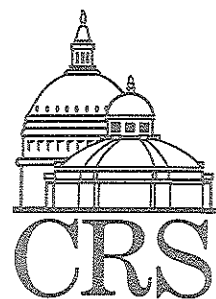


CRS Report for Congress

African-American Participation At The United Nations

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN PARTICIPATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

SUMMARY

African-Americans have been interested and involved in the United Nations since its establishment. Indeed, a number of African-Americans were observers at the conference establishing the United Nations, and Ralph Bunche participated in that conference as a member of the State Department's official delegation staff. Bunche joined the United Nations' staff in 1946 and continued to serve there until shortly before his death in 1971. In the late 1940s, with extraordinary skill, persistence, and sensitivity, he was instrumental in achieving a cease-fire and successful negotiation of an armistice in Palestine. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 for his noteworthy work as a peace negotiator and keeper of the armistice. In 1955 Bunche was appointed Under Secretary-General of the United Nations, the highest ranking American in the U.N. Secretariat. In that capacity he continued to address some of the most contentious peacekeeping issues in which the United Nations was involved including the 1956 Suez crisis, the 1960 Congo crisis, Cyprus, and the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Three African-Americans have headed the U.S. mission to the United Nations as U.S. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations with the rank of ambassador: Andrew Young, Donald McHenry, and Edward Perkins. Andrew Young served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations from January 1977 until August 1979. During his tenure at the United Nations, he is credited with strengthening the U.S. commitment to multilateral diplomacy, and with improving U.S. relations with many African and Third World countries. Donald McHenry succeeded Young as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations having served as Young's deputy, and brought notable diplomatic skills and particular expertise in Asian and African matters to his position. Edward Perkins, a career Foreign Service Officer, served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations at the end of President Bush's term, from May 1992 until January 1993.

A number of African-Americans have served on the U.S. delegation with the rank of Ambassador. James Nabrit, Jr. was Deputy permanent Representative and U.S. Representative to the U.N. Security Council in 1965 and 1966. Franklin Williams, Clarence Clyde Ferguson, Jr., and Alan Keyes, Jr. served with the rank of Ambassador as U.S. Representatives on the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and Robert Kitchen was alternate Representative to that body. Other African-Americans have participated on U.S. delegations to the U.N. General Assembly.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN PARTICIPATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS¹

INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of the United Nations, African-Americans have been actively interested and involved in its development. Observers at the conference establishing the United Nations in San Francisco in April 1945 included Mary McLeod Bethune of the National Council of Negro Women, Mordecai W. Johnson of Howard University, W.E.B. DuBois and Walter White of the NAACP. Ralph Bunche, acting chief of the division of dependent territories at the Department of State attended as part of the official delegation staff. This brief survey outlines the contributions of some African-Americans who served at the United Nations, in its employ, or as Representatives of the United States.

Since 1945, the extent of African-American involvement with the United Nations and international affairs has depended on the following factors: (1) the degree of American involvement in multilateral diplomacy; (2) the intensity of African-American political activism at home; (3) African-American identification with democracy and independence movements abroad, particularly those in Africa; and (4) the growing cadre of educated, politically active African-Americans who advocated the inter-relationship between domestic and global issues of justice, equality, and freedom. The most intense interest appeared when all these factors converged on the national political agenda: immediately after World War II and during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1946, Ralph Bunche went to work for the United Nations with the Trusteeship Council, formed "to safeguard the interests and welfare of non-self-governing peoples in territories held either under League of Nations mandates or detached from enemy countries after World War II."² Bunche was instrumental in several major initiatives to resolve conflicts, notably during the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948. In the late 1970s, Ambassadors Andrew Young and Donald McHenry headed the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, and in the early 1990s Ambassador Edward Perkins served in that capacity. James M. Nabrit Jr. had earlier served with the rank of Ambassador as Deputy Permanent Representative and Representative to the U.N. Security Council. Three African-Americans have served with the rank of Ambassador as U.S. Representatives on the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): Franklin Williams, Clarence Clyde

¹The brief selected bibliography at the end of this report lists some of the major sources for the information presented.

² Franklin, John Hope. *From Slavery to Freedom, A History of Negro Americans*, Fifth Edition, Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 1980. p. 447.

Ferguson, Jr., and Alan L. Keyes, Jr. Other African-Americans have served on U.S. delegations to the U.N. General Assembly.

