

April 14, 1987

Letter, Ben Sanders to Members of the PPNN

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Summary:

Description of the PPNN program in preparation for the first meeting. Letter sent to Mohamed Shaker, Jozef Goldblat, Jorge Pando, Roland Timerbaev, Jayantha Dhanapala, Joseph Nye, Warren Donnelly, Ryukichi Imai, David Fischer, Harald Muller, Ian Smart, Walter Rehak, and Lawrence Scheinman.

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April 14, 1987

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS SENT TO THE PERSONS LISTED IN THE ATTACHMENT

Dear

By letter dated April 2, 1987, Dr. John Simpson invited you to the first meeting of the "Core Group" of our Programme for Promoting Nuclear Non-Proliferation, and I should now like to make some suggestions about the subjects we might discuss.

We see this first meeting as an opportunity to discuss the general direction of the Programme, the role which the Core Group should play in it, and the way in which it should play that role. The discussion would bear on the philosophy and the substance of the project, as well as on the organization of our work and the procedures we might follow in communicating with each other and in our meetings. We suggest keeping brief summaries of the decisions we take and the conclusions we reach, so that there will be a record of our work.

I should like to avoid being unnecessarily formalistic, but we have so much to talk about that it will be useful to agree in advance on an agenda for our meeting. The main items suggested for discussion are listed below, with some annotations on each.

1. Organization of the work

We ought to agree as to how to proceed: do we wish to work on the basis of an agenda? Should we keep minutes of our meetings and if so, of what kind? How should we divide our available time? I hope, in other words, to have a brief discussion on the practical and procedural aspects of our meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

We should more or less agree on the items we are to discuss before we begin. The present list of items should of course be understood as entirely tentative and merely my suggestions for facilitating our meeting. Any member should be in a position to propose topics for discussion. I trust that in future members will write in with proposals before the meeting, and it is likely in any case that subjects for discussion will arise from previous meetings, from current work and from extraneous events; we shall probably always have more to talk about than we have time for!

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3. The purposes of the project

The Project write-up that was submitted to potential funders expands on the purposes as follows:

"... (The) immediate purpose (of the programme) is to help maintain and strengthen (the international non-proliferation regime) by contributing in particular to the success of the Fourth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the extent possible the Conference which is to be held in 1995 to determine the further duration of that Treaty. The programme aims to meet this purpose by promoting, particularly among government officials, diplomats, the research community and to the extent feasible among parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and the media a continuing interest in the question of nuclear non-proliferation and the means to counteract it, among which the NPT is primary; furthering an early start on the preparation for the Review Conference of 1990; creating and maintaining a wider and deeper public awareness of the issues involved; and in particular imparting to a younger generation who are new to the subject a substantive and practical knowledge of these issues, of the backgrounds to the Treaty, and of the possible new measures that might enhance the regime. An important aspect of the programme is the involvement of persons from developing nations, with a view to promoting a more intense association of those nations with the non-proliferation issues in general and the implementation, review and extension of the NPT in particular.

Specifically, the programme should serve the following four purposes:

- (i) To provide a means of sustaining multilateral on the NPT and reinforcing work to support it during the years when no conference activity is taking place;
- (ii) To assist younger members of the diplomatic service, international and national civil servants, members of the research community, nuclear industry management and other individuals who may be called upon to deal with the subject in an executive or advisory capacity to exchange both views on and acquire insights into, matters pertaining to the NPT and to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation in general;
- (iii) To encourage, and provide material for, research into the issue; and
- (iv) To provide a ready source of authoritative fact on the background, evolution and implementation of the non-proliferation regime and the NPT."

There are obviously various ways to meet these purposes, and we should try to discuss, in concrete terms, what should be done, what could be done and how it could best be done. There is already a great deal of work being undertaken in the area and it will have to be one of our first activities to

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try and find out exactly what work is underway elsewhere. This is where the idea of a "networking" exercise becomes so useful: each of the members of the Group is probably acquainted with, or involved in, efforts similar to ours and together we shall be able to collect a fairly authoritative repertory of current activities in support of non-proliferation. One characteristic that is, as far as I know, unique to our programme is its truly international nature, as evidenced by the composition of the Core Group; if we make the right use of it, that feature should be able to give our programme an impact that sets it apart from most of the work done elsewhere.

The programme proposal lists a number of ways to meet its purposes. These include the networking activities of the Core Group itself, periodic conferences, publications, studies and diverse outreach activities. There have been several suggestions since: for the preparation of an "oral history" of the subject and other audio-visual material and for the organization of individual lectures or even training courses. One item we might talk about is how - if at all - meetings of the Core Group might be used for outreach purposes.

4. The Core Group and its composition

This subject is closely connected with that of the purposes of the programme and the way they might be achieved. The Core Group is obviously the heart of the entire exercise; it should give the project its general direction as well as much of its content. It should, in my view, be more than an advisory body but should not be imposed on for the routine management of the project. Once we have gained more experience we shall no doubt find the best ways to proceed; meanwhile we should try to gain a general understanding of the Group's functions.

