

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's samml.

Conference of Ten, Geneva

15-23 March 60

Merter, Christian A. (Dept. of State, Washington, USA)

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15 March 1960

Dear Chris,

May I tell you how much I appreciated our talk the other day in the course of the pleasant luncheon you arranged for me and Mr. Heurtematte! I felt that it was most useful to have this opportunity to compare notes and to bring you up to date with our thinking on Laos and Africa.

You said at the luncheon that you would have liked to have had a word with me about disarmament. So would I, and you know, through the Delegation, that I got a bit worried when I heard that the Western proposals obviously went deep into matters on which the U.N. has the main experience and carries the main responsibility, without any contact with us. Yesterday afternoon I got, through the Delegation, your paper on disarmament which was also published in this morning's papers.

There is one point in the proposals which, to me, is a serious source of concern, and that is the presentation given to the idea of an international disarmament organ. It is said that previous experience should be taken into account. That experience, in my view, very convincingly indicates that an independent agency set up only for control functions will not have a sound life or become an effective member of the family of international organisations. The International Atomic Agency is a case in point, which also demonstrates that there is no half-way-house between a specialised agency, completely independent of the U.N., and an organ within the U.N. like, for example, the UNWRA. By opening the discussion about a disarmament organ as you do, I am afraid you have tipped the scales in the direction of a specialised agency, and the result, in my view, would undoubtedly be a very weak agency and a hollowing out of the U.N. of one of its main fields of activity.

I suppose that it has been thought that disarmament control would be too much for and would surpass the capacity of the U.N. Secretariat. If so, the answer is a U.N. organ of the type we already have used for other major operations within the framework of the U.N. proper. The same argument could well have been put forward in the case of Technical Assistance. Fortunately, it was not done.

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The Honorable Christian A. Herter,  
Department of State,  
Washington, D.C.

There seems to be at present a tendency in the thinking of the West which I find worrying. The peaceful uses of atomic energy, for no good reasons, were pushed outside of the U.N. The proposed atomic test organ is another example of the same approach. Both of these cases may be defended as marginal, but no such defense is possible when we reach disarmament.

If the disarmament control were to be lifted out of the U.N., and if present efforts to build up an international organ with wide membership for assistance to under-developed countries were to succeed, the result would be a weakening of international cooperation all around as the U.N. would be robbed of a main part of its substantive content without new and really viable substitutes being created.

I can see what the forces back of this apparent trend are, but I can also see the result to which they are likely to lead -- with the possibility of a new, and much widened, Bandung association in the perspective.

I have felt that in extending to you my thanks for the luncheon, I could take the opportunity to give you this frank expression of my worries.

Dag Hammarskjöld

MAR 23 1960

Dear Dag:

I am most grateful to you for your good letter of March 15. My only regret is that we didn't have a chance to discuss disarmament while you were here the other day, but I hope that the opportunity will arise soon. In the meanwhile, I am sending a copy of your letter to Eaton, who is our principal delegate in Geneva. I hope you won't mind my doing this but I feel that it is important for him to have it.

With respect to your own general assessment of the position of the United Nations in regard to disarmament, I fully concur. As to the precise organizational nature of the International Disarmament Organization, we are actively studying this matter. I hope we can discuss this question in the near future.

With warmest personal regards,

As ever,

*151 Chris*

Christian A. Herter

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