of idealism became synonymous with the Peace Corps. During this period, a romantic notion of the Peace Corps garnered support for the organization at home and abroad. Discussions of the organization's strategic importance in the Cold War disappeared. In examining actual program implementation, however, this rhetorical shift towards idealism appears to be only a façade, as programs were guided by U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War.

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Introduction

On the other side of the globe, teachers, doctors, technicians, and experts desperately needed in a dozen fields by underdeveloped nations are pouring forth from Moscow to advance the cause of world communism...I am convinced that our young men and women, dedicated to freedom, are fully capable of overcoming the efforts of Mr. Khrushchev's missionaries...¹

- John F. Kennedy, Speech in San Francisco, 11/2/1960

Our Peace Corps is not designed as an instrument of diplomacy or propaganda or ideological conflict. It is designed to permit our people to exercise more fully their responsibilities in the great common cause of world development.²

- John F. Kennedy, Presenting the Peace Corps, 3/1/1961

The first quote above, drawn from John F. Kennedy's "Staffing a Foreign Policy for Peace" speech, is a direct product of the insecurity that gripped the United States in 1960. In an era enveloped by a Cold War that dictated the foreign policy agendas of states across the globe, Kennedy viewed the position of the United States as increasingly perilous. Development technicians from the Soviet Union, aimed at courting Third World alliances, served as a potential threat to U.S. security. The Peace Corps, therefore, provided a counterbalance to better the position of the U.S. in the developing world.

This sentiment however, vanished from Kennedy's presentation of the Peace Corps after the organization's creation by executive order in 1961. In less than six months, the Peace Corps' stated purpose shifted from an agency that could serve important U.S. foreign policy interests to an institution focused on idealistic humanitarianism. Cold War security concerns aside, the Peace Corps now highlighted the commitment of the United States to "the great common cause of world development."

The stated motivations of the United States Government to create the Peace Corps in the 1960s exhibit this curious blend of Cold War security concerns and idealistic humanitarianism. Gerard Rice describes this mixture as "the paradox at the heart of the Peace Corps."³ Historians consistently highlight both of these factors as motivators behind the Peace Corps' creation. The relative importance accorded to each of these factors, however, differs dramatically in the secondary literature.

Some historians, like Brent Ashabraner and Coates Redmon, recognize the Government's hopes for the Peace Corps in containing Communism, but attribute a small role to this sentiment. These authors focus instead on the idealistic spirit of the 1960s as the primary motivator for the Peace Corps' establishment. As Ashabraner writes, "I think there is no doubt that...statements about the Peace Corps as a weapon against Communism were intended entirely for domestic consumption...Their major emphasis always in talking about the Peace Corps was that it would provide needed help to developing nations."⁴

¹ Quote from Karen Schwarz, *What You Can Do for Your Country: An Oral History of the Peace Corps* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 17.

² Statement printed in *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 3: 3056.

³ Gerard T. Rice, *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 258.

⁴ Brent Ashabraner, *A Moment in History: The First Ten Years of the Peace Corps* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), 317; Coates Redmon, *Come As You Are: the Peace Corps Story* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 21.

Other scholars retain the perspective that Cold War security dominated the discussion surrounding the creation of the Peace Corps. As Karen Schwarz writes, “To a great extent, the Peace Corps’ early operations were shaped by America’s concern over Communist expansion in the third world.”⁵ Julius Amin and Marshall Windmiller join Schwarz in presenting the “pragmatic thinking” about Cold War security that was central to the Peace Corps’ creation as a tool of U.S. foreign policy.⁶

In two of the most comprehensive histories to date, Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman and Gerard T. Rice present the most balanced renditions of the roles of security and idealism in the Peace Corps’ creation. Both writers argue that “the Peace Corps was walking a fine line” between supporting U.S. foreign policy and remaining committed to apolitical humanitarianism.⁷ These histories present evidence to show the Peace Corps as both contributing to and abstaining from official U.S. Cold War foreign policy.

Nearly all historical accounts attempting to understand this dichotomy between realism and idealism in the Peace Corps’ creation fall into one of the above groups.⁸ All of these histories, however, present evidence about U.S. motivations as *constant across time* from 1961-1966. These accounts, however, miss a fascinating trend in the primary source documents *within* the first five years of the Peace Corps’ history. A careful dissection of the documentation over this period highlights a distinct shift from an initial preoccupation with containing Communism to an emphasis in humanitarian goodwill.

This paper explores this rhetorical shift from anti-Communism to idealism in three parts. First, I show how the Cold War played a central role in early discussions on the Peace Corps. Then, I highlight the rhetorical shift towards humanitarianism that is evident in nearly all publications and discussions about the organization starting in 1962-63. Finally, I show that this rhetorical shift did not affect the actual implementation of Peace Corps programs, which retained a firm commitment to U.S. foreign policy as dictated by the necessities of the Cold War.

Chapter 1 – Creation as a Foreign Policy Instrument

U.S. Foreign Aid Mentality in the 1960s

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the decision of the U.S. Government to create the Peace Corps, it is essential to understand American foreign aid mentality in the early 1960s. In the late 1950s, the U.S. felt its position slipping relative to the Soviet Union in the Third World. During these years, the Soviets began to make a concerted

⁵ Schwarz, *An Oral History*, 32.

⁶ Julius A. Amin, *The Peace Corps in Cameroon* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1992), 1; Marshall Windmiller, *The Peace Corps and Pax Americana* (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1970), 47.

⁷ Rice, *The Bold Experiment*, 261; Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 106-107.

⁸ Many historical accounts of the Peace Corps may provide only a passing reference on the relative importance of the impetuses behind the Peace Corps’ creation. For example, see Kevin Lowther and C. Payne Lucas, *Keeping Kennedy’s Promise: the Peace Corps – Unmet Hope of the New Frontier* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 23; David Hapgood and Meridan Bennett, *Agents of Change: A Close Look at the Peace Corps* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968), 37; and Charles Wetzels, “The Peace Corps in our Past,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 365 (May 1966): 3-4.

effort to court friendships among neutralist states.⁹ In addition, events like Castro's expulsion of American-owned enterprise from Cuba in 1959 contributed to a sense of insecurity and fear about the spread of global Communism. These factors caused the U.S. to view its foreign aid efforts in terms of Cold War policy.

In 1962, the Department of State released a publication entitled "Five Goals of U.S. Foreign Policy." The Peace Corps fit into the third of these five goals, "Revolution of Freedom," which sought "to help the less developed areas of the world through their revolution of modernization."¹⁰ This goal placed the role of foreign aid squarely in the context of the Cold War. According to Under Secretary of State George Ball,

Our Government in our own national self-interest has supported a large and powerful foreign aid program...The purpose of this program is to strengthen the national security of the United States by strengthening the security of the free world.¹¹

The Peace Corps, therefore, as a means of providing development aid in the Third World, was undoubtedly viewed as an agent for strengthening U.S. security in the free world.

The Department of State also released a publication entitled "An Act for International Development" (AID) in 1961. This booklet covered the components, objectives, and strategies of the U.S. foreign aid program in the decisive "decade of development." This account is filled with both discussions and images conveying the significant threat of eastern bloc efforts to spread Communism and the centrality of U.S. foreign aid programs to combat these efforts.¹²

Another State Department publication, entitled "Foreign Aid: Facts and Fallacies," depicted a specific Soviet bloc aid effort aimed at advancing the spread of Communism in underdeveloped countries: development technicians. It states,

Foreign aid is only one of the many tools the communists use to increase their influence in the underdeveloped nations. The recent intensified drive by the Communist bloc to influence those countries is also illustrated by the fact that bloc technicians in less developed countries increased sharply from 1,400 in 1956 to 7,880 in 1960.¹³

The AID document also attempted to convey the severity of the threat of development technicians from the Communist world. Figure 1 places the dangers of eastern bloc development technicians on an equivalent level with the economic and educational efforts by the Communists to court alliances from among underdeveloped states.

⁹ Elizabeth A. Cobbs, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and the Foreign Policy of the Peace Corps," *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 1 (1996): 79, 93.

