

Moynihan Affair (Conc.)

It will come as no surprise to those who know both the man and the organization that Daniel Patrick Moynihan's career at the United Nations has come to an end only seven months after he was sworn in as chief United States delegate. What is a surprise is that Ambassador Moynihan evidently has quit not primarily out of frustration with the United Nations but because he believes his efforts have been blunted and undermined by the Department of State and even by Secretary Kissinger.

There may be more to it than that, of course. Speculation persists about Mr. Moynihan as a possible Democratic candidate for United States Senator from New York this year, despite his frequent emphatic disavowals of any such ambition. It might cause him embarrassment to eat these statements now, but perhaps no more than he may have felt at the outset in settling into energetic service in Richard M. Nixon's White House after having been a prominent satellite in John F. Kennedy's New Frontier constellation.

Ambassador Moynihan's comportment at the U.N. was mostly predictable. He had urged, prior to his appointment, that the United States "start raising hell" in all international forums. It was his recommendation that, if governments practicing outrageous repression at home lectured the United States and others on freedom, this country should "rip the hides" off the offenders: "Shame them, hurt them, yell at them."

If, as Mr. Moynihan evidently suspects, Secretary Kissinger has now concluded that such tactics by the American delegate eventually become counterproductive for this country—damaging to Washington's relations not only with the third world but with its closest allies as well—the Secretary was amply forewarned before recommending the Moynihan appointment to President Ford.

Actually, Mr. Moynihan got off to an impressive start at the special General Assembly on the problems of the poorer countries last September. He expended his awesome energy and flair for articulation to sell Mr. Kissinger's positive proposals for better cooperation with the third world. Some attitudes of developing countries toward the United States began to change for the better—and if Washington's follow-through on its program was disappointing, no one had cause to blame Mr. Moynihan for that.

It was during the subsequent regular General Assembly—in speeches and statements outside the U.N. as well as in formal session—that Mr. Moynihan gave flamboyant expression to his earlier prescriptions for American behavior. The provocations were undeniably great and much of what he said needed saying—indeed, a great many Americans felt it should have been said long ago. But his style and manner of saying it impressed many delegates as condescending if not downright insulting.

His successor at the United Nations will probably change little of the substance of the Moynihan message. Rather, he will undoubtedly seek to deliver it in a manner more calculated to persuade than to outrage.