

Nuclear Weapons Conference, Geneva 1958-61 ; SECCO after Summit Conference ...

HS L 179:91



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Nuclear Weapons Conference, Geneva

2 Sept. 58

Secret note on Disarmament
(delivered from Cairo)



2 September 1958

Note

1. In various respects the reaction of the United Nations to the results of the technical talks in Geneva on test detection will be of decisive significance. It is vital that the opportunities offered should not be missed and that the Governments should not choose a false direction in moving on from the point reached.

2. So far, I am not informed about governmental reactions to the report from the Geneva talks and I do not know clearly what the subsequent talks, proposed for the end of October in Geneva, will aim at. I guess that the intention is to translate the findings to some extent into operational terms, as well as to see what progress can be achieved concerning more firm arrangements for a suspension of tests. However, I would regret it, if a tendency were to develop to pursue these matters very much farther outside the framework of the United Nations to which they naturally belong. One first conclusion would therefore be that it is desirable, at an early stage, to make clear to the Governments directly concerned that other governments feel that the follow-through should take place within a U.N. framework and in such forms as fully to integrate the further action with the handling of the question of disarmament, as a matter of immediate concern to all Member Governments and pending before the General Assembly. In this regard it may be recalled that I have suggested an item for disarmament on the agenda under which the report from the Geneva talks, as circulated at the request of the participants, can appropriately be discussed.

3. In my introduction to the report to the General Assembly I have stressed that a technical approach to such disarmament problems as leave room for a study of a non-political nature, seems to provide possibilities for further progress on the disarmament question, similar to that achieved in Geneva, and that all such possibilities should be fully explored. I believe this to be sound and that, therefore, it would be wise if attention in the disarmament debate this fall were to be given to further such possibilities.

4. I would regret it, if the opportunity would be missed to use the result of the Geneva talks, together with the reports of the Radiation Committee and on the International Atomic Conference in Geneva, as a basis for a sweeping policy approach. The timing may be opportune for an effort to reach agreement on a general appeal in the General Assembly for "declassification" and full openness, as a principle which offers the best reply to the need for a reduction of tension and an approach to a true disarmament agreement. What I mean is that the results of the Geneva talks should be regarded not as an isolated dent in the disarmament

problem but, in being that, as constituting a first modest application of a general principle which provides a promising basis for a breakdown of the present state of tension. (In resolution language this line of thought would run somewhat along the line:

"is agreed that the fullest possible freedom of information on technical development, armaments, etc. etc. is a necessary prerequisite for an amelioration of international relations;

"welcomes the results of the discussions in Geneva, as reported to the General Assembly, as a valuable implementation of this principle;

notes with satisfaction the initiatives to which these results have given rise;

invites the Governments to continue their efforts along similar lines toward a widening of the fields within which full openness of information will be permitted, etc. etc.")

5. I am aware, of course, that the suggestion made in the previous point is an ambitious one and may be unrealistic. However, if something to that effect could be achieved in the General Assembly, it would be of value as a preparation for a later summit meeting. This is so because the summit meeting would be the proper place where an attempt could be made to achieve solid results in the indicated direction but where both sides would need to be able to fall back on a proposal which is, so to say, neutral. Neither Washington nor Moscow could take an independent initiative in this direction without the other party being brought into an awkward position and without creating suspicions for tactical manoeuvring. The value of even the most general decision in the Assembly in such a situation is obvious. For similar reasons I believe that such a decision in the General Assembly, if it is to be at all possible, should emanate from countries which cannot be suspected of playing a "big power" game. Therefore, I feel that the observations I have set down here are of particular interest to the Scandinavian countries.

6. The General Assembly would also have to form an opinion on what technical arrangements could be made in order to implement a control system as envisaged in the Geneva talks. It may be wise to try and influence the big power thinking on this point in good time before discussions are resumed. I would see considerable difficulties in having the necessary administrative and executive functions entrusted to any one country, or group of countries. Quite apart from the difficulty of finding countries which would be politically acceptable to both sides there is the added fact that a control system would require highly developed arrangements for international cooperation and coordination, basing themselves on assistance from work naturally related to the International Geophysical Year, etc. This clearly indicates that the task must be entrusted to a central international organisation of recognized vitality, sufficient resources and experience, and reasonable prestige.

