

# DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN AND THE UNITED NATIONS IN TRANSITION

by

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(Under the Direction of William Stueck)

## ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine how the relationship between the United States and the United Nations began to change in the 1970s. At that time, the new members of the United Nations began to attack the United States and attempted to restructure the international order in their favor. In 1975 Daniel Patrick Moynihan became US Ambassador to the United Nations and attempted to deal with the changed circumstances there based on his experience in American domestic politics. He attempted to make the United Nations, especially the General Assembly, an important part of US foreign policy by applying the ideology of Woodrow Wilson and democratic liberalism that he felt was in retreat after the Vietnam War. Moynihan was succeeded by Andrew Young and Jeane Kirkpatrick, who continued Moynihan's overall strategy while veering away from his centrist course.

INDEX WORDS: United Nations; Daniel Patrick Moynihan; Jeane Kirkpatrick; Andrew Young; Third World; Civil Rights; Vietnam; New International Economic Order

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by

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## INTRODUCTION

The period from 1975 to 1985 marked an experimental phase in the relationship between the United States and the United Nations. During the organization's first thirty years, the U.S. government made a practice of appointing prominent but not particularly innovative political figures to the post of U.N. permanent representative. This trend was finally broken in 1975, when Daniel Patrick Moynihan was appointed to the post not because of who he was but because of his ideas about the United Nations and the way the United States should approach it. The world and the international organization's place in it had changed significantly since the early years of the Cold War, and Moynihan was part of a process of rethinking the role the United States should play in the world after Vietnam, détente, and the rise of the Third World as a powerful actor in international politics. After Moynihan's service during the Gerald Ford administration, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan followed the precedent set by Moynihan's appointment. Carter and Reagan sent Andrew Young and Jeane Kirkpatrick based on their ability to follow Moynihan's example while altering it to fit new agendas.

While students of international politics often designate the time from the end of World War II until the fall of the Berlin Wall as the "Cold War era," in which most issues revolved around confrontation and competition between the two superpowers, there are important distinctions to be made within this period. This is especially obvious when looking at U.S. relations with the United Nations. The early Cold War, from the mid-forties through the fifties, was marked by U.S. dominance within the United Nations. It was during this time that it could

use its predominant power to win support on most issues, most prominently the Korean conflict but in many other areas as well. Illustrative of this is that during the first twenty-five years of the United Nations the Soviet Union used its Security Council veto more than a hundred times, while the first U.S. veto only came in 1970.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the stalemate in the Security Council thanks to Soviet veto power, the United States attempted to transfer authority to the General Assembly. For instance, after the Uniting for Peace resolution in 1950, the General Assembly was given power to convene after a veto in the Security Council in order to consider recommending collective action. Of the General Assembly's original fifty-one members, only six were aligned with the Soviet Union. The rest, mostly Latin American and Western European states, were closely associated with the U.S. position on most issues. Consequently, the United States was able to use its superior numbers to turn the United Nations to its advantage, not only in Korea but also circumventing Soviet antipathy and sending U.N. peacekeeping forces to the Congo.

Beginning in the 1960s, even as U.S.-Soviet relations began to thaw, the opposite phenomenon appeared: the United States began to lose its ability to set the agenda in the General Assembly. One reason this came about was an overwhelming change in the character and composition of the United Nations. As decolonization progressed, former European colonies, especially in Africa, gained nationhood and joined the United Nations, eventually overwhelming the United States and its closest allies. From its original fifty-one members, U.N. membership had doubled by 1960 and tripled by 1975, with 144 member states, 40 of which were newly independent African countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson Nicol, "Africa and the U.S.A. in the United Nations," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 16, No. 3 (Sept. 1978), 370.

Before decolonization, the majority of developing nations with U.N. membership were Latin American states with traditionally close ties to the United States. As more developing (or Third World, or Non-Aligned) countries joined the organization, even erstwhile allies in Latin America began to vote less and less based on the wishes of their northern neighbor. The result was a widespread feeling of alienation within the United States towards the organization it had brought into existence and which convened its assembly on its soil. The General Assembly, which had formerly been concentrated on issues that the United States found to be in its interest, began to take on an uncomfortably independent character. The Non-Aligned nations were less interested in superpower confrontation, often even playing off one against the other, than in issues of racism, economic development and liberation, to which the United States had often in the past paid little more than lip-service. U.S. foreign policy thus began to shift from focusing almost exclusively on communist rivals to recognizing the power and importance of the Third World and acknowledging the legitimacy of its concerns. This was especially true after the Vietnam War, as U.S. power seemed to be in decline.

Not coincidentally, similar issues were at the same time being raised within the United States itself about domestic problems of freedom and political, social and economic inequality. The civil rights movement, which took off during the '50s when the United States was secure in its international position and dominant at the United Nations, reached a turning point around the same time that African and Latin American countries began to demand more attention from the developed world and its leader, the United States. Originally focusing primarily on political rights, as indicated by the phrase "civil rights," the black liberation movement eventually broadened its goals to include economic rights and opportunities. This corresponded roughly to the pattern in the Third World of first seeking political independence and only later turning



towards economic demands. Many liberation struggles became more violent in this period, especially in Portuguese colonies and southern Africa.

The other major turn within the United States was from the emphasis on “non-violent” struggle, most forcefully expressed by Martin Luther King, Jr. and the SCLC and implemented through marches, boycotts and sit-ins, to the more militant rhetoric and actions exemplified by the growing appeal of Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. This change in tactics split not only black leaders but also sympathetic whites, who feared the growing violence in urban centers across the country. Republicans, led especially by Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, tried to turn back many of the gains of the Civil Rights movement. Many Democrats shifted perceptibly to the center as well, splitting the party over racial issues and student protests over the Vietnam War. The events of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s were a formative experience for Americans across the political spectrum. It was in this context that the United States began to shift its tactics at the United Nations during the mid-’70s. Presidential administrations had often seen the United Nations as either an irrelevancy or as a rubber stamp to legitimate their wishes. However, as Third World militants grew louder and began to use the United Nations as a soapbox, the organization started to receive more attention.

Beginning with Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s ambassadorship in 1975, U.S. presidents appointed a series of ambassadors who attempted to change the nature of the U.S. relationship with the United Nations and especially its Third World majority. Moynihan ended the policy of officially ignoring or appeasing Third World rhetoric and tried to shake up U.S. complacency about uncooperative and sometimes anti-American countries. Instead of disregarding attacks, Moynihan attempted to retaliate, both on the floor of the General Assembly and by threatening to cut aid to uncooperative nations. Answering libel with libel was not a new policy at the United

Nations, but in the past the United States had reserved it primarily for the Soviet Union.

Moynihan, however, focused his spleen on African and Arab nations who he felt had formed an anti-American coalition with the Soviet Union and its satellites.

Moynihan was trained as a sociologist specializing in ethnicity and the problems of race in America. He began work in government advising both Democratic and Republican presidents on race issues and gained notoriety for several of his policy prescriptions. His approach to both domestic and international issues was based on a critique of traditional ways of dealing with the underprivileged and disaffected. His assessment of the apparent failure of the Johnson administration's poverty programs in the '60s, the disaster of Vietnam, and the attack on the liberal democratic ideal both within America and abroad led him to attempt a reevaluation of liberalism as an ideology. He then tried to put these ideas into practice at the United Nations and was probably the most influential representative the United States ever sent there.

Describing the changed character of the General Assembly, Thomas Franck has written that "unlike the days when American leadership was based on economic and military preponderance, any US assertion of leadership nowadays must be based on demonstrated and recognized moral primacy, as well as on carefully planned and diligently executed diplomatic strategy."<sup>2</sup> It was during Moynihan's tenure that this fact was first brought to the attention of the policy elite and the American public. Moynihan gave the General Assembly a new importance as an ideological battleground, and as the focal point of U.S. relations with the Third World.

The precedent Moynihan set at the United Nations was too strong to ignore. Jimmy Carter appointed Andrew Young in an attempt to try altogether different tactics while remaining focused on Third World demands and militancy. Carter came to the presidency as a critic of the

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas Franck, *Nation Against Nation: What Happened to the UN Dream and What the US Can Do About It* (New York: Oxford, 1985), 254.

immorality of the Nixon and Ford administrations and tried to redirect American foreign policy towards more morally acceptable ends. Andrew Young was chosen to represent the United States at the United Nations because of his stature as a former civil rights leader and his ability to relate to the aspirations of the Third World. He tried to export his experience with black liberation in America, especially its doctrines of non-violence and later emphasis on prosperity, to the United Nations and especially to the problems of Africa. Instead of pushing U.S. interests too strongly however, Young was accused of working against those interests as well as his explicit instructions, ultimately leading to his resignation. Although his actions were often controversial, it is undoubted that he had tremendous influence while he was at the United Nations.

When Ronald Reagan became president in 1981 he chose an ambassador precisely for her similarities with Moynihan and distance from the Carter/Young ethos. Jeane Kirkpatrick was chosen because of her influential criticisms of the Carter administration's foreign policy, especially policies concerning the Third World. She was more reserved in her rhetoric than Moynihan though even more adamant in her demands that the United Nations should serve U.S. interests.

Though not an expert on race in America like her two predecessors, one of Kirkpatrick's formative political experiences was the leftward turn in the Democratic policy and the growing militancy in the Civil Rights struggle. She was one of the founding members of the nebulous but highly influential neoconservative movement of disaffected Democrats that coalesced around Norman Podhoretz and his publication *Commentary*. Both Kirkpatrick and Moynihan are generally believed to have been chosen for their United Nations positions based on foreign policy articles published in *Commentary*. Kirkpatrick's major area of expertise was revolution

and social movements in the Third World, particularly Latin America. She was also a strong supporter of Reagan's domestic and foreign policies.

All three U.N. ambassadors were influential policy makers in their own right, breaking the traditional deference of the U.S. diplomatic mission to Washington and especially the State Department. Moreover, all three shared a direct and formative experience with the problems of liberation struggle and protest in America and inevitably brought that background with them to the United Nations. Thomas McCormick has written that "People do not think one way about their national society and a different way about world society. Instead, they tend to project and internationalize conceptual frameworks first articulated at home."<sup>3</sup> Based on their experiences in America during the 1960s and 1970s, Moynihan, Young and Kirkpatrick all understood the necessity and inevitability of change both within their country and abroad, yet felt the need to manage and mediate that change as carefully as possible to avoid backlash and the escalation of revolutionary violence.

The thread that binds these three ambassadors together is their focus on the Third World as a major concern for U.S. diplomacy. To understand Young and Kirkpatrick as ambassadors, it is necessary to understand Moynihan, his background, and his influence on the succeeding administrations. His tenure raised more questions than it answered about U.S. foreign policy, the United Nations, and the Third World, but he set in motion a process of re-conceptualizing the world that was necessary during a new stage of the Cold War. Chapter 1 examines Moynihan's beginnings in domestic politics in the 1960s and early '70s, when he perceived a decline in the authority of the federal government because of the flawed liberal approach to both domestic and international problems. Chapter 2 deals with Moynihan's translation of his domestic experience

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas McCormick, "Drift or Mastery? A Corporatist Synthesis for American Diplomatic History," *Reviews in American History* 10 (Dec 1982), 326; quoted in Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2001), 6-7.

into an international context in which many of the same problems arose. Finally, the epilogue compares and contrasts Moynihan with his successors at the United Nations, Young and Kirkpatrick, who reacted to his legacy and worked within a United Nations that had been given a new importance by Moynihan's time there.

## CHAPTER 1

### Daniel Patrick Moynihan and the Great Society

“Few ideas are correct ones, and which they are none can tell, but with words we govern men.”<sup>1</sup>

Daniel Patrick Moynihan was a creator of words and ideas about government. Thanks perhaps to poor luck and possibly his style, his words became well known while the ideas behind them tended to remain obscure, stirring avoidable controversy and misunderstanding. Nevertheless, both words and ideas had a profound effect on the federal government and people’s perceptions of it during one of the most ideologically tense and fluid periods in American history. He was at the height of his powers as a producer of influential and innovative concepts at a time when the United States government seemed to be in desperate need of new ideas. From 1965 to 1975, the peak of his influence (and notoriety), he served conservative and liberal presidents and made his mark in significant ways on both domestic and foreign policy. A time of transition and disillusionment, those years began with the escalation beyond any going back of the war in Vietnam and ended with the fall of Saigon. The civil rights movement was at its peak in 1965, cities were burning by 1970, and all was quiet again by 1975. It was a time when the policy elite and the American public grasped for ways to explain to themselves and the world how the world’s most powerful country had failed to stop the spread of Communism and to stop its own cities from burning. Once the war was over and the fires smoldered, explanations were needed, explanations both of what went wrong and how to carry on.

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, quoted in Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place* (Bombay: Allied, 1979), 96.

