

## **The Nixon Administration and the United Nations: “It’s a Damned Debating Society”**

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Before the vote on Chinese representation in October 1971, President Richard Nixon and Walter McConaughy, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of China, were contemplating Taipei’s probable expulsion from the United Nations. In his usual awkward way Nixon tried to ease the blow:

I’d just say to hell with the UN. What is it anyway? It’s a damned debating society. What good does it do? Very little.... They talk about hijacking, drugs, the challenges of modern society, and the rest of it is to give hell to the United States.<sup>1</sup>

President Nixon and his Special Assistant for National Security, Henry A. Kissinger, were not proponents of using the United Nations in U.S. foreign policy. Nixon and Kissinger considered themselves realists who believed national self-interest and major power relations were the only real considerations for foreign policy. To them morality or idealism had no role in international relations. In his first major foreign policy speech to the Bohemian Club of San Francisco in July 1967, candidate Nixon included the United Nations in a list of “old institutions [that] are obsolete and inadequate” and that were “set up to deal with a world of twenty years ago.”<sup>2</sup> Nixon and Kissinger would admit that the United Nations could be useful in monitoring ceasefires, keeping warring factions apart, or passing resolutions to confirm what had already been negotiated secretly, but they viewed the organization with less than veiled contempt.

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are the author’s and do not represent those of the U.S. Department of State. The quote is from the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Material, Presidential Tape Recordings, Conversation between Nixon and McConaughy, Oval Office, June 30, 1971, Conversation 532-17

<sup>2</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS), 1969-76, Vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1972, Doc 2*

The Nixon administration's antipathy to the international organization in New York is by no means a new or startlingly revelation.<sup>3</sup> What is less well known is that the Nixon presidency was the first U.S. administration to recognize that there was a strong current of discontent in mainstream American society towards the United Nations, not just among the extreme right-wing organization, such as the John Birch society, but among many average Americans—the so-called “Silent Majority.” What Nixon and his political advisers began to realize was that this discontent could be channeled into political domestic support. They also realized that U.S. appointments to the United Nations could be valuable domestic political tools that could send a message to the U.S. electorate.

Before I test these suppositions, let me provide a brief account of how the Nixon administration's approach to the United Nations differed from previous U.S. administrations. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was instrumental in inspiring a United Nations designed to rectify the weaknesses of the League of Nations by giving the great powers that emerged from the Second World War a special stake in the organization by their veto in the Security Council. President Truman appointed the first U.S. Representative to the United Nations, former Secretary of State Edward Stettinius. By virtue of a Soviet miscalculation, the United Nations provided convenient and valuable international authority to the Truman administration's war against North Korean aggression. In Korea, UN collective security as a concept was put into practice. Even the Republican Eisenhower administration viewed the United Nations in a basically positive light, naming high-profile Massachusetts's politician Henry Cabot Lodge as Permanent Representative and siding with the UN against American allies France, Britain, and Israel during the Suez invasion of 1956. Lodge served for virtually all of Eisenhower's two terms, only to leave to run unsuccessfully as Richard Nixon's Vice Presidential candidate in 1960. John F. Kennedy, the classic anti-communist liberal internationalist, viewed the United Nations as a force for good and an important adjunct of

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<sup>3</sup>In virtual all the voluminous secondary literature on the Nixon presidency, as well as the major memoirs of the Nixon period, there is little no mention Nixon's policy towards the United Nations, with the exception of passing references to the issue of Chinese representation, the proximity of the Nixon-Kissinger opening to China, and a general realization of Nixon's aversion to the organization. For example, see William Bundy, *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency* (New York: 1998), pp. 53, 103, 514; C. L. Sulzberger, *The World and Richard Nixon* (New York: 1987), p. 10, 33-4; Richard Reeves, *President Nixon: Alone in the White House* (New York, 2001), pp. 386-7, 550. Reeves hints at political motivations for some of Nixon's UN policy and personnel decision. An exception is Nancy Bernkopf Tucker's article, “Taiwan Expendable? Nixon and Kissinger Go to China.” [www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/92.1](http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/92.1) (viewed on 9/3/05), which provides not only the best account of the UN representation issue, but also valuable context for larger U.S. relations with the PRC and ROC.

