

Adlai Stevenson's Public Relationship with the United Nations

By

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The United Nations was a new arena for American foreign policy in the post-World War II era, and perhaps no figure better embodied the hope for American foreign policy within the UN than Adlai E. Stevenson II. A former Illinois governor and two-time presidential candidate, Stevenson was appointed US Ambassador to the United Nations by John F. Kennedy and held the position until his death in July 1965. Stevenson acted as both a national and international advocate for the United Nations since its founding, utilizing his skills as a public speaker to advance ideals of political negotiation and peace. In recognition of his international status the *London Times* commented on Stevenson's death: "Abroad he came to represent that aspect of his country that most sustains foreign confidence in the

fundamental virtue of its intentions even when its actions seem wrong.”¹ To the international community, Stevenson also embodied those founding American principles that were reflected in the UN Charter. To many, the peaceful conclusion of the Cuban Missile Crisis confirmed the promise of those democratic ideals. Stevenson’s role in the United Nations was certainly portrayed as an example of American victory. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a political highpoint for Stevenson as the interests of the UN and United States were briefly but closely aligned. However, while Stevenson built his career on shaping world opinion through the oration of his ideals, during the crisis Stevenson also found himself used as a tool to influence the public. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, a disillusioned Stevenson retreated from his belief that the United Nations could shape American foreign policy. The escalation of the crisis in Vietnam marked Stevenson’s final surrender. With the loss of its most eloquent and vocal advocate, the United Nations has not yet regained the place in American foreign policy it held during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Stevenson’s career in foreign politics was founded on his oratory skills. Politics seemed a logical path for the well-spoken Stevenson, who was named after his grandfather, Grover Cleveland’s former vice president. However, Stevenson’s ability to shape language was first reflected in his choice of his early professions, which included a brief sojourn into journalism and a position at a well-established Chicago law firm. Stevenson also demonstrated his interest in international affairs early in his life when he became the president of the Chicago Council of Foreign Affairs, a group committed to increasing local

¹Quoted in Anthony Lewis, “Adlai Stevenson Dies in London Street,” *The New York Times*, July 15, 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <http://proquest.umi.com>.

awareness of global issues. Soon-to-be Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox heard Stevenson speak in favor of American interventionism in Chicago and asked him to become his special assistant in 1941, Stevenson's first governmental position.² During the war Stevenson worked in both Washington DC and Europe, exposing him to the workings of foreign policy during war. Stevenson later joined the Department of Public and Cultural Relations where he served as a liaison between the media and the State Department.³ Because of his experience in public relations during the war, Stevenson was sent to fulfill a similar role at the inception of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945. Stevenson reflected: "after almost four years of preoccupation with war, the satisfaction of having a part in the organized search for the conditions and mechanics of peace completed my circle."⁴ Stevenson would be a part of the United Nations and the international search for peace for the rest of his life.

Later that year Edward Stettinius, the American representative to the UN Preparatory Commission in London, returned to the United States for surgery leaving Stevenson in charge of the American delegation. The Commission's task focused on the organization of the UN bodies, as well as determining the headquarters of the UN. On December 15th, the Commission voted in favor of establishing the headquarters of the United Nations in the United States.⁵ This decision reflected both the American status as the leading power of the age and its historical commitment to international law.

² Aruthr M. Schlesinger Jr., "Stevenson, Adlai Ewing, II," American National Biography Online, 2000.

³ Adlai E. Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson: Washington to Springfield 1941-1948*, vol. 2, ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973): 226-227.

⁴ Stevenson, 249.

⁵ Stevenson, 273.