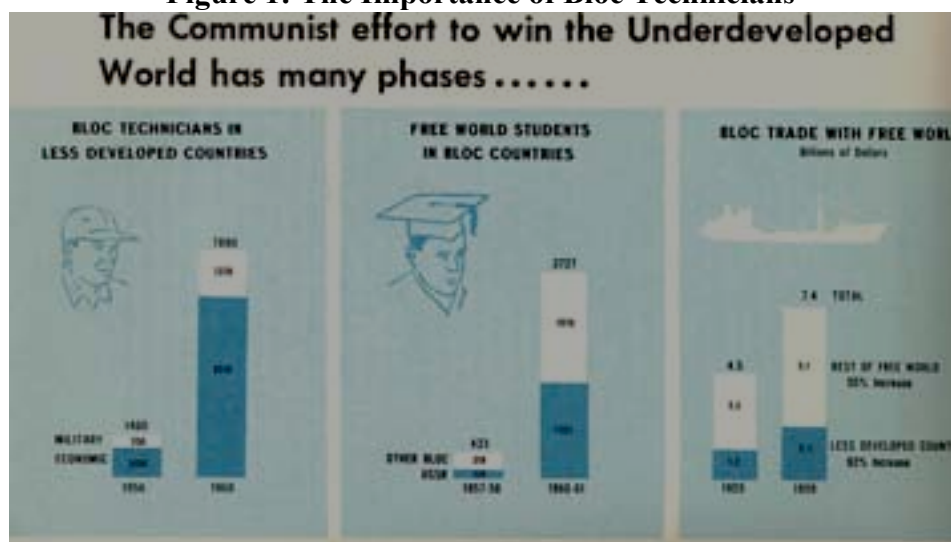
¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Five Goals of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Pub. #7432), Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, October 1962, 5. Also see Everett W. Langworthy, "The Peace Corps as an Instrument of United States Foreign Policy" (master's thesis, George Washington University, 1964), 4. The other four goals are: "Security through Strength," "Progress through Partnership," "Community under Law," and "Peace through Perseverance."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹² For a good example, see: U.S. Department of State, *An Act for International Development* (Pub. #7224), Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1961, 87.

¹³ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Aid: Facts and Fallacies* (Pub. #7239), Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1961, 29-31.

Figure 1: The Importance of Bloc Technicians¹⁴



The U.S. Government viewed the Peace Corps as a remedy to this proliferation of bloc technicians in the Third World. Peace Corps volunteers provided the free world with a means to counteract the influence of development technicians from the eastern bloc.

It is clear, therefore, that the U.S. State Department viewed Cold War security as significantly more important than idealistic humanitarianism in foreign aid programs during the period of the Peace Corps' creation. In fact, a page out of the AID booklet makes this point abundantly clear. In conveying the need for a foreign aid program, discussions with subtitles like "Communism Exploits the Demand for Change," "This is the 'Decade of Decision,'" and "The Choice is Between Freedom and Totalitarianism" dominate the text. The State Department relegated the subheading "We Must Help Because it is Right" to the end and gave it only cursory attention.¹⁵ Idealism in U.S. aid programs, therefore, became a footnote to the primary goals of securing the position of the underdeveloped world from Communist advance.

Cold War Concerns in Legislative Creation

This preoccupation with containing the spread of Communism pervaded the legislative process of the Peace Corps' creation. Along every step of its construction, from an idea to passage by Congress, the concept of the Peace Corps reflected the security fears of the United States in the Cold War.

The legislative beginnings of the Peace Corps (then called the "Point IV Youth Corps") began with Congress appropriating funds for a feasibility study for this type of organization. The Mutual Security Act of 1960 provided the legislative authority with which Congress financed this study.¹⁶ Representative Robert Chipfield (R-Illinois) described this act by saying, "Wholly aside from humanitarian and altruistic motives, the main purpose of the mutual security bill is through military and economic aid to maintain the security of the United States and the free world from Communistic aggression and

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *An Act for International Development* (Pub. #7224), Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1961, 186.

¹⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶ Rice, *The Bold Experiment*, 257.

thereby maintain the peace.”¹⁷ In financing the first study of the Peace Corps, therefore, Congress utilized an act dedicated to protecting the United States from Communism.

After providing funding for this study, Congress debated the potential merits of a “Point IV Youth Corps.” The importance of this type of organization in combating the spread of Communism occupied a significant portion of this discussion. For example, Representative Henry Reuss (D-Wisconsin), the original architect behind the “Point IV Youth Corps,” described the importance of the organization as he stated,

The main theatre for the drama of the 1960s will be the developing countries of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. The way we play our role in that theatre will help determine whether our civilization will survive... With this in mind, I have today introduced an amendment to the Mutual Security Act, to provide for a study looking toward a possible Point 4 Youth Corps...¹⁸

Congress viewed one of the important goals of a “Point IV Youth Corps” as providing a bulwark against Communist influence in the Third World. In fact, the very name of the “Point IV Youth Corps” stemmed from President Harry Truman’s “Point IV” program, which directly understood American foreign aid as a method of eliminating the seeds of Communism in underdeveloped countries.¹⁹

On June 15, 1960, Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-Minnesota) advanced the Peace Corps into the next phase of its creation by introducing an Act in Congress to create a “Peace Corps.” While discussing this new bill, Humphrey highlighted the importance of the Peace Corps in the battle for non-aligned countries. He stated, “The specific situation of the U.S. enjoying good relations with non-Communist countries and helping them along to economic self-sufficiency is much more persuasive to the Soviet Union than the most articulate statement prepared for a foreign ministers’ or summit conference.”²⁰ Humphrey’s presentation also advocated the importance of idealism in the Peace Corps, but he repeatedly stressed its role in stemming the spread of Communism.

The idea of the Peace Corps became a reality upon an Executive Order signed by President Kennedy on March 1, 1961. This permitted Kennedy’s brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, temporary authority to begin selecting the Peace Corps’ staff and establishing overseas programs. Early successes could highlight the viability of the organization and increase the likelihood of Congressional support for legislation to establish the Peace Corps permanently. The initial \$12 million in funding for the Peace Corps’ operations came from a contingency fund allotted to the president under the Mutual Security Act.²¹

The next step was to obtain Congressional approval for the Peace Corps through legislation formally creating and funding the organization. The first hurdle in this process was a hearing before the Senate’s Committee on Foreign Relations on June 22, 1961. This hearing revealed how both senators and Sargent Shriver viewed a significant role for the Peace Corps in the Cold War. At one point, for instance, a senator asked Shriver if the Peace Corps would consider placing volunteers in Communist Poland. Shriver replied, “Some people have already indicated that in some cases it might be most

¹⁷ *Cong. Rec.*, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960, 106, pt. 8: 10174.

¹⁸ *Cong. Rec.*, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960, 106, pt. 1: 574-5.

¹⁹ Amin, *The Peace Corps in Cameroon*, 9.

²⁰ *Cong. Rec.*, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960, 106, pt. 10: 12635.

²¹ Rice, *The Bold Experiment*, 44-49.

helpful to the overall world situation if Peace Corps personnel could serve in some of the countries such as the ones you mentioned.”²²

Hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs revealed even further the role of the Peace Corps in U.S. Cold War policy. In his opening statement, Shriver said, “The struggle of underdeveloped nations is caught up in a tense international struggle between the free world and the Communist world.”²³ Shriver indicated that Americans were eagerly aiding their country in this struggle, but that the Peace Corps offered “thousands of other Americans” a chance to contribute to this effort.

At certain instances in this hearing, Shriver directly advocated for the Peace Corps based on its importance in combating the eastern bloc:

Mr. Curtis: Would you agree with me that the Soviet bloc countries are sending out a great many more technicians, teachers, and other people to make their presence felt around the world than we are and there is a great need for more emphasis on that sort of thing?

Mr. Shriver: I don’t think there is any question about it. This committee, I am certain, already has the facts presented to you privately.

Mr. Curtis: The Peace Corps can help fill this need?

Mr. Shriver: Yes, sir. We certainly hope so. We have to be able to go into countries where this is going on.

Mr. Curtis: ...We do have mutual security programs in many parts of the world where your type of work could be fitted in with that work. So I take it that would be another way in which the Peace Corps might become interested.

Mr. Shriver: No question about it. We want to help in exactly that way.²⁴

Throughout both the Senate and House hearings, Shriver repeatedly emphasized the significance of the Peace Corps in advancing U.S. interests in the Cold War.

Finally, on September 22, 1961, President Kennedy signed the Peace Corps bill into law. Having passed in the House with a 253-79 vote and with a Senate voice vote the day before, the Peace Corps’ long journey from an idea to legal reality ended.²⁵ As we have seen, a significant commitment to anti-Communism marked each stage of the institution’s creation. This does not deny the significance of idealism and genuine concern for the underdeveloped countries that also influenced the Peace Corps’ creation. It does highlight, however, an important motivational influence that – as we shall see later – is noticeably absent from later discussions about the Peace Corps.

Tangible Foreign Policy Objectives

It is clear that Congress conceived the Peace Corps as having a special role in containing the spread of Communism in non-aligned countries. To this end, the state conveyed three specific objectives of the Peace Corps to strengthen the U.S. position in

²² Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *S. 2000, A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps to Help the Peoples of Interested Countries and Areas in Meeting their Needs for Skilled Manpower: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 63-64.

²³ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *H.R. 7500, A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps to Help the Peoples of Interested Countries and Areas in Meeting their Needs for Skilled Manpower: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

²⁵ Amin, *The Peace Corps in Cameroon*, 38.

neutralist states. By aiding in economic development, promoting literacy, and creating a positive image of Americans abroad, the Peace Corps occupied an important U.S. foreign policy role in the Cold War.

