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Meselson
Kaplan

Lunch with Bob Mikulak and Nikita Smidovich on
29 January 1991

Mikulak (USA) thought it would be useful to have a private lunch with his negotiating counterpart Smidovich (USSR) to forward bilateral and multilateral negotiations for a chemical weapons convention (CWC). I therefore arranged ~~the~~ lunch at the Auberge des Bois, Collex.

Discussion centered around (1) present difficulties with bilateral and multilateral negotiations, and (2) future Pugwash activities that would be most useful to accelerate progress.

Bilateral talks

While some (minor) technical details had to be worked out (e.g., destruction of stocks) the main problem was political, and that centered in the USA. A principal one was that the military objected to the risk of challenge inspections involving their installations.

Reciprocal visits to destruction installations and CW production facilities were going well (so far about 7 on each side). In February a large group (14) from the USSR will visit the Johnson island atoll. The USSR will have difficulty in meeting their commitment to the USA to have destruction underway by 1992. Their facility is very faulty (says Mikulak), and will certainly have operational trouble when it starts. Since technical personnel from both sides is involved I suggested that they could supply names for Issraelyan's meeting (April, Moscow), although it is difficult to see what the Moscow meeting can achieve in this sphere except in an educational sense for the parliamentarians who will attend. (I gave Smidovich my letter to Issraelyan for delivery in Moscow. I ask Issraelyan to give us information on acceptances and further plans for the meeting. If it is cancelled he should notify us immediately. This involves Meselson, Robinson, Lundin, Ezz and myself as co-organizers in a personal capacity.)

Multilateral

Mikulak was very pessimistic about getting very far concerning political agreement from other members of the CD. First, the USA and USSR would have to agree on a package, and then their combined weight could be extended on recalcitrants in the CD. According to Mikulak, the non-aligned group is fracturing. Both agree that the principal difficulty will be Third World countries for joining a treaty.

Pugwash

They both agreed that the best thing Pugwash could do was to hold a small meeting in Cairo of scientists (not diplomats) from key countries who could exert political influence in their countries to forward a treaty. Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Algeria, Pakistan, India, plus USA and USSR were mentioned. Mikulak and Smidovich would attend if they were free in time (fall would be best). I told them I would take this up with the Executive Committee and Council.

Smidovich felt that a prime need was a careful study of the secretariat and costs for an enforcement agency. Mikulak thought that several propositions had been put forward, but they need consolidation, keeping the annual budget at \$100 million dollars or less; otherwise there would be no chance for funding in the USA (who would have to cover 1/4 of the budget). I doubted whether Pugwash should or would undertake such a task; others could do it better.

Biological Weapons

I asked each to reply on the following concerning yellow rain and Sverdlovsk.

To re-open the yellow rain controversy for retraction, Mikulak said that a senior senator or committee would have to propose a re-study of the evidence. Mikulak also stressed that Sverdlovsk would certainly be brought up, if not previously resolved, when a CW treaty reached Congress, or perhaps when the yellow rain controversy surfaced again.

Smidovich said nothing about the possibility of clarifying Sverdlovsk when the report of the visit there by two journalists (Soviet) was discussed. He approved of the publication of their report, although he did not indicate whether the points made were valid.

For the Review Conference, Mikulak thought the best thing to do was to advocate openness by informal visits before trying to proceed to any formal inspections (if ever). He asked about epidemiological surveillance centres (advocated by D.A. Henderson formerly of WHO). I explained WHO past history on such centres, and added the advisability of human serum banks which I advocated over 30 years ago. USA will probably support the centre idea through WHO.

Mikulak thanked me for arranging the lunch which he found useful. Evidently the two men had little opportunity for an exchange of informal views on various issues. Mikulak was more pessimistic than ever about achieving a CWC in the near future (next two years). CW was behind conventional forces and START in the US order of priority, and now everything was pushed down the ladder because of the war. The two percent residual stock issue was not cast in cement and new ideas were being sought. The US group recognized the strong objections to that proposal on the part of other countries in the CD.

cc: Francesco Calogero
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Note added. Speaking later to Julian he reminded me that a previous suggestion was to arrange a meeting of inspectors participating in the national inspection exercises for an exchange of views and experience. Otherwise, much benefit of such exercises would be lost to preparations for and administration of a future CWC. This subject was not discussed at the luncheon.

MM 7/6