International law originated in the West and though lacking the enforcement of a statutory system, the United Nations created a new forum of public culpability. Thus the promotion of Western international law through the United Nations allowed states to exert control within the international system.⁶ The establishment of the headquarters of the UN gave the appearance that the United States would be the executor of the new international organization as a public forum for international law. In an interview with the British Broadcasting Company, Stevenson clarified that the United States did not ask for the honor of hosting the United Nations, but would rise to its new responsibility. Stevenson claimed: “public opinion...is the sovereign of us all. It is America’s destiny to take a leading part in the world of tomorrow and I hope and believe that the permanent headquarters in the United States will serve to increase ... a better informed public opinion, which will mean so much to the support of the Organization in the future.”⁷ The United Nations facilitated the ultimate expression of world opinion, providing additional motivation to follow international law. Stevenson understood the potential of the United Nations as a public forum for international negotiation, adding a level of accountability and transparency to the global organization that was an important component of the democratic American government.

In 1946 Stevenson acted as the senior advisor to the American delegation in the very first UN General Assembly, which he would later describe to the American people as “the town meeting of the world.”⁸ Stevenson relished the organization’s role as a dedicated

⁶ Philip Van Slyck, *Peace: The Control of National Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 32-33.

⁷ Stevenson, 285.

⁸ Donald C. Campbell, “The Road to Springfield,” in *Adlai Stevenson’s Lasting Legacy*, ed. Alvin Liebling (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 18; Source 5a, AES papers

location for the discussion of foreign issues. Though he would not return to the United Nations for fifteen years, Stevenson continued to pursue his interest of foreign policy in the domestic American arena. On his forty-seventh birthday, Stevenson struggled with his “consuming interest in foreign affairs—public affairs and desire for recognition and position in that field” and contemplated a later run for Senate.⁹ With the desire to be available to his family, instead Stevenson ran for governor of Illinois in 1948, a position held by only three Democrats since the Civil War. In fact “the Governor”, as many of his peers later referred to Stevenson, won the election by the largest margin of victory in the history of Illinois.¹⁰ Stevenson’s dedicated service in the public arena was the consuming focus of Stevenson’s life, beginning with the Illinois governorship. Ellen Stevenson divorced Adlai following the election in 1948 forcing him, as he wrote to his sister, to turn to politics as his remaining chance of a successful and fulfilling life.¹¹ Though Adlai may have viewed his family life as a failure, he did inspire his son to continue in the Stevenson tradition of politics. The Governor’s grandfather, the first Adlai Stevenson, and vice-president to Grover Cleveland founded the Stevenson political dynasty, which would be carried on by both the Governor and his son, Adlai Stevenson III.¹² Though Adlai Stevenson II would later joke that he had “a bad case of hereditary politics”, the sense of duty imbued in him by his family’s political history influenced his later career as ambassador.¹³

⁹ Stevenson, February 5, 1947, 365.

¹⁰ Jean Baker, *The Stevensons: A Biography of an American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 7, 16.

¹¹ Baker, 21.

¹² Leonar Schlup, “Stevenson, Adlai Ewing,” American National Biography Online, 2000.

¹³ Adlai E. Stevenson Quoted in Baker, 9.

Stevenson demonstrated his awareness of public opinion during his involvement in the 1952, 1956, and 1960 presidential elections. Stevenson gained voter support through his dedication to addressing the people. When accepting the Democratic presidential nomination in 1952, Stevenson spoke of facing upcoming obstacles together with an informed nation: "Let's talk sense to the American people. Let's tell them the truth."¹⁴ Though Stevenson never gained the opportunity to speak to the public from within the White House, telling the world the truth would become Stevenson's hallmark in the United Nations ten years later. Regardless of his standing in the polls, Stevenson learned to use the publicity generated by the campaigns as an opportunity to speak to the people about the issues he felt were confronting Americans.¹⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who assisted Stevenson in both the 1952 and 1956 campaigns, reflected how proud he was to aid Stevenson even after the 1952 loss to Eisenhower because Stevenson "established himself as a great national leader—gallant, and honorable and dedicated."¹⁶ Instead of disappearing from the national stage, Stevenson continued to speak to America, while reacquainting himself with world issues.