The Peace Corps' role in stimulating economic development in underdeveloped states provided a bulwark against the global spread of Communism. The United States clearly understood the direct correlation between poverty and the spread of Communist influence.²⁶ Hubert Humphrey, for example, focused on this relationship in his initial presentation of the Peace Corps Act. He said,

One of the most explosive situations today is that the rich nations are getting richer and the poor nations are getting poorer. Communism is nurtured not so much by poverty as it is by frustration...In this type of situation, communism can often look attractive. It is for this reason that we must offer them a suitable alternative.²⁷

U.S. political leaders believed in the eastern bloc's advantages in fomenting revolution from poverty. This susceptibility posed a barrier to U.S. influence in the underdeveloped world that the Peace Corps could eliminate by spurring economic growth. For this reason, economic development was central among the perceived goals of the Peace Corps. In fact, the feasibility study for the "Point IV Youth Corps" states, "The evidence to date indicates that a Youth Corps could serve the national interest in several ways, although primarily as an effective instrument of assistance to economic progress in the world's less developed areas."²⁸

Education provided another means for Peace Corps volunteers to aid the U.S. in the Cold War. Congress understood the vast problem of illiteracy plaguing underdeveloped countries in 1960. Publications discussing U.S. foreign aid, like the AID booklet, repeatedly emphasized illiteracy as a problem facing the developing world.

The problems of illiteracy were naturally tied to Cold War concerns. Humphrey lamented that "the Communist world is taking giant steps toward providing primary education for all their children." He revealed statistics to highlight the significant advantages of Communist states in providing education.²⁹ Literacy took the form of a Cold War battlefield in the struggle for the allegiance of non-aligned states. In the case of Guinea, for example, the Soviet Union made substantial attempts to gain influence in 1961.³⁰ In response, Humphrey advocated extending educational aid to Guinea. To Humphrey, education would exploit the "only ace we have in the deck," that of the desire of the Guinean Government "to make English the country's second language."³¹

²⁶ Michael R. Hall, "The Impact of the U.S. Peace Corps at Home and Abroad," *Journal of Third World Studies* 24, no. 1 (2007): 53-57.

²⁷ *Cong. Rec.*, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960, 106, pt. 10: 12635. Another fine example is Senator Wiley (R-Wisconsin), who said, "It is the result of the struggle between the haves and the have-nots. By providing an answer to the ever-growing need for experts...which this program [the Peace Corps] has in mind, we will be providing a counterforce to the millions of Communists planted around the world, sowing the seeds of Communism." *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 12: 16783.

²⁸ *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 3: 2848.

²⁹ *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 5: 5605.

³⁰ Julius A. Amin, "United States Peace Corps Volunteers in Guinea: A Case Study of US-African Relations during the Cold War," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 16, no. 2 (1998): 201.

³¹ *Cong. Rec.*, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960, 106, pt. 10: 12635.

In this educational contest, the Peace Corps provided a powerful force. Humphrey praised the educational emphasis of initial Peace Corps programs as he said,

I believe that the Peace Corps can play a vital role in this education for peace effort, and I am delighted to see the high priority given to education in the overall objectives of the Peace Corps...If we, working with them and their leaders, cannot demonstrate that education can be supplied to their children within the framework of freedom and democracy, they are going to turn to the Communist world for the solution of this problem.³²

Teaching programs comprised the vast majority of initial program assignments. In fact, in the first three years, educational programs accounted for 62 percent of all volunteer assignments.³³ The Peace Corps' Congressional Presentation in 1963 put forth a few rhetorical questions to emphasize the critical contribution of volunteers to the Cold War. It states, "What if the Russians had teachers in 30 out of 36 high schools in Sierra Leone, a new African nation? And four of its six colleges? With similar programs in most African nations?"³⁴ To Congress, the significance of the Peace Corps' educational programs in the Third World became immediately clear.

Congress saw a third important role for the Peace Corps in fostering positive relations with non-aligned nations. To this end, Peace Corps volunteers served as goodwill ambassadors to reflect the image of the United States in a positive light. The end of the 1950s signified a desperate need for something to reshape the international image of the United States. In 1951, a best-selling book entitled *The Ugly American* described how U.S. foreign service workers tarnished the image of Americans in the minds of other countries by remaining aloof from local populations while abroad.³⁵ To counteract this image of the "disinterested" and "self-righteous" foreign service worker, Peace Corps volunteers lived amongst local populations and focused their efforts in rural communities often untouched by American influence.

The Cold War directly affected efforts to create a positive image of the United States in the minds of people in the Third World. Peace Corps proponents, like Hubert Humphrey, recognized that even the somewhat idealistic objective of courting friendships in non-aligned states held important Cold War ramifications. He said, "In short, they will actively demonstrate that America cares, that America's goals for the developing countries are identical with their own goals. Peace Corps volunteers will help to restore that image that belongs to us and not the totalitarians – to Russia..."³⁶

The idea of the "Ugly American," therefore, became an issue of utmost importance in light of the Cold War. The East/West race for influence in neutralist states became an ideological struggle for "minds of men." In hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, Representative Chester Merrow (R-New Hampshire) made this clear:

The people in the Peace Corps are going to be doing technical work in agriculture, health and so on. This is an ideological struggle in which we find

³² *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 5: 5605.

³³ Schwarz, *An Oral History*, 35.

³⁴ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964*, 1963, Vol. III, 40.

³⁵ John Lunstrum, "The Mystique of the Peace Corps: A Dilemma," *Phi Delta Kappan* 48 (November 1966): 98.

³⁶ *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 7: 9288.

ourselves. It is a battle for the minds of men. I think perhaps it is more important in this respect than it is in some others.³⁷

The Peace Corps, therefore, served as a vital tool in this “battle for the minds of men.” In this way, the Peace Corps held perhaps its most significant tie to U.S. Cold War policy.

The Peace Corps’ creation in 1961, therefore, firmly placed the organization in the context of the Cold War. The Cold War era of the organization’s creation profoundly influenced the motivations of the U.S. Government. To this end, discussions surrounding the organization’s creation reveal three distinct policy objectives. Idealism, while constantly present as well, comprised only part of the discussion. This pattern, however, proved only to be temporary. The next chapter reveals a rhetorical shift in publications and discussions surrounding the Peace Corps that moved decisively away from the Cold War.

Chapter 2 – A Rhetorical Shift to Idealism

Cold War Ideology Diminishes

As evidenced by the first chapter, the Peace Corps’ creation in 1961 reflected a substantial commitment to containing the spread of Communism in the Third World. Over the first five years of the Peace Corps’ existence, however, the relative makeup of anti-Communism and idealism in discussions and publications shifted dramatically toward the latter.

Congressional discussions, as printed in *The Congressional Record*, serve as one forum in which the Peace Corps exhibited this shift away from anti-Communism and toward idealism. The organization’s strategic importance in the Cold War that pervaded the debates and hearings throughout the first chapter diminished in importance relative to purely idealistic motivations, which grew in importance throughout 1962-63. Senator Stephen Young (D-Ohio) provided an example of the organization’s newfound image:

As the Peace Corps enters its second year, it becomes evident that service to mankind without thought of personal gain is still one of man’s noblest endeavors...The Peace Corps has shown what is best in the human heart and mind. It has demonstrated the constructive spirit of a free people.³⁸

In the first full year of the Peace Corps’ existence, representatives and senators began portraying the organization as inherently idealistic. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson also joined in praising the idealism of Peace Corps volunteers.³⁹

This rhetorical shift to idealism persisted and even intensified after its beginnings in 1962-63. Speeches throughout *The Congressional Record* from 1964-66 exhibit a consistent emphasis on goodwill – rather than security – as motivation for creating the Peace Corps. In 1964, for example, Representative Herman Toll (D-Pennsylvania) called the Peace Corps “an experiment in practical idealism” that provided a foundation “for

³⁷ House Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 85.

³⁸ *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 2d sess., 1962, 108, pt. 11: 15400.

³⁹ Johnson said, “You will either give meaning to or you will disclose as hollow our concern for the worth of every individual...our commitment to the equality of mankind. This is why you are all objects of our faith.” Speech in *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 2d sess., 1962, 108, pt. 11: 15050.

future accomplishment, for sympathy and understanding, for goodwill, and for mutuality of hope.”⁴⁰ In 1965, Representative Clement Zablocki (D- Wisconsin) claimed,

The [Peace Corps] volunteers are, in many ways, the reflection of what this country has to offer its friends: an intense desire, an honest one, to take the extra step toward peace; to walk the extra mile to help our neighbors where we can; to journey down any road to do what we hope is our share of accepting the responsibilities of a successful nation.⁴¹

These examples highlight that Congressional discussions, which increasingly took an idealistic emphasis in 1962, continued on this trend through 1966. The importance of this organization in maintaining U.S. security in the Cold War took a relative “backseat.”

It is difficult, however, to provide concrete evidence for this shift based on examples alone. Formal reports, issued annually by the Peace Corps in every year since its inception, on the other hand, provide a source that confirms this trend over time. A systematic analysis of these Annual Reports reveals the same relative trend present in *The Congressional Record*.

Table 1 attempts to quantify this relative shift in rhetoric surrounding the Peace Corps from its creation until 1966. In analyzing the Annual Reports, I noted the prevalence of terms and phrases related to the Cold War and containing Communism. My tally of these terms in the Annual Reports from 1962-66 paints a basic picture of the relative importance of Cold War sentiment to the Peace Corps.

