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# The 1963 March on Washington: At Home and Abroad

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*Tandis que les États-Unis se préparent à la March on Washington pour les droits civiques, la communauté américaine à Paris organise un défilé similaire, parmi d'autres manifestations solidaires de par le monde. Les retombées sur la politique étrangère des États-Unis de ce soutien populaire international au mouvement pour les droits civiques seront importantes. En réponse, le gouvernement produira une série de réécritures de la manifestation de Washington que la diplomatie américaine orchestrera pour dépeindre la contestation, non comme une critique, mais comme une expression de la démocratie elle-même.*

**M**arching on Washington has a long tradition in American history, as activists across generations have raised the profile of their causes by taking them to the United States capital. Marching on Washington has a less studied international history, however. Around the world, peoples of other nations have protested U.S. government actions, and sometimes joined in solidarity with American social reform movements, by marching on American spaces within other nations, usually American diplomatic posts.

In 1963, as civil rights activists in the United States prepared for the most iconic “March on Washington” in U.S. history, Americans in Paris and elsewhere began to organize. Ultimately people in many nations would take up the cause of the American civil rights movement by marching “on Washington” all over the world. This essay will follow this diasporic chain of events, and the Kennedy administration’s reaction to them. Beyond the

important foreign policy consequences, both of a large-scale civil rights march in Washington, D.C., and of its international counterparts, another form of a global march on Washington would appear: U.S. government narratives of marching, spun by diplomats to portray protest not as criticism, but as an expression of democracy itself.

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## The March at Home

Race discrimination was widely considered to be an American “Achilles heel” during the early years of the Cold War, while the U.S. argued that democracy was a more moral form of government than communism. Yet as news of postwar lynchings and segregation blanketed the world press, U.S. allies as well as critics questioned whether democracy had any meaning in a nation that so mistreated people of color. Racism threatened to undermine the moral force of U.S. Cold War arguments, and brought other nations to question the ability of the U.S. to lead the world through the Cold War. The relentless use of American racism in Soviet and later Chinese propaganda reinforced the Cold War consequences of discrimination (Dudziak 2000; Borstelmann). The impact of discrimination on foreign relations gave the civil rights movement an important source of leverage, which activists capitalized on in different ways at different times. During the late 1940s and early 50s the National Negro Congress, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Civil Rights Congress appealed to the new United Nations, a strategy the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and other groups would return to in the 1960s (Horne 169-174; Anderson; Dudziak 2000). As the civil rights movement gained international prominence, a long list of civil rights leaders traveled overseas, spreading the message and enlisting international support (Dudziak 2000, 61-77). If the moral force of equality coupled with black political power would not move lawmakers, international scrutiny and international pressure would add to the arguments for civil rights reform.

The U.S. responded to this pressure through a sustained effort to manage the story of race in America for a world audience. U.S. propaganda told the story of race in America as one showing the superiority of democracy as a form of government, allowing for social change from slavery to freedom. Equality was presented as evolutionary, and the inevitable byproduct of American politics and values (Dudziak 2000; Krenn).<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, a crisis point had been reached in the government’s story of race and democracy by 1963. As civil rights groups persistently engaged in nonviolent direct action, encountering brutal resistance which generated

world-wide condemnation of American race relations, the Kennedy Administration felt that the international impact of the movement was harder to contain. Secretary of State Dean Rusk believed that civil rights reform would be the only long-term solution to this foreign policy problem (Dudziak 2003; Rusk; Krenn).

