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NATO science programs: origins and influence

W.A Nierenberg

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Abstract

From the perspective of a longtime participant in scientific interchange at the international level, this paper explores a dichotomy of viewpoint between political and scientific leaders. The former tend to view science as a "natural bridge"™ for bringing people and nations together in greater harmony, while scientists themselves more often emphasize material benefits to society. This dichotomy may help to explain why the participation of scientists in international activities is limited to a relatively few individuals and primarily in their own fields of research.



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William A. Nierenberg, for more than twenty years the director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, died in September 2000. Before becoming director at Scripps in 1965, Dr Nierenberg was for fifteen years a professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley. His participation in national and international scientific affairs was extensive. He was a member of the US National Science Board and a senior consultant to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. He was the first chairman of the NACOA Advisory Committee and of the NASA Advisory Council. From 1973 to 1983, Dr Nierenberg was an official US delegate to the Law of the Sea negotiations. He was the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Scientific Affairs from 1962 to 1965, and for some thirty years he was an adviser-at-large to the US Department of State.

- ¹ Deceased. C/o Dr J. Ausubel, Program for the Human Environment, The Rockefeller University, 1230 York Avenue, New York, NY 10021-6399, USA. Tel.: +1-212-327-7917; fax: +1-212-327-7519. E-mail: ausubel@rockefeller.edu.

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