Table 1: Peace Corps Annual Reports – Cold War Phraseology⁴²

	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
Communist/Communism	8	14	3	1	0
Russia/Soviet Union/Moscow	5	10	1	2	0
China/Peking	5	2	0	2	1
Neutralist/Uncommitted Nations	1	0	0	0	0
Totalitarianism/Despotism	1	0	0	0	0
Cuba/Havana	4	4	0	0	0
Khrushchev	1	2	0	0	0
Vietnam/Viet Cong	1	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	26	32	4	5	2

Using this analytical approach, the trend evident in *The Congressional Record* clearly appears in the Annual Reports. In its earliest years, there is a relatively high incidence of phrases like “Communism” and “Soviet Union.” Discussions in these reports emphasize the fierce criticisms levied by the eastern bloc against the Peace Corps.⁴³ Beginning in the organization’s third year, however, these terms nearly vanish from the Reports. Concerns with the Cold War drew much less attention in these years.

The Annual Congressional Presentations given by the Peace Corps follow a similar trend to the Annual Reports. In the Fiscal Year (FY-) 1963 presentation, the significance of Communism appears in discussions on volunteer training, cooperation

⁴⁰ *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 2d sess., 1964, 110, pt. 18: 23451.

⁴¹ *Cong. Rec.*, 89th Cong., 1st sess., 1965, 111, pt. 3: 3867.

⁴² Author’s analysis of: U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Reports*, 1962-66.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1962, 61-63; *Ibid.*, 1963, 61-65.

with the United Nations, and relations with host countries.⁴⁴ The FY-1964 presentation contains a chapter discussing Communist subversion attempts against the Peace Corps.⁴⁵ The presentations for FY-1965 and FY-1966, conversely, do not address these issues.

Another useful source comes from periodicals entitled *Peace Corps News* and *Peace Corps Volunteer*, which were publications mailed monthly to volunteers and their immediate families. By analyzing the relative number of Cold War-related terms across time (see Table 1), these sources provide additional support for the relative decline of anti-Communist sentiment in rhetoric surrounding the Peace Corps over the first five years of its existence.

Table 2 tallies the number of Cold War-related words and phrases that appear in the *Peace Corps News* and the *Peace Corps Volunteer* from 1961-66. The total count is divided by the number of pages published in each year to attain a ratio comparable across time. The final row, “Terms per Publication Page,” denotes the number of these words and phrases printed on each page of these periodicals from 1961-66.

Table 2: Peace Corps Periodicals – Cold War Phraseology⁴⁶

	1961-62	1963	1964	1965	1966
Communist/Communism	19	5	9	6	5
Russia/Soviet Union/Moscow/Iron Curtain	14	9	15	11	14
China/Peking	11	48	20	4	6
Neutralist/Uncommitted Nations	2	0	1	0	5
Neocolonialism/Imperialism	13	1	1	5	6
Cuba/Havana	5	3	0	3	1
Khrushchev/Mao/Castro/Cold War	6	0	1	1	8
Vietnam/Viet Cong	0	0	3	31	11
TOTAL	70	66	50	61	56
Publication Pages in Year	198	296	292	288	336
TERMS PER PUBLICATION PAGE	0.35	0.22	0.17	0.21	0.17

The *Peace Corps News* and *Peace Corps Volunteer* evidence the same rhetorical pattern present in *The Congressional Record*, the Annual Reports, and the Annual Congressional Presentations over this period. During the Peace Corps’ formative years, terms like “Communism,” “Iron Curtain,” and “Neocolonialism” appear on 3 ½ of every 10 pages of text. As time passes, this ratio declines. Interestingly, in 1965-66 discussions intensified surrounding a Cold War event of tremendous importance for the U.S. – the Vietnam War. Even with the prevalence of this issue, however, the per page ratio of Cold War related terminology never even approached the 1961-62 ratio.

The relative importance of anti-Communist and idealistic rhetoric surrounding the Peace Corps was not constant across time from 1961-66. The dialogue surrounding the organization in its formative years remained staunchly committed to the Cold War. This language however, became increasingly idealistic throughout the first five years of Peace

⁴⁴ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1963*, 1962, 16, 27, 46.

⁴⁵ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964*, 1963, Vol. III, 40-55.

⁴⁶ Author’s analysis of: *Peace Corps News*, June 1961-Autumn 1965; *Peace Corps Volunteer*, January 1962-December 1966; *Peace Corps World*, 1966.

Corps operations. What caused this change? The following two sections provide two compelling reasons for the Peace Corps to assume an increasingly idealistic position.

Success Abroad

A commitment to independence among non-aligned countries necessitated a rhetorical shift to idealism. For many states, the 1960s marked the overthrow of colonial powers and the establishment of new national governments. This colonial tradition imbued these states with a fierce dedication to independence, especially in remaining neutral in the Cold War. Had these states viewed the Peace Corps simply as a means of gaining their allegiance in the struggle against the eastern bloc, they would have been unlikely to welcome volunteers. Idealistic rhetoric, on the other hand, gave the Peace Corps an image unrelated to the Cold War that encouraged Third World independence.⁴⁷

The U.S. clearly understood the skepticism surrounding the Peace Corps among newly independent states that stemmed from their firm commitment to independence. Senator Albert Gore (D-Tennessee) explained this in the Peace Corps' Congressional hearings as he said, "An illustration of how sensitive some nations are to possible political efforts on the part of any representative of the United States, or any other country, within their own country, is my recent talk with high executives of a country in Africa who were not at that moment very enthusiastic about the Peace Corps."⁴⁸ The distrust of U.S. motives in promoting the Peace Corps among non-aligned states also came through in both the Annual Reports and testimonies from volunteers in the field.⁴⁹

In the midst of this skepticism, the U.S. needed idealistic rhetoric to encourage program acceptance by non-aligned states. Third World doubts necessitated the removal of the Peace Corps from the context of the Cold War. Dr. Robert E. Van Deusen (Secretary of Public Relations for the National Lutheran Council) made this very clear in his testimony before Congress during the 1961 hearings. He said,

It will be important that the motivation for the program be kept on an idealistic basis. If the emphasis of the Peace Corps should change from the "promotion of world peace and friendship" which is stated in its declaration of purpose to the promotion of American military, economic, and political objectives, international acceptance of the program could change to resentment and rejection.⁵⁰

Many of the Peace Corps' founders explicated the notion that the organization's success as a part of U.S. foreign policy could only result from its espousal of apolitical aims.⁵¹ Only by remaining aloof from the political objectives of the Cold War could the Peace Corps be effective in overseas service.

⁴⁷ Cobbs, "Decolonization," 96.

⁴⁸ Senate Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 80.

⁴⁹ Tom Livingston, a volunteer in Ghana from 1961-63, said for example, "In 1961, many of the non-aligned countries saw the Peace Corps as another aspect of American imperialism. A couple of the Ghanaian newspapers were very circumspect in their coverage of our arrival." Quoted in: Schwarz, *An Oral History*, 39; U.S. Peace Corps, *1st Annual Report*, 1962, 61.

⁵⁰ Senate Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 118.

⁵¹ Shriver himself said, "He [the Secretary of State] phrased it that the Peace Corps could make its greatest contribution to foreign policy by not being part of it. I think he means not being a wholly integrated part of it. A neutralist country like India could say, 'This is another arm of the U.S. Government.'" House Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 95. For a good discussion of this concept, see Langworthy, "The Peace Corps as and Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy," 23.

In spite of the Peace Corps' anti-Communist objectives (see Chapter 1), the U.S. needed to demonstrate to non-aligned countries that the organization was both apolitical and grounded in idealistic humanitarianism. The founders suggested many means to this end. First, through cooperation with the United Nations, the Peace Corps attempted to show its commitment to global development concerns rather than simply national interest. In his 1961 report to the President, Shriver suggested this option:

It is important, however, that the Peace Corps be advanced not as an arm of the Cold War but as a contribution to the world community. In presenting it to other governments and to the United Nations, we could propose that every nation consider the formation of its own peace corps and that the United Nations sponsor the idea...If presented in this spirit, the response and the results will be immeasurably better.⁵²

In addition to cooperation with the United Nations, the Peace Corps took dramatic steps to ensure that it maintained a separate identity from any other U.S. agency. The Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1963 expressed that while remaining in contact with the U.S. Embassy and foreign aid mission, the Peace Corps should remain *physically* apart from such agencies. The Peace Corps was to utilize "services and facilities of the Embassy and other United States agencies but without too closely identifying the Peace Corps with those agencies."⁵³ In this way, the Peace Corps remained an integral part of U.S. foreign policy while appearing apolitical in neutralist countries.⁵⁴

Under such apolitical auspices in the Third World, any volunteer with a background traceable to a U.S. Intelligence Agency could have proved disastrous. For this reason, the Peace Corps took steps to ensure against volunteers with intelligence backgrounds. Any individual that ever worked for a U.S. intelligence agency was disallowed from serving as a Peace Corps volunteer or staff member. The Peace Corps also collaborated with other intelligence agencies to guarantee that anyone who served with the Peace Corps remained unemployable by these agencies for at least four years.⁵⁵

The necessity of keeping the Peace Corps separate from U.S. political aims in the Cold War, therefore, explains one important reason for the rhetorical shift evidenced earlier. To encourage the acceptance of Peace Corps programs abroad, the organization divested from the Cold War concerns that marked its creation. As Cobbs Hoffman writes, "From the start Shriver emphasized that the United States had to show the international community that the Peace Corps was not intended as an arm of the Cold War, lest it be dismissed as another example of self-serving realpolitik."⁵⁶

Support at Home

The necessity of domestic support provides the second reason for the Peace Corps' rhetorical shift towards idealism. One of the most formidable tasks facing the

⁵² "Report to the President on the Peace Corps" found in: U.S. Peace Corps, *Peace Corps Fact Book*, 1961, 22.