In this context, civil rights leaders' plans to hold a massive civil rights march in August 1963 represented both a threat and an opportunity. A large-scale march on Washington might focus national attention on the movement, and increase the pressure for racial reform. President Kennedy and his aides were concerned that a march would erupt in violence and that the message conveyed might be critical of their civil rights policy. If peaceful however, the march might also be seen abroad as an example of effective participation in an open, democratic political process. If supportive of the Administration's reform policy, it could potentially be seen as reinforcing an argument made overseas that the federal government was promoting civil rights reform. What better evidence of that than a march by civil rights activists themselves reaffirming Kennedy's policies? As Scott Sandage has argued, the site of the March on Washington—The Lincoln Memorial—had symbolic value in the context of the nationalism of this era. Protest at this national cultural space enabled the movement to dramatically portray its claims to full American citizenship, and therefore within the terms of "Americanism" (Barber 141-178; Garrow 265-286; Branch 846-887; Pfeffer 240-280; Sandage 137-138, 159).

For March on Washington organizers, of course, the Kennedy Administration's commitment to civil rights reform was a matter of concern. Although the objectives of the March were broader, one goal was to pressure Kennedy to strongly support a meaningful civil rights bill. March organizers disagreed among themselves over how to directly challenge the Administration. Internal disagreement continued until the day of the March itself, when SNCC representative John Lewis was pressured to modify his speech. Lewis had planned to harshly criticize the Kennedy Administration and to call for a recreation of General Sherman's march through the South, saying "we shall pursue our own 'scorched earth' policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground—nonviolently." Some civil rights leaders and Justice Department officials objected to the speech. The Justice Department went so far as to draft an alternative, and ultimately Martin Luther King and A. Philip Randolph, the father of the original March on Washington Movement, pressured Lewis to tone down the speech (Barber 168-170).

Objecting to Lewis' speech was only one part of the Kennedy Administration's efforts to affect the image of the March. The Administration was well aware that a civil rights march on the nation's Capitol would receive worldwide attention. The State Department and the

U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the government agency charged with projecting a positive image of the U.S. around the world, worked to ensure that the “right” message was conveyed by the march, and that it was understood as consistent with the image of democracy the government had been trying to project. Before and after the event, the March was carefully packaged for foreign audiences.<sup>2</sup>

If the March were peaceful, the speeches moderate in tone, and the story of the March appropriately told, it might be seen as a symbol of progress, a marker of African American political participation, a fulfillment of the American liberal democratic vision. Control over the international image of the March would slip away from the government, however, as the March on Washington became a worldwide event.

### The March in Paris

A Paris nightclub, The Living Room, might seem an unlikely venue for an emerging threat to American diplomacy, but it was there amongst the cocktails that African American expatriates first began to plan their own “March on Washington”. Paris and other European cities were traditional diasporic sites, all the more so during colonialism. African Americans seeking freedom from American-style racism would meet Africans fleeing colonial oppression or seeking higher education (Stovall; Campbell). The American writer James Baldwin was in Paris in 1963 to complete a play soon to enter production. Although he sought isolation in Paris, Baldwin did not wish to disengage from the struggle for racial justice back home (Fabre 275; Stovall 266). He placed an advertisement in the international edition of the *Herald Tribune*, calling a meeting about civil rights in the U.S., to be held on August 17 at The Living Room. According to Barbara Sargent, wife of the Pastor of the American Church in Paris, about one hundred people attended the meeting. Many of them were prominent jazz musicians. While most of the crowd were U.S. citizens, among those attending were a leader of the African student movement, a Ceylonese law student, and others.<sup>3</sup>

William Marshall began the meeting, as Sargent reported it, speaking of “the desire of the American negro in Paris to have first hand knowledge of the integration movement in the USA, and to be a part of it, though living and working here.”<sup>4</sup> James Baldwin spoke about the March, and about conditions in American cities. Then, according to Sargent,

*many of the negroes asked if there was anything they could do. The pianist [...] Art Simmons spoke movingly of being forced every night to explain to foreigners something about America which he could not really explain to himself. They all felt that as jazz musicians they were the most influential unofficial ambassador's [sic] that America had...*

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So they began to plan.<sup>5</sup>