Stevenson became a figure on the national stage during the 1950's, while also continuing to expand America's exposure to international affairs through his writings and travels. After the 1952 campaign, Stevenson published *Major Campaign Speeches*, which appeared on the *New York Times* bestseller list twice within its first two months of

¹⁴ Adlai Stevenson, July 26, 1952, Chicago, IL, Speech Accepting the Democratic Presidential Nomination, <http://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/adlaistevenson1952dnc.html>.

¹⁵ Porter McKeever, "Adlai Stevenson and the Campaigns of 1952 and 1956," in *Lessons from Defeated Presidential Candidates*, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson, 133.

¹⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. November 26, 1952, *Journals: 1952-2000*, ed. Andrew Schlesinger and Stephen Schlesinger (New York: The Penguin Press, 2007), 22.

publication in 1953.¹⁷ The first of Stevenson's edited works, *Major Campaign Speeches* reflected Stevenson's conviction of the necessity of having a well-informed public for the betterment of the country. In between his two presidential campaigns, Stevenson traveled extensively and reported frequently on his experiences. In 1953 the popular magazine *Look* commissioned Stevenson to comment on the international issues that he confronted on global travels. This magazine series extended Stevenson's national and international exposure. More importantly, Stevenson's published report of his trip reached the magazine's four million subscribers, exposing average Americans to events happening around the world.¹⁸ Stevenson continued to inform Americans on the complexity of the world through editorials in newspapers such as the *New York Times*. In 1960, he wrote about the place where all international issues came together—the United Nations. In "Why the World Looks to the U.N.," Stevenson explained: "The United Nations represents the direction in which the world is moving, toward closer inter-dependence of peoples."¹⁹ This internationalism was not only reflected in the foundation of the United Nations, but also in Stevenson's desire to create a place for the UN within United States foreign policy.

In 1960, Stevenson hoped to be appointed John F. Kennedy's Secretary of State in recognition of his service in foreign policy and to the Democratic Party. When Kennedy instead offered the position of US Ambassador to the United Nations, Stevenson waited one week before accepting the role. Kennedy's lack of understanding about why Stevenson did

¹⁷Douglas Slaybaugh, "Political Philosophy or Partisanship: A Dilemma in Adlai Stevenson's Published Writings, 1953-1956," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 75, no. 3 (1992): 174, <http://www.jstor.org>.

¹⁸ Slaybaugh, 185.

¹⁹ Adlai E. Stevenson, "Why the World Looks to the U.N." *The New York Times*, September 18, 1960, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <http://proquest.umi.com>.

not automatically accept the position as ambassador highlighted the gulf between the two men, which prevented them from developing close relationship.²⁰ Though Stevenson made numerous speeches for Kennedy leading up to the 1960 election, Stevenson's announcement of his own candidacy in the week preceding the Democratic National Convention and his subsequent delayed endorsement of Kennedy marred the political atmosphere surrounding the two men.²¹ The absence of a sympathetic element to Kennedy and Stevenson's relationship was reflected in the opposite ways in which members of the Kennedy administration and the men who worked closely with Stevenson reacted to Stevenson's appointment. Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State, felt Stevenson was comfortable receiving instructions from the State Department as ambassador.²² This attitude reflected the administration's lack of delegation on foreign policy issues outside of its central group of advisors. In contrast, Charles Yost, who would become Stevenson's deputy ambassador in the UN, felt that Stevenson's appointment was "cruel and unusual punishment" because as ambassador Stevenson defended American policies that he did not form or always agree with in front of the organization that embodied his ideals for international cooperation.²³ These two opposing interpretations illuminate the difficulty that Kennedy and Stevenson had in their relationship and their mutual misunderstanding.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s analysis of the appointment demonstrated his unique position as both a professional and personal link between Kennedy and Stevenson. As special assistant to Kennedy, Schlesinger was closely tied to the administration. However,

²⁰ Schlesinger, December 1, 1960, *Journals*, 96.

²¹ Schlesinger, "Stevenson, Adlai Ewing, II".

²² Baker, 413.