RALPH JOHNSON BUNCHE AND THE UNITED NATIONS

"I have a number of very strong biases....I have a deep-seated bias against hate and intolerance. I have a bias against racial and religious bigotry. I have a bias against war, a bias for peace. I have a bias which leads me to believe in the essential goodness of my fellow man, which leads me to believe that no problem in human relations is ever insoluble. And I have a strong bias in favor of the United Nations and its ability to maintain a peaceful world." Ralph J. Bunche³

Ralph J. Bunche (August 7, 1904 - December 9, 1971), political scientist, educator, U.S. State Department official, and U.N. official, focused his attention at the United Nations on race relations, trusteeship, and colonial policies. Bunche's work at the United Nations began in May, 1946, when Secretary-General Trygve Lie "borrowed" him from the U.S. State Department to work as director of the Trusteeship Division, which Bunche had helped to organize. He continued to serve there until October 1971, two months before he died.

Bunche, son of Olive Agnes and Fred Bunche, was born in Detroit, Michigan. His father was a barber, and his mother a musician. After his parents' deaths in 1916, young Bunche and his sister went to live in Los Angeles, California with his maternal grandmother Lucy Johnson. He attended the University of California at Los Angeles, where he majored in international relations. He graduated summa cum laude in 1927, and earned membership in Phi Beta Kappa. The following year, he received a M.A. degree in government from Harvard University, and joined the faculty at Howard University in Washington, D.C., becoming full professor in 1937. Meanwhile, he returned to Harvard to complete his doctoral dissertation, comparing the rule of a mandated area, French Togoland, with that of a colony, Dahomey, in French West Africa. He was awarded a Ph.D. in 1934. Post-doctoral fellowships awarded by the Social Science Research Council in anthropology and colonial policy followed, at Northwestern University, the London School of Economics, and the Union of South Africa's Capetown University.

In 1938, Bunche embarked on an extraordinary project under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Working as chief of staff to Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish economist, he traveled through the southern United States for two years investigating the condition of African-Americans in America. The result of that work was a monumental two-volume study of race relations in the United States, **An American Dilemma**, completed in 1940. His studies and his concern about race and class would continue in his future work with the State Department and the United Nations.

In 1941, after the outbreak of World War II, Bunche went to work as senior social science analyst for the Office of the Coordinator of Information (later the Office of Strategic Services) in the Africa and Far East sections. He later

³ Quoted in The New York Times editorial, December 12, 1971.

became area specialist on Africa and dependent areas in the Division of Territorial Studies at the State Department, then acting associate chief of the Division of Dependent Area Affairs (Office of Special Political Affairs).

President Harry Truman selected Bunche, an expert on trusteeships, as adviser and U.S. delegate to a number of U. N. conferences, where he worked to draw up what later became the non-self-governing territories and trusteeship sections of the U.N. Charter and developed plans for governance for the former Italian colonies. In May 1946, Bunche officially joined the U.N. Secretariat as director of the Trusteeship Division, which he had helped organize.

Palestine was a critical post-war problem. Britain wished to give up its mandate. Jewish survivors of the Nazi holocaust wanted to leave Europe, immigrate to Palestine and join other Jews already in Palestine in creating a Jewish State. The Arabs, who formed a majority of the population in Palestine, opposed the influx. In 1947, Bunche studied the situation and recommended partition of the country into Jewish and Arab states, and a majority in the U.N. General Assembly voted for partition in November 1947; Arab leaders rejected the partition plan. Bunche was appointed principal secretary of the United Nations Palestine Commission in December 1947. After fighting broke out between Jews and Arabs, the U.N. Commission requested that the U.N. Security Council create an international armed force to implement the partition of Palestine, and study the conditions of a truce. In May 1948, following the withdrawal of British forces, Jewish leaders proclaimed the state of Israel, which was immediately recognized by the United States, the Soviet Union, and various other countries. Neighboring Arab states attacked the nascent Israeli state and major fighting continued for several months. When Count Folke Bernadotte, the main U.N. negotiator was assassinated on September 17, 1948 by Jewish extremists, Bunche succeeded him as acting mediator. According to Seymour Maxwell Finger, the achievement of a cease-fire, followed by the successful negotiation of an armistice was "in substantial measure due to the astuteness, extraordinary skill, sensitivity, patience, and dogged persistence of Ralph Bunche."⁴ In 1950, Bunche was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition for his work as peace negotiator and keeper of the armistice.

Bunche was appointed U.N. Under Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs in 1955, and continued to be involved in many important U.N. operations: following the Suez crisis, during the 1960 Congo conflict, the 1963 intervention of the U.N. forces at the time of the Tshombe-Katanga secession, the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, and in Cyprus. Bunche, the highest ranking American in the U.N. Secretariat, was a strong supporter of the United Nations and in promoting racial and ethnic equality.

