I met on Monday with Stan and David Dewitt and we are working on a plan to try to rework the agenda and mitigate the damage. David and I are meeting with the organizers on Thursday morning to explore the possibilities and try to find a path forward. Rather than detail our thoughts now (some of which may not be possible or attainable), I want to meet first with the organizers and see what might have a chance of working. I will get back with an update once we have had that meeting.

Patrick

Mamdouh Shoukri

First, no apologies needed. I also share your concern.

My expectation, based on early assurances, is that the participants are reasonable people but may have strong views about the issue. In that sense, I do not expect them to cross the line. It is always possible that some may. It is also possible that some from the other side may draw a line that is easily crossed. Either way, it is not hard to imagine a scenario in which some people walk out in protest.

Based on the above, I like your idea of an ombudsman-like in attendance. He may not be acting like a sensor but at least can interfere if things get out of hand or can be a reliable source of info on what really happened. I wonder if Roy will be willing to do that. Can he or John McCamus be asked to chair one of the sessions where troubles may occur?

I appreciate Patrick's input on this.

Mamdouh
To: Mamdouh Shoukri; <lawdean@esgoode.yorku.ca>
Subject: Durban 11

Hi,

The story in to-day's papers about "Durban 11", which I assume you have both seen, is what worries me about the upcoming Mapping Conference. Assuming we get enough pro Israeli speakers to "balance" the program, we may still not be out of the danger zone.

What do we do if one of the speakers launches into what amounts to or comes close to a racist diatribe?

Yes we can argue that at a university academic conference, free speech must be tolerated but that argument will get drowned out in the media circus that will erupt. Some attendees will walk out, but some will stay and applaud, as was the case in Geneva and we, as sponsors and [physical] hosts will be caught in the middle of an argument that we can't win.

So, the issue becomes -is there anything we can do to ensure that no speaker wanders off the range--i.e. they stick to their abstracts. Can the conference organisers enforce some discipline on the speakers and are they strong enough to do so? Can we disinvite known hate mongers, if we have any on the program? Is this censorship? Do we need an ombudsman in attendance at all times to preserve civility [Roy McMurtry?]

I don't have an answer but someone needs to think about this and be prepared.

Again, apologies for continuing to pester you guys about this, but yesterday's events will just heighten everyone's interest in and fears about the conference.

Marshall Cohen

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