²³ Charles M. Yost, *The Conduct and Misconduct of Foreign Affairs* (New York: Random House, 1972), 74-75.

initially Schlesinger felt guilty when he announced his support for Kennedy in the 1960 because of his previous loyalty to Stevenson as a member of Stevenson's 1952 and 1956 campaign staff.²⁴ Schlesinger was not only an official liaison between the White House and the United Nations, but an interpreter between the president and ambassador themselves. When Kennedy expressed his confusion at Stevenson's reluctance to accept the ambassadorship, Schlesinger explained that Stevenson felt that he had finished with his UN career and was more interested in creating foreign policy than "being on the receiving end."²⁵ Schlesinger attempted to bridge the gap between the president and his ambassador, but their previous political history stood in the way. In the end, Kennedy's appointment of Stevenson to the United Nations was made out of political calculations; Kennedy acknowledged that it would be safer to have the Democratic Party leader within his administration than outside of it.²⁶ Though technically a member of the administration as a cabinet member, Stevenson was an outsider to Kennedy's White House. Stevenson's physical distance from Washington and the generation gap between himself and the younger politicians solidified his position on the periphery of the Kennedy administration.

Though Stevenson spoke of the United States' commitment to the UN in his first official address as ambassador, this was more a reflection of his personal dedication to the organization than that of the Kennedy administration.²⁷ The strained relationship between Kennedy and his ambassador fostered separate arenas of influence. As Robert Kennedy

²⁴ Schlesinger, June 16, 1960, *Journals*, 70, 78-79.

²⁵ Schlesinger, December 1, 1960, *Journals*, 96.

²⁶ Harlan Cleveland, "On a World-Scale Roller Coaster: Adlai Stevenson at the UN, 1961-65," in *Adlai Stevenson's Lasting Legacy*, ed. Alvin Liebling (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 110.

²⁷ Adlai Stevenson, February 1, 1961, Statement to the Security Council, in *Looking Outward*, ed. Robert L. and Selma Shiffer (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 3-6.

noted, Stevenson “did a good job of keeping people happy at the UN.”²⁸ While his own government may have viewed his role as secondary, the international community recognized Stevenson’s history of commitment to the United Nations. Many people around the world viewed Stevenson’s appointment as a sign of the added importance the United States government was attributing to the United Nations.²⁹ Stevenson’s positive personal image in the international community influenced global perception of the United States, making Kennedy’s appointment of Stevenson all the more politically calculating. Stevenson embraced his responsibility of ensuring the worldwide security as a member of the United Nations, maintaining the good standing of the Kennedy administration and the United States in the world through his international prominence.

As ambassador to the United Nations, Stevenson went beyond functioning as a mediator between the American government and UN officials, acting as a representative accountable to the global public. Stevenson’s international reputation was brought into question within his first three months as ambassador. Just as the Cuban delegation to the UN requested an appearance on the floor of the United Nations to discuss American aggression and “adventurism”, the United States government was planning to implement a covert operation to overthrow Fidel Castro’s communist regime.³⁰ The Bay of Pigs operation was designed to look like a native revolt, with Cuban ex-patriots trained by the US military to invade their homeland. Stevenson was informed of the Bay of Pigs covert operation because in Kennedy’s opinion, “the integrity and credibility of Adlai Stevenson

²⁸ Seymour Maxwell Finger, *Your Man at the UN* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 116.

²⁹ Finger, 109.

³⁰ Finger, 118-119.

constitute one of our greatest national assets.”³¹ Instead, Stevenson was provided by the State Department with false information about the nationality of the pilots in the attempted airstrike to present to the United Nations. Stevenson and the United States were caught in the exposed cover-up in front of the global presence of the United Nations. Considering the possible ramifications of lying to the world, Stevenson and the United States got off lightly; Stevenson considered resigning, reflecting his dedication to his principle of being truthful to the public.³² The lack of negative consequences for Stevenson reflected the international status he had developed. However, the Bay of Pigs debacle put Stevenson’s ideals into conflict with his position as a representative of the United States. This conflict would later prove to be too great, as Stevenson’s role as ambassador changed after the Cuban Missile Crisis.