⁵³ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1963*, 1962, 35.

⁵⁴ David Burner, "The Politics of the Peace Corps," *Reviews in American History* 27, no. 3 (1999): 492; Daniel W. Drezner, "Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 4 (2000): 740.

⁵⁵ Ashabranner, *A Moment in History*, 324-326.

⁵⁶ Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need is Love*, 92.

establishment of a new organization like the Peace Corps was recruiting an adequate supply of willing volunteers. In order to accomplish this task in the domestic political conditions of 1960s, the Peace Corps needed to appear as an expression of American idealism and global humanitarianism.

In the 1950s, the U.S. experienced an incredible period of unity as Americans put aside their differences to battle Communism as a universal enemy. The grave threat of thermonuclear holocaust with the eastern bloc created a “Cold War consensus” in the U.S. that crossed traditional political boundaries. As time progressed, however, “McCarthyism” exploited and eventually shattered this consensus. By the early 1960s, a new generation of Americans emerged, looking for a different face in U.S. foreign policy. These Americans desired that international discussions and faith in the goodwill of humanity replace the threats and militarism of the Cold War.⁵⁷

The founders of the Peace Corps viewed the idealism of this generation as a valuable resource that could bring substantial benefits to the U.S. in the Cold War. As this group provided the source of Peace Corps volunteers, they served a very important role in combating the “Ugly American” image in the Third World. Many Congressmen commented on the idealism of this new generation as “a great national resource” that the Peace Corps could utilize.⁵⁸

While the idealism of this new generation offered a valuable resource to the Peace Corps, it necessitated that the organization assume an increasingly idealistic tone to gain support. Hubert Humphrey explained the futility of marketing the Cold War advantages of the Peace Corps as he said, “It is not sufficient to build anti-Communist programs; this is a bankrupt policy.”⁵⁹ By 1961, Humphrey understood that the “Cold War consensus” had run its course. The Peace Corps needed a new rhetorical approach to enlist the support of this idealistic generation. Without appealing to idealism, it would remain nearly impossible to obtain the foreign policy advantages afforded to the U.S. by the Peace Corps.

Sargent Shriver also understood the significance of the Peace Corps’ idealistic element in appealing to younger generations. In his view, however, the foreign aid program of the U.S. had abandoned this humanitarian image. For this reason, Shriver adamantly opposed subsuming the Peace Corps into the existing foreign aid structure. Doing so would deprive the organization of the very people it wished would volunteer:

To recruit the kind of people necessary for the Peace Corps means reaching people with a special motivation to join a unique program. It is one thing to say to young Americans, ‘Come join the foreign-aid program’; and another thing to say, ‘Come join the Peace Corps.’ It was important that the Peace Corps maintain its unique identity in order to recruit the right kind of people.⁶⁰

For this reason, Shriver constantly struggled to maintain an identity for the Peace Corps separate from existing foreign aid programs.

⁵⁷ Mark H. Lytle, *America's Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 2006), 13-25.

⁵⁸ *Cong. Rec.*, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., 1960, 106, pt. 10: 12637. For another example of the Peace Corps utilizing idealism as a resource, see *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 4: 4472.

⁵⁹ *Cong. Rec.*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 107, pt. 7: 9287.

⁶⁰ House Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 12.

The important role of idealism in attracting domestic support for the Peace Corps led to the organization's preoccupation with opinions expressed in domestic newspapers. Both the Annual Reports and the Annual Congressional Presentations evidence the Peace Corps' careful analysis of domestic opinion surrounding its operations. In fact, the Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964 listed 27 distinct newspapers across the country and the specific opinions they presented about the Peace Corps.⁶¹ The 1963 Annual Report rejoiced that the American press was more favorable about the Peace Corps in 1963 than in 1961 or 1962.⁶² The image the American public held of the Peace Corps played a very important role in the organization's operations, and image-building efforts proved so successful that they eventually immunized the organization from public criticism.⁶³ The rhetorical shift toward idealism served as one image-building method.

Domestic opinion, therefore, provided the second reason for the Peace Corps' rhetorical shift away from anti-Communism. In order to attract the necessary support from an idealistic generation of potential volunteers, a humanitarian spirit enveloped discussions surrounding the Peace Corps. The idealism of the American people, therefore, provided both a resource and challenge to the Peace Corps. Idealism ensured the steadfast commitment and wholehearted effort of volunteers, which served to improve the image of Americans abroad. On the other hand, this idealism forced the Peace Corps to move away from the Cold War considerations that marked its creation in favor of a humanitarian spirit aimed at garnering support.

This chapter has evidenced an important rhetorical transition away from anti-Communism and toward idealism in discussions and publications surrounding the Peace Corps. Both a desire to appeal to non-aligned states and to gain domestic support instigated this shift in language over the first five years of the Peace Corps' existence. Cobbs Hoffman summarizes this idea perfectly as she writes, "They had to devise a program while recruiting volunteers for it, convincing Third World nations to embrace it, and making sure it met its own goals while helping to win the Cold War."⁶⁴

Chapter 3 – The Rhetorical Shift and Actual Policy

Politics Guiding Program Development

The discussion thus far has remained limited to rhetoric surrounding the Peace Corps. The first two chapters showed the language of anti-Communism that stimulated the organization's creation and the marked shift in this language during the first five years of the Peace Corps' existence. This rhetorical shift, however, leaves questions about the actual implementation of Peace Corps programs. Did program development follow the move towards idealism? Did the Peace Corps assign volunteers to states based on humanitarian need? Did the Cold War continue to guide policy programming, with the shift as an external façade? To answer these questions, this chapter moves from its previous emphasis on the mindset of the Peace Corps' founders to a focus exclusively on actual policies implemented by the organization during its first five years of existence.

⁶¹ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964*, 1963, Vol. III, 43-47.

⁶² U.S. Peace Corps, *3rd Annual Report*, 1964, 54.

⁶³ Lunstrum, "The Mystique," 101.

⁶⁴ Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need is Love*, 44.

There is evidence that administrators followed the shift towards idealism in creating Peace Corps programs. Sargent Shriver retained a determined commitment to keep the Peace Corps apolitical, and some claim that he truly did not intend the organization to be an arm of the Cold War. Many avid “Cold Warriors” grew angry with Shriver for his refusal to send volunteers to states on the obvious “front lines” of the struggle against Communism – like Algeria or Vietnam. Shriver kept good on his claim before Congress that “we only go where we are asked.”⁶⁵

Despite these facts, however, significantly more evidence supports that Sargent Shriver and other staff directed the Peace Corps to states based on Cold War policy. While the Peace Corps only entered states “requesting” Peace Corps volunteers, these requests were hardly unsolicited. Shriver visited states to encourage them to adopt Peace Corps programs, targeting states strategic to U.S. Cold War interests like Nigeria, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines.⁶⁶

In addition to Shriver’s marketing of the Peace Corps to states of interest to the U.S., the Department of State confirmed the organization’s decisions on country programs and the distribution of volunteers across those programs. In describing this decision-making process in the development of Peace Corps programs, Shriver said,

The overall direction comes straight from the Secretary of State, and it involves the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and the administrator of the Mutual Security Agency, and in each case it is cleared with the area Secretaries involved, for instance, the Assistant Secretary for Africa. As a consequence of this kind of coordination, we believe that we will be able to go into those countries where the need is greatest and where our own national interests are well-served.⁶⁷

Latin America proved to be one area of special strategic importance, as Secretary of State Dean Rusk specifically requested additional volunteers for this region. The Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964 details this encouragement of program expansion:

In a letter to Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver, Secretary of State Dean Rusk cited the “urgent necessity of accelerating” efforts to aid democratic development in Latin America. “Considering the key role which the Peace Corps can play in this effort,” the Secretary wrote, “I would hope that you could double the number of volunteers scheduled for assignment to Latin America during the next year.”⁶⁸

This governmental encouragement to expand Peace Corps operations in the strategically important region of Latin America reaped immediate dividends. Peace Corps volunteers assigned to Latin America increased by 49.3 percent from 1963 to 1964.⁶⁹

Guinea provides another example of the significance of the Cold War in determining Peace Corps programs. As mentioned earlier, Guinea became an important Third World theatre for the Cold War in the early 1960s. Hubert Humphrey reminded

⁶⁵ Gary May, “Passing the Torch and Lighting Fires: The Peace Corps,” in *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-63*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 287; Cobbs, “Decolonization,” 86; House Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 31.