U.S. foreign policy and appointed high-profile politician and liberal torchbearer of internationalism, Adlai F. Stevenson, to be his UN representative. Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson suffered Stevenson until Stevenson resigned. Johnson then arm-twisted Arthur J. Goldberg off the Supreme Court to be UN permanent representative.

By contrast, Richard Nixon nominated Charles W. Yost, the first Foreign Service officer to hold the job of U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations since that post was created. Nixon had toyed with the idea of offering the position to his 1968 presidential opponent, Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, but this was for "show purposes with little expectation that it would be accepted."<sup>4</sup> Yost was a competent professional and well regarded inside the Department of State, but he was no Adlai Stevenson or Henry Cabot Lodge in political stature. Yost was Secretary of State William Rogers' man and his appointment was an indication that international organization affairs would be left to the Department of State while Nixon and Kissinger concentrated on the big issues: the Soviet Union, East-West relations, China, the major European allies plus NATO and Vietnam.<sup>5</sup>

Nixon's first administration coincided with major changes and events in the history of the United Nations. In 1970, the United Nations celebrated its 25-year anniversary. Secretary General U Thant announced in May 1971 his decision to retire after one term. The Committee of 24 on Decolonization had become in the Nixon administration's view--also shared by the British Government--a hotbed of anti-western national liberation movements and both countries withdrew from it. The United Nations faced severe financial problems and a shortage of space at headquarters in New York. There was increasing pressure within the organization to hold Security Council and General Assembly meetings in cities other than New York to "better facilitate its work", but in reality to emphasize and highlight controversial regional problems. Most importantly, the campaign to keep the People's Republic of China out of the United Nations was losing steam and by 1971 even the 2/3 "important question" formula would probably not keep China out of the bull shop.

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<sup>4</sup> Bundy, *A Tangled Web*, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> *FRUS 1969-76, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972*, Vol. I, Doc 61.

Getting President Nixon to focus on the United Nations was a battle. He dreaded his autumn treks to the United Nations to give his annual speech to the General Assembly for two basic reasons: first, he generally agonized over preparation and delivery of any major speech; second, he could be assured of a poor reception in New York. Chief of White House Staff, H.R. Haldeman, Nixon's virtual alter ego, wrote in his diary that the President's first address to the UN in September 1969 was a "good speech and [he] was good at reading it. Reaction was pretty lukewarm. They did finally stand and clap when he was introduced and came in, but there was no applause during the speech and they did not stand at the end."<sup>6</sup> In October 1970, Haldeman was more frank: "United Nations. Usual lousy reception, really bad for United States President to be treated that way. He really roared through his own speech and took off like a bolt after he finished. Not good for us...P[resident] still complaining about the speech, feels Ray [Price] and K[issinger] failed to come up with anything new."<sup>7</sup>

Not surprisingly, when Secretary Roger asked Nixon to request \$15 million of \$60 total million for expansion of UN Headquarters in New York, the President declined to ask Congress for the money citing the "construction moratorium and the war on inflation."<sup>8</sup> In March 1971, Nixon expressed his anti-UN frustration to Kissinger:

P: Don't get too excited about the UN. We have got Bush there and he's a smart fellow and he's on our side. He is not in love with it [the UN]. Let them flounder around. If they slapped us in the face there would be a hell of an American reaction. The liberals and intellectuals would say fine, but the veterans organizations and ...[omission in original] and I'd gin them up. There are a lot of people right now who want the UN out of this country. We don't realize how it [U.S. opinion of the UN] is.

Kissinger agreed with the President, who then recalled:

P: I have been up there twice and they have acted cool and lousy. I'm not going to go there and go through the hypocrisy about supporting the UN again. It's just hypocrisy.

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<sup>6</sup> *Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition*, Sept 18, 1969.

<sup>7</sup> *Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition*, Oct. 23, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972*, Docs. 6 and 7.