In 1975, President Gerald Ford chose Moynihan to be the permanent representative of the United States at the United Nations. He served for only eight months, but his time there was considerably more eventful than that of most ambassadors, and his positions were more influential than most, if not all, of his predecessors. From a distance, his tenure at the United Nations might seem like an interlude between two much more important periods of his life's work, punctuating ten years of advising presidents on the problems of race, poverty, and urban problems and twenty-four years as a senator from New York concerned mostly with that state's well-being. Closer inspection reveals, however, that in his brief time at the United Nations he had a great impact on U.S. foreign policy and on the position of the United Nations and the American ambassador within it. He helped to shift focus from the East/West polarity of the Cold War to a new North/South dynamic and helped bring about a new emphasis on human rights issues. His protean status as a liberal who had worked closely with conservatives and was even more intimately tied to the emerging "neoconservative" movement made him almost an ideal spokesperson for an America in search of firm ideological ground from which to confront the world. Scrutiny of his approach to the United Nations also reveals that his stay was anything but an aberration in the career of a politician primarily concerned with domestic issues. In fact, domestic and foreign affairs were intimately connected in Moynihan's mind. Problems in domestic and foreign policy during this period intersected in ways that made his transition between them almost seamless.

Moynihan has received a disproportionate amount of scholarly attention relative to other United Nations ambassadors, which is to say that his predecessors have received almost none at all whereas he has received a little. Works examining the relations between the United States and the United Nations make frequent mention of him, though usually they do not go far beyond

making use of the title of his memoir of service at the United Nations, “A Dangerous Place,” to sum up American perceptions of the United Nations at that time. He is also used as an archetype of one of the two possible styles of diplomacy at the United Nations, the quiet, conciliatory style, of which Arthur Goldberg might be the exemplar, and the “Moynihan style,” brash, confrontational, and largely unapologetic. Some debate, largely inconclusive, has taken place over whether his style was beneficial or detrimental to U.S. interests.<sup>2</sup> While this is an important question, it overlooks the fact that Moynihan actually used an innovative combination of confrontation and conciliation, as well as quiet and loud diplomacy. Also brushed over has been the significance of Moynihan’s tenure itself, regardless of style. As the first permanent representative chosen because of his specific ideas about the way the United States should approach the United Nations and the world, he marked the beginning of a new and exploratory era in U.S. relations with the United Nations. He and several of the permanent representatives to follow him, especially Andrew Young and Jeane Kirkpatrick, were an integral part of an attempt on the part of the U.S. government to find ideological footing in its relations with the world after the failure of the war in Vietnam and the internal upheavals of the ‘60s. He was also the first major publicly visible figure in the U.S. government to be given the explicit task of dealing with the Third World at a time when emphasis was shifting from concern with the East-West polarity of the Cold War to a new North-South dynamic, which focused on the international dilemmas of race and poverty.

The first task in evaluating the ideas of any intellectual, especially one dealing with the inherently factional arena of politics, is to establish his ideological affiliation. In Moynihan’s

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<sup>2</sup> See Seymour Maxwell Finger, *American Ambassadors at the UN: People Politics and Bureaucracy in Making Foreign Policy* (New York: Holmes and Meyer, 1988), 242-246; Godfrey Hodgson, *The Gentleman from New York: Daniel Patrick Moynihan, A Biography* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 252; Thomas Franck, *Nation Against Nation: What Happened to the UN Dream and What the US Can Do About It* (New York: Oxford, 1985).



case this is especially difficult, given the broad range of topics he dealt with and the diverse groups he associated with. He began and ended his career in federal government as a fairly orthodox liberal Democrat. During the late '60s and '70s, however, he was much more closely connected with the neoconservative intellectuals who coalesced loosely around Norman Podhoretz's publication *Commentary* and Irving Kristol's and Daniel Bell's *The Public Interest*. Indicative of his distance, at least as perceived by others, from the left-liberal wing of the Democratic Party is the fact that at this time he was praised almost to the point of fawning by William F. Buckley and damned by the publishers of the *Nation*.<sup>3</sup> He was even held up by Ronald Reagan in the 1976 Republican primaries as an exemplar of how U.S. foreign policy should look, only to become one of President Reagan's most prominent critics four years later.<sup>4</sup>

Moynihan's seeming ability to change teams almost effortlessly might be chalked up to simple confusion or political expediency was it not for a surprising consistency of intellectual concern. The central theme of his otherwise seemingly disconnected ideas is the problem of legitimacy and authority in liberal democratic society and, more broadly, the liberal world order, which was shaken by Vietnam and the rise of the Third World as a voice in international affairs. He saw the problem of authority on a more complex level than a simple lack of centralized power that commanded and received obedience. He denied the viability of elitist institutions that commanded submission based on claims of superior knowledge. This applied both to Democratic party politics, in the struggle between the liberal 'elite' and party regulars, and to relations of the United States with the Third World, where he denied that the United States could dictate to other countries what was best for them. He saw the problem of authority underlying

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<sup>3</sup> William F. Buckley, *United Nations Journal: A Delegates Odyssey* (New York: Putnam, 1974); "The Perils of Pat," *The Nation*, 22 September 1979, 227.

<sup>4</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 280; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *On the Law of Nations* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1990).

the issues of race and poverty in America, most sensationally in the problems of urban blacks whose family structure often lacked the authority of a male provider. The rise of student protests over Vietnam he felt was due to a crisis of authority and legitimacy in America's educational institutions and American government in general.<sup>5</sup> The same problem underlay the amoral drift of America's foreign policy during this period. The problem was not one of power, since he never lost the certainty that the United States was the most powerful country in the world, its institutional and economic order the most innovative and successful the world had ever seen.<sup>6</sup> He felt that the liberal democratic world was undergoing a crisis of faith, which he devoted his best efforts to remedying.

Moynihan joined the Kennedy White House as Assistant Secretary of Labor in 1961, one of the young technocrats who symbolized the administration's progressive attitude. It was also the year of his first contribution to *Commentary*. "‘Bosses and Reformers’: A Profile of the New York Democrats" was an indictment of elitist upper middle class liberals, the "reformers," who were attempting to take over the party from its working class "regulars."<sup>7</sup> It was based on several years' first-hand experience working inside the Democratic Party. It was also written before his self-proclaimed disillusionment with left liberal politics, which he would later attribute on a symbolic level to the assassination of President Kennedy and a pragmatic level both to the difficulties of liberal social policy in alleviating urban problems and the failure in Vietnam. Even though he was on the side of the reformers, being as he was a creator of social policy in the Kennedy White House, he demonstrated early on a suspicion of the motivations of

<sup>5</sup> See Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "Nirvana Now," reprinted in Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Coping: Essays on the Practice of Government* (New York: Random House, 1974), 116.

<sup>6</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 27.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "‘Bosses ’ and ‘Reformers’: A Profile of the New York Democrats," *Commentary*, (June 1961).

some of his peers who sought to dictate to the working class what their interests should be. At this point his concerns were primarily with the parochial issues of New York politics, but they foreshadowed a concern with class interests and authority that would surface again in other domains.

At the same time Moynihan's experience in New York brought the submerged class conflicts to his attention, he also became aware of another factor that had a profound but largely overlooked impact on politics, ethnicity. In 1963 Moynihan and Nathan Glazer published a groundbreaking study of ethnicity in New York that questioned the orthodox interpretation of immigrant behavior in America.<sup>8</sup> According to conventional wisdom, racial and cultural groups that were distinct at the time of their immigration would be slowly assimilated into the homogeneous American culture, and this was taken to be an unambiguously good thing. Glazer and Moynihan asserted in *Beyond the Melting Pot*, however, that this was not in fact taking place at all, that to all appearances ethnic affiliations were becoming more instead of less important. They also claimed that this was not necessarily a bad thing. Moynihan's vision was the Madisonian ideal of a pluralist society in which diverse groups asserted their unique interests, eventually reaching a compromise satisfactory to all without any one group dictating to or subsuming the others.

During the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies, Assistant Secretary of Labor Moynihan was intimately involved with the newly declared "war on poverty." It was during this time that he made his first impact on national politics. With the assistance of two researchers, he authored a report entitled "The Negro Family: A Case for National Action." The report was written soon after the greatest successes of the civil rights movement, the passage of the Civil Rights and

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<sup>8</sup> Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge: MIT, 1970).

Voting Rights Acts, and evaluated the prospects for the future. Moynihan asserted in his report that, political goals having been for the most part achieved, “Negro Americans ... will now expect that in the near future equal opportunities for them as a group will produce roughly equal results.”<sup>9</sup> It was the duty of the federal government, he felt, to make this expectation a reality, and he outlined what he saw as the primary obstacles. The civil rights movement had just achieved its most striking successes through the legislation of political equality as the Johnson administration, to the surprise of many on both sides, moved beyond merely reacting to the demands of activists to take initiative on its own. Based on Moynihan’s ideas, the president declared in a speech at Howard University that “equal opportunity is essential, but not enough,” essentially promising new federal initiatives to promote the economic success of minorities.<sup>10</sup>

In the “The Negro Family,” Moynihan gave his attention to a vexing issue which he felt constituted a major problem of liberal society in America, and would dominate his thinking about international affairs. “Liberty and Equality are the twin ideals of American democracy. But they are not the same thing ... nor ... always compatible with each other.”<sup>11</sup> White Americans tended to prefer liberty, “the middle-class aspiration par-excellence,” but as liberty had been achieved in the form of equal opportunity, the next phase of what he called the “Negro revolution” required insuring equality of outcomes. Otherwise, he warned, “there will be no social peace in the United States for generations.”<sup>12</sup>

While Moynihan placed the “twin ideals” of equality and liberty on the same footing, he also implied a hierarchy between them. Liberty was described as a precondition for true equality, therefore taking priority. For minorities in America, liberty, in the form of civil rights

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,” in Mark Gerson, ed., *The Essential Neoconservative Reader* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1996), 23.

<sup>10</sup> Hodgson, 97.

<sup>11</sup> Gerson, 27.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

legislation and the many important Supreme Court rulings up to that point, had been achieved. These substantial gains in political rights as of 1965, however, were only “the end of the beginning.”<sup>13</sup>

The difficulty of negotiating between the two ideals would be of central importance during Moynihan’s period at the United Nations, as the Third World began to demand equality in what its members felt was an unfair and discriminatory international economic and political system. “The Negro Family” contained Moynihan’s first recognition of the international implications of the struggles for liberty and equality contained in the civil rights movement. He noted the influence of anti-colonial struggles on the philosophy and tactics of activists in the South. They had taken their tactics from the non-violent activism of the Gandhian struggle for India’s liberty from Britain, and in turn inspired the struggles against racism and colonialism in Africa. He asserted that the United States could provide a model of “peaceful assimilation of races” for the world at large at a time when racial divisions threatened to disrupt national stability around the globe.<sup>14</sup>

Having outlined the value system and goals underlying the appeal for equality, Moynihan’s report turned to his assessment of the obstacles to their achievement. He found that centuries of racial discrimination had handicapped the black lower class, creating structural problems within urban communities that caused conditions for the poorest members of the community to worsen while the black middle class improved its position. He was personally attacked by liberals and civil rights activists because of these ideas, prompting one critic to coin a phrase to describe what he was doing: “blaming the victim.”<sup>15</sup> They feared that his ideas

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>15</sup> William Ryan, quoted in Hodgson, 118.

would only give racists more ammunition to assert the inferiority of blacks. He was even accused by some of being a closet racist himself, though he has been exonerated by scholars and journalists who examined his report after the emotionally charged era in which he was writing had passed.<sup>16</sup>

At the heart of the report's analysis were two ideas that would underlay Moynihan's thinking about the problem of poverty and liberal society in general. First was the idea that, though racism and oppression were the root causes of economic inequality, they had caused such damage to the black community's social structure in urban America that poverty had become self-perpetuating, getting worse even as the problems of racial discrimination and the prospects of middle class blacks were getting better. Thus, the liberal tendency to focus on and attempt to change only the behavior of white Americans was not productive. Especially after the assault on his work began, Moynihan became extremely critical of this tenet of "liberal orthodoxy," the idea that discrimination was the only real problems to be addressed.<sup>17</sup> He felt that it was necessary to look at the internal constraints on group development, rather than always seeking to assign guilt. The "parables of good and evil" that characterized the struggle for civil rights in the South were too simplistic to explain the deterioration of Northern cities.<sup>18</sup>

The second theme, which was also an integral part of the structural poverty Moynihan analyzed, was the problem of authority in urban communities. In "a society which presumes male leadership in private and public affairs," he wrote, the matriarchal structure found disproportionately in poor black families put them at a disadvantage.<sup>19</sup> His only data to back up his assertion was the correlation between declining economic conditions and an increase in

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<sup>16</sup> See Hodgson, 94; Lee Rainwater, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge: MIT, 1967); *NYT*, 31 March 1974, Section 6, pg. 19.