⁶⁶ Ashabranner, *A Moment in History*, 69; Drezner, “Ideas,” 470.

⁶⁷ Senate Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 65.

⁶⁸ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1963*, 1962, Vol. I, 29.

⁶⁹ Statistic calculated by the author from: U.S. Peace Corps, *10th Annual Report*, 1971, 18.

Congress that “the former French colony of Guinea is the one country in Africa in which the Soviet Union has made substantial incursions.”⁷⁰ Humphrey had good reason to take note of Soviet actions in Guinea. The Soviet Union offered the Guinean Government machinery, trucks, armored cars, light artillery and technicians – totaling \$110 million in aid by 1961. Naturally, Guinea arose as an important topic of discussion in the 1961 Peace Corps hearings before Congress.⁷¹

Given this Cold War struggle in Guinea, Sargent Shriver met with President Sekou Toure in June 1961 to encourage him to establish a Peace Corps program. Upon his success, Shriver was elated at the prospects of this collaboration. In a memo to the President and Secretary of State, he proved the Peace Corps’ Cold War objectives:

Here we have an opportunity to move a country from an apparently clear Bloc orientation to a position of neutrality or even one of orientation to the West. This is the first such opportunity I know of in the underdeveloped world. The consequences of such, in terms of our relations with countries like Mali or Ghana, or even Iraq or the UAR, could be very good indeed...If we can successfully crack Ghana and Guinea, Mali may even turn to the West. If so, these would be the first communist-oriented countries to turn from Moscow to us.⁷²

Guinea, therefore, provides a great example of how the Cold War dictated actual program implementation based on U.S. strategy in the Third World.

In January 1964, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs convened a hearing entitled “Winning the Cold War: The U.S. Ideological Offensive.” By this time, much of the anti-Communist rhetoric defining the Peace Corps’ creation had waned (see Chapter 2). To Congress, however, the Peace Corps remained a vital piece of U.S. efforts at stemming Communist advance in the Third World. In fact, discussions in this hearing referred to the Peace Corps directly as an agent of U.S. Cold War policy. As Walt Rostow, Chairman of the Policy Planning Council of the State Department, said,

Their [the Communists] apparatus is a disciplined, small apparatus whose object is to frustrate the society, open it up and take it over...Our job is to work with every instrument at our command...Sometimes it is to help their military go out to the villages where there may be danger and deal constructively with the people. Sometimes it is by teaching them by example that the rich and the privileged young folk – like our Peace Corps – ought to get out and work side by side with the people in the villages...For our kind of job, we do have the instruments.⁷³

Statements like this brought the Peace Corps directly into a discussion centered on defeating the ideological advances of Communism in the Third World.

During this hearing, Representative H.R. Gross (R-Iowa) questioned U.S. aid commitments to Ghana – a state he felt was beyond rescue from its tyrannical rulers. He said, “We have one of the largest contingents of Peace Corps volunteers in Ghana and yet today it is one of the worst tyrannies in existence...What is the image that we are trying

⁷⁰ *Cong. Rec.*, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960, 106, pt. 10: 12635.

⁷¹ Amin, “Volunteers in Guinea,” 201; Senate Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 65.

⁷² Amin, “Volunteers in Guinea,” 210.

⁷³ House Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements, *Winning the Cold War: The U.S. Ideological Offensive: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 88th Cong., 2nd sess., 1964, 761-62.

to portray in Ghana? Why do we keep the Peace Corps there under those circumstances?”⁷⁴ Those defending a continued Peace Corps presence in Ghana did not do so out of a commitment to humanitarianism. Rather, they feared “giving up” and allowing further Communist advance in the Third World. This hearing provides evidence that Congress still viewed the Peace Corps as playing a vital role in the Cold War, even though rhetoric behind the organization was growing increasingly idealistic.

Statistical Evidence

A statistical analysis of volunteer distribution throughout the Third World provides another powerful source of evidence about the importance of the Cold War in actual Peace Corps program implementation. In 1966, Richard Cady, Franz Mogdis, and Karen Tidwell compiled a dataset entitled “Major Power Interactions with Less Developed Countries, 1959-1965.”⁷⁵ This dataset of political indicators, when combined with the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers found in the Annual Reports, provides a quantitative tool for assessing the Peace Corps’ distribution of volunteers.

Since the dataset of political indicators contains cross-sectional data for countries in 1963 and 1965, I matched these observations with the sum of volunteers serving in a country for that year and the next. For example, Chile received 107, 268, 383, and 389 volunteers in 1963-66, respectively. I assigned political indicator data for Chile in 1963 to a volunteer count of 375, and for 1965, I assigned 772 volunteers.⁷⁶

The first interesting result evident in this new dataset compares the mean number of Peace Corps volunteers in a country for either two-year period (1963-64; 1965-66) based on the presence of a Communist party in that country. The 69 observations of countries without a Communist party received a mean of 104 volunteers for both of these two-year periods. The 105 observations of states with a Communist party received a mean of 273 volunteers. A simple t-test comparing these two means is shown in Table 3. This test supports that the difference between these two means is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Table 3: T-Test for Mean Volunteers and Presence of a Communist Party⁷⁷

Group Statistics				T-Test			
	N	Mean	Std. Err.		T	df	Sig.
No Communist Party	69	104.43	19.899	Equal var. assumed	-3.391	172	0.001
Has Communist Party	105	273.30	38.163	Equal var. not assumed	-3.923	151.15	0.000

⁷⁴ Ibid., 722.

⁷⁵ Richard Cady, Franz Mogdis, and Karen Tidwell, *Major Power Interactions with Less Developed Countries, 1959-1965* [Computer file], ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: The Bendix Corporation, Social Sciences Dept. [producer], 1966, Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1999.

⁷⁶ All volunteer numbers taken from: U.S. Peace Corps, *10th Annual Report*, 1971, 14-22. Volunteer totals are calculated by adding 1963 to 1964 figures (107+268) and adding 1965 to 1966 figures (383+389).

⁷⁷ Cady, Mogdis, and Tidwell, *Major Power Interactions*; U.S. Peace Corps, *10th Annual Report*, 1971, 14-22. T-test completed with SPSS statistical software.

This political indicator dataset, however, contains many more variables that can be analyzed in relation to the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers overseas. In order to control for and observe the impact of other political factors influencing the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers abroad, I treated these variables as independent in a regression analysis to determine their correlation with the number of Peace Corps volunteers assigned to various states. This data is both cross-sectional (across Third World states) and time-series (independent observations for 1963 and 1965) in nature.

The regression model I specified contains variables that could potentially influence the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers around the globe. These variables include the population of the host country, the year (1963 or 1965), dummy variables for the presence and orientation (USSR or CPR) of a Communist party, the size of that party, and the distance of the state from the U.S. In addition, I included variables measuring the host country's economic aid from, exports to, and the number of students engaged in educational exchanges with the USSR, China, and the U.S.

Table 4: Regression Results for Political Indicators and Volunteer Distribution⁷⁸

Model Summary				
Dependent Variable: Peace Corps Volunteers in state from 1963-64 and 1965-66				
N = 149	R square = .417	Adj. R square = .346	Durbin-Watson = 1.794	

Variable	B	Std. Error	T-Stat	Sig.
(Constant)	-1691.718	1515.649	-1.116	0.266
Year	28.607	23.694	1.207	0.229
Population	0.000	0.000	1.685	0.094
Dummy Communist Party	163.712	68.705	2.383	0.019
Communist Party Oriented To USSR	-206.545	67.161	-3.075	0.003
Communist Party Oriented to CPR	-77.045	131.153	-0.587	0.558
Communist Party Membership	-0.004	0.002	-1.843	0.068
Percent of States Exports to USSR	-0.085	0.063	-1.349	0.180
Economic Aid extended by USSR	-0.134	0.192	-0.698	0.486
Students for State enrolled in USSR	0.071	0.126	0.563	0.575
Percent of States Exports to CPR	-0.094	0.117	-0.804	0.423
Economic Aid extended by CPR	0.268	0.393	0.682	0.496
Students for State enrolled in CPR	1.059	1.623	0.653	0.515
Percent of States Exports to USA	0.044	0.016	2.843	0.005
Distance Between State and USA	-13.921	14.045	-0.991	0.323
Economic Aid extended by USA	-0.010	0.093	-0.107	0.915
Students for State enrolled in USA	0.126	0.051	2.459	0.015

⁷⁸ Political data (independent variables) drawn from: Cady, Mogdis, and Tidwell, *Major Power Interactions*. Volunteer totals (dependent variable) from: U.S. Peace Corps, *10th Annual Report*, 1971, 14-22. Regression analysis computed with SPSS statistical software.

