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Dear Friends:

As some of you know, I will be unable to come to Seoul because of a family emergency.

I wanted to make contact, however, about issues likely to face the IAMCR Council and my own thoughts about these. Some of these issues seem to have a great deal of emotion surrounding them -- I will talk about these first. Second are issues I think important but which may have little time to surface given the more emotional issues.

I am sending this letter to members of the Council with whom I have worked closely in the past. If you want to quote from this letter you may. You are, of course, under no obligation to represent my views at Council, or even to read this. I send this because I think it may be helpful in understanding some extremely complicated issues; because I want to do whatever I can to help calm things down; because I am very fond of some of the folks involved in these conflicts; and because I am so sorry not to be there.

#### ISSUE

1: AN APPEAL FOR CALM For a whole host of reasons which I will not detail here, there is a great deal of alarm and concern about the state of IAMCR affairs. Things have gotten somewhat out of hand, it seems, as the alarm has now extended beyond the Council to members at large, precipitated it appears by the two conflicting messages in the recent newsletter regarding what persons should do with their Seoul papers (send them to Amsterdam or send them to Washington D.C.) and by the cartoon in the most recent issue of the IAMCR newsletter, a cartoon which at best is simply in bad taste and at worst is both sexist and a public attack on our incoming president.

A major reason why I am taking the risk of sending this letter is that I think it is very important that those of us not directly involved in the conflict do our best to help those most involved (in particular, Cees, Hamid, and Robin) to find a way to mediate their differences and avoid public emotional and conflictual outbursts in Seoul. Given the negative reactions that I received last week from relatively uninformed persons to the recent issue of the newsletter, I can only project that more displays of that kind will only hurt IAMCR badly.

One of my purposes here is to provide those of you who have not been so involved in the networking some idea of what the issues are about. Of course, it goes without saying

that this is my view of the state of affairs and given the complexity of the issues, there are no doubt any number of points to which I have not been privy. So use this content for background and to guide you in asking questions.

I should mention that a number of folks have been trying to help alleviate the tension in the situation in a wide variety of ways. It is unclear right now, as I write, how successful these efforts have been. The difficulties have lots of roots but are attached right now to a few main issues which I will discuss below. Each of the parties as well wishes to claim various misdeeds by the other and in some cases there are varying degrees of truth in the claims. I will address some of these charges below but in the main I will bring these up only as necessary to explain the situation. I am going to purposely avoid conjecture about intentions, etc. in these comments as best I can and relay what I have seen and heard and my own opinions. It is of course fair to say that none of the parties involved is a perfect human being, as none of us are. The difficulty in this situation is the tolerance needed so that fallible persons can get on with business seems almost entirely absent. Each party feels that he has been the tolerant one and in some sense each is right from his own perspective simply because each party is having trouble seeing the other.

Upfront, let me explain, as some of you know, that Cees is someone I consider a valued friend -- we have socialized and worked together and should I lose his friendship (and that of his wife, Seija), I would consider it an enormous loss, one from which I would never really recover. Hamid, on the other hand, is not someone I really know personally and is someone [and I am not saying anything here I have not said directly to him] whom I have difficulty getting along with and with whom I frequently disagree on issues. However, I see him as our duly elected president and as such I am committed to working cooperatively with him. You also should know that in addition to sending this letter to folks to selected folks on Council who are not directly involved in the conflicts, I am sending copies to Cees, Hamid, and Robin because I try whenever possible to never say things behind a person's back that I am not willing to say up front. [I am no angel, however, and I do not always succeed].

All this said, I want to emphasize the following:

\*I believe we must honor and appreciate that there would be no IAMCR if it were not for the efforts of Jim Halloran. No matter what charges may be made about how he ran the organization, in that time/place it worked sufficiently to put the organization on the map. It helps little to charge that he treated the organization like he owned it. While

there may be some truth to that, it was part of our evolution and in fact an essential part. As one Council member put it: he paid for a good part of the horse on which IAMCR rode and, of course, then rode the horse on his own behalf. And amid that, to my mind, he did a remarkable job in his special way attracting to IAMCR diverse interests and cultures and solid purpose. He also put in untold hours of unpaid work. The organization grew, the world changed, a new era entered. But without Jim -- both his strengths and weaknesses -- there would be no organization. It is unfair to charge otherwise and unfair to claim he left the organization bankrupt. If anything, it was the resources he garnered that made IAMCR possible.