⁴ Finger, Seymour Maxwell. *American Ambassadors at the U.N., People, Politics, and Bureaucracy in Making Foreign Policy*, Holmes & Meier, New York: 1988, p. 56. Finger was senior advisor on Economic and Social Affairs (1956-1964), then Ambassador and senior advisor to the Permanent Representative (1967-1971).

U.S. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UNITED NATIONS**Andrew Jackson Young** (March 12, 1932 -)

Andrew Young was nominated U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations by President-elect Jimmy Carter in December 1976. Both men were from Georgia, Carter was sympathetic to the cause of civil rights, and Young supported Governor Carter's bid for the Democratic Presidency in 1976. Young was the first African-American, first ordained minister, and youngest person to lead the American delegation at the United Nations. Young assumed office on January 30, 1977.

Andrew J. Young was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. His father was a dentist and his mother a school teacher. After receiving his Bachelor's degree at Howard University in 1951, he received a B.D. degree in 1955 from the Hartford Theological Seminary, where he was inspired by Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent resistance and economic action. After serving as pastor in several southern towns, Young moved to New York City, where he worked for the National Council of Churches. In 1961, he moved to Atlanta, Georgia to work with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the non-violent civil rights movement. In 1968, after King was murdered, Young decided that politics was the path toward progress in race relations. He ran for Congress in 1970, lost, then won in his subsequent bids in 1972 and 1974, becoming the first African-American Congressman from Georgia since Reconstruction.

It was during Young's second term in Congress, that Jimmy Carter won the Presidency and offered Young the Ambassadorship to the United Nations. Young, encouraged by the progress made through non-violent actions on the domestic front and inspired by the work of Ralph Bunche at the United Nations, eagerly accepted the appointment, believing that he could apply the principles of the civil rights movement in the international arena. Because of his close working relationship with President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and his stress on non-violence, negotiation, and economic pressure, Young worked toward moving the United Nations and African combatants toward negotiated peaceful settlements and ultimately independence under majority rule in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Namibia.

With the support of Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Young succeeded in drawing in Britain, Canada, France and the Federal Republic of Germany to form a contact group on Namibia. At the United Nations and within African and European capitals, talks continued, until acceptable terms were worked out in 1978: in Namibia there would be U.N. controlled and supervised elections by secret ballot after the elimination of discriminatory laws, the release of political prisoners, the withdrawal of South African troops and a cease-fire.

Rhodesia presented another problem. The U.N. Security Council had imposed mandatory economic sanctions on Rhodesia in 1966, strengthened the

sanctions in 1968, and expanded them again in 1977. Ultimately, in December 1979, an agreement was worked out that led to a cease-fire, the establishment of a new government based on majority rule elections, and an end to international economic sanctions. Young, with the aid of Donald McHenry, was instrumental in pushing for these negotiated settlements through patient networking and organized pressure.

In August 1979, it was revealed that Young had a private meeting with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) representative at the United Nations with the purpose of furthering Middle East peace negotiations. Whether the meeting(s) had been officially authorized or not remains unclear. The United States had promised Israel that it would not deal with the PLO while it supported the violent overthrow of the Jewish State and terrorist tactics. Jewish organizations were alarmed and some Members of Congress drew up a request for his resignation, Young took full responsibility for his actions and submitted his resignation on August 15, 1979.

After resigning from his U.N. post, Young remained a popular leader having established a reputation in the international community for improving relations with newly developing countries in Africa and Asia. Young continues to participate in public life, writing, speaking and serving as mayor of Atlanta for several terms. He is currently Co-Chairman of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

Donald F. McHenry (October 13, 1936 -)

Donald McHenry replaced Andrew Young as Ambassador. He had worked as Young's Deputy at the Security Council since early 1977. In fact, McHenry had been instrumental in working out the 1978 proposals for peace and independence for Namibia. McHenry was a highly respected diplomat with State Department experience, familiarity with the workings of the Federal bureaucracy as well as U.N. experience. Furthermore, while he shared Young's views and enjoyed the confidence of Secretary Vance, he was considered to be publicly more "discreet". McHenry served as Ambassador to the United Nations through the end of President Carter's term in office.

McHenry was born in St. Louis, Missouri. His mother, Dora Lee raised her family of three children alone. In 1957, McHenry received his B.S. degree from the Illinois State University. He continued his studies in public speaking and international affairs at Southern Illinois University, receiving an M.S. degree in 1959. He then moved to Washington, D.C. where he taught English at Howard University and pursued graduate work in international relations at Georgetown University. In 1963, McHenry joined the State Department. He served as foreign affairs officer in the Dependent Areas Section of the Office of U.N. Political Affairs, then as assistant to the Secretary of State. He also served as alternate representative to the U.N. Trusteeship Council, and participated in U.N. conferences on apartheid and racial discrimination, and human rights.