<sup>17</sup> *NYT*, 9 June 1968, E 11.

<sup>18</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Gerson, 33.

female-headed households and illegitimate births. Intangibles like authority are of course very difficult to measure, the lack thereof amounting almost to an intuition based on circumstantial evidence like rising crime rates. His suggestion for dealing with the lack of authority was to create employment instead of encouraging dependency through increased welfare. This would supposedly return to the poor a lost sense of autonomy and self-esteem, and shore up the failing social structure in urban communities.

The intuition that an absence of authority was at the heart of many problems was one that seems to have struck Moynihan again and again, and he often tried to balance the desire to experiment to find solutions with a fear that cures might be more dangerous than the disease. His mistrust of reform-minded liberal elites, which he had shown regarding state level Democratic Party politics in 1961, surfaced again during the controversy over Johnson era poverty programs. Though his report to President Johnson had highlighted the problem poverty created for family structures, he was opposed to programs that tried to tamper too directly with community structures. He continuously asserted that the fundamental problem with poor people was that they had no money, and favored employment programs, even suggesting that the federal government be the “employer of last resort.”<sup>20</sup> Others disagreed, and the encouragement of “community action” became the administration’s policy.

Community action programs were based on the idea that the main problem of the poor was that they were alienated from local governments that were supposed to meet their needs but were often in fact hostile to them, especially in the case of minorities. The programs comprised a wide array of government services, including education, employment, health, and welfare. The central tenet of community action was that the programs should involve the “maximum feasible

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<sup>20</sup> *NYT*, 5 February 1967, Section 6, pg 13.

participation” of the poor themselves in planning and execution, in order to better integrate them into the governing process.

Around the same time community action programs were being implemented, riots began to break out in cities all over the nation, beginning in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts in the summer of 1965 and continuing year after year. Moynihan’s report was cited by the media as having “predicted” the outbreaks of violence, an idea that Moynihan didn’t discourage.<sup>21</sup> He had already left the government to run (unsuccessfully) for office in New York City, and from his newly independent position in academia began to criticize the Johnson administration’s approaches to domestic problems.

In 1968 he published *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*, an indictment of the “community action” advocates’ call for “maximum feasible participation” of the poor themselves in poverty programs. Here and in several articles published in *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* he suggested that reformers and academics were often more interested in increasing government social programs in their own professional interest rather than out of concern for the objective well being of the poor. He also correlated the rise of urban radicalism and community action programs, not going so far as to claim direct causation but still implying an intimate connection. Community action had “politicized the poor” and riots had resulted. Readers were invited to make what connections they wished.<sup>22</sup>

The lesson to be learned by liberals was that “we had to learn the limits of legislating social attitudes; to learn to treat blacks as true equals.”<sup>23</sup> Though community action’s adherents had claimed it to be the most egalitarian way of dealing with the poor because it encouraged their

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<sup>21</sup> Hodgson, 115; Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> *New York Times (NYT)*, 15 December 1968, 1:3; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action and the War on Poverty* (New York: Free Press, 1969).

<sup>23</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 6.



participation in community programs, Moynihan felt that the programs themselves and the agendas those programs were designed to fulfill were the creation of a reformist elite and not of those they were designed to help. The liberal reformers in the federal government had attempted to instill poor citizens with civic virtue but had inadvertently caused them to become even more disaffected with their local governments. By focusing on the problem of “social attitudes” instead of on the more fundamental problem of jobs and money that the poor themselves were most concerned about, the programs only raised discontent among the poor without improving their lives in “a comparable degree.”<sup>24</sup> Despite his criticisms of liberal policies and the fact that he was soon to take a position in the Nixon White House as Urban Affairs specialist, he continued to identify himself with the “liberal” ethos, which he saw as sick and often misguided, but not fundamentally flawed.

In the culture in general, Moynihan felt there was “a near-obsessive pre-occupation with “blame” for poverty, instead of a rational assessment of what could and should be done.”<sup>25</sup> The obsession with “blame” and “guilt” was counterproductive, only resulting in further encouragement of violence and frustration with what progress had actually been made in alleviating domestic problems. An even more dangerous phenomenon that the riots brought to Moynihan and others’ attention was the fact that liberals “rather approved of the violence and certainly saw it as a stimulus to social change.”<sup>26</sup> He felt this to be a result of disillusionment, especially on the left, with the institutions of democracy and the processes of peaceful change. He predicted as a consequence the “onset of nihilism among elite youth,” or worse, terrorism.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *NYT*, 19 December 1968.

<sup>25</sup> *NYT*, 19 December 1968, 27:2.

<sup>26</sup> Moynihan, *Coping*, 48.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

Anxiety about domestic problems was of course not the sole reason for the discontent in American political culture at the time. Dissatisfaction with, if not revulsion towards, the war in Vietnam began in the late '60s to diffuse from the radical left into larger portions of the populace. Moynihan acknowledged that he came "rather late" to see what a mistake the war was, but then came down firmly against it. He used his position as one of Nixon's closest advisers to repeatedly urge the most immediate possible withdrawal of American forces from Southeast Asia.<sup>28</sup>

Moynihan's position in the Nixon White House, beginning in 1969, was head of the newly created Urban Affairs Council. In creating it, Nixon explicitly connected the crises the country was facing abroad with those in America's cities by analogizing the new organization to the National Security Council. Moynihan dwelled on the interconnection of international and domestic affairs as well, though unlike Nixon he saw the problem as involving more than the need for "order" and "security." He believed that "the Negro revolution and the War in Vietnam ... have much in common as to origins, and even more as to the process by which they have brought on mounting levels of disunity."<sup>29</sup> Both had been initiated by President Kennedy and the liberals he brought to Washington with him, people who believed in the unending possibilities for change and who Moynihan believed represented a liberalism which had "lost its sense of limits."<sup>30</sup>

The consequence of this lack of humility was the creation of false expectations of limitless and instantaneous success, in either eradicating poverty or spreading democracy abroad. Accountability and humility were necessary, and Moynihan acknowledged that "the war was

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<sup>28</sup> Hodgson, 153.

<sup>29</sup> *NYT*, 11 March 1970, 1:8.

<sup>30</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 17.

liberalism's war; ravaged Detroit was, as it were, liberalism's city."<sup>31</sup> When the most visible results of so much expectation turned out to be devastated cities and a seemingly endless war in Southeast Asia, a loss of faith was almost inevitable. Moynihan understood but nevertheless deplored the loss of "popular confidence in the American system."<sup>32</sup>

Nixon's foreign and domestic policies both revolved around the need to find palatable compromises over divisive issues within a polarized electorate, to address what Moynihan called the "vast failure of leadership" during the '60s without resorting overtly to authoritarian measures.<sup>33</sup> Domestically, the centerpiece of Nixon's policy was the "New Federalism," a program to devolve power over social issues like welfare and education from the federal government to state and local governments through revenue sharing. It was a compromise between the radically democratic tendencies of the Johnson administration's discredited "community action" programs and the desire for direct control from Washington. Moynihan was one of the program's most enthusiastic advocates. He also used his position near the president to promote his ideas about the importance of family structures, advocating an eventually unsuccessful "Family Assistance Plan," which would provide a guaranteed income to all families regardless of income level.

At the time Moynihan and Nixon's other domestic advisers were trying to deal with the crisis of legitimacy and authority within America, Henry Kissinger was taking it upon himself to respond to the dilemmas of foreign policy. Just as the failure of social policy was dealt with through decentralization and partial devolution of authority, so too did the international strategies of détente and the "Nixon Doctrine" attempt to ease tension by diffusing responsibility.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Moynihan, *Coping*, 133.

<sup>33</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 12.

Normalizing relations with China eased the burden of facing the Soviet Union. Because of the overwhelming cost of the Vietnam War, steps were taken to increase Europe's and Japan's share of the cost of maintaining the international financial order, one of which was devaluation of the dollar. In the wake of Vietnam and the anti-interventionist sentiment it inspired, the Nixon Doctrine proclaimed that allies would bear the primary responsibility to defend themselves from communism. It was due to the paradoxical nature of the times that policymakers felt the need to preserve the power and authority of Washington over local and international affairs by delegating responsibility to others.

Moynihan was for the most part in agreement with the premises of Nixon/Kissinger foreign policy, especially the need to ease the threat of nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union and end the war in Vietnam.<sup>34</sup> Where he and many of his neoconservative allies differed with the administration was on the issue of morality and ideology. Kissinger was famous for his advocacy of *Realpolitik* and emphasis on balancing power, which left no room for short-term considerations of morality. This perceived amorality was seized upon by both the right and left as a departure from the true purposes of American foreign policy.

It was in this context that the first stirrings of interest in "human rights" began since the founding of the United Nations a quarter century before. In Congress Donald Fraser on the left and Henry Jackson on the right began to openly question Nixon's and Kissinger's policy of ignoring the internal nature of regimes and focusing entirely on external behavior and stability. On the left, criticisms were raised of the government's support for right wing authoritarian regimes like Pinochet's Chile or Franco's Spain, while neoconservatives like Jackson criticized Nixon and Kissinger for turning a blind eye to the Soviet Union's human rights violations, such as the restriction of Jewish emigration and the suppression of dissidents like Solzhenitsyn.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

Kissinger's claim that the prevention of nuclear war was a higher form of morality convinced few and the "grand design" never achieved real consensus.<sup>35</sup>

Though Kissinger himself only showed a passing concern for the Third World as such, focusing instead on what he felt were bigger problems like the Soviet Union and conflict in the Middle East, his policy of easing tension between the great powers made it almost inevitable that conflict with developing nations would rise in importance. Added to this was the fact that the Third World had begun to develop a new sense of empowerment, especially after the OPEC embargo of 1973, thus beginning a new era of ideological conflict with the West. As Moynihan transferred his attention from domestic issues to those of foreign policy, it was this new North/South conflict that received his attention.

During his first decade in Washington, Moynihan served in three presidential administrations, Republican and Democratic, and dealt with the major issues of American domestic policy: ethnicity, poverty, education. The common ground he found between these disparate issues was a decline of authority from the community up to the national level, which he blamed in part on the excesses of Kennedy and Johnson era liberals. His strong reaction against the Great Society and willingness to join the Nixon administration was a result of his belief that a crisis was taking place in American society, which was not being properly addressed by either conservatives or liberals. The crisis was not only a shortcoming of liberals of the Democratic Party, with whom he counted himself, but also within liberalism more broadly, the ideology of both parties and of the liberal democratic world. As his years of activity dealing with domestic problems came to an end, Moynihan concerned himself more and more with the diminishing authority in the world of America and the liberal democratic values he felt it represented.

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<sup>35</sup> Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since the Vietnam War: The Search for Consensus from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Sharpe, 2000), 75.

## CHAPTER 2

### Moynihan, the World, and the United Nations

Moynihan's period in the Nixon White House ended in a mixture of failure and misunderstanding, leading him to a shift in focus from the domestic problems that occupied the early part of his political career to a more direct concern with the problems of international affairs. The "Family Assistance Plan" for which Moynihan had used his best efforts to try and win approval passed one house of Congress but not the other, was condemned by liberals as being too stingy and by conservatives as too liberal (as was Moynihan himself).<sup>36</sup> He was also vilified because of a memo to Nixon that leaked to the press, suggesting that "the issue of race could benefit from a period of benign neglect" at a time when the use of racial rhetoric served to divide people and sensationalize problems, instead of encouraging a rational evaluation of the problems and progress in promoting racial equality.<sup>37</sup> The memo was taken by much of the press and by critics of the Nixon administration as advocating a "benign neglect" of blacks, and not of the "issue of race," as was intended. As a result, Moynihan felt he had to turn away from the domestic issues that had long concerned him, telling one reporter: "I can never usefully be involved in those matters I had been involved in. It won't ever be forgiven."<sup>38</sup> He thus transferred his attention from the problems of urban America to foreign policy, creating as much controversy and spreading as much influence in that domain as in his former field of expertise.

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<sup>36</sup> Hodgson, 181.

<sup>37</sup> *NYT*, 1 March 1970.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 March 1974.

The foundation of Moynihan's interest in foreign policy was his concern about the crisis of authority in America created by the Vietnam War, a war he felt was a "disastrous mistake." 39 The most important consequence, besides the loss of life and social turmoil it created, was that it was causing "a tyranny of conscience" among Americans regarding the role of their nation in the world.<sup>40</sup> This could result in a dangerous inward turn in public concern, fostering the new isolationism that Moynihan sensed especially in the McGovern wing of the Democratic Party, which favored major cuts in defense spending and reducing America's military presence abroad.<sup>41</sup>

The crisis of conscience within the American public could not come at a worse time as far as Moynihan was concerned. In the years leading up to his service as permanent representative to the United Nations, he served as a public delegate to the organization and as ambassador to India. Based on this experience, he began to feel that the liberal international order was under attack and the power of liberal democracy as an ideal was waning. After Moynihan resigned from his position as presidential adviser, Richard Nixon tried to nominate him to be permanent representative to the United Nations in 1971. Instead of taking that job, he returned to academic life, accepting, however, a temporary position with the U.S. delegation to serve on the U.N.'s Third Committee, also known as the Human Rights committee.<sup>42</sup> It was there that he began to form his ideas about how and why the United Nations was a "dangerous place." The growing anti-American bias at the United Nations had been pointed out before, but Moynihan began to move beyond the simplistic explanations that were most common, usually boiling down to the hostility of the Soviet Union and its satellites combined with the "political

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1970.