Table 4 details the results of this regression analysis. Statistically significant variables at the 10 percent level are highlighted in yellow, while variables significant at the 5 percent level are highlighted in orange. These variables and their respective coefficients reveal an interesting trend with respect to explaining the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers in the Third World. First, the presence of a Communist party had a positive impact on the number of volunteers assigned to a country (as evidenced by the t-test above). In addition, the size of the Communist party within a state and that party's affiliation with the USSR are *negatively* correlated to the number of Peace Corps volunteers received by that country. The other statistically significant variables indicate closer relationships to the U.S., including large trading partners (exports) and states with significant student exchange programs with the U.S.

The interpretation of these findings offers a unique portrait about states most likely to receive Peace Corps volunteers. First, states with significant connections with the U.S. were most likely to receive Peace Corps volunteers. This fits with the First Annual Report, which states, "It is significant to note that both the so-called 'neutralist' nations and those more commonly called our 'allies' requested Volunteer programs."⁷⁹

The presence of a Communist party in a state serves as a second condition statistically related to receiving higher numbers of volunteers. However, the size of this party remained small and unconnected to the eastern bloc. The Peace Corps did not send volunteers into states with powerful Communist parties – like Cuba or Vietnam – to conduct covert warfare. This meshes with Shriver's statements in the 1961 hearings. Senator Frank Church's (D-Idaho) question – "You are not planning to go behind the Iron Curtain and the satellites?" – elicited a simple "no" response from Shriver.⁸⁰ Neutralist states, therefore, with small but potentially dangerous Communist parties that remained untied to the USSR, fit the profile of a country most likely to receive large contingents of Peace Corps volunteers.

A simple comparison of the mean number of Peace Corps volunteers received by countries with various types of Communist parties reinforces this hypothesis. Table 5 compares the mean number of Peace Corps volunteers received by countries in 1963-64 and 1965-66 based on the status of that state's domestic Communist party in both 1963 and 1965 (each year is treated as a separate observation to account for status changes).

The 1950s were an interesting decade for the Communist world. A rift between the USSR and China forced the domestic Communist parties within the Third World to choose their allegiance. Some parties sided with the USSR, while others sided with the Chinese. Some parties remained neutral in this split, while others suffered internal divisions themselves. As Table 5 shows, states with Communist parties that sided with the USSR received fewer volunteers on average than those not tied to the USSR. In addition, states with Communist parties that remained neutral or experienced internal division received a substantially higher mean of Peace Corps volunteers. This corroborates the findings of the regression analysis in Table 4. By sending more volunteers to states with small Communist parties that remained untied to the USSR, the Peace Corps did not engage in direct conflict with the eastern bloc. Rather, they sought to influence countries in which the Communist presence was most vulnerable.

⁷⁹ U.S. Peace Corps, *1st Annual Report*, 1962, 32.

⁸⁰ Senate Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 31.

Table 5: Communist Party Characteristics and Mean Number of Volunteers Received ⁸¹

	N	Mean
Party Oriented to USSR		
Oriented to USSR	40	140.75
Not Oriented to USSR	65	354.86
Party Oriented to CPR		
Oriented to CPR	12	201.58
Not Oriented to CPR	93	282.55
Party Split over USSR-CPR Orientation		
Split Exists	19	406.21
Split Does Not Exist	86	243.93
Party Neutral in USSR-CPR Orientation		
Neutral in Orientation	28	389.86
Not Neutral in Orientation	77	230.91

Despite the lack of *economic* data from the underdeveloped states in this period, it is also possible to statistically test the data available against the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers in the Third World. This analysis serves two important points. First, it serves to support or challenge the assertion made by Daniel Drezner that the “degree of poverty in recipient countries [was] a prime consideration of the Peace Corps.”⁸² In addition, it can highlight the relative importance of economic and political factors in driving the Peace Corps to establish and reject programs within certain states.

The dataset I employed in this analysis was created in 1968 by Bruce Russett, Karl Deutsch, Hayward Alker, and Harold Lasswell and is entitled “World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators, 1961-1963.” This dataset includes a vast range of interesting data on relative levels of economic development across a broad cross-section of states during the period of my analysis.⁸³ As with the political indicator dataset, I matched this economic indicator data to the number of Peace Corps Volunteers received by a state in 1961-63. As mentioned earlier, however, the data is somewhat limited in some of the underdeveloped states within the dataset.

I attempted a similar regression to the results in Table 4, using variables that indicate the level of economic development within a state. I also used variables with the highest number of observations in order to increase the accuracy of the results. The five variables specified in this regression model are: percent of students enrolled in primary and secondary school; people per hospital bed; GNP per capita; daily newspaper circulation; and degree of urbanization. I also included the population of the state as a control.

⁸¹ Political data drawn from: Cady, Mogdis, and Tidwell, *Major Power Interactions*. Mean volunteers calculated from U.S. Peace Corps, *10th Annual Report*, 1971, 14-22. Mean comparisons computed with SPSS statistical software.

⁸² Drezner, “Ideas,” 473.

⁸³ Bruce M. Russett, Karl Deutsch, Hayward Alker, and Harold Lasswell, *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators, 1961-1963* [Computer file], ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1968.

As Table 6 shows, none of the economic development indicator variables prove to be significant at the 5 percent level. These results support the previous assertion that Cold War political concerns, rather than pure humanitarianism based on economic underdevelopment, were more important in determining the creation of Peace Corps programs. Even Shriver said, “The Peace Corps is not primarily or certainly not solely an instrument of economic, of foreign economic, policy.”⁸⁴

Table 6: Regression Results for Development Indicators and Volunteer Distribution⁸⁵

<u>Model Summary</u>			
Dependent Variable: Sum of Peace Corps Volunteers in state from 1961-1963			
N = 57	R Squared = .073	Adj. R Squared = -.038	Durbin-Watson = 1.784

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>	<u>T-Stat</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
(Constant)	94.234	113.715	.829	.411
Population	.000	.000	.652	.518
Degree of Urbanization	-.220	.450	-.489	.627
Daily Newspaper Circulation	.538	1.920	.280	.781
GNP/Capita (for 1957 in \$)	-.430	.558	-.770	.445
People per Hospital Bed	.020	.028	.740	.463
Percent Enrollment in Primary and Secondary Ed.	3.826	3.460	1.106	.274

Statistical analysis provides a clear picture of the characteristics of states to which the Peace Corps sent large contingents of volunteers. States with close ties to the U.S. received significantly higher numbers of volunteers.⁸⁶ In addition, the presence of a Communist party – albeit an independent or divided one that remained small – resulted in the Peace Corps sending more volunteers. Considerations of the relative level of economic development, on the other hand, show no statistical significance in the Peace Corps’ assignment of volunteers abroad.

The Experience of the Volunteer

The experience of Peace Corps volunteers provides another piece of evidence that actual program implementation remained tied to Cold War concerns despite the rhetorical shift towards idealism. The training programs, required loyalty expressions, and field experiences of many initial Peace Corps volunteers highlight that the rhetorical shift did not sway the organization from its important objectives in the Cold War.

During pre-departure training, the Peace Corps ensured that volunteers were properly equipped to deal with the Communist threats they potentially faced in the Third World. In fact, a clause in the Peace Corps Act of 1961 guaranteed that volunteer training programs included this sort of preparation. Section 8(c) stated, “Training hereinabove provided for, shall include instruction in the philosophy, strategy, tactics,

⁸⁴ Senate Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 66.

⁸⁵ Russett, Deutsch, Alker, and Lasswell, *World Handbook*; U.S. Peace Corps, *10th Annual Report*, 1971, 14-22. Regression analysis computed with SPSS statistical software.

⁸⁶ This assertion is qualitatively supported by Schwarz, *An Oral History*, 20.

and menace of communism.”⁸⁷ Through this training, the Peace Corps hoped to ready the volunteers to face the threats of Communist agitators in the Third World.

These training programs to prepare volunteers to face Communist threats proved to be intensive and rigorous. By 1963, in fact, these programs comprised 48 of the training hours logged by volunteers. Every training program contained this element, and it usually focused on the specific Communist activity in the country of the volunteer’s assignment.⁸⁸ The organization employed diverse pedagogical methods to maximize the efficiency of these training programs. Volunteers watched films created by the Department of Defense and read educational materials with titles like “Notes on the Language of Communism.” The Peace Corps also employed experts in this task. Lecturers considered prominent in Communist studies from the Industrial War College, for example, spoke with volunteers. All volunteers experienced training programs that consisted of “role-playing” with a U.S. Information Agency expert to expose them to possible confrontational situations. The focus of these programs was not necessarily to create “ideological warriors,” but rather to ensure that volunteers were able to argue on behalf of the free world and create the best possible image of the U.S. abroad.⁸⁹

The Peace Corps also made numerous efforts to ensure the political loyalty of volunteers abroad. Volunteers espousing support for Communism overseas could have proved disastrous to the Peace Corps’ efforts to counteract the eastern bloc in the struggle for the “minds of men.” One method the Peace Corps used to ensure the loyalty of volunteers was to conduct full FBI background checks of all potential volunteers.⁹⁰ In addition, the organization required volunteers to swear a loyalty oath to the U.S. It read:

I am not a Communist or Fascist. I do not advocate, nor am I knowingly a member of any organization that advocates the overthrow of the constitutional form of the Government of the United States, or which seeks by force or violence to deny other persons their rights under the Constitution of the United States.⁹¹

The Peace Corps even limited the travel of volunteers during their free time. During time off, volunteers often traveled home or took the opportunity to travel the globe. Only one requirement restricted the movement of volunteers: they could not travel to the Communist bloc.⁹² The safety of the volunteer probably played a significant role in this travel restriction, but it also ensured that volunteers had no opportunities for collaboration with the Communists.