McHenry resigned from the State Department in 1973. He taught at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and at American University. In addition, he worked at Brookings Institution, and served as director of humanitarian policy studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. After Jimmy Carter won the Presidential election, he named McHenry Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. Security Council. McHenry's ability to attend to details complemented Young's flair for projecting bold, general concepts. McHenry's visit to Angola helped diffuse conflict there. He helped develop plans for the U.N.-supported withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia, and worked to establish cooperation with African nations such as Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia.

When Andrew Young submitted his resignation, Carter demonstrated his continued support for the Young-McHenry team, respect for McHenry's expertise on Asian and African affairs, and the Administration's commitment to ending racism and apartheid in Southern Africa. He asked McHenry to assume the leadership of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. McHenry stepped into the position in September 1979.

McHenry won the U.N. Security Council's unanimous support for demands for immediate release of American hostages taken in Iran in November 1979. Attempts to mobilize an international economic boycott of Iran failed when the Soviet Union vetoed the measure. The Soviet Union's incursion into Afghanistan in December provoked reaction in the Security Council, which was quashed by a Soviet veto. In the General Assembly, however, McHenry won approval for a resolution demanding the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan.

A major foreign policy uproar occurred when McHenry joined in the unanimous condemnation of Israel for its establishment of settlements on the occupied West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. The United States had previously been careful to abstain on such votes in the Security Council. However, Carter's preoccupation with Iran, Afghanistan, hostages in Colombia, and the election campaign apparently led to delayed response and confusing instructions to modify the text of the resolution. The Carter team was trying to implement the Camp David accords, including the Israeli recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and the promised suspension of settlements in the West Bank, but did not wish to engender hostilities by participating in a general condemnation. Two days after the vote, President Carter disavowed it, and Secretary of State Vance assumed responsibility for the mix-up.

When Carter lost his bid for re-election in 1980, McHenry finished out the year at the United Nations and returned to writing and teaching at Georgetown University. He also serves as consultant on foreign relations and on the editorial board of *Foreign Policy* magazine. He is currently also serving as the State Department's Special Envoy for Nigeria.

Edward Joseph Perkins (June 8, 1928 -)

Edward Perkins was appointed by President George Bush as U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. He served in that role from May 7, 1992 to January 31, 1993.

Perkins received a B.A. from the University of Maryland in 1968, and graduate degrees (MPA in 1972 and PhD. in 1978) from the University of Southern California. A foreign service officer with extensive experience in personnel and management matters as well as in Asian and African affairs, Perkins directed the Office of West African Affairs at the Department of State 1983-85). He served as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia (1985-86) and to South Africa (1986-89). Perkins was Director General of the Foreign Service from 1989 until his appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. He is currently U.S. Ambassador to Australia.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL**James Madison Nabrit, Jr.** (September 4, 1900-)

In 1965, while president of Howard University, James M. Nabrit, Jr. was appointed Deputy U.S. Representative in the Security Council with the rank of Ambassador by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1966 he was appointed Deputy U.S. Representative to the United Nations while continuing as Deputy Representative in the Security Council. Nabrit had been one of NAACP's top lawyers in the civil rights struggle. While representing the United States at the U.N. Security Council in 1965 and 1966, he continued to serve as president of Howard University, retiring in 1969.

Nabrit was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He graduated from Morehouse College in 1923 with honors, then attended Northwestern University where he earned the J.D. degree with honors in 1927. After teaching at Leland College in Baker, Louisiana for several years, he served as dean of the Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. After leaving academic life, from 1930 to 1936, Nabrit practiced law in Houston, Texas. He then returned to education as an associate professor at Howard University's Law School. Nabrit successfully argued the case of *Bolling v. Sharpe* in 1954 before the Supreme Court. The case involved public school segregation in the District of Columbia.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

Franklin H. Williams (October 22, 1917 - May 20, 1990)

In 1964, Franklin H. Williams was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson as U.S. Representative to the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). He served there as Ambassador for two years, representing the United States during the U.N. International Year for Human Rights in 1964. After he left the United Nations, he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Ghana from 1965 to 1968.