On Monday October 22, 1962 President Kennedy announced to the American people that United States had compiled evidence of Soviet installation of nuclear weapons on Cuba. The President outlined the steps the government was taking to provide security for its country, one of which was to call an emergency meeting of the Security Council to address the Soviet violation of the UN Charter.³³ The following day, Adlai Stevenson addressed the Security Council evoking the rhetoric of the Charter that he helped craft, and spoke of the growing threat to peace that the presence of offensive missiles on Cuba created. Stevenson accused the Soviet Union of beginning a “war against the world of the United Nations”, a

³¹ John F. Kennedy to Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr, April 7, 1961, Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), 271.

³² Baker, 416.

³³ John F. Kennedy, October 22, 1962, Washington, Televised Address on the Cuban Missile Crisis, in *“Let the Word go Forth,”* ed. Theodore Sorenson (New York: Dell Publishing, 1988), 272-276

world whose founding principle was rooted in the maintenance of international peace.³⁴

Though the Cold War rivals were the two main players in the crisis Stevenson defined the missiles in Cuba as a global safety concern, ratcheting up the stakes of the game. By labeling the world as a “world of the United Nations” Stevenson added a layer of global authority to the Crisis. Stevenson’s deputy ambassador Yost reflected upon Stevenson’s impassioned emphasis that the Cold War did not exist in a bilateral world. Instead, in his address to the Security Council Stevenson defined the conflict as a “world civil war... a contest between the world of the Charter and the world of the communist conformity.”³⁵ The Cuban Missile Crisis was therefore not an example of a superpower struggle between two nations but a clash between two opposing ideologies, which encompassed much more than two nation states. By placing the Soviet ideology against “the world of the Charter”, Stevenson put world opinion as expressed through the 104 members of the United Nations in opposition with the Soviet actions.

Two days later Adlai Stevenson personally questioned Soviet Ambassador Valerian Zorin in front of the Security Council on the presence of medium and intermediate-range missiles in Cuba. When Ambassador Zorin refused to respond to this direct question on the grounds that he was not “in an American courtroom” Stevenson responded that he was “in a courtroom of world opinion.”³⁶ In this exchange, Stevenson put Zorin and the Soviet position on trial in the most public manner imaginable. The televised stand off between the

³⁴ Adlai Stevenson, October 23, 1962, Statement to the Security Council, in *Looking Outward*, 85.

Charter of the United Nations, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/un/unchart.htm>.

³⁵ Yost, 16.

³⁶ Adlai Stevenson, October 25, 1962, Statement to the Security Council, in *Looking Outward*, 108.

two ambassadors was broadcast to the global community from the authoritative backdrop of the UN floor. The photographic evidence of the Soviet missiles that Stevenson produced was not only seen by the members of the Security Council, but by the world. Zorin's evasion of Stevenson's question and lack of a defense provided the public with as clear of an impression of the Soviet position as if he had answered Stevenson's prompt of "yes or no."³⁷ As Stevenson would later outline to the members of the US Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Relations, the United Nations served three essential purposes during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The UN provided a "world forum" that facilitated negotiation and the exchange of evidence. Secretary General U Thant acted as an intermediate third party, intervening in favor of the blockade to promote negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. And, though Castro prevented the UN from adopting their final role, both Khrushchev and Kennedy agreed to UN supervision of the removal of the missiles from Cuba as an "international inspector."³⁸ While the United Nations added a vital component to the settlement of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Stevenson still had to explain to the members of the U.S. government the benefits of UN membership. The attitude of the administration prevented the UN and thus Stevenson, from developing beyond the role they held during the Cuban Missile Crisis: a global stage used as an instrument to further American foreign policy.

The debates in the United Nations surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis lasted through January of 1963.³⁹ Though Stevenson's performance in the Security Council made

³⁷ Adlai Stevenson, 108.

³⁸ Adlai Stevenson, March 13, 1963, Statement to the US Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Relations, in *Looking Outward*, 126-127.

