



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary (in New Delhi)

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

MR. NAKASONE'S PROPOSAL TO CONVENE A CONFERENCE
ON LIFE SCIENCES AND MANKIND

BT 1
The Prime Minister agrees that you should ask Dr. Nicholson to sound out Dr. Brenner, Mrs. Warnock and Professor Polkinghorne to see if they would be willing for Mrs. Thatcher to put their names forward for invitation to the proposed Conference on Progress for Life Sciences.

A. J. Gles.

25 November 1983



Prime Minister.

Agree proposal 8?

MR COLES ✓

attached
CT 1586/83 Yes not

A.F.C. 24/11

The Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Nakasone, wrote to the Prime Minister on 21 October about his proposal to convene a conference on life sciences and mankind in Japan on 19 to 22 March 1984.

2. This suggestion arose out of a brief discussion at Williamsburg, during the course of which Mr Nakasone expressed Japanese concern on some of the implications of recent progress made in genetics and other "life sciences".

3. Mr Nakasone is proposing that three people should be invited from each member country of the Summit; they would not be representatives of the Government; they would be three "outstanding authorities", to include one person from among scientists concerned in the field of life sciences and two with more general social scientific or philosophical qualifications.

4. I have discussed with Dr Nicholson whom you might recommend to attend this conference.

5. As far as the scientist member of the delegation is concerned, the best person would be Dr Sydney Brenner from the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge. Possible alternatives would be Professor Ken Murray of the Department of Molecular Biology in Edinburgh, or Professor David Weatherall, Professor of Clinical Medicine at Oxford.

6. Among philosophers who would be well qualified to take part in a discussion of this kind, perhaps the outstanding figure is Mrs Mary Warnock, who has been Chairman of a DHSS Committee on Test Tube Babies and of the Home Office Advisory Committee on Animal Experiments. Alternatives might include Professor Bernard Williams, Provost of King's College, Cambridge, Sir Stuart Hampshire, Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, and Professor Henry Harris, a Professor of Medicine at Oxford.

7. For the third member of the group, to represent a specifically religious point of view, the Archbishop of York would obviously be ideal but is perhaps unlikely to be able to spare the time. Apart from him,



a suitable candidate would be Professor John Polkinghorne, who was Professor of Physics at Cambridge before he took Holy Orders, and Mr Arthur Peacock, the Dean of Clare College, Cambridge.

8. If the Prime Minister agrees, I should like to ask Dr Nicholson to sound Dr Brenner, Mrs Warnock and Professor Polkinghorne to see if they would be willing for the Prime Minister to put their names forward for invitation to the proposed conference on progress for life sciences. If any of those suggested were unable to accept nomination, I would ask Dr Nicholson to approach the alternatives, in the order suggested in this minute.

9. Once we have identified three people who are willing to be nominated, I would then suggest a draft reply for the Prime Minister to send to Mr Nakasone's letter of 21 October.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

23 November 1983