<sup>40</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 66.

<sup>41</sup> John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals in Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994* (New Haven: Yale, 1995), 58-60.

<sup>42</sup> *NYT*, 17 September 1971, 22:4.

immaturity” of the new nations, forty of which had joined the United Nations during the 1960s alone.<sup>43</sup>

Although his comprehensive explanation and his recipe for improving this situation at the United Nations wouldn't come until 1975, when he wrote “The United States in Opposition” and became the U.S. permanent representative, Moynihan's ideas about the problems of the international system were already forming and receiving notice in 1971. The crux of Moynihan's insight was that Americans “aren't very good at ideological argument.”<sup>44</sup> The United Nations, especially the General Assembly, was not a place of practical but of symbolic politics, where rhetoric and ritual recrimination received most attention. Since the representatives of so-called “totalitarian” states were, according to Moynihan, expert theoreticians, ideological argument came naturally to them. Not so with Americans, who excelled at doing things like “feeding people in West Bengal” but failed to repel accusations of being an “imperialist, rotten, fascist regime.”<sup>45</sup>

In essence, Moynihan was repeating what he had reiterated in his memos to President Nixon about urban problems: that the U.S. government tended to lose battles over symbolic politics. Domestically, racial rhetoric actually obscured the progress towards equality that had already been made and made further progress more difficult. Internationally, the politics of a “divided, post-colonial world” was working to the benefit of the “totalitarian” states instead of the liberal democracies and making the United Nations irrelevant towards the solution of concrete problems.<sup>46</sup> At home, ideological tension needed to be eased, but the United Nations required a different tactic. The American people were scarcely aware of the type of

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<sup>43</sup> See George Kennan, *Memoirs*, Vol. II, 1950-1963 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), 238.

<sup>44</sup> *NYT*, 10 November 1971.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*



condemnation taking place at the United Nations and that their way of life was being damned. As a temporary delegate he could only create a small amount of publicity, but he did create enough to inspire William F. Buckley to take the same job two years later and to set a precedent for his own lengthier stay at the United Nations.<sup>47</sup>

In 1972, after Moynihan's first stay at the United Nations ended, Richard Nixon asked him to become U.S. ambassador to India. It was there that Moynihan experienced the problems of the developing world first hand, reinforcing his intuition that the United States needed a new approach in its foreign policy towards India and other countries like it. The agenda given to him by Nixon and Kissinger was to do whatever possible to improve U.S. relations with India at a time when that country's importance was growing, as was its hostility towards the United States. When India went to war with Pakistan in 1971, America had backed India's rival, even sending an aircraft carrier to the Bay of Bengal to try and exert pressure. India, which had used Soviet arms to win victory over Pakistan, subsequently signed a "Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation" with the Soviet Union and began a program to develop nuclear weapons.<sup>48</sup>

Moynihan's solution to the rift in Indian-American relations was to convince Congress to cancel a large portion and reschedule the rest of India's debt to the United States, which had been incurred mostly during a time of famine in the previous decade. The debt, equal to a third of India's money supply, was not only a huge financial strain on India's economy but also a psychological burden as well. Some Indians claimed that, instead of being an act of generosity, the American wheat had been "dumped" on India as a means to sustain American agricultural prices.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> William F. Buckley, *United Nations Journal: A Delegate's Odyssey* (New York, Putnam, 1974).

<sup>48</sup> *NYT*, 14 August 1971, 6:1; *NYT*, 3 May 1972, 6:41.

<sup>49</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 17.

India's debt crisis brought Moynihan to the conclusion that the Kennedy era approach to the Third World had been misguided. Massive amounts of aid, instead of causing goodwill as expected, actually stirred resentment and hostility as a result of the feeling of dependence. Moynihan's new approach required a rejection of the paternalistic attitudes of the past: "Perhaps there was once an aspect of 'we know best, we know who India's allies should be, what their agriculture and family planning programs should involve.' Well, that's over, finished."<sup>50</sup> The Johnson administration had demonstrated what Moynihan saw as a typical liberal insensitivity to other nations' cultural pride in its attempt to deal with India's debt. Johnson had proposed to put the funds into an American directed educational trust to subsidize Indian higher education. Indians realized the humiliation of having a foreign power "take charge of and pay for their culture" and aborted the plan. American liberals, to their discredit in Moynihan's eyes, never did realize the cultural chauvinism inherent in their plan.<sup>51</sup>

India was at the time the most prominent member and *de facto* leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (N.A.M.). Formed in 1961 by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, this group's reason for being was its refusal to choose between the two superpowers that sought allegiance from weaker states. From the beginning the United States had refused to accept the doctrine of non-alignment, essentially ignoring the movement's existence and continuing its bilateral diplomacy as before. Seeing that his government's attitude was alienating the N.A.M.'s most powerful country and actually pushing it into the Soviet sphere of influence, Moynihan encouraged recognition of non-alignment, which Kissinger proceeded to do during his 1975 visit to India.<sup>52</sup> It came too late, Moynihan believed, as "true non-alignment" was no longer

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<sup>50</sup> *NYT*, 31 March 1974.

<sup>51</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> *NYT*, 3 November 1974, 6:1.

possible; India and its allies were part of an alignment “against the West and with the Soviets.”<sup>53</sup>

In seeking to understand the roots of this growing alliance between the Third World and the Soviet Union, Moynihan returned to the issue of authority and legitimacy. The problem was not that the Soviet Union was growing in power or authority (Moynihan tended to believe it to be weaker than usually portrayed), but that the United States was declining. Moynihan was in India in 1974, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Woodrow Wilson’s death, and commemorated it by writing a piece for *Commentary* on Wilson’s legacy, entitled “Was Woodrow Wilson Right?”<sup>54</sup> Taking a long view, Moynihan believed that America’s intellectual and moral influence on the world peaked with Wilson’s vision of a liberal democratic world order and had diminished ever since. The problem, which was reaching crisis proportions, had been exacerbated by the paternalistic approach taken by the American government, especially toward the developing world, and the failure in Vietnam. Not only had the world lost faith in Wilson’s ideals, which had become synonymous with American ideals, but so had Americans themselves.

Wilson was extraordinarily significant to Moynihan because he had simultaneously created a vision of the world as it should be at the beginning of a new era and defined an American self-image appropriate to that era. The Wilsonian ideal for the world was a community of nation-states based on self-determination and liberty. Wilson expanded the traditional American idea of citizenship and patriotism, “a matter not of blood and soil or religious faith, but of adherence to political norms,” to include “the duty to defend and, where feasible, to advance democratic principles in the world at large.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “Was Woodrow Wilson Right?”, *Commentary* (May 1974).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

In his essay on Wilson, Moynihan explicitly laid out the foundation for his approach to the world, which he would put into practice at the United Nations. He also anticipated the conflict that would arise with the person who would give him the job as ambassador, Henry Kissinger, and with the policy of *détente* Kissinger represented. The lack of Wilsonian faith in the conduct of foreign policy was the doing, Moynihan wrote, “of men who know too much to believe anything in particular and opt instead for accommodations of reasonableness and urbanity the drain our world position of moral purpose.”<sup>56</sup> Moynihan was attempting to tread the fine line between two evils, moralism and moral neutrality. In doing this he believed he was on the side of the majority of the American and the world’s population, who believed in Wilson’s ideals even if they didn’t know who Woodrow Wilson was. It was the fault of elites for not exerting proper leadership that American foreign policy had gone astray.

Moynihan was a firm believer in the correctness of Wilson’s ideals, but skeptical of their sustainability in view of his pessimism about the direction the world was taking. He had been in India while Indira Gandhi slowly suspended civil liberties until Indian democracy was basically authoritarian. With tongue in cheek he congratulated Gerald Ford that during his presidency the United States had become the world’s largest democracy, now that India had become a form of dictatorship.<sup>57</sup> Not only India, but the world at large was becoming less democratic during this period. Samuel Huntington has described the process of worldwide democratization in the modern period as taking place in three long “waves,” during which the numbers of democratic countries tended to rise and fall together. The 1970s, the time Moynihan was observing the decline of freedom in India, was at the trough of one of these waves. In 1962, the peak of a previous wave, 36 of 111, or 32 percent of countries in the world, had been democratic. In 1973,

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>57</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 74.

the democracies had declined to only 30 while the number of states had grown to 122, leaving only 25 percent of the world as democratic.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of the decline in authority of democratic institutions, Moynihan advocated a fundamentally Wilsonian approach to the world, though condemning American tendencies towards “corrupt Wilsonianism” and “false moralism” that tended only to reinforce isolationist sentiment by creating unrealistic goals.<sup>59</sup> Moynihan went beyond Wilson in trying to defend the relevance of Wilson’s ideals, and in the process revealed both his background in the problems of ethnicity and politics and his belief in the interrelation of domestic and foreign affairs. “By the end of the century,” he wrote, “the United States will be a multi-ethnic nation the like of which even we have never imagined.... There will be no struggle for personal liberty [in the world] which will not affect American politics.” In order to make the internal problems inherent in this state of affairs bearable, the United States should “deliberately and consistently bring its influence to bear on behalf of those regimes which promise the largest degree of personal and national liberty.”<sup>60</sup> Thus Wilsonianism was necessary not just for ethical reasons and the perpetuation of international peace, but also for the preservation of the internal integrity of America itself.

In the piece on Wilson, Moynihan laid out his assessment of the state of the American soul: fundamentally good, though in moderate disarray and paralyzed by ambivalence. Soon after, and while still in India, he wrote another article for *Commentary* which filled in the other half of the picture, the state of the world, and got him his job as U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations.

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<sup>58</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 26.

<sup>59</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 22.

<sup>60</sup> Moynihan, “Was Woodrow Wilson Right?”, 30.

“The United States in Opposition” took an even longer view than the piece on Wilson, outlining in brief the history of the world during the modern era and predicting the course of the next several decades. The modern period, Moynihan wrote, was characterized by three great revolutions each of which had enormous consequences both for the individual countries involved and the rest of the world. The first was the “liberal revolution” of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, which included both the French and the American revolutions and institutionalized an international ideology of constitutional rights and individual liberty. The second was the Russian Revolution, the antithesis of its liberal predecessor and originator of the “totalitarian” ideal. The last, the “British Revolution,” was Moynihan’s own discovery and the primary concern of his essay.<sup>61</sup>

The British Revolution was essentially the rise of the Third World as an ideologically distinct entity. Since 1945, eighty-seven states had joined the United Nations, forty-seven of which were formerly British colonies. The British culture of the first half of the twentieth century had profoundly influenced both Britain’s former colonies and the rest of the new nations, and that influence was primarily in the form of socialist ideology. The British Revolution postulated by Moynihan was a synthesis of the previous communist and liberal revolutions, the new nations involved preferring the middle way of the welfare state to the two alternative models endorsed by the superpowers.

Moynihan’s definition of the new states’ ideology tidily explained many of the problems America was experiencing internationally at the time, especially in the United Nations. British socialism had been marked by an anti-American bias, dismissing the United States for being

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<sup>61</sup> Daniel Patrick Moynihan. “The United States in Opposition,” *Commentary* (March 1975), 35.

“capitalist and vulgar,” which explained why the new nations were so devoted to excoriating the United States at every possible opportunity.<sup>62</sup>

The London School of Economics, founded by Beatrice and Sydney Webb and run by Harold Laski, all founding members of the Fabian society, was basically a training school for the elite of what was to become the Third World during the first half of the twentieth century. British socialism, specifically Fabianism, was obsessed with the redistribution of wealth as opposed to wealth creation, and indifferent to the idea of economic growth.<sup>63</sup> The elites trained in London absorbed these ideas and then returned to their home countries. For countries influenced by these ideas, economic inequality was seen to be the result of capitalist exploitation and the solution was to take from the rich and give to the poor. An analogy was made between the exploitation of the working class by the industrial elite and the exploitation of the Third World by the imperialist, industrialized nations. This led Moynihan to a simple but far-reaching conclusion: the Third World’s disinterest in economic growth explained its poverty and its obsession with capitalist exploitation explained its anti-American bias.