\*In some sense, the same can be said of Cees Hamelink: he has followed very much in Jim's pattern. He, too, paid for at least half the horse on which IAMCR has ridden for the last four years. And, indeed, he has traveled on the horse for his own purposes as well. Yet, in my mind, what he has done for IAMCR in the past 4 years can never be accounted. If anything it is his enormous efforts that make some of the current dilemmas possible for he (and his wife Seija) have put in untold hours of volunteer labor in getting the organization organized -- computerized membership rosters, pruned and accurate lists, efficient procedures. It is this degree of organization that makes possible a wider vision of future structural possibilities. I have visited the Amsterdam office and I can tell you I was astonished at the amount of time and effort Cees and Seija have put in. Further, Cees has acknowledged the need for the organization to move forward to more participatory forms and has encouraged and assisted this. And, he has involved IAMCR, as Halloran did, in important world-wide networks. In short, we owe Cees (and Seija) an enormous debt.

\*I further believe that we must honor Hamid as the duly elected president of IAMCR. I see no evidence suggesting that Hamid does not deserve the same degree of tolerance I would extend to any other fallible human being. I have a harder time dealing with his fallibilities than, for example, I do with Cees'. But the problem is mine, not his, and I am working on it. Further, in recent discussions with Hamid, I have learned that he is putting in long hard hours on IAMCR concerns. Finally, no matter how angry someone is, I do not think it appropriate that cartoons and jokes be put in the IAMCR newsletter about a duly elected officer of the organization. The most recent occurrence was a cartoon pointed at our incoming president in the most recent issue of the newsletter. Such cartoons are inexplicable to most readers for they do not know the inside squabbles. Further, because humor is so culturally driven misunderstandings are a dangerous result particularly in an international organization: for example, public disrespect

of an elected official is clearly not a cultural universal. I mention this explicitly for I fear some angers about this will come to Council meeting. The day the newsletter arrived at Ohio State, four different folks in my own department came to me and asked "What is GOING on?" One female member from Asia called me in a state of shock, near tears. I thought the cartoon both administratively inappropriate and insulting to women. I was so offended that I called Hamid and apologized to him that it happened.

\*Having said that I also want you to know that I admire and have affection for Robin Cheesman who we can assume put the offending cartoon in the newsletter (with or without Cees' knowledge, I do not know). I give Robin room for grace as well -- we all know that sometimes between people things go amuck and emotions run high and we act on those emotions. How very human. Robin has himself given untold hours to IAMCR both as newsletter editor and as a major contributor to getting us technologically organized. However fallible he may have been in putting this cartoon in the newsletter, I believe he deserves our support and commendation. He certainly has my affection and nothing he has done changes that.

## ISSUE

2: THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE. One of the major contentious issues is the question of where the administrative office will be and how it will be funded once Hamid takes office in Seoul. Here is some background.

\*When Halloran was president, the office and Halloran's office were the same -- I am sure it was quite impossible to separate one from the other. And, while I am not clear on funding then, it is reasonable to hypothesize given what we know now about our finances that less than half of the IAMCR horse was paid for by IAMCR members.

\*Hamelink's structure for the IAMCR office has been somewhat more complex, but in the same model. Here we have figures. Given how Cees structured the office, our expenses have been around \$100,000 US. Income from IAMCR members: around \$47,000. The difference has been made up by funds Cees raised in the Netherlands. These funds were housed in a Foundation of which Cees is an officer. In effect, then, we have a situation where Cees, IAMCR president, is making agreements with Cees, Dutch foundation officer. All of this has worked well on our behalf. Some may charge that Cees was extravagant, But clearly we could not have accomplished what we have in the past 4 years without Cees' considerable efforts. If Cees was extravagant then he was so at least in good part on our behalf. His contributions have allowed us a lavish newsletter, for example, that we could not afford with our own resources.