In this context I refer again to the programme proposal, which lists as the Group tasks, inter alia, to steer the project in a general sense by selecting topics for discussion in core group meetings and periodic conferences, commission papers to be presented there and give overall guidance to its evolution and its work; pool, exchange and present in an appropriate form the combined knowledge of its members of the practical, political, diplomatic, economic, technical and institutional aspects of the question of non-proliferation, with specific reference to the NPT and pass this on to those newly called upon to deal with this question; to exchange information on developments in respect of nuclear proliferation and on measures taken against the; exchange ideas on possible further means of both promoting non-proliferation and strengthening the NPT; contribute relevant information to an informal newsletter whose circulation would initially be restricted to members of the Group; seek to acquaint itself through its members with research done elsewhere; seek to influence their respective environments in favour of non-proliferation; stimulate an outreach programme to this end and promote further studies.

One topic we should consider is the composition of our Group. It is understood that individual members participate in their personal capacity, yet they are representative of their respective national, political and professional backgrounds.

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Obviously, then, the Group's representative character and thus, presumably, its potential impact, might benefit from further participation by persons from developing nations and from industry and it will not go unnoticed that, although we have done our best to remedy this, there are no female members at present. The members present may have suggestions in these regards.

Another issue to discuss is the newsletter. One of the main activities of the Core Group is to collect and exchange information on the wide range of issues that make up the nuclear (non) proliferation scene. This exchange is meant to be helped by the circulation of an informal periodic newsletter through which members would inform each other of relevant events in the area: what is happening with regard to proliferation; what is being done against it; what is new in non-proliferation measures or ideas; what political factors are influencing developments indirectly - to give some examples. The newsletter might also serve to exchange ideas on possible further means of promoting non-proliferation and it would be a vehicle through which members could learn of relevant studies and research being done and of new publications in the field. In other words, the newsletter would have an important function in the programme and we should discuss what might go into it.

As I see it, we should first talk about exactly what role the newsletter is to play. Its function will dictate the substance and that, in turn, will indicate where and how we should seek the information we need. One might also consider the most appropriate form of the newsletter; who should get it; how often it should come out. Those questions are all related; some of the answers, however, may not depend only on our wishes but also on the means at our disposal.

It seems to me that the newsletter should initially serve precisely the purpose implied in the term: to be a "letter" exchanged between the members of the Core Group to keep each other abreast of new developments and ideas. As such it might have considerable potential. All those participating in our work are experts in their field, but few of us - very few people in general - can be aware of all aspects of this highly complicated subject: the strategic and security factors; the arms limitation side and its links to other measures of arms control; nuclear trade and export policies; the developmental aspects of nuclear energy; new technologies and their impact in either facilitating or deterring proliferation; the economics of peaceful uses; health and safety aspects and physical protection; institutional developments - to mention just some aspects. While the programme is not designed to include an overly ambitious information effort, it may well be the marginal increase in knowledge, the discussion of a modest practical suggestion not heretofore considered or any other product of the interaction of the respective inputs from our various participants that could make our programme most useful.

Once the newsletter has found an appropriate form and its preparation has become routine, we might consider a wider distribution. Eventually, there may be an opportunity to make the newsletter, in an appropriately adapted format, part of the "outreach" effort foreseen in our programme for other groups we hope to target.

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5. Funding

As of today, the sums covered in the various formal and informal undertakings to fund the programme together do not quite add up to the estimated budget. Several possible sources of funds are still being approached. Members may have some ideas where additional support might be found and in what way this might be raised.

6. Dates and venues for further meetings

It is the intention that the Core Group should meet at intervals of approximately six to nine months. Since the programme could not get underway until well into its first year, and the first Core Group meeting therefore had to be held relatively late, if - as we think is indeed the case - it will be desirable to hold a second meeting in the course of 1987, this should take place in early November.

It would be possible to hold a meeting of the same length as the present one from 6 to 8 November, inclusive, at the Birdwood Mansion conference centre at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Virginia. Provisional reservations have been made of these facilities and the necessary personal accommodations have been booked tentatively. The subsequent meeting - in Spring 1988 - might again be held in one of the Channel Islands. It might be useful to discuss a tentative meeting schedule for the entire project period.

7. Topics for future meetings

To the extent possible, it would be useful to determine in advance what we shall discuss at future meetings, what non-members might be invited to attend and what we would ask them to talk about; this would involve a discussion on the possible commissioning of papers.

One reason I have gone to such length in commenting on various possible items for discussion is to enable those who will attend the Jersey meeting to give some advance thought to a meeting that might be quite important in giving an early impetus to the programme and helping to determine its future course. I hope that those who are unable to attend the meeting can let me have their thoughts (in writing or orally, depending where they are) so that I can pass those on to the other members at our meeting.

With kind regards.

Sincerely yours,

Ben Sanders

P.S. I trust that for my next letter I shall be able to use more appropriate stationery specially designed for the programme!

14 April 1987

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