The group discussed the ideas of a sympathy march on the U.S. Embassy in Paris the same day as the March on Washington, and possibly a sit-down strike on the Embassy grounds. The purpose of such a protest would be “to make a point.”<sup>6</sup> Members of the group “obviously feel that one reason, if not the main reason, that progress has been made toward equality in our country, has been the pressure of foreign opinion, and the fact that our racial troubles cripple us vis a vis the world.”<sup>7</sup> The atmosphere at the meeting was “electric. One after another spoke of their bitterness and grief and frustration, each one urging the other on.”<sup>8</sup>

At some point a drafting committee consisting of Marshall, Baldwin, jazz musician Memphis Slim, actor Anthony Quinn, Barbara Sargent and Silvia Jerico composed a brief petition in support of the March, to be placed in the international editions of the *New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune*. The petition stated that

*I, the undersigned, as an American citizen, hereby publicly express my support of the March on Washington Movement, which aspires not only to eradicate all racial barriers in American life but to liberate all Americans from the prison of their biases and fears. I cannot physically participate in this March, but I, like the rest of the world, have been tremendously stirred by so disciplined an exhibition of dignity and courage and persistence and would like to associate myself with it.*<sup>9</sup>

Some published copies of the petition indicated that it was sponsored by “a group of Americans in Paris.”<sup>10</sup> All copies asked signers to present the petition at “the American Embassy in your city on Wednesday, August 21, between 1 and 3 o’clock.”<sup>11</sup> The ad was paid for by donations, with the overall amount guaranteed by Quinn.<sup>12</sup>

Planning continued the next day at a meeting at the American Church. Two hundred attended. The group ultimately did not plan a formal march. Sargent reported that some felt that a march or sit-in would be “irresponsible.”<sup>13</sup> As related by a U.S. Embassy officer, “another important element in the decision to abandon a ‘march’ on the Embassy was the fact that an organized demonstration in the streets involved red tape with the French authorities.”<sup>14</sup> So instead, eighty to one hundred people “walked” alone or in small groups from the American church to the Embassy at about the same time on August 21. Others showed up separately at the Embassy, so that by the end of the day over 550 petitions had been delivered.<sup>15</sup> The high point of this “walk” came shortly after 1:00 p.m. when the leaders arrived at the Embassy. William Marshall headed the delegation, which included James Baldwin, Hazel Scott, Memphis Slim, Mezz Mezzroe and Mae Mercer. They presented a scroll of signatures to Cecil Lyon while approximately one hundred and fifty others waited in the Embassy’s main hall.<sup>16</sup>

## From Europe to the World

This effort begun in a Paris nightclub quickly spread throughout Europe. The newspaper petitions appeared in issues of the *New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune* distributed in Western Europe. Readers clipped out and signed the petitions, and delivered them to U.S. diplomatic posts in many countries: forty-seven in London, thirty-five in Rome, eight in Madrid, and more reached U.S. missions in several German cities. While most of those signing were citizens of the U.S., citizens of other nations at times wrote in their own nationality. Those who could not personally deliver their petitions mailed them in. Many wrote personal notes. Richard C. Longworth hoped to emphasize “the heartfelt desire of us Americans living abroad that our nation, which has stood for so long as a symbol of all that is best, will now be able to extend its liberties and opportunities to all its citizens.”<sup>17</sup> A small number of petitions did not support the March. A group of unnamed U.S. tourists in London edited their copy to state that they “*object* to the March on Washington Movement,” and “*don’t* associate with it.”<sup>18</sup> The tourists complained: “We *resent* this kind of attempt to publicize a *minority* group!” and “p.s. The U.S.A. form of gov’t stems from ‘*The Town Hall*’ consent, & will, of the *majority*!”<sup>19</sup>

James Baldwin returned to the States, and on August 28, 1963, marched with over 200,000 people to the Lincoln Memorial. The news of support from Americans overseas was conveyed to the crowd as the actor Burt Lancaster read the Paris petition to the crowd. When Martin Luther King, Jr. gave the final speech of this historic day, his words echoed across continents, as well as across time (Barber 170-171; Washington 217-220).