\*This is where the confusion starts. Cees' assumptions seem to be that the office should continue in Amsterdam essentially as it is now but that Hamid and the Finance Committee should have raised the roughly \$50,000 to continue that structure. In fact, this has been Cees' assumption for a long time although only recently did this become clear to me. Further, Cees and some supporters have designed a proposed Dutch Foundation which would essentially take over oversight of the Amsterdam office: i.e. control all funds, supervise work, etc. This Foundation, if I understand the proposal, is to be supervised by a committee of IAMCR members located in Europe.

\*One sub-issue here is that some see Hamid as failing IAMCR because he did not raise the extra \$50,000 to keep the Amsterdam office going. This was assumed by some to be a mandate to Hamid and the Finance Committee. My own position is this, and has been for a long time. I never placed much credence on the idea that someone had to go out and raise \$50,000 for the office to stay in Amsterdam. From my perspective, this is quite impossible: who wants to support an organization that can't support its own basic services? One can counter that Cees did it and if Cees did it Hamid should be able to. But I think it a more full interpretation to understand that Cees was raising money in good part for his own purposes which he implemented to our benefit through IAMCR. This is a very different kind of organizational viewpoint than is usual. Most organizations with which I am affiliated have an administrative office that is "neutral" in that it is not attached to its officers and the politics of the organization per se. Further, Cees is obviously tied in with an influential network in the Netherlands which makes such fund-raising possible. I have considerable background and success in fund-raising but I could not raise money under such conditions -- i.e. to support basic services of an organization. In essence, I feel it is unrealistic to build the IAMCR presidency on the assumption that the president can somehow round up \$50,000 to maintain an Amsterdam office, particularly when that president will also have to raise money to maintain some semblance of an office locally. Hamid has done the latter, by raising funds at American University. Clearly, transferring these funds to Amsterdam is out of the question. Further, the idea of an administrative office being supervised in some way by a group other than the Executive Board seems extremely troublesome to me.

\*Perhaps Hamid can be faulted in never explicitly announcing that there was no way he could raise the money to continue to Amsterdam office. Perhaps he can be faulted for making promises he could not deliver. But we can all be faulted on this count. It was not until recently that I understood

exactly how much money was required over our membership income to support the Amsterdam arrangement. The bottom line for me is this: in 1993 we had only 318 paid up individual and 78 paid-up institutional members. We are rich in human resources and committed purpose. But being realistic, we are poor financially and it is my position that we must find a way to live within our means and build up from there.

\*There is a complication, however, which I think requires we offer some degree of grace to both Cees and Hamid. It is true that Hamid made several public statements that he would keep the office in Amsterdam. I do not think he [or maybe anyone] knew the implications of this promise for it is only now, for example, that I [despite considerable past efforts] am beginning to have a clear picture of our financial situation and of the structure Cees built. But Hamid did say he would stay in Amsterdam or Europe and so some will want to call him to account for that.

\*Another complication; : Cees, as IAMCR president, evidently signed two different contracts vis-a-vis the relationship between IAMCR and the Dutch Foundation (called the International Foundation for the Study of Comparative Ethics), One of these commits IAMCR to reimburse IFSCE for office and administrative costs for the time period October 1990 to September 1994. I have seen this document. Evidently, though, Cees also signed a rental agreement on behalf of IAMCR which extends one more year to September 1995 and involves some \$11,000 in cost. So, here is the rub. Hamid did make verbal statements in public supporting the idea of keeping the office in Amsterdam. But I don't think anyone clearly understood the financial implications so I give him grace on that. On the other hand, Cees acted with good intentions based on these statements and so I give him grace on that.

\*What the above implies is that no matter what decision is made about our "administrative office", somehow Cees deserves assistance with the rental obligation. My understanding is that there are a number of avenues being pursued here (i.e. a contribution from a possible donor, etc.) but there is no way of knowing whether this will be resolved by the time Council meets.

\*In the meantime, Hamid and the Finance Committee have done some hard work in coming to grips with the realities of our situation. We are a poor organization: but we do have enough resources to fulfill our mission and grow and build. However, we must seriously alter how we structure our administration. The Finance Committee has come up with a plan which I believe goes in the right direction. Hamid, GeeGee, Annie, and Francois have put considerable work into it. The plan has, to my mind, several advantages: 1) it

makes our budget fully and comprehensibly public for the first time because it relies only on funds we provide; 2) it involves the use of a "neutral" party to handle routine administration; 3) it involves more than one member of the Executive Board in approving expenditures. Because of these benefits, it moves us in the direction for the first time of establishing a structure which would eventually allow us to apply the broadest possible consideration to potential presidential nominees. We would not be restricted to choosing someone with lots of resources.

