

What the Yost Dismissal Was All About

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Dec. 11—At the Security Council's meeting last Saturday on Guinea's charges of a Portuguese invasion, the United States representative, Charles W. Yost, wore a lavender shirt of wallpaper design and a wide purple tie for the first time in his life. His preference had normally run to gray suits, white shirts and bland dark ties. The new accouterments had been given to him

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at a party the night before by members of his staff who professed to feel that his lack of sartorial glamour was the reason for his reported troubles with the White House. The party, a "family buffet dinner," had been planned long in advance, but it turned into a farewell gathering after it became known that President Nixon intended to replace him. In every word and gesture that evening, the staff members expressed deep respect for Mr. Yost's professional skills and their admiration for his human qualities.

That is the view generally held at the United Nations by foreign diplomats and secre-

tariat officials. Mr. Yost is very much "a professional's professional."

Many delegates feel that Mr. Yost has been treated shabbily, as a western European delegate put it, and that he has run afoul of politicians in Washington.

When news leaked out that Daniel Patrick Moynihan was slated to replace Mr. Yost, it was evident that the purpose of the planned change was to find an appropriate job for Mr. Moynihan, a counselor to the President. Mr. Yost was to be removed, it was understood then, not for any professional shortcomings but mainly because he pulled no political weight and was therefore vulnerable.

Although Mr. Moynihan finally declined the appointment, President Nixon never uttered a word of praise for the man who was still his representative here.

Controversy within the Administration over the Middle East is widely believed to have been a factor in his dismissal, although Mr. Yost himself says that the Middle East was never mentioned to him by any official in the White House or the State Department as a source of friction.

Other factors that are being cited include the fact that through no fault of Mr. Yost's, the United States did poorly in the General Assembly this year in key votes on the Middle East and China.

As for the award of the job to a Republican Congressman defeated in the race for a Sen-

ate seat last month, a United Nations official here commented wryly today: "I didn't know the U.S. Ambassadorship to the United Nations was still considered a political plum. Maybe there's more life left in this place than some people say."

His Views on Mideast

Regarding the belief that differences on the Mideast may have had a role in Mr. Yost's removal, his views on the issue have been known for a long time. They were stated in a book he wrote before being named to the United Nations.

Basically, Mr. Yost believes that the United States national interest calls for the negotiation of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East as the only way to bring about the departure of the Soviet Union from the area. He is known to have argued that negotiation must be one of two prime objectives of American policy, the other being to help assure the security of Israel.

Over the last two years Mr. Yost has been fully consulted by both the White House and the State Department on Middle East policies. As far as is known he attended every meeting of the National Security Council that dealt with the Middle East.

On occasion, as United States policy was being shaped, he is understood to have advocated that the United States exert

greater pressure on the Israelis to try to get them to the conference table than other key officials in the Administration were willing to accept.

He is thought to have been closer to Secretary of State William P. Rogers on this issue than to Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security affairs, or Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

The Rogers initiative of last summer, which brought about a cease-fire and a short round of indirect Arab-Israeli talks, was a policy that was very much in line with Mr. Yost's thinking. Israel endorsed it with reluctance. It was accepted as a consensus within the Administration, but Mr. Kissinger later let it be known that he had been doubtful about it all along.

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