The March on Washington had a worldwide impact, inspiring additional solidarity marches abroad. In several countries around the world, people marched on U.S. diplomatic posts to express their solidarity. Others sent telegrams and delivered petitions. It appears that these actions were largely unrelated to the organizing in Paris, and uncoordinated with each other. A demonstration of 1200 to 1400 who marched on the U.S. Consulate in Amsterdam was organized by the Action Committee for Solidarity with the March on Washington, a local, ad hoc group. Approximately 2500 demonstrated in Kingston, Jamaica, led by the Mayor of the city. In Ghana, a smaller, informal group organized a protest at the Embassy carrying signs with slogans like “America, Africa is Watching You,” and “Stop Genocide in America and South Africa.”<sup>20</sup> Students demonstrated at the U.S. Legation in Burundi. Another sympathy march occurred in Tel Aviv. The American actor Al Hoosman led a group of forty to fifty Germans and Americans to the U.S. Consulate in Munich. While most protests challenged the Kennedy Administration to take action to protect civil rights, some were expressions



of support for steps already taken. In Oslo, for example, one hundred people marched through heavy rain to present a petition to the U.S. Embassy giving outright support to President Kennedy's proposed civil rights bill.<sup>21</sup>

Most protests were peaceful, but in some cases that could be a sign of government suppression. In at least one context, Embassy complicity in confining the scope of a sympathy march was evidence of U.S. government efforts to protect the American image abroad by silencing critics.

### Managing the March

The U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt, anticipated several hundred demonstrators on August 28, and planned accordingly with the local police. According to Donald C. Bergus, Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs, "the police took elaborate precautions not only to see that the 'demonstration' stayed entirely within peaceful bounds but even more to reduce the whole affair to minimal proportions."<sup>22</sup> Preparations included "sizeable police contingents" posted at the Embassy early in the morning.<sup>23</sup> By the time the march occurred, "about 200 policemen were stationed in the Embassy area."<sup>24</sup> Only thirteen protesters chose to face these forces. They walked to the center of town, wearing signs with slogans such as: "Remember Negroes Also Built America," "Down With the Ku Klux Klan," and "Medgar Evers Did Not Die in Vain."<sup>25</sup> As they reached peacefully within one block of the U.S. Embassy, the group of thirteen "were intercepted by a strong contingent of police."<sup>26</sup> The group was told that only two of them could approach the Embassy. The marchers selected M.A. Makiwame of the African National Congress and R.I. Sibanda of the Zimbabwe [sic] African Peoples Union. According to Bergus, the two men

*approached the Embassy surrounded by policemen and looking rather frightened that they might be arrested if they did or said the wrong thing. Immediately in front of the gate they were again stopped by a police officer who gave them a three-minute lecture about behaving themselves. The two then presented the petition to the waiting Embassy officers.*<sup>27</sup>

Makiwame and Sibanda gave the officers a memorandum in support of the civil rights movement, signed by representatives of African liberation organizations based in Cairo. They viewed "with great concern the plight of the Negro people in the United States of America."<sup>28</sup> American racism "fills us with anger," they said.<sup>29</sup> "For generations, the Governments [sic] of the United States have been fooling the world into believing that everything was going on well in the country, they have shouted at the top of their voices about freedom and democracy, but these have only been on paper and never practiced."<sup>30</sup> The protesters "strongly condemn[ed] the Kennedy Administration" and called upon the U.S. government to protect civil



rights.<sup>31</sup> In non-aligned Egypt, the protest was extensively covered on generally anti-Western Radio Cairo.<sup>32</sup>