\*On the negative side, the proposal from Hamid and the Finance Committee has some drawbacks -- some of which I see as more serious than others: a) It can be asserted that it will be inefficient and will result in a diminishment of services. In fact it might and this will be a consequence of living within our own resources. But I do not think that is necessarily a given. What it means, to my mind, is we must work more deliberately and clearly at finding ways to provide more with less. To my mind, we must do this if we are ever to become a truly participatory organization. b) It can be asserted that the plan will confuse members because they won't know who to contact because of changing addresses. But, in fact, members already have a host of people to contact and I think we can handle this problem with a crisp list of: "If you want to....., then contact....." just like other organizations do. c) The Finance Committee has called their plan decentralization which I am not sure is the best word for it. In fact what is happening is that the routine administration of the organization is being separated from the president's office and decentralized in the sense that it will be supervised by the Executive Board. The fact is that most of the power and decision making for association-wide innovations will still rest in the President's office just like these powers rest with the Section heads for section activities. Likewise, the listing of a number of different countries as the focal points for different activities can be seen as an advantage in an international organization. Yes, inefficiencies may be introduced but we will learn by them as we move toward more participatory arrangements. d) More serious, to my mind, is that the consulting company proposed by the Finance Committee is in Canada and, thus, moves us to North America where I didn't want our administrative office to be. However, as I have thought about this my more serious objection is that the proposal from the Finance Committee does not include evidence of alternative bids for these services, hopefully from different countries. I can not imagine, for example, that a big would not come from one of the many computer services companies cropping up in Ireland or Germany. Yet, on the other hand, I note the proposed contract is for only one year so the Council could mandate that at least three bids from different countries be obtained for the next

round. Then, if the Canadian proposal is the cheapest and best, there would be a clear reason for choosing it. I understand from a conversation with GeeGee that in fact the Committee did canvass quite broadly in addressing these issues so perhaps the report to the Council will answer this objection. e) Finally, I am concerned that the base estimate on which the consulting companies services are calculated counts us as having between 500 to 800 members. In 1993, we had in fact 318 paid-up individual members and 78 paid up institutional members. However, this cloaks the fact that a great many more persons draw on our resources -- i.e. all the individual members plus all the individuals nested in institutional memberships plus conference attendees who are not members. I haven't got an answer for this other than that we take all possible economizing steps, and continuously monitor the situation. I do think, too, that the Council should take a careful look at Hamid's proposed budget so that in an interchange of ideas other possible economizing means may emerge.

In short, as I look at the issue of the headquarters I really do not see us as having much choice but to move in the direction Hamid proposes. I do not really call this "decentralization": rather to my mind it is a move toward a changed structure that will permit greater participation. I wish more than anyone that we could stay in Amsterdam and capitalize on the incredibly efficient and productive organization that Cees has built. However, we can not afford it and wishing otherwise will not make it so.

#### ISSUE

3: THE SALMAN RUSHDIE STATEMENT Background: Robin Cheesman, Cees Hamelink and a number of other IAMCR members initiated a statement to appear in the IAMCR newsletter (last 2 issues) in support of Rushdie and in support of freedom of expression as a basic human right. This action has become controversial because: 1. Hamid felt it inappropriate and asked that it be stopped suggesting that such political statements were not appropriate for IAMCR. 2. Reactions to this demand have become increasingly tense. Cees, in particular, has emphasized that support of Rushdie and the human right to communicate is absolutely central to IAMCR's mission. He has felt honor bound to inform others of Hamid's stance. 3. Finally, tensions have become so high that this is the implied subject of the horrible cartoon in the recent IAMCR newsletter which shows a man with his arms around a female secretary holding a book from which he reads as she types. The caption reads: "Is this a Newsletter editor and his secretary - or a future IAMCR president and his editor? Aside from the bad taste involved and the insult to women, the cartoon is a sign of the degree of passion involved. I do not know whether Cees knew of the cartoon, by the way. Further, I want to repeat

how much I admire and have affection for Robin, newsletter editor. So while I consider this an inappropriate action, I do not class it as a felony nor condemn him for it. Further, while I could respect any number of reasons for not signing the Rushdie statement, I think Hamid's position on IAMCR and political positions is also wrong. But again, I can understand how and why heated things get said in the passion of the moment.

