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## Macalester at Home and Abroad, Reel 2

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**Macalester College Archives**

**Audio Reel #13, reel 2**

**Minnesota Private College Hour: “Macalester at Home and Abroad, Part 2”**

[bells ringing]

This is the Minnesota Private College Hour.

[orchestral music plays]

Tonight the Minnesota Private College Council, representing the fifteen private liberal arts colleges in our state, welcomes you again to a half hour of television for the discriminating viewer.

[orchestral music plays]

Macalester College in St. Paul presents Macalester At Home and Abroad. In this series, Dr. Yahya Armajani visits with faculty members, students, and campus guests participating in Macalester's extensive program of international studies. Dr. Armajani.

YA: Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this program Macalester At Home and Abroad. Those of you who were with us last week know that we have a distinguished visitor on the campus, Barclay Acheson Professor of International Studies at Macalester College Dr. Faye A. Sayegh. And last week we discussed about the [unclear] and we emphasized change, social change brought about in education, brought about in the contact with the West, brought about with the revolution and evolution, we talked about all these things and aspects of social change.

This evening we are going to discuss again about the [unclear], but this time we are going to talk together, talk with Dr. Sayegh, about some of the political and international implications perhaps of this change, or some political factors that have affected the change or have been caused by the change.

And one of the first things, Dr. Sayegh, as you know having been in this country that people in this country are bothered to say the least about the term neutralism, nonalignment, they feel that America is on the right side, Soviet Union is dictatorship, so that there shouldn't be any question whose side people should take. Since the [unclear] is the champion of the nonalignment and neutralism we'll start with that.

FS: Now I think that with all due respect for most Americans, I'll be blatant the very opening of the program, and say most of the misunderstanding of the position of neutralism results from three factors: when most Americans don't understand what the word means, it's unhappy but that's the case. Secondly, most Americans grudge other people, the same things that Americans indulge in, when they were in the same position which those other people are. Now America was neutral in world affairs for 150 years, and didn't think America was doing anything wrong with respect to the problems of great powers. We are in the same position now with that of the other world, in which America was from the beginning of its history, until, say, World War II, when it discarded its neutrality and plunged into world affairs. I think every new nation requires a time of leisurely detachment from outside involvement in which to concentrate on expressing domestic problems. Problems about which we spoke last time, and this is basically the main reason why thirty of at least of the emerging nations have chosen neutralism.

YA: Now do you think that this question is valid, do you like to discuss this, that true, you are right, that for many years the United States was neutral, and that was one of the subjects of Washington's farewell speech. Don't get entangled, but then there are some of the Americans saying those days the world was not at the verge of, at the brink of war between two ideologies, and two ideologies such as communism and freedom, and therefore there must be some difference down here. To quote [unclear], "neutralism is a sin," I think that's what he said.

FS: And I think he said it was immoral.

YA: Immoral, so will you discuss that?

FS: Well, I don't want to be cynical and say that every time any country finds itself in a conflict with another country it seems to say that this is a conflict between right and wrong, it so happens that almost always this is the case. But entirely apart from that, the neutral world feels that America also is being neutral about another conflict, which is equally one between right and wrong, namely, the conflict between national movements and colonialism. Now we see there are two problems taking place in the world, and not one. The one between communism and democracy, and the one between national freedom and colonial oppression. We are neutral towards the conflict between colonialism and democracy because we are [unclear] between the problem of colonialism and nationalism, and America is neutral towards the problem of

nationalism versus colonialism, because it is up to its neck in the problem of communism versus democracy.

YA: I would like to comment on this term, positive neutralism. Now I think that bears some explanation.

FS: Positive neutralism did move a step beyond the logic I have just been discussing. Its basic philosophy is this: not only will we stay outside the Cold War, the way for example America stays outside the world of colonialism and nationalism, but also since we are in a process of developing ourselves, and we need help for this development. We are ready to accept this help from any side of the Iron Curtain it comes, whether from the East of the Iron Curtain or from West of the Iron Curtain. As long as this help, if we get it from England or France or America, or if we get it from Russia or China, as long as this help does not tie our hands in the matter of forming our foreign policy, does not make us satellites of either East or West, and does not plunge us, or involve us in the Cold War that we want to stay outside of. If this help is forthcoming from the Soviets as it was from 1955 to 1959, we are going to accept it. If this help comes from the West, as Egypt is getting it from the past year, as India is getting it today, no strings attached, we are ready to accept it. But we will not barter our freedom of judgement, freedom of formulating our foreign policy, for loans or trade or arms or any of the aspects of the help that we'd want.

YA: All right, now this whole movement of neutralism or positive neutralism which you have explained, very naturally, has brought the outer world in contact with the USSR. Now what has been the experience of Egypt on the one hand and Iraq on the other? Your opinion, what did this contact and receiving of aid and relationship with the USSR?

FS: Well, the experience has been two fold. One is that when we were almost isolated by the West, to the extent of, if we didn't get aid from the West, we would have nowhere to turn, the Soviet Union stepped in and offered to give us loans, not grants. The Soviet Union never gave any other country grants. It gave loans, at low interest rates, two and a half percent, and loan repayment arrangements. It offered to trade with us, on terms favorable to us, for example Egypt needed to export its cotton, the Soviet Union was ready to give it anything it wanted in return for cotton, not for hard currency, which Egypt didn't possess. So our first experience with the Soviet Union then was that the Soviet Union stepped in to help us, on terms favorable to us, and without an exchange, when we needed help. But this was only one part of the story. The other part was, that when the Soviet Union felt that we might have reached the point of dependence upon it, then it began to interfere domestically in our politics. And primarily this was to the role of the Communist Party in other countries. At the time Egypt was buying arms or receiving loans from the Soviet Union, Nasser was putting every communist in Egypt in jail, the Soviet Union said nothing about it from 1955 to '59, then in 1959, when it felt, and as it proved wrongly, that now Nasser was...