7. The question has been raised whether the International Atomic Agency (I.A.E.A.) might not be the central body in such a control system as I have mentioned in the previous point. I am convinced that it would be a serious mistake to use the Atomic Agency for such purposes. It might be just as reasonable to use the W.M.O. - which goes to prove the fundamental error in the approach. The reasons why I rule out the Atomic Agency are the following:

- a. The operation will require a high degree of executive efficiency of which the Agency, as now organised, seems to be constitutionally incapable.
- b. The operation would have to be fully integrated with any disarmament supervision system which may be developed and intimately correlated with the continuing work on disarmament in the United Nations. (Obviously, no solution should now be chosen which could not be harmonised with, for example, later arrangements for the supervision of measures against surprise attack).
- c. The task would push the Agency completely off its rails; the spokesman of the Agency, themselves, cannot give any better statutory basis for its connection with the anticipated task than the duty of the Agency to look at questions of "health and safety" related to peaceful uses of atomic energy.

8. I believe that a rational solution would require the creation of a new central executive body, fully integrated with the United Nations, although with a wide freedom of initiative. This body would coordinate all activities necessary, use existing governmental facilities where that is possible, farm out certain tasks as appropriate to the W.M.O. and other similar international bodies (including the Atomic Agency) and undertake, on its own, what must be done administratively within the framework of the U.N. itself. With such an arrangement the technical and personnel resources of the Atomic Agency, to the extent that they are adequately developed in their own right, could be used in a rational way and without either a slanting of the character of the Agency or a breaking up of the integral nature of - the political work of the U.N. in the disarmament field (or of the technical work of the Atomic Agency in the field of peaceful uses). There is no wish on my side to add to the executive functions which we already have in the U.N. with the ensuing heavy political responsibilities. But I do not see any other way to get this new operation going, compatible with true long-term interests, especially in the field of disarmament. The experience which we have gathered, especially in the Middle East, also establishes that a wide delegation of executive functions in the political sphere is a good way to bypass discussions or conflicts, which otherwise would be only too likely to stop any practical progress within a reasonable future.

2 September 1958

Note

1. In various respects the reaction of the United Nations to the results of the technical talks in Geneva on test detection will be of decisive significance. It is vital that the opportunities offered should not be missed and that the Governments should not choose a false direction in moving on from the point reached.

2. So far, I am not informed about governmental reactions to the report from the Geneva talks and I do not know clearly what the subsequent talks, proposed for the end of October in Geneva, will aim at. I guess that the intention is to translate the findings to some extent into operational terms, as well as to see what progress can be achieved concerning more firm arrangements for a suspension of tests. However, I would regret it, if a tendency were to develop to pursue these matters very much farther outside the framework of the United Nations to which they naturally belong. One first conclusion would therefore be that it is desirable, at an early stage, to make clear to the Governments directly concerned that other governments feel that the follow-through should take place within a U.N. framework and in such forms as fully to integrate the further action with the handling of the question of disarmament, as a matter of immediate concern to all Member Governments and pending before the General Assembly. In this regard it may be recalled that I have suggested an item for disarmament on the agenda under which the report from the Geneva talks, as circulated at the request of the participants, can appropriately be discussed.

3. In my introduction to the report to the General Assembly I have stressed that a technical approach to such disarmament problems as leave room for a study of a non-political nature, seems to provide possibilities for further progress on the disarmament question, similar to that achieved in Geneva, and that all such possibilities should be fully explored. I believe this to be sound and that, therefore, it would be wise if attention in the disarmament debate this fall were to be given to further such possibilities.

4. I would regret it, if the opportunity would be missed to use the result of the Geneva talks, together with the reports of the Radiation Committee and on the International Atomic Conference in Geneva, as a basis for a sweeping policy approach. The timing may be opportune for an effort to reach agreement on a general appeal in the General Assembly for "declassification" and full openness, as a principle which offers the best reply to the need for a reduction of tension and an approach to a true disarmament agreement. What I mean is that the results of the Geneva talks should be regarded not as an isolated dent in the disarmament

problem but, in being that, as constituting a first modest application of a general principle which provides a promising basis for a breakdown of the present state of tension. (In resolution language this line of thought would run somewhat along the line:

"is agreed that the fullest possible freedom of information on technical development, armaments, etc. etc. is a necessary prerequisite for an amelioration of international relations;

"welcomes the results of the discussions in Geneva, as reported to the General Assembly, as a valuable implementation of this principle;

Notes with satisfaction the initiatives to which these results have given rise;

invites the Governments to continue their efforts along similar lines toward a widening of the fields within which full openness of information will be permitted, etc. etc.")

5. I am aware, of course, that the suggestion made in the previous point is an ambitious one and may be unrealistic. However, if something to that effect could be achieved in the General Assembly, it would be of value as a preparation for a later summit meeting. This is so because the summit meeting would be the proper place where an attempt could be made to achieve solid results in the indicated direction but where both sides would need to be able to fall back on a proposal which is, so to say, neutral. Neither Washington nor Moscow could take an independent initiative in this direction without the other party being brought into an awkward position and without creating suspicions for tactical manoeuvring. The value of even the most general decision in the Assembly in such a situation is obvious. For similar reasons I believe that such a decision in the General Assembly, if it is to be at all possible, should emanate from countries which cannot be suspected of playing a "big power" game. Therefore, I feel that the observations I have set down here are of particular interest to the Scandinavian countries.