K: I thought the behavior the last time was outrageous when the Secretary General didn't have the courtesy to meet you at the door.

P: I hope they don't get their new building."<sup>9</sup>

This outburst is clear evidence that Nixon not only appreciated that an undercurrent of hostility to the United Nations existed among a large segment of the American public, but also that he realized it could be used to gain political support. This exchange occurred soon after Nixon had fired UN Ambassador Charles Yost.<sup>10</sup> The search for a successor to Yost illuminates the second part of my thesis: that the Nixon and his political advisers were prepared to use U.N. appointments for short-term domestic political gain.

First how and why was Yost fired? Nixon could never bring himself to fire anyone. He hated personal confrontation so he always got someone else to do the job. In this case, he asked Kissinger and Haldeman to convince Secretary of State Rogers to ease Yost out. Yost was not doing a bad job at the UN mission in New York, rather he fell victim to Nixon's suspicions that he was more loyal to the Department of State and the Foreign Service than to the president. Obviously, Nixon's disillusionment with the United Nations also was an additional factor. Finally, Yost was could do nothing for the Nixon presidency from a political standpoint because Yost was officially apolitical. As early as April 1970, seven months before he replaced Yost, Nixon considered appointing Republican Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, so "we can get a good new man appointed to Senate in Kentucky," as Haldeman phrased it.<sup>11</sup> Cooper did not bite and the idea of clearing Republican deadwood from the Senate was replaced by a truly inspired one: appointing the Nixon administration's only liberal and a registered Democrat, Patrick Moynihan, as UN representative. Nixon himself offered Moynihan the job in June 1970 and Moynihan agreed to consider the offer. The President and his political advisers became increasingly enthusiastic about Moynihan. Director of the Office of Management and Budget, George

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<sup>9</sup> National Archives, Nixon Presidential Material, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Mar. 30, 1971.

<sup>10</sup> *Washington Post*, Dec. 18, 1970, p. A 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition*, April 9, 1970.

Shultz, considered it “a masterstroke.” But on November 25, 1970 Moynihan turned the job down because his wife insisted that he return to Harvard to resume his teaching career.<sup>12</sup>

Nixon then decided to offer the job to the only African-American Senator, Republican Edward Brooke of Massachusetts. Brooke’s appointment particularly appealed to Nixon because it “gets a black in the Cabinet, appeals to non-white generally and could work a deal with [Governor of Massachusetts] Sargeant to appoint [Secretary of Transportation] John Volpe senator and get him out of the Cabinet.” Haldeman thought it was “a good move if it will work”, but it didn’t. Brook turned the President down.<sup>13</sup>

The search for Yost’s replacement finally settled on George H. W. Bush, newly defeated Congressman from Texas who was looking for a higher profile job to further his political career. Bush lobbied hard for the UN job, but was initially offered only a White House staff position by Haldeman. Bush and Haldeman then went to see Nixon and, in Haldeman’s words, Bush “made such a good pitch to the P[resident] about what he would like to do at the UN in the way of really being an advocate for the P, not only at UN , but in overall New York Community, that P. decided this was in fact a better use of Bush than having him in the White House.” Bush took charge in New York in February 1971 and one of his first tasks, according to Haldeman, was “to clean out the UN office, ” firing all political appointees that were not with the President before the election.<sup>14</sup>

As Permanent Representative to the United Nations George Bush did a credible job, especially given that he had to deal with some very divisive issues, including U.S. funding for the organization, choosing a new secretary general and other key appointments, and most difficult of all, the issue of who should represent China. Bush spearheaded a massive campaign among UN members to lobby for a maximum 25% assessment rate proposal that would lower U.S. contribution 5 % from the current 30% maximum. This was a hard sell, but

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<sup>12</sup>*Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition*, June 8, 18, Nov. 10, 25, 1970.

<sup>13</sup>*Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition*, Nov. 26-29, Dec. 1, 1970.