Williams was born in New York City, received a B.A. from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, then completed law school at Fordham University in New York. He was accepted to the New York and California bar and practiced law. From 1959 to 1961, he served as assistant attorney general in New York State. In 1961, Williams was named regional director for Africa in the U.S. Peace Corps. He sought the creation at the United Nations of an international voluntary service.⁵ Such a program was not created at that time, but in January 1971 a U.N. Volunteer Program began operation.

Upon retiring from government service, he headed a new Urban Affairs Center at Columbia University, served as president and trustee of the Phelps Stokes Fund, and a commentator for Westinghouse Broadcasting Company.

Clarence Clyde Ferguson, Jr. (November 4, 1924 - December 21, 1983)

Ferguson was appointed by President Richard Nixon to be U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. He served in that capacity from 1973 to 1975.

He received his education at Ohio State University and was awarded a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1951. He practiced law in Massachusetts and New York, specializing in corporate and bankruptcy matters. In 1952, Ferguson participated in a UNESCO Conference in Havana. In the 1960s he served as alternate and subsequently as U.S. expert on the U.N. Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. He also helped draft the UNESCO Statement on Race in 1967. At the same time, from 1963 to 1969, he was dean and professor at Howard University law school. In 1969, Ferguson coordinated the relief program for civilians during the Nigerian Civil War. In 1970, he was appointed Ambassador to Uganda and in 1973 he was named Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. He began teaching at Harvard Law School in 1975.

⁵ Fasulo, Linda M. *Representing America, Experiences of U.S. Diplomats at the UN*, Praeger Publishers, New York: 1984. p. 92.

Ferguson is considered one of the originators of the concept of affirmative action. He was active in civil rights, served on the board of directors of the NAACP and acted as general counsel for the Civil Rights Commission.

Alan Leo Keyes, Jr. (August 7, 1950 -)

In August 1983, President Ronald Reagan nominated Alan L. Keyes to be U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council. Keyes served in that capacity until November 1985, when he was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.

While attending Cornell University in the late 1960s, Keyes was a supporter of the Vietnam War. After completing his undergraduate studies at Harvard University with a B.A. in 1972, he earned several teaching fellowships from 1974 to 1978 and successfully completed his doctoral studies in 1979. He joined the Foreign Service in 19. From 1980 to 1981, he was posted in Zimbabwe, and afterward worked on the policy planning staff in the State Department in Washington.

While at the United Nations, Keyes antagonized some Americans, black and white, by leading Reagan Administration opposition to economic sanctions against South Africa. Keyes reflected a changed attitude toward the United Nations. In September 1987, Keyes, the highest-ranking African-American in the State Department, submitted his resignation after a disagreement with Deputy Secretary John C. Whitehead over the distribution of U.S. funding to U.N. agencies. According to a *Washington Post* report (9/17/87), Keyes charged that he was treated "in a racist manner", and as a "token black".

Since then Keyes has taught, moderated a radio talk show, and run unsuccessfully for the Senate in 1988 and 1992. He recently announced his candidacy for the Presidency.

Robert Wilson Kitchen, Jr. (July 19, 1921 -)

Robert W. Kitchen served as alternate representative to ECOSOC from 1971 through 1977. Kitchen graduated from Morehouse College in 1942 and received a Master's degree in business administration from Columbia University in 1946. He pursued studies in industrial management and engineering, receiving an LL.D. from Chapman College in 1965. He served for many years in the Agency for International Development (AID) and the State Department. He was responsible for the administration of the first major AID program in Africa, the U.S. Mission to the Sudan, from 1958 to 1960.

DELEGATES TO THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Charles C. Diggs, Jr. served as a congressional delegate to the General Assembly in 1971. Diggs resigned from the U.S. delegation abruptly on December 18, 1971 to protest the Nixon Administration's African policies. He favored increasing pressure on Rhodesia and South Africa to change their official apartheid policies and to develop systems of majority rule.

Generally, public delegates to the U.N. General Assembly are appointed for a short term. The following list includes some of the African-Americans who have served on the U.S. delegations to the U.N. General Assembly:

Edith Sampson served as alternate delegate to the United Nations General Assembly in 1950 and 1952.

Archibald J. Carey served as alternate delegate to the General Assembly in 1953.

Charles H. Mahoney served as delegate to the General Assembly in 1954.

Robert L. Brokenburr served as alternate delegate to the General Assembly in 1955.

Zelma George was alternate delegate to the General Assembly in 1960.

Carl T. Rowan served as alternate delegate to the General Assembly in 1962.

Patricia Roberts Harris served as alternate delegate to the General Assembly from 1966 to 1967.

Pearl Bailey was special representative on the U.S. delegation to the United Nations from 1987 to 1989.

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