Moynihan’s description of the Third World’s ideology described fairly well the rhetoric surrounding the issue of inequality at the United Nations. The idea that the West’s wealth was derived from its exploitation of the poorer nations was nothing new. Raul Prebisch, head of the United Nations Economic Committee on Latin America, had brought the idea to the international organization in the 1950s. He was the father of dependency theory, which posited that the developing world was being slowly strangled by the richer nations as the “terms of trade” between industrial goods produced in the West and primary commodities produced in the Third

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<sup>62</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 35.

<sup>63</sup> Moynihan, “The United States in Opposition,” 36.

World became increasingly disadvantageous to the poor.<sup>64</sup> Inspired by Prebisch's ideas, the General Assembly's Third World majority began in the 1960s to devote itself to the problems of economic development, combining it with another major concern, decolonization. Though decolonization was proceeding fairly rapidly, many representatives of the Third World felt that the old European colonialism was being replaced by "neocolonialism" in the form of Western economic penetration and domination of the poor nations. Just as the Non-Aligned Movement was the Third World's answer to the political divisions of the Cold War, the Group of 77, founded in 1964, was its answer to their economic grievances.<sup>65</sup> At each of its meetings, Algeria in 1964, India in 1968, Peru in 1971, the Group of 77 (grown to over 100 members by the 1970s) criticized the West, particularly the United States, for perpetuating an inequitable, neocolonial world order.

The tide of anti-American rhetoric was peaking as Moynihan wrote, thanks largely to the OPEC embargo and price hike of 1973, which completely changed the nature of the debate. The embargo was put in place after the outbreak in October 1973 of the Yom Kippur War between Israel, Syria, and Egypt. Only the United States and the Netherlands were specifically targeted for embargo since they were Israel's most prominent allies at the time, but producers also cut production and quadrupled the price of oil, causing oil shortages and rapid inflation all over the world.<sup>66</sup> In 1963, OPEC states received roughly 6 percent of the income of world trade, but thanks to their concerted action that share had more than doubled to nearly 16 percent in 1974.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Peter Klaren and Thomas Bossert, eds., *Promise of Development: Theories of Change in Latin America* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), 6.

<sup>65</sup> Tony Smith, "Changing Configurations of Power in North-South Relations since 1945," *International Organization*, 31, no. 1 (Winter 1977), 4-6.

<sup>66</sup> Jyoti Shankar Singh, *A New International Economic Order: Toward a Fair Redistribution of the World's Resources* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), 7.

<sup>67</sup> Smith, 4.



With OPEC having exhibited the power of solidarity amongst exporters of primary products, the issue was no longer merely demands for equity but threats, implied and explicit, which were already having palpable consequences in the form of a Western energy crisis. The Third World was suddenly on the world map as an autonomous entity with an agenda of its own. The American policy elite, which was Moynihan's audience, began to see the new nations as more than potential dominoes waiting to fall under communist control.

Moynihan cataloged the injurious rhetoric coming out of the United Nations and its various organs such as that contained in the 1970 World Social Report, which assessed the internal justice of states based on the amount of dissent. The U.S. and Western Europe were ranked among the least just because the social protests there were more visible than in states like the Soviet Union, whose apparent tranquility made it "the very embodiment of a just state."<sup>68</sup> At the United Nations World Population Conference in 1974, the Chinese proposed a theory of "consumerism," which held that the problems of the Third World were due to "excessive consumption in the developed world." The supposed "vulgar affluence" of the West and its "colonial denudation" of the East led easily to the conclusion that "the wealth of the world should be redistributed."<sup>69</sup>

Condemning the United Nations for devising such a topsy-turvy view of things, Moynihan was even more distressed at the complacent reaction of America's representatives. He attributed to them a guilt complex similar to that which he had seen in liberals who had welcomed and even encouraged urban rioting during the previous decade. At a conference in Stockholm called the Population Tribune, "ritual recantation became the order of the day as one notable [American] after another confessed to the class-bound past which had blinded him to the

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<sup>68</sup> Moynihan. "The United States in Opposition," 36.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

infinitely bright future.”<sup>70</sup> This sort of behavior had disastrous consequences, Moynihan believed, encouraging countries to look for scapegoats for problems that could really only be solved by restructuring their own economies, not by redistributing the world’s wealth.

Moynihan asserted that international liberalism was facing the same crisis in the ‘70s that American liberalism had faced in the ‘60s, a deprecation of its usefulness without any assessment of its achievements. Writing about the state of the world economy, he echoed his memos to Nixon on urban problems, which had repeatedly urged optimism in the assessment of the progress being made toward racial equality. He felt it should be made known that “until the dislocations caused by OPEC ... things were better than they had been.”<sup>71</sup> The liberal economic order was not the real problem, flawed though it might be, and should not be done away with. The problem was that the United States was too slow to realize that it was coming under attack, and had yet to formulate a coherent defense.

The solution he proposed was contained in the title of his essay: the United States should go into “opposition” at the United Nations, no longer turning the other cheek to the insults being thrown at it. The first step was taken care of by Moynihan’s essay itself: the distinct ideology of the Third World had to be recognized in order to be dealt with, and a competing ideology formulated. Moynihan took the first steps in the direction of the new ideology to be defended, which was not especially new except in its explicit formulation for use at the United Nations. He summed it up in a quote from an Israeli socialist, who said that “those nations which have put liberty ahead of equality have ended up doing better by equality than those with the reverse priority.”<sup>72</sup> This notion was to be gotten across by whatever means possible to the Third World,

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 44

which was split between a reverence for the liberty represented by the West and the collectivism represented by the Soviet Union.

The United States had always shown a bias towards rights of political and civil liberty at the United Nations, as opposed to those of economic and social equality. It was after all at the behest of the United States that the Human Rights Covenant was split into two separate documents, one on political rights which it endorsed and one on social rights which it opposed. Moynihan's innovation was to assert that these two aspects of the human rights conundrum be rejoined, but with liberal rights subsuming the social as *sine qua non*.

Further, instead of pleading no contest to the charges leveled against it, the United States should take the offensive, to the point that "the American spokesman came to be feared in international forums for the truths he might tell."<sup>73</sup> The members of the Third World derived their legitimacy from paying lip service to the ideals of liberal democracy. Moynihan believed that the United States could gain authority by pointing out the distance of most nations from the ideals they professed. The imperfection of American society was to be acknowledged while at the same time maintaining that the reality there more nearly met the professed ideal than anywhere else.

Moynihan's essay had an almost instantaneous impact. The combination of convincing analysis, call for revived national pride, and program of action apparently resonated in the political culture. Good publicity helped too: Norman Podhoretz held a press conference in honor of the essay's publication. Kissinger soon called Moynihan, saying that he "suddenly felt he understood what was going on out there."<sup>74</sup> Within weeks Moynihan was rumored to become

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 42

<sup>74</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 50.

the next ambassador to the United Nations and his impending replacement of Ambassador John Scali was announced in April.<sup>75</sup>

By May, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was holding its first hearings on U.S.-U.N. policy in twenty years, with Moynihan's ideas and imminent nomination as permanent representative to the United Nations as the chief object of debate. Former U.N. ambassadors Henry Cabot Lodge, Arthur Goldberg, and Charles Yost all appeared before the committee, along with individuals with some expertise on the United Nations or international organizations. Though many disagreed with some particulars of Moynihan's analysis, the former ambassadors in particular taking affront to the implication that they had not done their jobs properly, a general consensus emerged that the United States was in need of a new approach to the United Nations, especially regarding the Third World.

“Interdependence” was the concept most often discussed; the Senators and those testifying before them were concerned about the power of an organization like OPEC to disrupt the U.S. economy. They looked beyond OPEC as well to the potential power of other commodity cartels, especially in the African nations which held near monopolies in several strategically valuable minerals. On June 7, Moynihan was unanimously approved to become permanent representative to the United Nations.<sup>76</sup>

The first task Moynihan faced at the United Nations was the Seventh Special Session of the General Assembly, which was dedicated to the problem of international development. The Sixth Special Session, held in 1974 on the same theme, had seen the introduction of the concept of a “New International Economic Order” (NIEO) into international discourse. It lumped

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<sup>75</sup> *NYT*, 21 April 1975, 1:7.

<sup>76</sup> *Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate Ninety-Fourth Congress: United States and the United Nations* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975)

together every demand of the developing world, calling for more equitable representation in international economic institutions, more Western developmental assistance, and technological transfers from the north to the south. Most broadly conceived, it was an expression of a desire for a “world social contract.”<sup>77</sup> One of the more controversial documents that was integrated into the NIEO was the “Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States,” which had been proposed by President Luis Echeverria of Mexico in 1972. It was an attempt to strengthen national sovereignty over resources, legitimizing their expropriation by governments and calling for reparations by “colonial and neocolonial” powers.<sup>78</sup> It was the single most coherent statement of the desire for redistribution of international power and wealth, amounting basically to a threat of confiscation of Western assets if some reformative action were not taken.

The Sixth Session had been generally regarded as a failure, thanks to the inability to reach any sort of compromise between the demands of the Third World and the resistance of the developed countries. American Ambassador John Scali had condemned the “tyranny of the majority” of the Third World, which insisted on passing resolutions in the General Assembly that the developed countries wholly opposed but which could not be carried out without the cooperation of both parties. Kissinger spoke contemptuously of producer cartels like OPEC, saying that none benefited “from basing progress on tests of strength.”<sup>79</sup> The Seventh Special Session was an attempt to make progress out of the previous year’s stalemate.

In the first days of the session, Moynihan delivered in Kissinger’s name a speech he and Kissinger had worked on together that was considered by many to be an about face in U.S. economic policy. The British ambassador to the United Nations called it “the most significant

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<sup>77</sup> David B. H. DeNoon, *The New International Economic Order: A U.S. Response* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 6.

<sup>78</sup> Karl P. Sauvant and Hajo Hasenpflug, eds, *New International Economic Order: Confrontation or Cooperation Between North and South?* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977), 100.

<sup>79</sup> *United Nations General Assembly Sixth Special Session, Plenary Meetings* (New York: United Nations, 1975), 17.

American speech on economic policy since the Marshall Plan.”<sup>80</sup> The concessions to Third World demands were numerous. Most important were an increase in the International Monetary Fund’s ability to provide development assistance, a grain reserve to provide emergency food aid, and a tariff restructuring on the part of the developed countries to favor raw materials and manufactures from developing countries.<sup>81</sup>

The concrete economic proposals were the work of the Treasury Department, but the political ideas were restatements of the doctrines expressed in “The United States in Opposition.” Though the main concern was the international economic structure, a restatement of Moynihan’s hierarchy of values appeared as well: “One of the ironies of our time is that systems based on the doctrine of materialism, that promised economic justice, have lagged in raising economic welfare.”<sup>82</sup> In other words, political liberty was not only a good in itself, but also delivered prosperity. His emphasis on the importance of optimism about the power of a liberal world order was present as well. “Many developing countries,” he said, “have been increasing their per capita incomes at far faster rates than obtained historically in Europe and North America at comparable stages of growth.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore, completely restructuring the world economy could actually harm the Third World rather than benefit it.

The lessons of Moynihan’s Indian experience were evident: “Methods of development assistance of the 1950s and 1960s are no longer adequate. They are less acceptable to the developing world because they have seemed to create a relationship of charity and dependency.”<sup>84</sup> There were also nods to the question of guilt. Not only were they not “charity,”

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<sup>80</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 131.

<sup>81</sup> *NYT*, 2 September 1975, 20:1.

<sup>82</sup> *United Nations General Assembly Seventh Special Session, Plenary Meetings, 2327<sup>th</sup>* (New York: United Nations, 1975), 5.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

the economic concessions of the developed world should not be “received as due,” as reparations for exploitation.<sup>85</sup> Instead of acknowledging the culpability of the developed states, he tried to draw attention to the irony that “the most devastating blow to economic development in this decade came not from ‘imperial rapacity’ but from an arbitrary, monopolistic price increase by the cartel of oil exporters.”<sup>86</sup> Despite the jabs at OPEC, the tone of the speech was one of negotiation, not of acquiescence or intransigent confrontation. In exchange for a moderate reformation of the world economy, the developed world expected moderation in the behavior of energy cartels.

On his own initiative, Moynihan created a working paper that synthesized Kissinger’s compromises with a draft resolution devised by the non-aligned bloc.<sup>87</sup> The original Third World proposal was in the hostile tradition of the Sixth Session, so Moynihan proceeded to subtly reword it so as to preserve the substance of the demands without the divisive rhetoric. Instead of the veiled threat of language that said that “accelerated development” of the poor nations “would best promote world peace and security,” he substituted “world harmony and well-being.”<sup>88</sup> Moynihan believed that in a body like the General Assembly, with no actual power to legislate, semantics and symbolic language were most important. It was the American delegation’s ignorance of such things that had allowed things to get out of hand in the first place.