<sup>14</sup> *Haldeman Diaries,, Multimedia Edition*, Dec. 9, 1970, April 20, 1971.

in December 1972, the General Assembly agreed in principle.<sup>15</sup> Against the opposition of the Department of State and UN bureaucracies, Bush supported moving Security Council and General Assembly meetings. In a short personal memorandum to Nixon, Bush wrote:

There is some resistance at some layers in the UN for having General Assembly Meetings abroad, namely due to cost, old habits, inconvenience of New York based people, etc. I'll keep plugging away. If they can hold Olympics around the world, they ought to be able to hold General Assembly Meetings.

Such advice caused the President to write on the memorandum: "Good. Keep it!"<sup>16</sup> No doubt this presidential support caused some consternation of the Department of State and UN establishments—both opposed to moveable UN meetings.

The question of who was to succeed U Thant, who announced he would serve only one term, was another problem for Bush since the Soviet Union and Arab members opposed the preferred U.S. candidate, Finnish Permanent Representative Max Jakobson, and Afro-Asian members preferred drafting U Thant for a second term. When it became clear that U Thant would not accept a draft and Jakobson could not win, Bush worked with the five permanent Security Council members to elect compromise candidate, Kurt Waldheim of Austria as the new Secretary General, whose World War II experience was not known at the time.<sup>17</sup>

The United States and Bush eventually fared better in replacing the long-time head of the UN Development Program, American Paul Hoffmann. In October 1970, World Bank President Robert McNamara called Kissinger to encourage him to initiate action to find an American successor to Hoffman "who is old and about to retire." McNamara told Kissinger he had "been trying to stimulate action but so far as I can tell there has been none." Other UN members were joining together to push a non-American successor, and McNamara asked Kissinger if having an American in the job mattered to him. Kissinger replied that it most

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<sup>15</sup>FRUS 1969-76, Vol. V, *United Nations, 1969-1972*, Docs. 189 and 210.

<sup>16</sup>FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, *United Nations, 1969-1972*, Doc. 117.

<sup>17</sup>FRUS 1969-76, Vol. V, *United Nations, 1969-1972*, Docs. 213, 231, 247.

definitely did and the only non-American the Nixon administration would accept was a Briton.<sup>18</sup> In November 1970, Kissinger recommended two potential U.S. candidates to Nixon, Anthony Solomon, President of the World Bank's International Investment Cooperation for Yugoslavia, and Senator Charles Percy, but neither candidate apparently appealed to Nixon. Furthermore, Hoffman got wind of the talk of appointing his successor and took umbrage, given the fact that he wanted to extend his appointment for one more year.<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding Hoffman's sensitivities, Kissinger informed Nixon in that "the maneuvering to replace Hoffman is already well under way. Deputy UN Secretary General Narasimhan hungers for the job, and is moving actively to line up support. Narasimhan is a devious character, and if he succeeds Hoffman, it would be a grievous blow to U.S. interests." Kissinger submitted a new list of potential candidates including Ambassador Graham Martin, Tom Killfer of the Chrysler Corporation and formerly Vice President of the Export Import Bank, banker Rudy Peterson, a leading proponent of the multilateralization of U.S. economic aid, and University of California at Los Angeles Chancellor and foreign assistance expert, Franklin Murphy. Nixon chose Peterson and Bush cleared the idea with U Thant and McNamara and the deal was done.<sup>20</sup> The selection of Peterson had a silver lining from the UN point of view because Peterson insisted that he have Nixon's support if he took the job. When the Congress attempted in early 1972 to gut funding for the UNDP, Peterson called in his marker and received Nixon's support.<sup>21</sup>

The other personnel problem that Bush faced was to find an American replacement for UN Under Secretary General for Political Affairs, Ralph Bunche, a virtual UN fixture at the chief peacekeeping official at the United Nations for 20 years.<sup>22</sup> Secretary General Waldheim agreed to name a high level American to his staff, but not to Bunche's specific job. Bush insisted that the United States have an appointment with political responsibilities, if not authority over peacekeeping. On March 27, Waldheim appointed Congressman F. Bradford

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<sup>18</sup> National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger telephone conversations, October 6, 1970.