This small but determined protest was met by the full power of the state. The record does not disclose Nasser's motives, though they are likely to have had more to do with maintaining control over dissidents than supporting the Kennedy Administration. The government of Egypt made it clear to the U.S. Embassy, that it did not support the protestors' efforts, and had "assured the Embassy that it considers African Association attacks on the Kennedy administration grossly mistaken and counterproductive."<sup>33</sup> As Bergus put it, the government's "handling of this protest was in line with the assurances to the Embassy. The action taken by the authorities on August 28, also provided excellent evidence that when the Nasser regime decides it wants to control a demonstration, it knows how to do the job extremely well."<sup>34</sup>

On the same day that two Africans faced the Cairo authorities, the Washington marchers could not have been aware of the extent of support for them around the world. Great effort and planning had gone into the March, and its success is often measured by the size of the crowd and the enduring power of the message of its speakers. Surely its impact can also be gauged by the thousands abroad who made their own personal pilgrimages to register international support.

## A USIA Spin

The March was a major worldwide news event. In contrast with the criticism that so often characterized the international press treatment of American civil rights, the United States Information Agency was pleased that coverage of the March was strongly celebratory. In Western Europe, "most comment found the Washington March a ringing affirmation of the power of the American democratic process."<sup>35</sup> The Cold War implications were evident, as papers "specifically contrasted the opportunity granted by a free society with the despotic suppression practiced by the USSR."<sup>36</sup> As *Algemeen Dagblad* in Rotterdam put it, "nowhere in the world has so much been done [...] for the solution of the racial problem as in the US in recent years [...] ; just imagine what would have happened had such a demonstration been planned in East Berlin [or] Moscow."<sup>37</sup> In Africa, "much of the comment hailed [the March] as the greatest event of its kind in history."<sup>38</sup> Criticism of the U.S. was still warranted, however. The Ghanaian *Times* thought that "time is running out."<sup>39</sup> Race discrimination in America "casts much slur on Western civilization championed by the US."<sup>40</sup> Even in Cairo, *Al-Gomhuriyah* thought that President Kennedy supported the marchers because "he realized the 'disastrous effects' the 'policy of persecuting U.S. Negroes [has] on the general situation inside the United

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States itself as well as the harm it does to the prestige of the United States in the eyes of all the peoples of the world.”<sup>41</sup>

There was a lesson in such global praise about the need for federal action to protect domestic civil rights, and consequently U.S. prestige abroad. The USIA reported that most foreign comment agreed “that the meaningful impact of the March would be measured in terms of the response of Congress to the Administration’s civil rights proposals and the day-to-day support given to civil rights by the American public.”<sup>42</sup>

There was general consensus that the United States still had “a long way to go to achieve racial equality,”<sup>43</sup> and long before the March occurred, the USIA had had plans to present its story in an advantageous manner. Foreign posts received a USIA telegraph two days before the March indicating that the British Television network ITV planned a fifteen minute feature. This film would be useful for the USIA mission, for it was intended to “plac[e] [the] March in proper context within civil rights struggle.”<sup>44</sup> It would “highlight positive aspects [of the] March and emphasize its significance as [a] manifestation of public sentiment in support [of] civil rights.”<sup>45</sup> Because of the March’s importance, ITV planned the “most rapid distribution possible,” with copies of the film most likely sent out the day following the event. A USIA documentary was later prepared on the March, and distributed in 1964.

Yet a new crisis erupted even as efforts to spin the story were getting underway. On Sunday morning, September 15, a bomb exploded in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, killing four young girls. David Garrow calls this incident “the greatest human tragedy that had befallen the movement.” In response, SNCC leader Diane Nash Bevel drew up a plan of action to break the back of segregation in Alabama, including “demonstrations at the United Nations to secure the vote” for disenfranchised African Americans (Garrow 292-93).