There was more at stake than mere words. Moynihan even went so far as to attempt to secure presidential authorization for a commitment to provide 0.7 percent of the country’s GNP to foreign assistance, a goal set by the developing nations in the ‘60s on which the United States

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>87</sup> *Financial Times*, September 9, 1975.

<sup>88</sup> Leonard Garment, *Crazy Rhythm* (New York: Random House, 1997), 306.

fell well short. This action was vetoed by Kissinger, however, according to Moynihan because he had attempted to go over Kissinger's head to the president.<sup>89</sup>

The General Assembly voted unanimously for the compromise resolution on the last day of the special session, making that session considerably more successful than the one preceding it, in which the developed and developing countries had been divided. The outcome was believed to represent "a shift in United States policy from bilateral toward multilateral aid."<sup>90</sup> It continued the trend in the Nixon/Kissinger foreign policy towards a decentralization of power, this time not just through bilateral but also multilateral diplomacy. The idea was to preserve the legitimacy of the international order by co-opting certain of the Third World's demands into the old order, rather than assenting to the creation of some unspecified "new order." Moynihan's ideas had been proven correct thus far, that it was possible for the United States to defend itself and negotiate with the Third World at the same time, and he concluded that "the system works."<sup>91</sup>

Moynihan displayed little of the combativeness towards the Third World during the special session that he would become known for. He participated in the granting of unprecedented concessions to the developing nations' demands, even attempting to be more conciliatory than Kissinger strictly favored. Moynihan refused complete accommodation and compromise, however, reflecting his insistence that the United States was intending to go into "opposition," especially on points of its national self-image. The one moral point he repeatedly insisted upon was that he would not allow the developing nations to blame the United States for

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<sup>89</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 137.

<sup>90</sup> *NYT*, 2 September, 1975, 45:2. On the growing emphasis on multilateral aid, see *U.S. Participation in Multilateral Development Lending Institutions*, July 8, 1975, Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, House (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975).

<sup>91</sup> *United Nations General Assembly Seventh Special Session, Plenary Meetings, 2349<sup>th</sup>*, 6.



international inequality and injustice.<sup>92</sup> He maintained that as Americans, “we aren’t guilty any more than any other nation, any other people in the world.... We don’t feel our record is anything to be ashamed of. Have we been perfect as a society? Certainly not.”<sup>93</sup>

While participating in an unprecedented commitment of the country to working through multilateral organs at the Seventh Special Session, Moynihan was also formulating a new approach to multilateral forums, especially the United Nations. As part of his attempt to make the State Department take the symbolic votes of the General Assembly more seriously, he authored a paper for Kissinger entitled “Bilateral Traditions and Multilateral Realities: A New Approach to Relations with Sixty-four Countries.”<sup>94</sup> The “sixty-four countries” he had in mind were countries with which the United States had little bilateral concern, i.e. a very small economic or strategic interest, but each of which still held a single vote in the General Assembly. In the interest of turning the U.S. opposition at the United Nations into the majority it once was, he proposed that a careful record be kept of these countries’ voting patterns and that pressure, diplomatic and economic, be exerted on them in order to change their voting behavior.

Though he singled out only sixty-four countries as having primarily “multilateral” relations with the United States, Moynihan believed his emphasis on countries’ behavior in international organizations should apply to more than just those relatively minor states. One of the reasons he came to the conclusion that bilateral/multilateral relations were in need of restructuring was the realization when he came to the United Nations that India had been in part responsible for the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. In July 1973, India’s ambassador had proposed a resolution before the Security Council that rebuked Israel for its occupation of Arab territory and asserted that any Middle East settlement must protect the rights of

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<sup>92</sup> *NYT*, 15 September, 1975, 1:1.

<sup>93</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 139.

<sup>94</sup> Reprinted in *Ibid.*, 106-110.

Palestinians. The United States vetoed the resolution because of its strong language and bias against Israel, leaving the Egyptians with the feeling that they had no other recourse but war since the United States had expressed opposition to the Arabs' most fundamental claims. India had created the resolution out of solidarity with the Arab cause, but Moynihan felt that through bilateral negotiations the Indian government might have been convinced to moderate the resolution's language. Moynihan had been ambassador to India at the time, but he lamented that "no one in Washington ever asked us in New Delhi to try to stop the Indians."<sup>95</sup>

Moynihan's design for restructuring the approach to multilateral organizations was implemented in January 1976 in reaction to one of the most controversial resolutions the General Assembly ever passed.<sup>96</sup> The previous October, a resolution sponsored by several Arab nations had been passed in the General Assembly's Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee. Designed to associate Israel with international pariah regimes like South Africa and Rhodesia, the crux of the resolution was the statement that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination."<sup>97</sup> According to Moynihan, the resolution had frightening implications because racism was "the one doctrine that the existing world political community had outlawed."<sup>98</sup> By declaring Zionism, the nationalist movement which created the state of Israel, to be illegal, the legitimacy of Israel would be denied.

Moynihan caused a stir at the same time the resolution was being considered by calling the Ugandan leader Idi Amin a "racist murderer" after a speech Amin had given at the United Nations that criticized the United States for being a tool of Zionists and the enemy of "freedom,

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>96</sup> *NYT*, 9 January, 1976, 1:1.

<sup>97</sup> *UN Chronicle*, 12, no. 11, (Dec. 1975), 37.

<sup>98</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 172.

peace, and justice in the world.”<sup>99</sup> The offense to Amin was not welcomed by the African states, and Moynihan had compounded the insult by saying that it was “no accident” that Amin was then acting president of the Organization of African Unity, when in fact it had only been Uganda’s turn to hold the office which rotated among the O.A.U.’s members.<sup>100</sup>

After unsuccessful attempts to postpone consideration of the resolution for a year, it passed the General Assembly with 70 in favor, 29 opposed, and 27 abstaining.<sup>101</sup> Even though the margin was far closer than many of the votes against Israel in the General Assembly, in which the United States and Israel were often the only dissenters, Moynihan was blamed for the resolution’s being passed at all. It has been said that his antagonistic attitude towards the Third World, especially African nations, caused them to vote in favor of a resolution they were otherwise skeptical about.<sup>102</sup> When the resolution passed, Moynihan declared that the “the United States rises to declare before the General Assembly and before the world, that it does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act.”<sup>103</sup> The resolution was a “terrible lie,” perpetrated with “shameless openness.”<sup>104</sup>

Moynihan had come to the United Nations with the idea of revitalizing the General Assembly by focusing on the issues of liberal democracy and human rights. The legitimacy of liberal ideals were being called into question at the United Nations, while the legitimacy of the United Nations was being questioned by an American public distressed by the hostility towards its values propagated there. The Zionism resolution was dangerous, Moynihan felt, because it

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<sup>99</sup> *NYT*, 4 October 1975. 1:4.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 October 1975, 2:3; Hodgson, 241.

<sup>101</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 185.

<sup>102</sup> *Newsweek*, 24 November 1975, 48; Finger, 243.

<sup>103</sup> *United Nations General Assembly, 30<sup>th</sup> Session, Plenary meetings, Vol. 3* (New York: United Nations, 1975), 795.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 795.

abused the values preserved in the U.N. Charter, and could cause a disastrous turn in public opinion away from the United Nations.

Zionism was not and could not be a “racist” doctrine, Moynihan explained to the General Assembly. As a national liberation movement, it defined its membership not in terms of birth but of belief.<sup>105</sup> The idea that Jews were a race was a creation of anti-Semites in the nineteenth century, and propagated in the twentieth by groups such as the Nazis. In a final and tragic irony, the General Assembly was stating that Zionism, by being racist, “is a form of nazism,” because in many of the U.N. reports on racism the two are inextricably linked. To Moynihan, this was a perversion of the language and ideals on which the General Assembly was founded. If racism, one of the most important concepts in the U.N.’s human rights lexicon, could be abused, so too could “national self-determination” or any of the world community’s other ideals.<sup>106</sup>

Thanks to the dangerous precedent set by the majority of the General Assembly, Moynihan feared that “the damage we now do to the idea of human rights and the language of human rights could well be irreversible.”<sup>107</sup> Thus, before the General Assembly’s session had really even begun Moynihan felt he was being hindered from carrying out his primary goal at the United Nations. He had suggested in “The United States in Opposition” that the country should make the cause of liberty its international ideology. In that interest, he and his staff decided to make the cause of universal human rights and liberal democracy the theme of the thirtieth General Assembly.<sup>108</sup> After the passage of the Zionism resolution, the optimism and accommodating attitude Moynihan had shown at the Seventh Special Session began to turn into bitterness. He began to sense an inability to communicate his ideals in a General Assembly that

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 797.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 798.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 798.

<sup>108</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 72; Garment, 305.

could embrace such a resolution. He nevertheless began a shift in U.S. policy at the United Nations towards a more activist, universal stance on human rights.

When defending Israel against the anti-Zionism resolution, he had declared that one of the reasons the United States was so concerned with the attempt to “delegitimize” Israel was because Israel, whatever its flaws, was one of the few practicing liberal democracies in the world.<sup>109</sup> By singling it out for censure, the United Nations was practicing a double standard, since so many other regimes were guilty of crimes against their own people. The same was true for South Africa and Chile, whose political prisoners were more often the subject of the General Assembly’s debate and censure than those of any other states.<sup>110</sup> In the interest of creating a more universal concern for human rights, Moynihan developed a resolution calling for a general amnesty for all political prisoners, in every country. It was obviously an impractical proposal, but it served an important purpose. Speaking before the Third Committee, he pointed out that, of 60 cosponsors to a resolution attacking South Africa’s political prisoners, 23 had political prisoners of their own. The purpose of his universalized proposal was to point out that “unless we care about political prisoners everywhere, we don’t care about them anywhere.”<sup>111</sup> The resolution was eventually dropped, after being weighed down with amendments by the Third World.<sup>112</sup> Though it failed, it had been the first attempt in decades by the United States mission to put human rights on the international agenda on its own terms, rather than reacting to the Third World’s biased attempts to single out only its enemies.

In his speech calling for an international amnesty for political prisoners, Moynihan made clear that one of the countries the resolution was aimed at was the Soviet Union by quoting

<sup>109</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 172.

<sup>110</sup> On this, see Jack Donnelly, “Human Rights at the United Nations 1955-85: The Question of Bias,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 32, No. 3 (Sept. 1988), 285.

<sup>111</sup> Speech before Third Committee, 11 November 1975, reprinted in Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 205-208.

<sup>112</sup> *NYT*, 1 February 1976, 18:3.

Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, prompting the Soviet ambassador to walk out of the Assembly.<sup>113</sup> He was not attempting, however, to return to the pre-détente policy of criticizing the Soviet Union while overlooking the failings of states friendly to America. As part of the attempt to universalize the human rights issue by showing that the United States would criticize its allies as well as its enemies, U.S. delegate Clarence Mitchell made what Moynihan called “the strongest indictment ever of South African policies by the United States.”<sup>114</sup> Mitchell’s first speech denouncing apartheid and the jailing of its political opponents took place in the Special Political Committee.<sup>115</sup> The speech was significant enough to prompt South African Prime Minister John Vorster to repudiate Mitchell’s claims that South Africa regularly jailed opponents of apartheid, calling them a “downright lie.”<sup>116</sup> The General Assembly’s regular, almost ritual, denunciations of apartheid were not considered significant enough to warrant the South African government’s attention. It was only when a delegate of the United States, often one of South Africa’s few allies in the General Assembly and Security Council, spoke out against that country’s racial problems that it received attention.

After Vorster’s public condemnation of the United States, Moynihan and Mitchell prepared an even more detailed examination of South Africa’s apartheid policies, which Mitchell presented before the full session of the General Assembly in November.<sup>117</sup> Instead of basing their criticism, as was the usual practice at the United Nations, on the fact that apartheid was a legacy of imperialism and colonialism, the condemnation was built around South Africa’s failure to live up to its professed ideal of liberal democracy. Mitchell asserted that “the South African

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 December 1975, 4:3.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 November 1975, 34:4.

<sup>115</sup> *United Nations General Assembly, 30<sup>th</sup> Session, Special Political Committee* (New York: United Nations, 1975), 14.

<sup>116</sup> *NYT*, 30 November 1975, 7:1.

<sup>117</sup> *United Nations: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations* (Washington : U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1976), 65.

