

# Script for Resignation

*Capital Debates Move by Moynihan:  
Did He Plan It or Was He Ousted?*

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 15—

The departure of Daniel P. Moynihan from the United Nations is now generally being treated by Administration officials and news media opinion-

makers as an amusing aside, News perhaps a mere Analysis matter of politics or personality, just another coming

and going in the world of power-seekers. It was that, but it also revealed something much deeper about how Washington works.

It showed how power-brokers maneuver to bring about resignations and avoid outright dismissals, to induce suicides, not to commit homicide. The confrontations that result from public dismissals are usually seen as too costly for all of the participants.

Public words of praise are often the signal that privately something quite different is going on. In fact, the praise is an integral part of the ceremony, allowing the intended victim to withdraw with dignity and reputation intact.

The medium is mostly the news organizations, but often the drawing rooms of Washington society are deemed a less public way to get the message across.

Through these channels, the word filters back to the intended victim that his superiors have lost confidence in him, and that it would be better for all concerned if he left quietly.

When the resignation is announced, the script almost invariably includes the line that "Mr. So-and-so is not leaving because of any differences over policy with the President or the Secretary." It's always ascribed to "family reasons," or "the long-neglected business," or "to return to teaching."

Whether the resignation of Mr. Moynihan fits this mold is still a question being savored in idle moments by Washington power-watchers—Congressional and Administration officials, columnists, editorial writers, reporters, and those whose social events bring these different groups together.

Some officials and aficionados maintain that Mr. Moynihan designed and planned his own departure. They say he was looking for an excuse to leave at the height of his popularity, not to return to teaching, but to make his move toward becoming a Senator from New York.

Others insist that Mr. Moynihan does not plan that far ahead, and that his resignation is a classic case of being eased out without being dismissed outright.

servers of Mr. Ford's public defense some months ago about Mr. Kissinger's "unique talents" for holding the posts of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Secretary of State. Some weeks later, Mr. Ford announced that Mr. Kissinger was relinquishing his White House position.

The basic facts in Mr. Moynihan's case are now well known. For months, State Department officials — high, medium and low — were telling reporters that what they saw as Mr. Moynihan's show-boating and table-pounding arrogance was destroying United States policy in the United Nations and with the developing world. To them, the ambassador was turning a subtle carrot-and-stick policy into nothing but clubs.

As was intended, Mr. Moynihan heard about what his detractors were saying. He shot back a message to Mr. Kissinger and all American diplomatic missions letting them know that he knew and leaving Mr. Kissinger a lot of room to disassociate himself from his subordinates. The cablegram was leaked to The New York Times.

The White House and the State Department issued their praises and support, but Mr. Moynihan was looking for something else — what he viewed as the real signal. Days later, James Reston wrote a column in The Times asserting that Mr. Ford and Mr. Kissinger were not happy with Mr. Moynihan. The ambassador read this as his signal, so he has said, and resigned to go back to Harvard University.

Sending the message privately through columnists, reporters or social conversations is an important part of the process. It allows for "deniability."

For others who, unlike Mr. Moynihan, do not get the message, there are other techniques:

¶ Letting out the word that the intended victim no longer has access to his superior. For example, when former Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel began to show signs of policy independence, the White House told reporters that Mr. Hickel had no influence and never got to see President Richard M. Nixon.

¶ Discrediting the intended victim. This can be done by pigeonholing him, as President Lyndon B. Johnson did in calling his Under Secretary of State, George Ball, "the house dove" on Vietnam. It can also be done by letting it be known that the man in question has lost his objectivity and become an advocate.

¶ Cutting the intended victim off the distribution list for cablegrams and memorandums. This is an ultimate weapon, akin in the business world to coming to work one day and finding someone else's name on your office door.

The last ingredient for the successfully engineered resignation is that any differences over policy are to be mutually denied. As one State Department official put it, "The dangerous thing is when a man leaves voicing his policy disputes with the Secretary because that gives outside critics the chance to say that a serious man inside the Administration who has all the facts agrees with the critics."

## Confidence Avowed

In this view, Mr. Moynihan's suspicions about his standing turned to near-certainties when the White House announced two weeks ago that President Ford and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger had complete confidence in the ambassador and supported him completely.

It sounded too much like the "1000 percent support" statement that George S. McGovern, the Democratic Presidential aspirant in 1972, made about his running mate, Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, even as he was seeking to persuade Mr. Eagleton to leave the ticket.

It even reminded some ob-