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[Conversation between the President and Daniel Patrick Moynihan – then U.S. representative to the United Nations – on the ability of Blacks to lead nations]

Nixon: I'm not saying that Blacks cannot govern. I *am* saying they have a hell of a time.

Daniel P. Moynihan: Mm-hmm.

Nixon: Now that must demonstrate something. Now, having said that, let's look at Latin America. Latin America's had 150 years of trying at it and they don't have much going down there either. Mexico is a one party government; Colombia, they trade it off every two years; Venezuela is tiptee-toe, and the rest are dictatorships except for Allende, which is a communist dictatorship – elected, but communist.

Now, let me come back to another point. Within that scheme, this thought – and I think you might want to do a little piece on this sometime – is my ... I think you may have heard me tell of my conversation with [Luis] Muñoz Marín [first governor of Puerto Rico], who, incidentally *was* capable of governing.

Moynihan: Yes.

Nixon: You know... I think you think well of him. In '58, after Lima and Caracas, I stopped there. And he and I talked all night... and he, drinking his scotch and all, and he really lived it up... [*laughing*] And I, trying to keep up with him – practically dead! But he made a very interesting point, very late – early in the early morning hours... he said, look, he says, I shouldn't say this, he said, "But Mr. Vice-President, my people have many fine qualities, I mean, they're courteous... they're, they're family people... in the arts... and you know, philosophy, etc." But he said, "I will have to admit, my people" – speaking of Latins generally – "have never been very good at government."

Moynihan: Yeah.

Nixon: Now let's look at that. The Italians aren't any good at government. The Spanish aren't any good at government.

Moynihan: Yeah.

Nixon: The French have had a hell of a time, and they're half Latin. And all of Latin America's not any good at government. They either go to one extreme or the other. It's either a family, well, three extremes: family oligarchy, or a dictatorship, or a dictatorship

on the right or one on the left. Very seldom in the center. Now having said all that, however, as you compare the Latin dictatorships, governments, etc. and their forms of government, they are – they at least do it their way. It is an orderly way which works relatively well. They have been able to run the damn place. Looking at the Black countries . . . of course, there are only two old ones – Haiti is an old one, and Liberia is a very old one. Ethiopia is a very old one, but they have a hell of a time running the place.

Moynihan: It's a pretty miserable world.

Nixon: Now, now, now, you look at Asia, and you can say, well what about out there? You don't have democracies. Of course you don't, except Japan – where we impose it, and the Philippines – and it's a hell of a mess. But on the other hand, Thailand, with its oligarchy, has the right kind of a government for Thailand. And we have to say too that Iran with the benevolent Shah . . .

Moynihan: [*Interrupting*] – works pretty well?

Nixon: . . . with the benevolent Shah, that's the right thing for those folks.

Moynihan: Yeah.

Nixon: I think. Now what I am getting back the wrong way around is this: I think something, I think something could be, uh, that is eventually gonna come out here is this – that – and it's right beneath the surface, this whole black-white deal is gonna come out the fact that. . . Asians *are* capable of governing themselves, one way or another. That we and the Caucasians have learned it after slaughtering each other in religious wars and other wars for many, many years, including a couple in the last...this century. The Latins do it in a miserable way, but they do it. But the Africans just can't run things. Now that's a very, very fundamental point in the international scene. See my point?

Moynihan: Oh boy, you sure see it around this place! [*Moynihan is at the United Nations*]

Nixon: Well, of course you do, you see them – You know, I have mixed feelings...I receive their ambassadors, they change all the time, and I've had in the past... I love 'em, they're so *kind*, and so *nice*...and they're children!

Moynihan: Yeah.

Nixon: Children...

Moynihan: [*Laughing*] Yeah...and they always want something like children...

Nixon: Oh god yes, they why...well what can you do...But what I meant is it is so childlike...the childlike faith, and this and that...And of course a lot of them are crooks but we have crooks too! Anyway, what I am getting at is, I think you've got in the field of business, you've got the field of education, and so forth and so on. But there are many

other areas, as you've well pointed out, where they can beat the hell out of us. Now – and they should be proud of those! Athletics isn't a bad achievement!

Moynihan: Not at all!

Nixon: And you look at the World Series, for God's sake, what would either of these teams done without – what would Pittsburg be without . . .? heh, heh . . .

Moynihan: Yeah...sure...

Nixon: A hell of a lot of blacks! And, and music... the dance! Now - and these things, are they to be therefore just pissed upon, hell no, they're important! And also, also, in certain areas – poetry, et cetera. They have a free and easy style, that creates – that adds enormously to our culture. But on the other hand, when you to some of the more, shall we say, some of the more profound, rigid disciplines, basically... They have a hell of a time makin' it.

[Conversation continues, irrelevant]