³⁹ Baker, 419.

him a public champion of the Crisis, an expose published in the *Saturday Evening Post* challenged this perception, accusing Stevenson of proposing a Munich-like appeasement during the original decision-making meetings of the Executive Committee. (As a member of ExComm, Stevenson was part of the group of military and political leaders who were assembled to decide the American response to the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba.) Because one of the article's authors was Charles Bartlett, a friend of the Kennedy's, Stevenson and others viewed the publication as a statement from the President himself, perhaps aimed at getting Stevenson to resign. The White House quickly denied this rumor in a public statement that reinforced Stevenson's positive contribution to the settlement of the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁴⁰ Though this personal attack on Stevenson quickly blew over as being unsubstantiated, it reflected the general attitude of Stevenson's colleagues: they worried that the Ambassador was too indecisive and soft to stand up to the Soviets in the United Nations. The Executive Committee, who was using Stevenson to influence world opinion, sent John McCloy to accompany Stevenson in the Security Council. McCloy, a lawyer known for his tenacity, proved to be an unnecessary chaperone, but the combination of his presence and the sentiment expressed in the *Saturday Evening Post* article, made Stevenson realize that he, and the UN were being treated as tools by his own administration.⁴¹

The resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis displayed the triumph of the United States over the communist threat to world peace. Yet in the most important peaceful conclusion

⁴⁰ E.W. Kenworthy, "White House Disputes a Report of Stevenson 'Dissent' on Cuba," *The New York Times*, December 4, 1962, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <http://proquest.umi.com>. For Stevenson's contributions to the October 19 Executive Committee meeting and the October 20 National Security meeting on the subject of the Cuban Missile Crisis see appendix A.

⁴¹ Baker, 421.

of a conflict since World War II, Adlai Stevenson, long-time peace advocate was personally disillusioned. Stevenson had spent his entire career utilizing national and international opinion to champion the ideals embodied by the UN. However, Stevenson's appeals before the Security Council on October 23 and 25 were not treated by the Kennedy administration as examples of the shining success of the United Nations. Instead Stevenson and the UN were reduced to the roles of a dramatic actor and setting. Ever since Stevenson's first taste of international leadership during the UN Preparatory Committee in 1945 his professional goal was to become a creator of foreign policy. Stevenson viewed being appointed UN ambassador a setback to this ambition. When he had the greatest opportunity to impact foreign policy from the UN during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Stevenson was congratulated for his performance rather than his substantive policy contributions. Stevenson's friend and Secretary of State for Economic and Agricultural Affairs, George Ball recognized that: "after the Cuban Missile Crisis Adlai was only going through the motions....From then on he knew he was not going to have an impact on foreign policy—which was what was most important to him. Washington was a force of its own and he was not part of it."⁴² After fifteen years of waiting to be an executor of foreign policy, the situations surrounding the Cuban Missile illuminated to Stevenson that his dream was not going to be realized.

Stevenson, the former architect of public opinion was instead used by his administration as a figure of public opinion itself. In addition, Stevenson's central doctrine—negotiation— did not immediately result in the peaceful conclusion of the Missile Crisis. Instead, the resolution took place three days after Stevenson's confrontation with Ambassador Zorin, when a combination of factors including Khrushchev's

⁴² Finger, 122.

misperception of an American threat of force to Cuba ended the conflict. The resolution of the standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union was deemed a victory for the Americans as the Soviet missiles in Cuba were later removed. While, the American government and press portrayed the peaceful settlement as a strong stand made by President Kennedy in the face of communist force, the element of negotiation—the dismantling of the Jupiter Missiles in Turkey—which Stevenson supported during the ExComm meetings, was not made public.⁴³ The positive outcome of the Crisis imbued the Kennedy administration with a sense of hubris, further ensuring that an outsider, like Stevenson, would not influence foreign policy.

