

April 1996

**Opening remarks of the Chairman of the 19th Core
Group Meeting at Wye Plantations, April 1996**

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Written version of oral address outlining future plans for the PPNN Group.

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Chairman's Opening Remarks
19th Core Group Meeting: Wye Plantations, April 1996

Dear friends,

I warmly welcome all of you to 19th meeting of the Core Group. It has taken a small miracle to get you all together here, at least for today. But Emily Bailey routinely performs miracles. As you know, we tried to schedule our meetings to take account as much as possible of your convenience. Since all of you have important professional commitments that is not always easy. It is particularly difficult when Core Group meetings are held in conjunction with PPNN conferences that have to be timed both so as to attract a selected category of participants and in light of the availability of meeting facilities. That will be the case in October. Even now, when it should have been relatively simple to get seventeen people together, we find that some of us cannot be here for the full duration of the meeting.

That cannot be helped; circumstances conspired against us, this time. But we do have to try and avoid this situation in the future. We really cannot afford it. There are three main reasons, why not. In the first place, we cannot afford to do without the input of all of you. The Core Group has been reduced from its former size, and loses its representative character, as well as a lot of brain power if it does not operate at full strength. Secondly, we cannot afford financially to bring people in for just a day, or a day-and-a-bit. Thirdly, we report to our funders on each of our meetings. They provide the means for our gatherings. One is always slightly wary of being suspected of holding meetings in pleasant places just for the fun of it. If we are seen not to use our gatherings for full and productive discussions among our entire Core Group, or **almost** the entire Group, then the least accusation we are liable to incur is that we mis-schedule our meetings, and the worst that we do not take them very seriously.

For now I am grateful that the majority of the new PPNN Core Group can be here for this momentous occasion.

It is indeed a big occasion. We are starting Phase III of PPNN's activities and in so doing, we are adopting a new orientation within an established framework. Let me just recall what happened so far.

In Phase I, which began a little over nine years ago, our principal aims were to promote awareness among government officials, diplomats, researchers and the media of the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the measures that were and should be taken to deter it; to help those communities understand and support the non-proliferation regime, and to do what we could to contribute to the success of the 1990 NPT Review Conference, especially given that this would be the last Review Conference before the 1995 extension exercise. [- - -]

Phase II, which began in 1991, concentrated on 1995: we sought to help achieve a viable extension of the NPT and thereby reenforce the non-proliferation regime. Especially in the run-up to the 1995 Conference, we concentrated on the various extension options and the issues that would be met at the Conference. I suppose that all of you more or less know what we did - you can judge to what extent we contributed to that event.

Phase III will at least initially focus PPNN's attention on the decisions adopted in 1995. In the short period until the first Preparatory Committee session in 1997, we intend to help interpret what the new review process means in practice and how best to implement it. As we have done before, we hope to give guidance to the people who will take part in that process. That will initially be a procedural process, but we also need to pay keen attention to new global and regional proliferation factors and help our target audiences cope with them.

When I say that we are adopting a new orientation within an established framework, I do not just mean that we shall do what we have been doing so far and just give it a slightly different slant. Not at all. We are facing a basically new situation. The substance of PPNN's work will be different from what it has been. The way I see it is that we use the means that have proven successful in the past: briefing meetings, publications, providing fora for informal exchanges, and we try to make the best possible use of the experience of the people who have guided the work in the past. We try to keep what was good but we must accept that we face new circumstances. The continuity of PPNN itself, which is reflected in the fact that we call this the nineteenth Core Group meeting, assures consistency of approach. But I trust we have also made sure that we do not get rusty, by adding several new members to the group.

A few words about the Core Group. That institution goes back to the Cold War, when the composition had to take particular account of East/West balances. Still, and largely through personal links and acquaintances, we were able to attract not only people who represented regions but also highly capable experts in a variety of fields. Above all, and that has characterized this curious group all along: there has been a striking personal affinity among its members. With very few exceptions, everyone has fitted in, both professionally and personally. People have by no means always agreed on substance but they have agreed on the general approaches PPNN would adopt; they have been able to work together phenomenally well; and they have forged a network of real friendships.

It is sad, of course, that over time, and given the need to reduce membership for financial reasons and at the same time to add some fresh faces, we have inevitably lost some old friends. Some of those had been with us from the start. Most of them were my personal friends. I do not think we shall lose contact with them altogether. PPNN seems to be addictive. All former members have agreed to remain available in case they are needed to make presentations or give advice, and I trust we shall see them from time to time.

We are very happy that we have been able to attract some new members who are involved in various aspects of PPNN's work: Martine, Enrique, Sverre and Peter. I hope that we can make them feel how warmly welcome they are. We greet them as old friends and new companions. I do not presume to speak of their backgrounds and qualifications; if they think that is appropriate they might each wish to tell you in a few words what their specific interest in PPNN is.

As I have said, from the very beginning all those years ago, we have enjoyed this rare chemistry among PPNN members which has added up to lasting friendships, mutual understanding and close cooperation. I am sure our four new colleagues will feel the same.

As a rule, Core Group meetings not only serve as internal gatherings but, as I said in another context, are held in conjunction with wider gatherings such as briefing meetings for government officials and diplomats. But we have felt that this was an occasion at which we should only meet among ourselves, to get acquainted; to discuss future work; and to consider PPNN's strategy for the next two years - that is to say, the period for which so far we have obtained funding.

Now, let me say just a few words about the way we might approach our future work. In the past, Core Group meetings dealt mainly with three areas of interest: first, functional questions such as new developments in safeguards, technological factors that might increase proliferation risks, or issues such as illegal trade and export restrictions; secondly, problems related to given countries or regions, that is to say, mostly specific proliferation situations; and thirdly, the range of issues likely to play an important role at review conferences. Given our orientation for the immediate future, this division might not be the most appropriate, and I wonder if it would not be better if we try to categorize our work for now simply into procedural and substantive matters and subsume the three categories I have listed under the substantive heading. Once we have been able to make some headway through the procedural jungle, I suggest we organize the approach to the substance, perhaps along the lines of the Principles and Objectives. We might discuss this point when considering the programme of the Core Group in these two years. In doing so we might keep in reserve a third category of activities and preoccupations: regional issues.

Whether and to what extent we should and can pay much attention to regional problems, in the way we have done in the past, depends on several conditions: financial means, time constraints, and most of all on the priority we give to the preparations for the 1997 PrepCom.

I apologize for speaking at such length but I thought the occasion warranted it and I would now in the first place like to ask if our new members wish to introduce themselves.

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