There had been, and would later be, other deaths. The brutal killing of children, however, seemed especially horrific, and brought in spontaneous support from around the world, from individuals and government leaders alike. The international press condemned the “slaughter of innocents,” while also giving prominent coverage to President Kennedy’s expression of outrage over the killings.<sup>46</sup>

U.S. Embassies around the world were flooded with petitions condemning the bombing and calling for civil rights reform. Funds from abroad were sent to rebuild the 16th Street Baptist Church.<sup>47</sup> The Deputy Premier of Western Nigeria sent a check for the “relatives of [the] deceased as [a] small token of my genuine sympathy for their loss and as an expression of my oneness with them, and their oneness with all people in Africa in our common struggle for equality, justice and democracy.”<sup>48</sup> The Deputy Premier’s letter, which was released to the press, noted “the

determination and positive action” of the Kennedy Administration to fight racism, but nevertheless suggested that “increasing brutalities and bestialities of white men to black men, black women and black children in the United States of America is really becoming unbearable.”<sup>49</sup>

Reports to the State Department show to what extent the bombing undercut U.S. efforts to play up the March on Washington as an example of American racial progress. For example, in Cameroon, the March had “captured the local imagination and focused attention on the Negro drive for equality as no other event before it had done.”<sup>50</sup> When news of the church bombing broke, it did much to “dissipate any feeling of hopefulness and sympathy evoked by the march.”<sup>51</sup> When the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer invited a top government official to a screening of a March on Washington film, he replied “Don’t you have a film of the church dynamiting, too?”<sup>52</sup> In Tanganyika, the government “squashed” a demonstration in reaction to the church bombing at the U.S. Embassy because, in the words of a local official, the “Tanganyikan government saw no basis for [the] demonstration since [the] policy [of the] U.S. government [is] so firmly against such outrages.”<sup>53</sup> The Embassy response was to express “appreciation for Tanganyikan Government confidence.”<sup>54</sup>

The Birmingham bombing powerfully underscored the fact that a new era had begun. In terms of its impact on foreign affairs, by 1963 civil rights was a constant, critical theme. The moral power of the movement, the brutality of resistance, and the ever present international gaze meant that civil rights could not be subordinated to other priorities on the presidential agenda. The circumstances required strong civil rights leadership if John F. Kennedy wished to be seen as an effective statesman, at home and abroad.

The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations’ strengthened civil rights efforts ultimately led to the passage of landmark civil rights laws. Civil rights reform would be America’s best Ambassador in foreign lands and make its propaganda easier to write. Subsequently a new USIA pamphlet simply reprinted parts of the text of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

## A Future for the March

The March on Washington soon figured in the narrative of race in America constructed for the world. In *The March*, a film produced by the USIA for distribution overseas, USIA filmmaker James Blue used the style of documentary realism. As Nicholas Cull has written, Blue “creates the impression that his film is an authentic filmic record of the events in Washington, presented with the minimum of artifice” (Cull). Hand-held cameras followed marchers on busses as they made their way to Washington. The focus throughout was on participants in the March, African

American and white, young and old, men and women. The minimal use of commentary seemed to enable the film's viewers to join in the crowd and experience the event as it unfolded. Yet while the documentary presented itself as a simple, realistic depiction, Blue's choices in focus told the story of the March from a particular perspective.<sup>55</sup>

Although the March was presented against a backdrop of conflict over civil rights, conflict within the movement was written out of the story, as was discord between the organizers and the Kennedy Administration. Rather than challenging government policy on civil rights, the marchers were portrayed as fulfilling an American ideal. As the film's voice-over suggested, "the Constitution of the United States guarantees every American the right to protest peacefully. Two hundred thousand Americans, then, are going to use this right."<sup>56</sup> Moreover, this image of consensus was reinforced by the film's coverage, or lack of coverage, of March speakers. Only Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech was included, and in an edited form. While the speech began with a critique of the state of civil rights, arguing that the U.S. Constitution was a "bad check" whose promise had not been fulfilled, the film focused only on the forward-looking "dream" segment.<sup>57</sup>