<sup>19</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Docs. 250-252.*

<sup>20</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Docs. 253-257.*

<sup>21</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Doc. 262.*

<sup>22</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Docs. 263-265, 267.*

Morse, a Republican from Massachusetts, Under Secretary General for Political and General Assembly Affairs.<sup>23</sup>

In late 1972, after his landslide reelection, Nixon again started rethinking his Cabinet. Former journalist and White House Special Communications Consultant John Scali took Nixon's fancy as a potential UN Representative. Scali was urbane, articulate, and smart, but what appealed to Nixon was that he was a Catholic Italian-American and would make the Cabinet more ethnic. Nixon offered the job to Scali with virtually the same conditions he offered Bush: while he should get along with Rogers and Kissinger, "he must be the President's Ambassador, and no one else's. At the United States mission we want smart people, but they must be loyal to the administration, and he [Scali] should be ruthless in cleaning it up. He should not become the captive of the foreign service."

The President's advice to Scali is pure Nixon paranoia: "The State Bureaucrats will knife you and the press will jump on it, but your assets are such that you'll override. You have been around the world, you know PR and the press.... You will take a lot of heat, but you will murder them." Scali accepted with gratitude and promised loyalty to the Nixon and Nixon alone. There one final set of requirements by Nixon: Scali had to "go to mass regularly and see [Cardinal Terrance] Cooke frequently."<sup>24</sup>

All of these personnel issues and administrative problems paled in significance to the politically charged question of who should represent China at the United Nations: the Republic of China on Taiwan or the People's Republic of China. Since 1961, the United State had fought a successful diplomatic campaign to retain for the Republic of China its seat in the Assembly and Security Council by declaring "Chinese representation" an "important issue" requiring a two-thirds majority vote in the General Assembly. As memories of the Korean War faded and both Third World and Western European nations recognized the People's Republic, securing that Taiwan remained as the sole representative of China became increasingly harder to do.

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<sup>23</sup>FRUS, 1969-1976, Vol. V, *United Nations, 1969-1972*, Docs. 267-269, 271.

<sup>24</sup>*Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition*, Nov 20, Dec 4, 14 and 15, 1972.

During the 1969 General Assembly Session, the United States succeeded in making Chinese representation an important question requiring a 2/3 vote and then defeating an Albania resolution to seat the People's Republic of China.<sup>25</sup> Secretary Rogers informed the President that the status quo on Chinese representation could be held for another year, but a two-China or dual representation formula was probably the only way to assure Taiwan's presence in the United Nations in the future. For the time being, Nixon decided to hold the line for one more year and rejected the two-China option.<sup>26</sup> Nixon and Kissinger then did what they usually did to make sure that an issue was not acted upon: they asked the bureaucracy to study and report on options for representation at the United Nations not just for China, but Korea, Germany, and Vietnam looking and to determine how U.S. policy on Chinese representation would effect U.S. relations with Beijing.<sup>27</sup> An interagency group was required to prepare an elaborate interagency paper, to be submitted to Kissinger and the President in early January 1971.

The basic question, as NSC Staffer Marshall Wright told Kissinger when summarizing the paper, was should the United States support the Republic of China and go down to sure defeat within two years or sooner, or should it support UN membership for both Taipei and Beijing in the UN? Wright noted that from 1966 to September 1970 "with no leadership from anybody" support for The People's Republic of China's (PRC's) entry into the UN among the U.S. general public doubled to 35% and among the college educated it was over 50%. Newspapers editorials favored dual representation by 80%. Wright then suggested, "A change in our policy on Chicom membership is no longer contrary to political significant American public opinion. To the contrary, I am convinced that a change in policy would be of domestic advantage to the Administration."<sup>28</sup> This was advice directly contrary to Nixon and his political adviser's instincts. They did not care about liberal newspaper editorials or college-educated voters. Their sights were on the 65% of the population actually or potentially opposed to Beijing's entry into the United Nations. Not surprisingly, Kissinger did not repeat this advice to the President.