Stevenson, resigned to his secondary position as ambassador following the Cuban Missile Crisis, fulfilled only a symbolic role in the limited test ban of 1963. Though Stevenson's formal position in the United Nations remained the same until his death, his role in American foreign policy all but disappeared. During the 1956 presidential election, Stevenson was the first American politician to champion the idea of a nuclear test ban.⁴⁴ Stevenson was wholly concerned with the danger that nuclear weapons created in the modern world and not the possible political ramifications of making the test ban an issue during his campaign. Though the Soviet Union and the United States signed a bilateral limited test ban in 1958, the Soviets resumed testing nuclear weapons in September 1961 and America responded by resuming its own aboveground testing in April 1962.⁴⁵ In June 1963, Stevenson was a member of the US delegation at Moscow creating a new limited test

⁴³ Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 333.

⁴⁴ Ken Hechler, "Stevenson: Concerned and Brilliant—His Finest Hour Was in Seeking a Nuclear Test Ban," in *Adlai Stevenson's Lasting Legacy*, ed. Alvin Liebling (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 60.

⁴⁵ Dobbs, 194-195.

ban treaty, but was not involved with the formulation of the treaty itself.⁴⁶ Stevenson filled an ornamental role in Moscow, not attempting to create the foreign policy that was one of his earliest causes. Stevenson's lack of involvement in the 1963 test ban reflected his retreat from the ideals that had previously defined him and his relationship with the United Nations.

When Lyndon B. Johnson became president of the United States following the assassination of John Kennedy in November 1963, Stevenson hoped to have a larger role in the administration of Johnson's foreign policies. Stevenson reported to Arthur Schlesinger Jr. that Johnson had approached him, recognizing the fact that Stevenson was not often consulted on foreign policy during Kennedy's administration, and planned to give Stevenson more influence. Stevenson took Johnson's compliments and reassurances at face value. When Stevenson related the conversation to Schlesinger he believed that "things are going to be ten times better for me [Stevenson] than they were before."⁴⁷ Stevenson's bitterness over his exclusion from the Kennedy administration's creation of foreign policy blinded him from the political nature of Johnson's promises. Perhaps encouraged by having a superior from his own generation, Stevenson did not question Johnson's motives, hoping finally for the opportunity in foreign policy that he had been waiting for his entire career. Schlesinger, however, realized that Johnson was making empty promises to Stevenson, astutely analyzing that the relationship between Johnson and Stevenson was dependent on the amount of weight the administration gave to the impact of the United Nations; Stevenson had less of a role under Johnson than under Kennedy because "Johnson

⁴⁶ Baker, 424.

⁴⁷ Schlesinger, December 3, 1963, *Journals*, 211.

rarely though about the UN or the Third World and thus rarely about Adlai.”⁴⁸ As the administration turned less to the United Nations, Stevenson’s disappointment continued as he had even less of an influence on foreign policy.

The Vietnam War came to the United Nations on May 13, 1964 when the delegation from Cambodia requested an appearance before the Security Council to address South Vietnamese aggression and American “terrorist raids” over their border. In his address written by the State Department to the Security Council on May 21, Stevenson supported the United States’ position and argued that the American forces were attempting to promote peace in Southeast Asia.⁴⁹ For the rest of his career, Stevenson staunchly defended American involvement in Vietnam on the world stage in the UN. Stevenson’s public stance in favor of Vietnam seemed to contradict his ideals of informing the public with the truth and seeking political negotiation before the use of force. A group of anti-war activists recognized this contradiction and in 1965 turned to Ambassador Stevenson to resign from his position to champion his moral principles and come out against the Vietnam War. While Stevenson met with the activists, he then gave the government’s standard justification for their involvement in Vietnam.⁵⁰ Stevenson turned away from his principles during his last years as UN Ambassador, becoming a standardized representation of the United States government. Though Stevenson had tried for so long to make a true impact on foreign policy, by the end of his career he resigned himself to a comfortable position of receiving instructions that he had previously scorned. With the loss

⁴⁸ Schlesinger, July 15, 1965, *Journals*, 239.

