

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

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Conference of Ten, Geneva

25 - 29 March 60

Wilcox, Francis O. (Assist. Sec. of State,
Washington, D.C., USA)

- 1 letter to D.H.
- 1 letter from D.H.

29 March 1960

Dear Francis,

I thank you for your letter of March 25 with its comments on the question of the IDO and related problems. I think it might be useful if, in the light of your observations, I were to try to focus on what is my main concern. I can do this from the viewpoint of the negotiations and of an effective disarmament operation, leaving aside here the point I stressed in my letter to the Secretary of State, that is the impact of various approaches on the United Nations and international cooperation in general.

It is agreed that the operation is such that it will have to be handled by a unit which, administratively, has a considerable degree of autonomy. It should, however, on the other hand be recognised that the work of such a unit is very closely related to, and must finally be fully integrated with, the international policy-making of the U.N., of which disarmament forms a part. The real point is where, in these circumstances, ultimate political responsibility should lie.

The experience is, without any exception, that a unit operating under its own assembly and council, as organs carrying ultimate political responsibility, cannot achieve more than a very modest degree of coordination with U.N. activities and certainly not integration; no assembly of another agency has shown willingness to accept directives or decisions from the U.N. General Assembly or the Security Council, while, on the other hand, we have no reason to hope that governments will get over their normal "schizophrenia" and speak with the same tongue in different assemblies, thus providing for integration through the delegations.

My conclusion is that a new unit, politically, must be under the final authority of the General Assembly and the Security Council, if — in its own interest and in the interest of the member governments — a reasonable degree of integration is to be maintained. (Also from a U.N. angle, it is precisely the loss of integration which would follow if ultimate responsibility were not resting with the U.N. General Assembly and the Security Council, that would lead to a serious weakening of the U.N. without any corresponding gain in other fields of international cooperation)

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The Honorable Francis O. Wilcox,
Assistant Secretary of State,
State Department,
Washington, D.C.

Of course, the fact that ultimate political responsibility is vested in the U.N. General Assembly can easily be reconciled with a wide measure of administrative autonomy for the unit, safeguarding it from such road-blocks as you seem to fear. I have heard the objection that a new operation must be free from the weaknesses of the U.N. in three respects: it must be able to include members which are not admitted to the U.N., it should preferably have a weighted voting system and there should be no veto. I do not consider those arguments against ultimate political responsibility for the U.N. as in any way valid, as it seems obvious to me that the moment these three questions could be resolved to your satisfaction in a new organ, they could just as well be resolved within the U.N. itself. Similarly, the other questions which will have to be resolved and to which you refer seem to me just as easy or just as difficult to resolve whether the new unit is an organ of the U.N., as I advocate, or an organ only linked to the U.N., as mentioned by you as a possibility, if not more.

Dag Hammarskjöld.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 25, 1960

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Dear Dag:

The Secretary has asked me to comment in somewhat greater detail than he has done in reply to your letter of March 15. Before turning to the disarmament problems which you raised, I should like to say how much I enjoyed the exchange of views during your visit and am looking forward to seeing you again soon.

Your views on the status of the International Disarmament Organization were extremely welcome. You know already from the Secretary's letter that we fully recognize the ultimate authority of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Some of the specific questions you raise, however, on the relationship of the International Disarmament Organization to the United Nations can not be readily answered. As you will have noticed, the Western disarmament proposal envisages functions for the International Disarmament Organization which cover a broad spectrum embracing the simple receipt of information, actual inspection and control over a prohibition of production of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, prohibition of the use of outer space for military purposes, and other far-reaching responsibilities.

You will appreciate that a number of tremendously complicated issues are involved in coming to grips with the kind of machinery necessary to serve such a variety of purposes. This will involve not only the question of the relationship between the organization and the United Nations but also such problems as the composition of the governing body and the staff, voting procedures, powers, etc. It is too soon, for example, to tell whether there might initially be a small International Disarmament Organization of limited membership, with limited functions and operating only in a limited area, or whether it would be preferable to begin at the outset with a more ambitious organization which will be capable of discharging all of the responsibilities eventually assigned to it.

The question

His Excellency
Dag Hammarskjold,
Secretary General of
the United Nations,
New York, New York.

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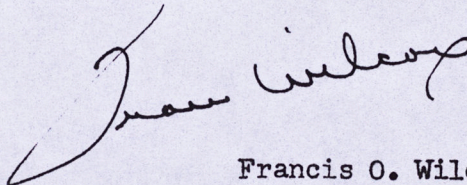
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The question of how the International Disarmament Organization shall take its decisions is, of course, a fundamental matter. The answer to this question, in turn, could be affected by the nature of the relationship of the International Disarmament Organization to the United Nations. For example, a relationship to the Security Council would have to be worked out carefully to assure that the International Disarmament Organization could not be hamstrung in its daily operations by the veto. In short, this is an area where we have to find our way as we go along.

On the broader question of international peace-keeping, you probably noticed that in Mr. Eaton's opening remarks at Geneva, he pointed out that as national armaments diminish, an international force must come into being within the framework of the United Nations to preserve the peace. Furthermore, Mr. Eaton stressed that the problems being discussed in Geneva affect not only the ten nations there, but all of the United Nations. We also plan in future statements which deal with the question of studies of international peace-keeping machinery (which is covered in section F of the first stage of our proposal) to emphasize that in our view these studies should be undertaken by the United Nations.

With warmest personal regards,

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Francis O. Wilcox".

Francis O. Wilcox

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Dag Hammarskjöld.