Finally, the testimonies of volunteers themselves depict the Peace Corps as preoccupied with building a positive image for the U.S. To these volunteers, the actual programs they conducted took a “backseat” to their appearance in the Third World. Margot Jones, a volunteer in Ecuador from 1965-67, said, “No one had explained to me exactly what my role was going to be in Ecuador – which was basically window dressing...I came to the conclusion that the volunteers’ purpose was to do public

⁸⁷ U.S. Congress, “Legislation on Foreign Relations Through 2004,” <http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/archives/109/98863.pdf> (accessed April 12, 2009), 1563-64.

⁸⁸ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964*, 1963, Vol. II, 43.

⁸⁹ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1963*, 1962, 27; House Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 85.

⁹⁰ House Committee, *A Bill to Provide for a Peace Corps*, 5.

⁹¹ *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 2d sess., 1964, 110, pt. 18: 23520.

⁹² *Peace Corps News*, November 1961, 5.

relations for Uncle Sam.” Betsy Levenson, who served in Afghanistan from 1963-65, corroborated this as she claimed, “The other goal of the Peace Corps, to make people more aware of Americans, was basically propaganda couched in idealistic terms.”⁹³

These image-building efforts stem back to the “Ugly American” problem discussed in Chapter 1 and the battle with the Communists for the “minds of men” in the Third World. Shriver directly placed his volunteers in conflict with the Soviets as he said, “They are unable to develop the equivalent of our volunteers... We stand ready to match our volunteers against anything the Soviets may concoct.”⁹⁴ In practice, therefore, the Peace Corps’ concern with image building in the Third World became apparent to some volunteers actually serving in the field. Their testimonies, in conjunction with the training programs and loyalty checks for volunteers, provide another piece of evidence underscoring the Peace Corps’ concerns with the Cold War throughout the entire process of program development.

Measuring Success in Communist Resentment

Throughout the Peace Corps’ first five years of operations, it sustained harsh and repeated attacks from Communists around the globe. These attacks provided a significant threat to a Peace Corps dedicated to winning the affections of the Third World. If these attacks proved successful, they could have rendered one of the significant objectives for Peace Corps programs in the Cold War useless.

For this reason, the Peace Corps monitored these attacks closely. The Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964, for instance, devoted an entire chapter to this type of Communist propaganda. In addition to listing many of the attacks levied on the Peace Corps by the Communists, this chapter included statements like, “The year 1962 showed an intense upsurge in Communist attacks on the Peace Corps both by press and radio.”⁹⁵

The U.S. also attempted to monitor the effect of these attacks on foreign perceptions of the Peace Corps. To this end, the Peace Corps compiled detailed accounts of editorials expressing opinions of the organization in foreign newspapers. The Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964 again provides a compelling example. It reported,

[In Peru]... 172 newspaper and 5 magazine articles have appeared in Lima since the first one, on February 22, 1961. Of these, 21 percent were completely enthusiastic, 67 percent were either neutral or mildly favorable, and 11 percent offered slight criticisms of the Peace Corps. Only two articles, slightly over one percent, were completely derogatory.⁹⁶

In an ideological battle for the “minds of men,” the Peace Corps needed to concern itself with Communist efforts to denigrate its image. The specificity of the examples contained in primary source records highlight the Peace Corps’ concern with intensity of this threat.

The importance of these attacks became so prominent that the Peace Corps equated the level of anti-Peace Corps propaganda from the Communists to a display of

⁹³ Volunteer accounts drawn from: Schwarz, *An Oral History*, 60. For further evidence, Marisue Zillig (Panama, 1965-67) said, “I have no doubt that the Peace Corps was basically a public relations campaign” and Frank Neubauer (Turkey, 1964-66) said, “I came to the conclusion that what really counted to the Peace Corps in Washington and to Congress was the diplomacy that was being carried out.”

⁹⁴ U.S. Peace Corps, *Annual Congressional Presentation FY-1964*, 1963, Vol. III, 42.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 43.

the organization's success. The Second Annual Report, for example, states, "As a matter of practical logic, we may assume that if the organization is drawing denunciation from the Soviet Press, it is doing some good."⁹⁷ Periodicals distributed to volunteers echoed this statement. The *Peace Corps News* stated, "Generally speaking, Peace Corps effectiveness can be measured by Communist annoyance. . . ."⁹⁸ Even Congress joined in expressing this sentiment, as Senator Claiborne Pell (D-Rhode Island) stated "It is an old and tested maxim that one can tell much about the effectiveness of an undertaking by the nature of the opposition to it. The people who are hurt most generally are the ones who cry loudest. This is now being demonstrated by a bitter attack on the Peace Corps."⁹⁹

In the midst of the ideological struggle for the Third World, the Peace Corps fell into the direct line of fire of Soviet propaganda. Fearing the effects of these false charges, the Peace Corps closely monitored foreign opinion of the organization. Over time, the Peace Corps eventually viewed the prevalence of these attacks as a testament to the organization's success in the Third World.

Conclusion

To understand the relative contributions of anti-Communist and idealistic motivations behind the establishment and operation of the Peace Corps in its first five years, we have analyzed three central points. First, the rhetoric about the Peace Corps during its creation displayed a consistent and powerful commitment to advancing U.S. interests in the Cold War. Second, this language became increasingly idealistic over time in discussions and publications that portrayed the organization as humanitarian and working through goodwill. This shift allowed the Peace Corps to attain the necessary support it needed from both foreign governments and volunteers at home. Finally, this shift did not alter the actual implementation of Peace Corps programs; rather, they were instituted to reflect the Cold War objectives present from the organization's founding.

This portrait of the U.S. Government's motivations in creating the Peace Corps offers significant insight into the nature of international affairs. In the conduct of foreign policy, states make decisions to maximize their security and well-being. The creation of the Peace Corps during one of the tensest eras of the Cold War serves as a great example. Eastern bloc investment in the Third World, aimed at courting Communist-friendly alliances, was perceived by the U.S. as a significant threat. The Peace Corps provided the U.S. Government with a tool to combat this threat.

At times, however, a foreign policy aimed at ensuring the security interests of a state can contradict the ideology of its people. Individual citizens, viewing the world from a paradigm influenced by numerous factors, may perceive foreign policy in an entirely different light than state policymakers. The surge of idealism in the 1960s evidences one of these instances. In an era only moments away from nuclear war, a new generation of Americans looked to turn away from foreign policy dictated by a "Cold War consensus." The state recognized this new ideology, but still found itself in the middle of a Cold War that posed a grave threat to U.S. security.

⁹⁷ U.S. Peace Corps, *2nd Annual Report*, 1963, 62.

⁹⁸ *Peace Corps News*, May 1962, 7.

⁹⁹ *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, 109, pt. 11: 14426-27; For further discussion, see Langworthy, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 25.

In these instances, the state must reconcile the discrepancies between the ideology of its people and its position in global affairs. In the 1960s, the Peace Corps needed to assume an idealistic tone that could resonate with this new generation. Moving away from Cold War rhetoric, the state enlisted the dedicated efforts of thousands of young Americans committed to the humanitarianism of the Peace Corps.

Once atoning for the discrepancies between domestic ideologies and foreign policy necessities, policymakers can move forward to ensure the security and well-being of the state. For the U.S. Government in the 1960s, Peace Corps volunteers went into critical states and played a vital role for U.S. interests in the Third World. As Cobbs explains, “As a foreign policy initiative, the Peace Corps was one of the most successful strategies of the post-World War II period for making friends for America in the Third World.”¹⁰⁰ In this way, Peace Corps programs played a vital role to U.S. security by checking the growth of Soviet power across the globe.

At the same time, the efforts of the state to reconcile the inconsistencies between domestic ideologies and global security challenges can take on a life of their own. This is clear in the sweeping trend of idealism that took hold of the Peace Corps in the mid-1960s. The idealistic spirit of a new generation wary of Cold War ideologies idolized the Peace Corps as a new approach to global relations – one predicated on international friendship and understanding between people.

This historical experience has defined the Peace Corps today. The Soviet Union is gone and discussions of the initial Cold War objectives of the Peace Corps have disappeared. Its early shift toward idealism, however, persists. Those who esteem the Peace Corps religiously today serve as further testament to the effects of this idealistic shift in the purpose of the Peace Corps. The historically derived idealism of the Peace Corps has caused it to become nearly synonymous with idealism itself, providing it with new opportunities to conduct U.S. foreign relations in the twenty-first century.

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¹⁰⁰ Cobbs, “Decolonization,” 80.

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