⁴⁹ John Bartlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World: The Life of Adlai Stevenson* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977), 794.

⁵⁰ Baker, 434.

of its champion advocate following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United Nations began to lose its role in the execution of American foreign policy. As historian Seymour Finger noted: "measured against his stature in the nation and the world and his own expectations, Stevenson's term as permanent representative could be considered a failure....yet Stevenson did a laudable job of representing the United States at the UN."⁵¹ The difference in these two statements reflects the difference between Stevenson's personal and public goals. Adlai Stevenson's idealist qualities that made him such a unique advocate for the United Nation's position in American foreign policy were ultimately dimmed by his continued failure to create foreign policy. As UN Ambassador Stevenson acted the part of the United States on the UN stage, with his star performance occurring during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Adlai Stevenson died on July 14, 1965 in London. The following day two articles appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*, one detailing the formal announcement of his death and the other entitled "Right Man, Wrong Time" providing a melancholy view of a man with a largely unsuccessful political career who attempted to influence foreign policy.⁵² The public attention given to his death reflected Stevenson's continued role in the international limelight, though sidestepping Stevenson's retreat from his personal principles at the end of his life. For the majority of his career, Stevenson had been able to mold world opinion in favor of American national interests through his support of the United Nations. On his death, Stevenson received recognition from the world for his efforts

⁵¹ Finger, 153-154.

⁵² Anthony Lewis, "Adlai Stevenson Dies in London Street at Age 65; Johnson Leads Tribute," *The New York Times*, July 15, 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <http://proquest.umi.com>. James Reston, "Right Man, Wrong Time," *The New York Times*, July 15, 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <http://proquest.umi.com>.

both inside and outside the United Nations. It is appropriate that the tribute delivered by U Thant, the Secretary General during the majority of Stevenson's ambassadorship, more accurately represented Stevenson as the "people's friend" and part of the history of the United Nations than President Johnson's uncreative remarks that urged America to remember Stevenson for his ideals and not for the positions he held.⁵³ Johnson himself was guilty of making Stevenson's final position as UN Ambassador a position not worth remembering because of the lack of influence he gave the United Nations. Stevenson's sudden death ended his gradual decline into ignominy.

In 2003, Adlai Stevenson's son, Adlai Stevenson III wrote an editorial in the *New York Times* in response to the connection the public was making between his father's moment before the United Nations during the Cuban Missile Crisis and Colin Powell's appearance before the Security Council arguing in favor of the war in Iraq. Adlai Stevenson III discredited the connection because of the difference in the two men's motivations: Stevenson II was trying to maintain peace while Powell wanted to justify war.⁵⁴ Though Stevenson III emphasized the difference in situation, Ambassador Stevenson II and Secretary of State Powell were very different men appearing on the world stage. Powell went to the UN with the ability to exert the power behind his position, while the Kennedy administration gave Stevenson II what appeared to be power to the watching public. An

⁵³ U Thant, "Tribute to Adlai E. Stevenson," *Adlai E. Stevenson: A Voice of Conscience*, Notable American Unitarians, <http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/unitarians/stevenson.html>. Lyndon B. Johnson, July 14, 1965. "Remarks of the President of the United States on the death of Adlai E. Stevenson," *Adlai E. Stevenson: A Voice of Conscience*, Notable American Unitarians, <http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/unitarians/stevenson.html>.

⁵⁴ Adlai E. Stevenson III, "Different Man, Different Moment," *The New York Times*, February 7, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com>.

equally significant difference between Stevenson's 1962 appearance and Powell's 2003 appearance before the United Nations was the nature of public opinion as demonstrated in the United Nations in each situation. Stevenson addressed the world when the international community was aligned with American foreign policy. On the other hand, Powell appeared before the UN justifying an American cause, demonstrating the negative international reaction towards the war in Iraq. The beginning of this shift in public opinion occurred while Stevenson was the ambassador to the UN, and reflected the metamorphosis the role of the United Nations held in American foreign policy in the twenty short years of Stevenson's involvement in the UN.