6. The General Assembly would also have to form an opinion on what technical arrangements could be made in order to implement a control system as envisaged in the Geneva talks. It may be wise to try and influence the big power thinking on this point in good time before discussions are resumed. I would see considerable difficulties in having the necessary administrative and executive functions entrusted to any one country, or group of countries. Quite apart from the difficulty of finding countries which would be politically acceptable to both sides there is the added fact that a control system would require highly developed arrangements for international cooperation and coordination, basing themselves on assistance from work naturally related to the International Geophysical Year, etc. This clearly indicates that the task must be entrusted to a central international organisation of recognized vitality, sufficient resources and experience, and reasonable prestige.

7. The question has been raised whether the International Atomic Agency (I.A.E.A.) might not be the central body in such a control system as I have mentioned in the previous point. I am convinced that it would be a serious mistake to use the Atomic Agency for such purposes. It might be just as reasonable to use the W.M.O. - which goes to prove the fundamental error in the approach. The reasons why I rule out the Atomic Agency are the following:

- a. The operation will require a high degree of executive efficiency of which the Agency, as now organized, seems to be constitutionally incapable.
- b. The operation would have to be fully integrated with any disarmament supervision system which may be developed and intimately correlated with the continuing work on disarmament in the United Nations. (Obviously, no solution should now be chosen which could not be harmonised with, for example, later arrangements for the supervision of measures against surprise attack).
- c. The task would push the Agency completely off its rails; the spokesman of the Agency, themselves, cannot give any better statutory basis for its connection with the anticipated task than the duty of the Agency to look at questions of "health and safety" related to peaceful uses of atomic energy.

8. I believe that a rational solution would require the creation of a new central executive body, fully integrated with the United Nations, although with a wide freedom of initiative. This body would coordinate all activities necessary, use existing governmental facilities where that is possible, farm out certain tasks as appropriate to the W.M.O. and other similar international bodies (including the Atomic Agency) and undertake, on its own, what must be done administratively within the framework of the U.N. itself. With such an arrangement the technical and personnel resources of the Atomic Agency, to the extent that they are adequately developed in their own right, could be used in a rational way and without either a slanting of the character of the Agency or a breaking up of the integral nature of - the political work of the U.N. in the disarmament field (or of the technical work of the Atomic Agency in the field of peaceful uses). There is no wish on my side to add to the executive functions which we already have in the U.N. with the ensuing heavy political responsibilities. But I do not see any other way to get this new operation going, compatible with true long-term interests, especially in the field of disarmament. The experience which we have gathered, especially in the Middle East, also establishes that a wide delegation of executive functions in the political sphere is a good way to bypass discussions or conflicts, which otherwise would be only too likely to stop any practical progress within a reasonable future.

2 September 1958

Notes for Mr. Koch.

With reference to our talk this morning I wish to set down the following brief points.

1. In various respects the reaction of the United Nations to the results of the technical talks in Geneva on test detection will be of decisive significance. It is vital that the opportunities offered should not be missed and that the Governments should not choose a false direction in moving on from the point reached.

2. So far, I am not informed about governmental reactions to the report from the Geneva talks and I do not know clearly what the subsequent talks, proposed for the end of October in Geneva, will aim at. I guess that the intention is to translate the findings to some extent into operational terms, as well as to see what progress can be achieved concerning more firm arrangements for a suspension of tests. However, I would regret it, if a tendency were to develop to pursue these matters very much farther outside the framework of the United Nations to which they naturally belong. One first conclusion would therefore be that it is desirable, at an early stage, to make clear to the Governments directly concerned that other governments feel that the follow-through should take place within a U.N. framework and in such forms as fully to integrate the further action with the handling of the question of disarmament, as a matter of immediate concern to all member governments and pending before the General Assembly. In this regards it may be recalled that I have suggested an item for disarmament on the agenda under which the report from the Geneva talks, as circulated at the request of the participants, can appropriately be discussed.

3. In my introduction to the report to the General Assembly I have stressed that a technical approach to such disarmament problems as leave room for a study of a non-political nature, seems to provide possibilities for further progress on the disarmament question, similar to that achieved in Geneva, and that all such possibilities should be fully explored. I believe this to be sound and that, therefore, it would be wise if attention in the disarmament debate this fall were to be given to further such possibilities.