Government has the form, but for over 80 percent of its people little of the substance of democracy.”<sup>118</sup> Not only was the ideal of popular sovereignty lacking in South Africa, but its laws were illegitimate as well, because the “system of detention and repression is built into the legal structure of that country itself. There is a system of political laws, which are designed to stifle and intimidate political opposition; laws that make criminal acts which are not criminal in any free society. Indeed, such acts as form the lifeblood of democracy are considered criminal in South Africa.”<sup>119</sup>

Instead of welcoming the attempts by the U.S. delegation to apply a universal standard, the General Assembly’s majority continued to put forth resolutions and documents condemning individual states, even the United States itself. In December, a report by the Special Political Committee called on the General Assembly to “Strongly condemn the military and naval activities of the United States on Guam as they are detrimental to the inherent rights of the peoples of this Territory to self-determination.”<sup>120</sup> Moynihan’s reaction was caustic. As American citizens, the people of Guam had an elected governor, legislature, and freedom of expression, “something the majority of the members of the Special Committee do not have, which is perhaps why they do not recognize the working of a democracy when they see it.”<sup>121</sup>

In his final speech before the General Assembly in January, Moynihan roundly condemned the thirtieth session as a failure. Referring to the Zionism resolution, he said that the Assembly had been “the scene of acts which we regard as abominations.”<sup>122</sup> He essentially admitted his own failure in the attempt to endow the Assembly with some legitimacy, saying that

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<sup>118</sup> *United Nations General Assembly, 30<sup>th</sup> Session, Plenary meetings, Vol. 3*, 1050.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 1050.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 1265.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 1177.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 1376.

“the Assembly has not attained to anything like the degree of acceptance and authority among its constituent members that warrants any transfer of genuine power of a parliamentary nature.”<sup>123</sup>

The reason for this was “the essential incompatibility of the system of government which the Charter assumes will rule the majority of its members, and the system of government to which the majority in fact adheres.”<sup>124</sup> Since the majority of U.N. members were not liberal democracies, they could not properly participate in the world forum. By the end of the session, Moynihan had almost completely abandoned the ideas which had brought him there. From the original combination of confrontation and negotiation, negotiation had been eliminated.

In his first speech before the General Assembly, he told the Third World that “we have heard your voices.”<sup>125</sup> Six months later, he was grudgingly admitting that he didn’t appreciate what those voices were saying. He did however maintain his belief that the General Assembly could and should devote itself to the cause of human rights. The only substantive progress he could point to was the unanimous adoption of resolution 3453, condemning torture and other cruel and unnecessary punishments.<sup>126</sup> He also felt the United States had set a precedent in its indictment of South Africa, “we named prisoners, we specified dates, we cited statutes,” which went beyond the General Assembly’s usual ideologically driven condemnations.<sup>127</sup> He also promised that the United States would continue its pursuit of a general amnesty for political prisoners.

The Third World did not know how to take Moynihan’s style. He was criticized by the African press for alleged his insults against them, accused by one Ugandan newspaper of

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 1377.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 1376.

<sup>125</sup> *United Nations General Assembly Seventh Special Session, Plenary Meetings, 2349<sup>th</sup>*, 15.

<sup>126</sup> *United Nations General Assembly, 30<sup>th</sup> Session, Plenary meetings, Vol. 3*, 1378.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 1378.



“diplomatic insanity.”<sup>128</sup> Though most Third World diplomats did not agree with his positions, especially those critical of their domestic policies, many welcomed his willingness to take them seriously as states whose voices mattered. According to one diplomat, Moynihan was welcome because “for the first time an American politician is treating us as responsible adults” rather than neurotic children.<sup>129</sup>

In America, Moynihan’s style of diplomacy at the United Nations was both praised and criticized as well. The British Ambassador to the United Nations, Ivor Richard, had caused a stir when he criticized Moynihan for practicing diplomacy as if in the Wild West.<sup>130</sup> An editorial in the *New York Times* by the authoritative insider James Reston asserted that, for political reasons (Moynihan’s immense popularity during an election year), Ford and Kissinger “supported [Moynihan] in public and deplored him in private.”<sup>131</sup> Moynihan took the editorial to be an attempt by Kissinger to nudge him out of office after his purpose had been served.<sup>132</sup> President Ford accepted Moynihan’s resignation in January 1976.

The press gave mixed reviews, some arguing that he had been too combative in his approach to the Third World and consequently had driven some away from the American position.<sup>133</sup> The general consensus, though, was that, whatever his shortcomings, he had done well in bringing much needed attention to the United Nations.<sup>134</sup> Not only that, but his ideological stance in favor of “liberty” had proved to be immensely popular. Upon rumors that Moynihan might resign, one congressman wrote President Ford that if he was forced to quit then

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<sup>128</sup> *NYT*, 14 October 1975, 5:1.

<sup>129</sup> Bernard Lewis, “A Dangerous Place,” *Commentary* (March 1979).

<sup>130</sup> *NYT*, 21 November 1975, 3:4.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 January 1976, 29:5.

<sup>132</sup> Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 274-277.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 November 1975, 37:2; *Newsweek*, 24 November 1975, pg 48.

<sup>134</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 12 January 1976, 1:1; *Journal of Commerce*, 4 February 1976, 4:1; *The Economist*, 7 February 1976, pg. 11.

“Congress will decide that the United States will leave the United Nations.”<sup>135</sup> At the hearings for Moynihan’s successor, former Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton, the debate centered on whether Moynihan’s “abrasive tone” was most appropriate at the United Nations. Even those who thought he might have been overly zealous in his defense of liberal principles agreed that Moynihan “did a great deal to improve the internal morale in this country.”<sup>136</sup> According to Senator Charles Percy, Moynihan “more than any US rep to the UN since Ambassador Lodge excited public opinion about the problems and opportunities presented to American foreign policy in the world forum.”<sup>137</sup>

Moynihan ended up inadvertently inspiring the next administration, that of Jimmy Carter, in its pursuit of human rights in foreign policy. In the Republican primaries, Reagan cited Moynihan as an exemplar of the kind of ideological foreign policy that the country should follow and nearly gained the nomination from the incumbent Ford. In the general election Carter took up the theme of human rights and morality as well after seeing its success against Ford, who was associated with the amoral foreign policy of Kissinger and Nixon. Once Carter won the election, he made human rights a central feature of his foreign policy because of its power to appeal to both the right and left ends of the political spectrum.<sup>138</sup>

William Scranton succeeded Moynihan at the United Nations, and kept a much lower profile than his predecessor. Moynihan had proved that the United Nations was a formidable place to conduct public, ideological diplomacy, though, and the next two administrations ended up making it an important aspect of their foreign policy. Ambassadors Andrew Young and Jeane

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<sup>135</sup> *NYT*, November 23, 1975, 21:1.

<sup>136</sup> *United Nations: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 1976, pg. 21.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>138</sup> Elizabeth Drew, “A Reporter at Large: Human Rights,” *New Yorker*, 18 July 1977, 41; See also Tony Smith, *America’s Mission: the United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 268.

Kirkpatrick continued the Moynihan tradition of speaking out independently at the United Nations and using their post to shape policy. They both also carried on the substance of Moynihan's approach, though reshaping it to fit their agendas.

From 1971 to 1976, Moynihan transformed himself in a surprisingly short period from an expert on domestic issues into an important figure in foreign policy. His concern about a crisis in authority within America and his hierarchy of liberty and equality, first formulated in "The Negro Family," became the basis for his attempt to a renewal of Wilsonian ideals as the basis of American foreign policy. Beginning with a brief stay at the United Nations and a longer period as ambassador to India, he began to critique U.S. foreign policy in the same terms and with many of the same proposed solutions with which he had earlier critiqued the liberal domestic programs of the Great Society. This culminated in a brief but highly influential tenure at the United Nations, where he tried to reinvigorate the U.S. mission there with an ideological agenda that would, for the first time in over a decade, make the United Nations and especially its General Assembly an important part of U.S. foreign policy.

## EPILOGUE

### Andrew Young and Jeane Kirkpatrick after Moynihan

During Moynihan's time there, the United Nations was given a new importance for U.S. foreign policy in dealing with the growing power of the Third World. The policy he followed there was a combination of confrontation and conciliation. He favored meeting the Third World half way on many of its demands, especially for economic justice, while insisting that the United States preserve its ideological integrity by asserting a revived form of Wilsonian morality. Although he was criticized as being too harsh on the developing world, his criticisms of their excesses also signaled a new realization of the new nations' importance as legitimate actors. In attempting to formulate a new internationalist ideology, he made human rights the center of U.S. policy at the United Nations. The complexity of the problem of human rights caused numerous problems for succeeding administrations, but it was too popular and important an issue to ignore.

Though Moynihan had attempted to apply a standard of human rights that applied to all nations, the Carter and Reagan administrations took what was essentially a centrist position and divided it into two opposing ideologies. The Carter administration's policy, of which Andrew Young became the spokesman at the United Nations, was to attempt to apply the human rights standard universally. However, Carter and Young downplayed the importance of competition with the Soviet Union and focused instead on trying to improve human rights conditions in the developing world, especially southern Africa. They also were more receptive to the Third

World's demands for recognition of economic and social in addition to political rights than previous administrations had been.

Though they carried it out in a very different manner, Carter and Young continued Moynihan's tradition of trying to apply a balanced standard of human rights. Reagan and his U.N. ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick then turned this policy upside down, claiming that Carter's human rights initiatives only hurt and alienated America's allies and increased the power of the Soviet Union in the Third World. They rejected the concept of economic rights altogether, focusing instead only on political rights. Though Kirkpatrick's time at the United Nations was seen by many as a return to the Moynihan era of confrontation, unlike Moynihan she actually endorsed a selective approach to the Third World and human rights that returned to the policies of the early Cold War.

Andrew Young was characterized by both friends and enemies as the antithesis of Moynihan at the United Nations. Those who appreciated Moynihan's sometimes belligerent attitude lamented that Young's approach was too conciliatory towards the Third World and the Soviet Union.<sup>139</sup> Others felt that Moynihan had only succeeded in alienating potential allies and made diplomacy at the United Nations more difficult, and so welcomed Young's sympathetic posture.<sup>140</sup> In fact, even though Young took Moynihan's approach in different directions, the two had much more in common than is generally perceived.

Young and Moynihan both began their work in national politics dealing with the problems of race and inequality in America in the 1960s. While Moynihan, as Assistant Secretary of Labor, had been part of the federal government's policy making apparatus, Young

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<sup>139</sup>Walter Laqueur, "The World and President Carter," *Commentary*, (February 1978).

<sup>140</sup> Finger, 245.

began at the grass roots level and worked his way up. Young was one of the more moderate leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference during the Civil Rights movement, and constantly emphasized the need for increased economic development in the black community and cooperation with the white community.<sup>141</sup> His fellow workers at the SCLC even jokingly called him “Uncle Tom” because of his eagerness for compromise and negotiation.<sup>142</sup>

At the United Nations, Young was welcomed by the Third World because of his seeming openness to their demands. There were limits to that openness, however. Despite giving the impression of an unprecedented willingness to listen to radical voices, especially in the struggle for liberation in southern Africa, he maintained that the progressive, capitalist model that had succeeded in America would be most beneficial in the struggle against apartheid. Young, like Moynihan, criticized many Third World ideologues for holding a “no-growth” attitude towards development as a reaction to the perceived injustices of capitalism. He insisted upon the liberal capitalist tenet that societies must “create and grow or die.”<sup>143</sup> He also preached the usefulness of international economic integration and the power for initiating change held by large multinational corporations, ideas with which many African leaders were uncomfortable. He asserted that, during the civil rights struggle in America, corporations actually gave the movement “our first impetus for freedom and support.”<sup>144</sup> What had worked in the American South could work in southern Africa as well.

Moynihan had gone to the United Nations with the explicit goal of acknowledging the “moral failings” of the United States while maintaining that the liberal capitalist model it

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<sup>141</sup> Adam Fairclough, *To redeem the soul of America: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 44.

<sup>142</sup> H.E. Newsum, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Southern Africa: Andrew Young and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), 10.

<sup>143</sup> Lee Clement, ed., *Andrew Young at the United Nations* (Salisbury, N.C.: Documentary Publications, 1978), 34.

<sup>144</sup> Finger, 264.

represented was superior, and this was Young's ambition as well. For both men, the legacy of Vietnam was a fundamental problem that had to be dealt with before America could regain its moral credibility. Martin Luther King's outspoken opposition to the Vietnam War had a profound influence on Young. King had condemned the proposition that America was fighting for freedom in Vietnam while its own citizens suffered from poverty and discrimination. Young felt that he was continuing the legacy of King at the United Nations by preaching the virtues of peace and non-violent change.

Moynihan had encouraged Kissinger to allow North and South Vietnam admission to the United Nations as a way to "regain the sense of pride that existed before the Vietnam War."<sup>145</sup> He felt that vetoing their admission would be a petty act not befitting a great power, while allowing them in would be a symbolic way to move beyond a shameful past. He was instructed though to veto their admission on the basis that South Korea was not admitted as well.<sup>146</sup> One of the few things that Young insisted upon in his Senate confirmation hearings was that North and South Vietnam should be approved in their applications for membership.<sup>147</sup> He too felt that allowing them too join the United Nations would be a way to move beyond the legacy of Vietnam. This time the Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, and President Carter agreed, and Vietnam's application for U.N. membership was approved.<sup>148</sup>

Young agreed wholeheartedly with Moynihan's argument in "The United States in Opposition" that the Third World should be approached from outside the Cold War anti-communist framework. Based on his experience, he felt that "communism has never been a

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<sup>145</sup>Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*, 144. North and South Vietnam originally applied for admission to the United Nations separately, but were later admitted as a single state.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>147</sup>*Nomination of Hon. Andrew Young as U.S. Representative to U.N.: hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-fifth Congress* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977).