While *The March* presented a story of a united, peaceful, interracial movement carrying out the democratic ideals of free speech and political participation, the film would generate its own controversy. Dissenting voices within the USIA wondered whether the film's recognition that civil rights problems remained to be fully solved meant that too much of the nation's dirty laundry would be aired overseas. Members of Congress got wind of the project, and some were offended by the film's celebration of protest, and the showing of an interracial couple among those traveling to the March. President Johnson told Senator Richard Russell that he liked the film, though he acknowledged that "there's been some hell raised about" it.<sup>58</sup> "All it shows [...] is marching here—from Washington's Monument to Lincoln's Tomb [sic] and it shows that the nigras has a right to be heard and is heard and has a voice and can petition and doesn't get shot."<sup>59</sup> The film was popular at many U.S. diplomatic posts. Ultimately, it was edited to respond to its critics. The USIA added an introduction by its African-American Director Carl Rowan, who called the March "a moving exercise of one of the most cherished rights in a free society: the right of peaceful protest," and told viewers he believed "that this demonstration of both whites and Negroes, supported by the federal government and by both President Johnson and the late President Kennedy, is a profound example of the procedures unfettered men use to broaden the horizons of freedom."<sup>60</sup> Rowan's introduction put an explicit spin on the film that James Blue's filmic style displayed more subtly. In so doing, he reinforced the fact that this was a U.S. government sponsored propaganda message. In this way,

efforts to make the film more palatable to domestic critics may well have undercut its persuasiveness overseas.<sup>61</sup>

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The film *The March* capped U.S. government efforts to manage the story of the March on Washington. In the hands of the USIA, the March was portrayed as an illustration of American democracy, rather than a critique of it. By the early 1960s, however, U.S. propaganda competed with the proliferation of international news sources. News photographs of civil rights protest published around the world threatened to overcome the U.S. government's story of racial progress. International travel by U.S. civil rights leaders, including Malcolm X, James Farmer, Fannie Lou Hamer and many others, meant that Africans, Asians and Europeans could get a picture of race in America that they considered to be more authentic. Efforts to use the March on Washington to bolster the U.S. government's narrative of race and democracy could not be fully effective as long as the movement, through efforts at home and abroad, contested the government's story.

The global dimension of the 1963 March was one particularly prominent example in a longer international history of marching on Washington. It illustrates both the way American protest narratives have resonated overseas, and the way American spaces in other nations become places where peoples of other nations engage American politics. When Americans marched in Washington, D.C., their voices were heard around the world. Whether in solidarity with Americans or in protest against their government, people around the world "marched on Washington" at U.S. diplomatic posts. And in response to these marches at home and abroad, the U.S. government tried to reassert its authority by constructing for a global audience a narrative of the March: a story not of protesting injustice, but of realizing free political participation. In this way, both the marching on Washington's various sites, and the narrative constructions of marching, became global counter-narratives about American democracy itself.

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1. "The Negro in American Life," folder 503, box 112, series II, Chester Bowles Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
2. United States Information Agency to Curacao, Dhahran, Kuwait, Dublin, Aug. 26, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
3. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963, enclosure to American Embassy, Paris to Department of State, Sept. 17, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives. The U.S. Embassy reported that only thirty people attended the meeting at The Living Room, but its estimate was not based on a first-hand account. American Embassy, Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 28, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
4. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963.
5. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963.
6. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963.
7. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963.
8. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963.
9. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963.
10. Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 21, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 19, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
11. Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 21, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 19, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
12. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963; American Embassy, Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 28, 1963; Enclosures to American Embassy London to Department of State, Aug. 28, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
13. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963.
14. Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 21, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
15. Sargent to Fales, Aug. 28, 1963; Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 21, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Paris to Secretary of State, Aug. 19, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
16. Paris to Secretary of State, August 21, 1963; Sargent to Fales, August 28, 1963.
17. Enclosure to American Embassy, London to Department of State, Aug. 28, 1963.
18. Enclosure to American Embassy, London to Department of State, Aug. 28, 1963 (emphasis in original).
19. Enclosure to American Embassy, London to Department of State, Aug. 28, 1963 (emphasis in original). See also American Embassy, The Hague to Department of State, Aug. 24, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
20. American Embassy, Accra to Department of State, September 1, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
21. American Embassy, London to Secretary of State, September 5, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, The Hague to Department of State, September 5, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, Kingston to Department of State, August 30, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Oslo to Secretary of State, Aug. 29, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Consulate, Munich to Department of State, August 30, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963, pp. 6-8, RG 306, Records of the USIA, Office of Research, "R" Reports, 1960-63, Box 17, Folder R-172-63, National Archives.
22. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.



