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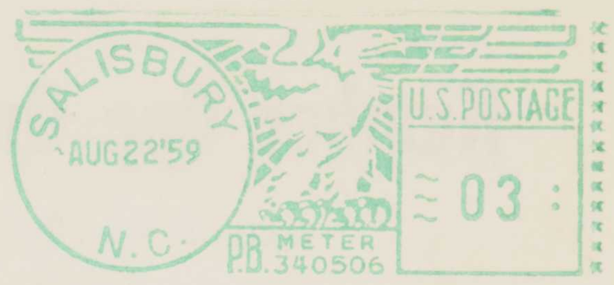

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FORM 3547 REQUESTED

World Law Gets Support In A Quarter That Counts

(*Charlotte Observer*—August 2, 1959)

Only a few years ago any talk about a rule of law in the world would have been dismissed, almost automatically, as a Utopian dream among harsh realities.

It is not so easy to dismiss it now. The idea has gained almost surprising support in the last year or so.

It is still much more hope than substance, but it has at last entered the action stage. And it has enlisted the support of people who are in position to advance that action.

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In January, President Eisenhower committed his Administration to move toward the establishment of a world rule of law.

In April, Vice-President Nixon outlined the first positive steps that should be taken in this direction.

The Administration has made its position clear to Congress on the first of those steps.

It is the repeal of the Connally amendment of 1946. That amendment leaves to the United States the sole right to decide which of its disputes shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

It is one of the big reasons why this court, staffed competently with international lawyers, has been deciding barely a single case a year. It is one of the reasons why it has never fulfilled its potential in the settlement of international disputes.

The Administration is pushing for the repeal of this amendment. It is arguing, very logically, that it is out of date in a world over which hangs the nuclear bomb. It says that it is comparable to one of the participants in a lawsuit saying, in finality, that he will not accept the jurisdiction of the court that exists to settle it.

Vice-President Nixon, speaking for the Administration, suggested a second step in the direction of legal rule among nations. He said that any future agreements between the United States and other nations should contain this stipulation: Any disputes which may arise as to interpretation of the agreement shall be submitted to the International Court, and the nations signing the agreement shall be bound by the decision of the court.

Both of these steps are logical points of entry into this great problem. It is true that they sacrifice a degree of American sovereignty, but there is nothing in them that should be feared by a nation that is moral and honorable in its dealings.

Some degree of sovereignty is already being sacrificed every time this country makes an agreement with other powers. Every agreement with our allies of NATO involves, for instance, some submission to the common purpose.

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This slow but certain movement toward world law is hardly strange. It is perhaps the inevitable reaction to the dog-eat-dog state of nuclear politics. It is an effort to find something better than a condition in which two powers face each other across the world, each of them armed with weapons that can send mankind back to the dark ages.

The important thing at this point is to tackle the problem, to make a beginning, and it is encouraging to see the Administration headed in this direction.

It will be a long and difficult quest, this search for effective world law, but the alternative leaves little choice any more. The alternative is mutual terror above the powder keg.

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