<sup>148</sup>*Washington Post*, 21 July 1977, A16.

threat to me.” Instead, “racism has always been a threat -- and that has been the enemy of all of my life and everything I know about life.”<sup>149</sup> Consequently, at the United Nations Young addressed the problem of racism in an unprecedented manner, acknowledging that his country had yet to overcome its race problems. Though the content and subject matter was very different, Young was much like Moynihan in his willingness to make highly charged statements. Moynihan had angered the Third World by calling Idi Amin a racist murderer. Young pleased them by calling, at different times, Presidents Nixon and Ford, as well as the British, Swedes and Russians, all racists, though he mitigated the potential insult by acknowledging that he himself was also guilty at times of racism.<sup>150</sup>

Young and Moynihan were both criticized for their tendency to occasionally speak “undiplomatically.” Moynihan lost the support of the president and secretary of state for his behavior, but Young retained President Carter’s endorsement and was even given credit for increasing American credibility because of his outspoken style.<sup>151</sup> During the second half of Carter’s term in office, Young began to distance himself from the president’s policies, as Carter began to turn to a more hostile position towards the Soviet Union. Young felt this was unnecessary, especially if it meant an increase in defense budgets, money he felt would be better spent on humanitarian causes abroad and social programs at home. He felt that American credibility in the world and amongst its own people could not be maintained at the same time as huge defense budgets. Condemning Congressional attempts to increase military spending in 1978, he said that “I think that our national security right now is much more jeopardized by the

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<sup>149</sup> Quoted in Heritage Foundation Reports, “The New Left in Government: From Protest to Policy Making.” November, 1978, *Institution Analysis*; No. 9.

<sup>150</sup> *The Wall Street Journal*, 12 April 1977, 20:1; *The Washington Post*, 27 May 1977, A1; and *The Washington Post*, 7 June 1977, A3.

<sup>151</sup> *NYT*, 18 August 1977, 20:1.



economic situation we find ourselves in than by our military situation.”<sup>152</sup>

It was not because of his occasional verbal gaffes that Young was eventually forced to resign, but for a more substantive violation of American policy, which reflected his desire to approach international issues as evenhandedly as possible. Young met in secret with the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s representative at the United Nations in the same spirit he had met with white South African businessmen and black radical leaders to discuss apartheid, or Ku Klux Klan leaders during the civil rights movement.<sup>153</sup> He went beyond the permissible limits of independence and was forced to resign, to be replaced, like Moynihan before him, by a diplomat of the “quiet diplomacy” school, Donald McHenry.

Carter’s presidency ended with a series of foreign policy fiascoes that reaffirmed the importance of the Third World but called into question Carter’s approach to it. The fall of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua and its replacement by the Marxist Sandinistas, as well as the Islamic fundamentalist revolution in Iran, alarmed the American public and helped Ronald Reagan defeat Carter for the presidency. Not only had Carter not been able to prevent the replacement of these former allies with hostile powers, but Carter had put mild pressure on Somoza and the Shah to reform their repressive governments as part of his human rights policy, giving his enemies reason to claim that he had helped overturn friendly states.

The most significant such criticism came from political scientist Jeane Kirkpatrick, who wrote a forceful article for *Commentary* called “Dictatorships and Double Standards.”<sup>154</sup> In it, she accused Carter and his foreign policy team of holding a quasi-Marxist view of history that held “progressive” change to be inevitable. In attempting to stay on the right side of history and

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<sup>152</sup>*The Washington Post*, 30 July 1979, A3.

<sup>153</sup> Finger, 285.

<sup>154</sup> Printed in *Commentary*, (November 1979).

progress by pressuring authoritarian governments to reform, Carter was in fact hurting friendly regimes and fostering totalitarianism. The article caught the attention of Ronald Reagan, who made Kirkpatrick a foreign policy adviser for his campaign, and then permanent representative to the United Nations.

Kirkpatrick was critical of Andrew Young's style of diplomacy at the United Nations, saying that under Carter's administration "the United States has never tried so hard and failed so utterly to make and keep friends in the Third World."<sup>155</sup> Instead, she claimed to favor the Moynihan approach, at least that aspect of it which involved confronting the Third World. At her confirmation hearing, she cited Moynihan's outspoken defense of liberty as the proper procedure to follow at the United Nations. She rejected, however, that part of Moynihan's ideology that involved attempting to accommodate the Third World's demands for economic justice. Whereas Moynihan had proposed that the United States should try to accept the Third World's ideology, Kirkpatrick denounced the idea of the New International Economic Order as "global socialism" and insisted that the United States would only back U.N. initiatives based on "free-market principles."<sup>156</sup>

Compared to Young and Moynihan, Kirkpatrick's stance on South Africa was retrogression to defense of apartheid. Reagan's policy towards South Africa, which Kirkpatrick spoke in favor of and helped justify, was significantly more conservative than previous administrations. Even though in the past Nixon and Kissinger favored a "tilt" towards South Africa, it had been carried out in secret.<sup>157</sup> Reagan instead openly declared a policy of

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<sup>155</sup> Kirkpatrick, in Gershman, 163.

<sup>156</sup> *U.S. News and World Report*, 25 April 1983, 43; Allan Gerson, *The Kirkpatrick Mission: Diplomacy Without Apology at the United Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 79.

<sup>157</sup> *The Washington Post*, 7 September 1981, A17.

“constructive engagement” with the Pretorian government, and that much of apartheid had already been “eliminated.”<sup>158</sup>

Instead of being willing to join the Third World in criticizing the racial situation in southern Africa, Kirkpatrick said that “we’re even prepared to protect South Africans under the basis of the rule of law.” Her analysis of the problem of South Africa was pervaded by her distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Speaking at her Senate confirmation hearings, she said that she believed “racial dictatorship is not as onerous as totalitarianism,” which implied that it should not be criticized as harshly.<sup>159</sup> During her tenure, the United States abstained on every General Assembly vote critical of apartheid and vetoed five Security Council initiatives to condemn or sanction South Africa.<sup>160</sup>

Though Kirkpatrick and Moynihan differed on several fundamental principles, they shared a similar background in domestic politics. Both were closely associated with the neoconservative movement that rejected the excesses of liberal Democrats and brought this experience to the United Nations in the form of a strong distrust of reform programs. Before beginning to focus on criticizing Carter’s foreign policy, Kirkpatrick spent most of the decade of the ‘70s studying domestic politics and the decline of the Democratic Party, which she blamed on the rise of radicalism in the 1960s. She felt that the party, which had been transformed by the reforms known as the “New Politics,” had been consequently taken over by “public relations firms, professional campaign consultants, and candidate organizations.”<sup>161</sup> She described the rise of a new class similar to the one Moynihan had described a decade and a half earlier in “Bosses and Reformers,” which was injecting its utopian ideology into politics against the true

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 August 1985, A26.

<sup>159</sup> Borstelmann, 261.

<sup>160</sup> *NYT*, 7 March 1981, 8:1; *NYT*, 1 May 1981, 3:3.

<sup>161</sup> Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, “Dismantling the Parties” (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), 2.

desires of voters and were duping them through marketing skills. The reformers, “believing that their intelligence and exemplary motives equip them to reorder the institutions, the lives, and even the character of almost everyone,” were in danger of falling prey to “the totalitarian temptation.”<sup>162</sup>

Moynihan went to the United Nations believing that the ideal of detente with the Soviet Union was fundamentally correct, though he thought Kissinger naïve to believe that ideological competition between the two countries would cease. He felt that the moral and ideological competition such as took place at the United Nations would in fact serve as a surrogate for the arms race as it slowed down. Kirkpatrick on the other hand saw ideological and military competition as reinforcing each other. She was a firm believer in the Reagan era defense build-up, using her post at the United Nations to bring attention to Soviet and Cuban expansionism and making the case for increased American strength.

The basis of Kirkpatrick’s difference from Moynihan and Young is that she did not perceive a crisis of authority in liberal democracy the way they did. Kirkpatrick seems not to have felt ashamed of the war in Vietnam the way Moynihan and Young palpably did. She told the American Legion that: “I don’t think we were driven out of Vietnam-I think we left.”<sup>163</sup> When the U.S. military invaded Grenada in 1983, she became one of the most prominent advocates of the use of force, claiming that “the prohibitions against the use of force in the U.N. Charter are contextual, not absolute” and can be breached in pursuit of “freedom, democracy, peace.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, “Martin Diamond and the American idea of Democracy,” *Publius*, 3 (Summer 1978), 29.

<sup>163</sup> Melanson, 150.

<sup>164</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 164.

Young had experienced firsthand the indignities suffered by the black community in America, so he understood why the United States had to prove its good will to the Third World. Moynihan was foremost a social scientist and had spent considerable time studying the decline of authority at the community level and saw a similar decline nationally and internationally. As a political scientist, Kirkpatrick had primarily devoted herself to the study of intellectuals and their role in political movements. To her, totalitarianism was the work of thinkers who either were deluded or merely power hungry. Consequently, negotiation was useless and dangerous. The only solution, which she put into practice at the United Nations, was to either attempt to punish those who attacked the United States or to try to persuade them through force of argument that liberal democracy was the ideal form of government. As a result she was perceived by the Third World as hostile and pedantic, given to lecturing on the virtues of the free market and democracy and not at all receptive to their opinions.<sup>165</sup>

No cloud of controversy surrounded Kirkpatrick's resignation from the U.N. post in 1985, when she decided to return to academic life. Her four year stay was the longest of any permanent representative in twenty years and she had been extremely close to President Reagan, who constantly praised her achievements.

Kirkpatrick's exit from the United Nations corresponded to the end of an era for both the United Nations and its American representative. She was the last outspoken delegate the United States thus far has sent there. Part of the reason is that the United Nations became less important as a forum for ideological confrontation as the Cold War came to an end. Not only did U.S.-Soviet confrontation come to an end, but the Third World ceased to exist as an ideologically distinct entity. With no "second world" to play off against the "first," the very concept of a "third world" was rendered obsolete. Calls for a New Economic Order eventually petered out to

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<sup>165</sup> Finger, 301.

nothing as neoliberalism became the dominant economic ideology in the world. The Fabian influence of the London School of Economics was no longer nearly as important, replaced by the neoclassical influence of the Chicago school.<sup>166</sup>

The end of ideological conflict at the United Nations did not mean that the organization ceased to function. The U.N.'s social and humanitarian bodies continued their work, which American representatives had always maintained were the United Nations' most important functions anyway. The Security Council in fact became more important as the end of the Cold War also ended the practical deadlock caused by the veto powers of the United States and the Soviet Union, allowing the number, size, and complexity of U.N. peacekeeping missions to greatly increase.<sup>167</sup> The only U.N. institution that declined in importance was the General Assembly.

The General Assembly had always been a paradoxical body. Designed to work like a parliament, its resolutions did not carry the force of law like those of the Security Council. Its activities did not receive much notice when the majority there agreed with the United States. It was only after the Third World began to turn the agenda there to its own purposes that Americans began to take notice and become alarmed. Moynihan's "opposition" strategy was designed on the premise that if the General Assembly were treated like a parliament, the majority there would perhaps begin to act more agreeably.

The rise of the General Assembly to importance in U.S. affairs also corresponded to an overwhelming decline in the confidence of the American people in their foreign policy after the Vietnam War. It has been suggested that the reason the Third World was so harsh in its rhetoric

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<sup>166</sup>See John Rapley, *Understanding Development: Theory and Practice in the Third World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996), Ch. 4.

<sup>167</sup>See Steven R. Ratner, *The New UN Peacekeeping: Building Peace in Lands of Conflict After the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

at the General Assembly was that the delegates there were speaking for the benefit of the audience at home more than the international community.<sup>168</sup> The same could perhaps be said of the U.S. representatives beginning with Moynihan.

The Ford, Carter, and Reagan administrations all sought to recreate the consensus within the American body politic about U.S. foreign policy up until Vietnam. The U.N. ambassadors they chose were exceptionally well equipped to engage in symbolic politics for the benefit of the world and the American people. The United Nations did not decline in importance as an ideological sounding board after the Cold War because the coveted consensus had been reached, but because the entities against which the American ideology was defined disappeared.

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<sup>168</sup> Craig N. Murphy, "What the Third World Wants: An Interpretation of the Development and Meaning of the New International Economic Order Ideology," *International Studies Quarterly* 27 (1983), 56.

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