Let me give me own perspective first. If I were not co-coordinator of the Publication Committee I would have signed the statement [see below for why I did not]. But I would have considered it an utterly unimportant act. Having spent time in jail for actions supporting human rights, I do not see signing my name as an individual on a paper as assisting much of anything. Nor do I demand that a membership organization which is participatory and therefore includes myriad views on such issues be the arena in which my own individual political or value concerns be implemented. Rather, I would much prefer that IAMCR do more dangerous things collectively: for example, if the supporters did the political work necessary so that in Seoul a proposition of support went to the General Assembly and an anti-fatwa statement became official IAMCR voice, then I would have pride in the action.

Further, in the heat of the moment (in fact in the heat of several moments over the past year), it is clear to me that the supporters of the statement have ignored some rights of our members to "free expression" while defending the very same rights for Rushdie. For example, one of our members called me and said he/she "signed" the statement but appended some comments of objection and concern. These appended comments did not appear in the newsletter. This does not surprise me given normative procedures on how such matters are handled. However, it is indicative of some concerns I have about how a membership organization takes political and value stances.

When the conflict first arose, it landed in my e-mail bin. My position was essentially as follows: \*I wanted the proposers to either position the issue as one open for discussion (i.e. issue a call for statements to all members); or print a number of different versions of statements in not so much a debate [Who among us would be against freedom of expression?] but an exploration of nuances. Thus, I was concerned about how newsletter space is used in a membership organization. I felt there were problems that need addressing which arise because a privileged few in IAMCR have easy access to the newsletter and it can too readily become their platform. \*However, in response to Hamid's objection, I argued that the statement could not be stopped by him or anyone because there was no standing policy against such statements nor

any procedures in place governing how they are introduced into the newsletter.

One can't be sure how these issues will play out in Seoul. I have raised them here both because of the spontaneously concerned reactions I received locally to the cartoon and because obviously this remains an issue of high concern for at least some of the parties involved and some members. I do, by the way, respect Cees' high degree of ethical commitment to this issue. In fact, my position seems to be closer to his than to Hamid's. But I still emphasize that membership organizations must be very mindful about how they go about such things unless they unintentionally deny to their own members the very rights which they are supporting for others.

OTHER ISSUES Given the intensity of the issues above, maybe no other issues will be dealt with in Seoul. But let's hope some are. Here are some that concern me, with my comments added:

#### ISSUE

4: MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES. The Membership Committee is bringing forth a good proposal, designed to streamline our membership categories and stabilize income a bit more. I would like to add these concerns: \*First, the Dervin and Huesca membership report of 1993 showed that in fact it is the wealthier western members who more often take advantage of the institutional membership category. Is there anything more we can do about this? \*Second, might we consider raising regular dues to \$100. It appears to me as if the 300-some regular members are highly committed and will stick despite this raise. \*Third, might we consider another category called Sustaining with dues of \$150, a special category of persons who want to give exceptional support to IAMCR. Names could be listed in the newsletter? \*And, of course, what can be done to attract membership from the 300-plus potential members -- persons with past membership and/or participation who have dropped out. \*Finally, I am not sure what policy is now but I would want to make sure that the conference attendance fee for non-members is the base conference fee plus a sum that is greater than what it would cost to be a member.

#### ISSUE

5: CYBERSPACE AND IAMCR'S USE OF IT Howard Frederick is putting forth a proposal whose direction I agree. The direction is to establish a commission within IAMCR to consider when and how to move more and more of our activities into cyberspace. I am essentially for this providing that: \* We do not in any way privilege our members with more resources while ignoring those with less.