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<sup>25</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Doc. 283.*

<sup>26</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Doc. 290.*

<sup>27</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Doc. 312.*

<sup>28</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Docs. 326, 333.*

Various NSC groups--the Senior Review Group and the National Security Council--examined the issue, but Kissinger recommended deferring action until a presidential envoy, old warhorse diplomat Robert Murphy, discussed the issue with Chiang Kai-shek. Nixon agreed. At this point Bush weighed in with a dose of realism insisting that Murphy not let Chiang assume that dual representation meant that the Republic of China could keep a seat on the Security Council. "It is a regrettable fact of life," Bush maintained, it was impossible.<sup>29</sup>

There was a clear unwillingness within the Nixon presidency to grasp the nettle of Chinese representation. Murphy's mission was a disaster and he did nothing to convince Chiang that under a dual representation formula Taiwan could not retain China's Security Council seat. As Nixon told Rogers in late May 1970, Chiang was doomed and the President needed time "to move on the right wing myself. I have to get Walter Judd in and talk about the issue." There was another more important reason for Nixon's desire that Rogers not move formally to a two-China policy. Nixon and Kissinger were about to finalize the initial stages of their secret opening to China and were awaiting response from Beijing to a message sent through Yahya Khan, President of Pakistan.<sup>30</sup>

Nixon began to cover his political back among supporters of the Republic of China. In a meeting with Walter McConaughy, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of China, quoted in part at the beginning of this paper, the two men agreed that if the People's Republic of China obtained China's Security Council seat, Taiwan would withdraw from the UN. Nixon stated,

Let me be frank with you. If I was ever in that position and the UN moves in that direction, I'd just say to hell with the UN. What is it anyway? It's a damned debating society. What good does it do? Very little [unintelligible]. They talk about hijacking, drugs, the challenges of modern society, and the rest of it is to give hell to the United States.

Nixon then confided to McConaughy that, "It does not serve our interests to give anything up to the UN. As you know, none of our vital interests have ever been submitted to the UN and never will be as long as I am here." McConaughy informed the President of Taiwan's real

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<sup>29</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Docs. 335, 342, 344, 346.*

<sup>30</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Docs. 354, 358.*

fear was being isolated and finding its trading partners, especially the European Economic Community, using Taipei's expulsion from the UN as a pretext for discriminatory trade action against them "They are afraid their efforts to keep up their exports might suffer."<sup>31</sup>

On July 15, 1971, Nixon announced that he would go to China in a "journey of peace."<sup>32</sup> In the corridors in the UN there had been some expectation of this move; the matches between the U.S. and PRC ping-pong teams had created a buzz. Any chance dual representation had to succeed was eliminated after July 15. Everyone in Washington knew it. As Rogers phrased it, the decision was whether to expend "a maximum effort to save Taiwan's seat.... or just go through the motions." Haldeman suggested, "if we fight, we still may lose, but if we appear to fold, the conservatives will hit us." Nixon railed at "how stupid the Birchers are in attacking us on this, because they should see it in terms of a matter [of supporting the Chinese] against the Russians and be delighted with it."<sup>33</sup>

In a meeting with the President on July 19, Rogers conceded that even if Kissinger had not gone to Beijing, Taiwan's position was doomed. On July 22, Rogers suggested to Nixon and Kissinger that the United States just vote against the Albanian resolution to seat the PRC and expel the ROC and go down fighting. Nixon and Kissinger were aghast. It would be "too cynical." Nixon warned that, "looking at it from the standpoint of domestic relations... there's still a helluva lot of people who oppose the initiative to Red China and the UN...." Reverting to his opening to China, Nixon continued: "it looks like we are being tricky as hell, if we on the one hand say we are going to Communist China, and on the other hand were voting against Communist China coming into the UN. I wonder if it makes us look like a bunch of hypocrites?" Roger replied simply: "I think it does." The result of this and previous discussions was that the United States would support the People's Republic of China's admission, but not Taiwan's expulsion.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>National Archives, Nixon Presidential Material, Presidential Tape Recording, conversation between Nixon and McConaughy, Oval Office, June 30, 1971, Conversation 532-17.