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23. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

24. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

25. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives. Medgar Evers was the NAACP's first field secretary for Mississippi, serving from 1954 until his death in 1963. His efforts included a boycott of Jackson merchants that received national attention and a successful campaign to desegregate the University of Mississippi. As he arrived home from a meeting in 1963, 37-year-old Evers was shot by Byron de la Beckwith, who was not convicted of the murder until 1994. Evers, Myrlie B. with William Peters. *For Us, the Living*. Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1996.

26. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

27. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

28. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

29. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

30. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

31. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

32. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives; US Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963, p. 14.

33. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives.

34. American Embassy Cairo to Secretary of State, Aug. 31, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 1963, SOC 14-1 US, Records of the Department of State, National Archives; US Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963, p. 14.

35. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

36. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

37. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

38. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

39. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

40. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

41. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

42. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

43. United States Information Agency, "Worldwide Comment on the Washington Civil Rights March," Sept. 6, 1963.

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44. USIA to Curacao, Dhahran, Kuwait, Dublin, Aug. 26, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
45. USIA to Curacao, Dhahran, Kuwait, Dublin, Aug. 26, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
46. American Embassy, Rome to Secretary of State, September 17, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, The Hague to Department of State, September 24, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Bern to Secretary of State, September 20, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Kampala to Secretary of State, September 18, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives, American Embassy, The Hague, September 17, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963; SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, New Delhi to Secretary of State, September 17, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
47. American Embassy, Rome to Secretary of State, September 17, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, The Hague to Department of State, September 24, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Bern to Secretary of State, September 20, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; Kampala to Secretary of State, September 18, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives, American Embassy, The Hague, September 17, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963; SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, New Delhi to Secretary of State, September 17, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
48. American Embassy, Lagos to Secretary of State, September 19, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, Lagos to Department of State, September 20, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, SOC 14-1, National Archives.
49. American Embassy, Lagos to Secretary of State, September 19, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives; American Embassy, Lagos to Department of State, September 20, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, SOC 14-1, National Archives.
50. American Embassy, Yaounde to Department of State, September 23, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
51. American Embassy, Yaounde to Department of State, September 23, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
52. American Embassy, Yaounde to Department of State, September 23, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives.
53. Dar-es-Salaam to Secretary of State, September 28, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives (telegram no. 344); Dar-es-Salaam to Secretary of State, September 28, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives (telegram no. 342).
54. Dar-es-Salaam to Secretary of State, September 28, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives (telegram no. 344); Dar-es-Salaam to Secretary of State, September 28, 1963, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File 1963, SOC 14-1 US, National Archives (telegram no. 342).
55. *The March* (1964), RG 306.765, National Archives. I am very grateful to Nick Cull, who kindly took time from his own research at the National Archives to help me locate and copy USIA films, including *The March*.
56. *The March*.
57. *The March*.
58. LBJ/Russell, January 20, 1964, LBJ Library Tape WH6401.17, PNO 13.
59. LBJ/Russell, January 20, 1964, LBJ Library Tape WH6401.17, PNO 13.
60. LBJ/Russell, January 20, 1964, LBJ Library Tape WH6401.17, PNO 13.
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