I mean this quite broadly: for example, cyberspace is faster so those not networked lose the advantage of time and the resulting impact of being able to participate fully. \*We are mindful of what cyberspace activities do to our membership base. If, for example, we distribute our conference papers by e-mail, do we make joining unnecessary? \*We make our activities self-reflexive -- open for continued examination. This would mean, for example, evaluating our current IAMCRNET and IAMCR-L. Why do folks drop out? What is useful? What isn't? What would folks like to see happen? \*The Commission mandates itself to explicitly go after assessments from members: Who has electronic access? who does not? when might they get it? what costs ensue for them? etc.

I would also like to propose consideration of a short-term possibility as well: \*A large number of members have at least FAX; some have e-mail. What would be the reduction in newsletter cost if: a) we were willing to give up the printed format we are so used to (including pictures) b) we converted to an electronic format c) we then distributed the newsletter to everyone with e-mail by e-mail d) we appointed a central FAX distributor in every country/region to whom we send one faxed copy of the newsletter plus a FAX mailing list and then reimburse those dispatching points for phone costs to send FAX copies on to others e) for all remaining newsletters, we first do everything possible to obtain an e-mail or fax address; for those for whom this is impossible, we would mail either from the administrative office or through a dispatching system where the dispatchers in each region/country do the copying/ mailing in exchange for reimbursement of costs f) hard copy would be provided only for e above g) e-mail and fax transmissions would be delayed until all mailing modes have a reasonable chance of arriving simultaneously

#### ISSUE

6: FUTURE CONFERENCE SITES There has been some cyberspacing regarding future conference sites. I have three concerns to raise: \*I would still prefer we NOT go to North America for awhile because North Americans can easily overload our organization and, thus, diminish our essential diversity \*I would argue strongly that we must find ways to go to the third world and former second world. So, for example, if the cyberspace options for 1995 are accurate --Leicester vs Slovenia, I would chose the latter.

\*Some cyberspace conversation projects an invitation might be forthcoming from South Africa. However, my own South African and other African contacts argue strongly that this is not a good idea. There are evidently hidden agendas behind these possible invitations: a concern by some that those pressing most for SA as a conference site are not

doing so in any kind of solidarity with other African or even SA folks. Further, there is a concern that if South Africa is so privileged than IAMCR would be unintentionally supporting a generalized move that seems to be designating capitalism-advanced SA as THE acceptable African country. A better move regarding going to Africa for a conferences seems to be to look to ACCE for direction and encourage an ACCE sponsored invitation. Part of doing this relates to the next issue below.

#### ISSUE

7: FUNDING OF CONFERENCES A related issue is how conferences are funded. The off-year conferences (e.g. Dublin, Istanbul) are not governed by any rules and, thus, can seek inexpensive housing (e.g. dorms as in Dublin) etc. The regular bi-annual conferences on the other hand are governed by a huge

of requirements which hosts must meet, including a rather substantial promise of funding. I feel strongly that we must revise these requirements as soon as possible. The facts are that the kind of support that was possible in the past (particularly before the fall of the 2nd world governments) has all but disappeared and that our requirements now necessarily mean only a few countries can compete. Yet, as the off-year conferences are illustrating, we can launch a successful conference without such backing and open up options.

#### ISSUE

8: THE APPLICATION TO BECOME A SECTION OF THE PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION RESEARCH WORKING GROUP I understand that this Working Group is submitting an application to become a Section and want to indicate that I support the application. First, of course, I must confess my own self-interest up front. I have been active in this group since 1987 and it is now my primary avenue for participating in IAMCR with papers, etc. But more than that I believe that this group has more than fulfilled the requirements to become a Section: \*it has had regular meetings, at least two per bi-annual conference \*these meetings has as good attendance, and sometimes better, than what I have observed at some section sessions \*it puts out a newsletter to which 100 persons subscribe \*it has convened meetings at other organizational conferences identified as an IAMCR group \*it is working on a proposal for the IAMCR book series.

In short, this is a Working Group behaving as a Section.

I understand that there is a committee mandated to review the criteria by which a Working Group becomes a Section and I concur that this is a need. However, I do not believe

that the application of the Participatory Communication Research group should be evaluated based on any potential and as yet not formal criteria, but rather on the criteria in existence for the many years during which the group has worked to achieve the stability and permanence and degree of activity that has warranted Section status in the past.

Thanks for your attention.

Brenda