<sup>32</sup> *Public Papers of the President, Richard Nixon, 1971* (Washington: 1972), pp. 819-829.

<sup>33</sup> *FRUS, 1969-1976, Vol. V., United Nations, 1969-1972, Doc. 345; Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition, July 17, 1971.*

<sup>34</sup> *Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition, July 19, 1971; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Doc. 377.*

On August 2, Rogers announced the dual representation initiative and U.S. diplomats in New York and worldwide lobbied hard for the concept, but it was a lost cause. To make matters worse, Kissinger was going to be in China again arranging for the President's visit just as the Chinese representation vote took place. Rogers felt, to use Haldeman blunt words, "it would louse up the UN debate."<sup>35</sup> On October 25, the important question vote to admit Beijing lost by a narrow margin and U.S. efforts to make expulsion of Taiwan an important question also failed. As Bush reported, the "bandwagon psychology set in the Albanian Resolution passed overwhelmingly."<sup>36</sup>

The reaction from the right wing that Nixon feared happened immediately. A furious Governor Ronald Reagan of California was on the phone to Nixon at midnight on October 25. Nixon returned Reagan's call the next morning. Reagan insisted that the President go on television and announce that in the future the United States would not abide by future UN votes. Nixon said he couldn't do that. Rogers then called Reagan and tried to calm him down, but the governor was not pleased to hear that the Rogers had made a statement on the vote that had not called on Congress cut UN funding. Attorney General John Mitchell called conservative columnist Bill Buckley, Conservative Party Senator from New York James Buckley, and Senator Barry Goldwater to douse the flames, but he feared that "the P[resident] is going to get the blame for it all, because of Peking [visit]."<sup>37</sup>

On October 26, Kissinger, just back from Beijing, tried some damage control with Reagan, informing him that the President had "issued a blast against the undignified, gleeful behavior" of the pro- PRC supporters at the UN. The Tanzanians danced in the isles, the Albanians shouted, "A great Defeat for America!"<sup>38</sup> Reagan responded that he had only seen Roger's statement on the UN "which made me urp." Kissinger assured Reagan that UN Development Funds would be cut and future aid would be bilateral rather than multilateral. Reagan responded: "these things are not going not to be announced—I am out here

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<sup>35</sup> *Haldeman Diaries Multimedia Edition*, September 28, 1971.

<sup>36</sup> *FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, Doc. 429.*

<sup>37</sup> *Haldeman Diaries Multimedia Edition*, October 26, 1971.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Reeves, *President Nixon, Alone in the White House*, p. 386.

where...doing things behind the scenes isn't going to impress the people. The people are really peeved off. They are mad. They want to know why the hell we are staying in the UN. I go out to bat on the Peking business but how can I continue doing that without getting into the UN thing?" Kissinger responded: "We don't mind you blasting the UN thing." Reagan asked what could he tell his Republicans when they asked what Nixon was going to do about the UN vote? Kissinger responded: "we are going to do it in a quiet way. Bush is making a list of countries that behaved most badly. If they are getting CIA funds or anything like that, we are going to cut the be-Jesus out of them and we are going to cut the UN Development Fund money." Reagan was not appeased and concluded with the observation that while the decision was popular with the readers of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, "there is a little America out here that thinks the UN stinks to begin with."<sup>39</sup>

If anything was needed to reiterate to Nixon and his advisers that U.S. support for the UN ran shallow in the Republican Party, it was Reagan's reaction. Nixon ordered a spin campaign by Rogers and Press Secretary Ron Zeilger to imply that the UN expulsion of Taiwan had seriously impaired its support among the American people and Congress. Nixon noted that "Ron [Reagan] picked up this line and used it today, and it had quite a big play."<sup>40</sup>