4. I would regret it, if the opportunity would be missed to use the result of the Geneva talks, together with the reports of the Radiation Committee and on the International Atomic Conference in Geneva, as a basis for a sweeping policy approach. The timing may be opportune for an effort to reach agreement on a general appeal in the General Assembly for "declassification" and full openness, as a principle which offers the best reply to the need for a reduction of tension and an approach to a true disarmament agreement. What I mean is that the results of the Geneva talks should be regarded not as an isolated dent in the disarmament problem but, in being that, as constituting a first modest application of a general principle which provides a promising basis for a breakdown of the present state of tension. (In resolution language this line of thought would run somewhat along the line :

./.

" is agreed that the fullest possible freedom of information on technical development, armaments, etc. etc. is a necessary prerequisite for an amelioration of international relations; welcomes the results of the discussions in Geneva, as reported to the General Assembly, as a valuable implementation of this principle; notes with satisfaction the initiatives to which these results have given rise; invites the Governments to continue their efforts along similar lines toward a widening of the fields within which full openness of information will be permitted, etc. etc. ").

5. I am aware, of course, that the suggestion made in the previous point is an ambitious one and may be unrealistic. However, if something to that effect could be achieved in the General Assembly, it would be of value as a preparation for a later summit meeting. This is so because the summit meeting would be the proper place where an attempt could be made to achieve solid results in the indicated direction but where both sides would need to be able to fall back on a proposal which is, so to say, neutral. Neither Washington nor Moscow could take an independent initiative in this direction without the other party being brought into an awkward position and without creating suspicions for tactical manoeuvring. The value of even the most general decision in the Assembly in such a situation is obvious. For similar reasons I believe that such a decision in the General Assembly, if it is to be at all possible, should emanate from countries which cannot be suspected of playing a "big power" game. Therefore, I feel that the observations I have set down here are of particular interest to the Scandinavian countries.

6. The General Assembly would also have to form an opinion on what technical arrangements could be made in order to implement a control system as envisaged in the Geneva talks. It may be wise to try and influence the big power thinking on this point in good time before discussions are resumed. I would see considerable difficulties in having the necessary administrative and executive functions entrusted to any one country, or group of countries. Quite apart from the difficulty of finding countries which would be politically acceptable to both sides there is the added fact that a control system would require highly developed arrangements for international cooperation and coordination, basing themselves on assistance from national monitoring stations, or work now in the hands of the W.M.O., or work naturally related to the International Geophysical Year, etc. This clearly indicates that the task must be entrusted to a central international organisation of recognised vitality, sufficient resources and experience, and reasonable prestige.

7. The question has been raised whether the International Atomic Agency (I.A.E.A.) might not be the central body in such a control system as I have mentioned in the previous point. I am convinced that it would be a serious mistake to use the Atomic Agency for such purposes. It might be just as reasonable to use the W.M.O. - which goes to prove the fundamental error in the approach! The reasons why I rule out the Atomic Agency are the following: -

- a. The operation will require a high degree of executive efficiency of which the Agency, as now organized, seems to be constitutionally incapable.
- b. The operation would have to be fully integrated with any disarmament supervision system which may be developed and intimately correlated with the continuing work on disarmament in the United Nations. (Obviously, no solution should now be chosen which could not be harmonised with, for example, later arrangements for the supervision of measures against surprise attack).
- c. The task would push the Agency completely off its rails; the spokesmen of the Agency, themselves, cannot give any better statutory basis for its connection with the anticipated task than the duty of the Agency to look at questions of "health and safety" related to peaceful uses of atomic energy.

8. I believe that a rational solution would require the creation of a new central executive body, fully integrated with the United Nations, although with a wide freedom of initiative. This body would coordinate all activities necessary, use existing governmental facilities where that is possible, farm out certain tasks as appropriate to the W.M.O. and other similar international bodies (including the Atomic Agency) and undertake, on its own, what must be done administratively within the framework of the U.N. itself. With such an arrangement the technical and personnel resources of the Atomic Agency, to the extent that they are adequately developed in their own right, could be used in a rational way and without either a slanting of the character of the Agency or a breaking up of the integral nature of - the political work of the U.N. in the disarmament field (or of the technical work of the Atomic Agency in the field of peaceful uses). There is no wish on my side to add to the executive functions which we already have in the U.N. with the ensuing heavy political responsibilities. But I do not see any other way to get this new operation going, compatible with true long term interests, especially in the field of disarmament. The experience which we have gathered, especially in the Middle East, also establishes that a wide delegation of executive functions in the political sphere is a good way to bypass discussions or conflicts, which otherwise would be only too likely to stop any practical progress within a reasonable future.