The next obvious place for the Nixon administration to use the anti-UN sentiment was the presidential election of November 1972. This paper would have a resounding conclusion if the Nixon administration had used an anti-United Nations stance as a main plank in the president's reelection campaign. The 1972 presidential campaign was much more a referendum on Vietnam, which most political observers agree was decided definitively in Nixon's favor when Kissinger announced that peace in Vietnam was "at hand" just before the election. Nevertheless, the Nixon campaign team--remember its opponents' rendering of its acronym, CREEP, Committee to Reelect the President--was well aware of the domestic opposition to the United Nations. Furthermore, Democrat presidential candidate George McGovern announced that "idealism" and "greater reliance on the United Nations" would be major principles of his foreign policy." McGovern promised formal diplomatic recognition of China, a permanent seat for Japan on the Security Council, and "more charity abroad."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> National Archives, Nixon Presidential Material, Kissinger Telephone Conversation, Oct. 26, 1971.

<sup>40</sup> *Haldeman Diaries, Multimedia Edition*, October 27, 1971.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*, Oct. 6, 1972, p. 1 and Oct 29, 1972. p. 1.

McGovern handed the UN issue to Nixon on a silver platter. It was not hard to differentiate the president's position from such a liberal approach to the United Nations. Nixon officials seized the opportunity. Nixon publicly chastised Waldheim for a "double standard" in "naively" being taken in by North Vietnamese propaganda that the United States was bombing Red River dikes." Nixon asked why Waldheim criticized U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, but not North Vietnamese military actions against the South.<sup>42</sup> In New York, UN Representative Bush publicly reiterated U.S. determination to contribute only 25% of the UN budget and criticized the UN for being too slow to respond to hijacking and terrorism.<sup>43</sup> Just three weeks before the election, Rogers announced to the press that the United States would exercise its veto power (used only twice since 1945) more readily in the Security Council. If the resolution is a bad one," Rogers stated, "we will veto it."<sup>44</sup> The annual celebration of United Nations' week, less than 14 days before the election, went unnoted and uncelebrated by the Nixon presidency. The General Assembly did its part to enrage American conservatives by voting overwhelmingly on November 4, just 3 days before the election, not just to condemn colonialism in Africa, but also to recognize the "legitimacy" of anti-colonial armed liberation movements, which the rightwing of the Republican Party considered Communist front organizations.<sup>45</sup>

No political scientist or historian would argue that this UN debate had any appreciable effect on the 1972 election. Most of those who disliked the UN were already going to vote for Nixon, except for the few voters who hated the UN with such a passion that they would vote for American Party's ultra conservative candidate, John G. Schmitz, who promised to withdraw America from that body. McGovern's supporters were virtually all pro-UN and anti-war. The Nixon campaign was fully aware that the hostility to the UN was a component of their support and could be challenged, not from the left, but from the right. Thus, the Nixon administration orchestrated a campaign of criticism of the UN right up to the election on the theory that it could shore up support from the right. Looking at the final popular vote in

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<sup>42</sup> *New York Times*, Aug 4, 1972, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> *New York Times*, Oct 5, 1972, p. 11, Oct 31, 1972, p. 11; *Washington Post*, Oct 1, 1972, p. C5.

<sup>44</sup> *New York Times*, Oct. 15, 1972, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> *New York Times*, November 5, 1972, p. 10.

1972, Nixon received 60.7 %, McGovern received 37.5 % and Schmitz, 1.3%.<sup>46</sup> Combine Nixon's and Schmitz's votes, a totals of 62%, and compare it to McGovern's 37.5 percent. Surprisingly, but perhaps not significantly, these figures were close to the 65% to 35 % opposing the PRC's entry into the UN that Marshal Wright noted in the September 1970 poll.

The Nixon administration would not be the last administration to bash the United Nations for a combination of ideological and political reasons. America political society has generally moved to the right since 1972. The Nixon presidency, however, was the first to recognize the potential domestic appeal that hostility to the United Nations could have political dividends. Nixon was not the first, nor would he be the last president, to appoint key officials to UN posts for domestic political reasons, but we now know that he was the first do so brazenly with such obvious political calculation.

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<sup>46</sup> Theodore White, *The Making of the President, 1972* (New York: 1973), p. 373.

