

P.J. Plauger

6 December 1988

Cornelia Boldyreff
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Dear Cornelia:

I trust that Alan Mycroft has by now received the latest version of the draft ANSI C standard, along with the update Rationale, response document, and minutes of the September 1988 X3J11 meeting. A careful review of those documents will show that X3J11 devoted considerable attention to his latest public comments, as we did during the previous public review period. We appreciate his careful reading of the draft and the novel perspective he has brought to the review process.

X3J11 has submitted the draft to X3 for final approval as an ANSI standard. BSI must now decide whether to approve this draft for submission as an ISO DIS, or whether ISO must revote at the DP level. I cannot proceed on either course until I hear from both you and the Danish representatives to WG14.

If BSI chooses not to approve the ANSI standard as an ISO DIS, then I can only assume that you plan to press for an ISO standard that differs from the ANSI standard. Given the widespread opposition to differing standards, I expect that this will lead to substantial delays in the acceptance of an ISO standard for C. As Convenor, I will of course look to BSI for guidance on how to conduct future meetings of WG14. The next meeting will be held in conjunction with the 6-7 March 1989 X3J11 meeting in Seattle, Washington.

I must confess to some dismay at your letter of 30 November 1988, and to the comments made by Brian Meek at the September 1988 SC22 meeting in Tokyo. On both occasions, BSI has asserted that X3J11 has "consistently failed to respond to our comments in a satisfactory and timely manner" (to quote from your letter). The only specifics you cite concern the handling of Mycroft's remarks submitted at the June 1987 X3J11 meeting in Paris (your letter of 11 February 1988).

*This is
actually
incorrect.*

I remind you that you submitted Mycroft's remarks directly to X3J11 at the start of that meeting. They were not registered as formal public commentary, so X3J11 was under no obligation to consider them at all. (You did not even submit them through me, as International Representative, so that I could champion them on behalf of the international community.) Nevertheless, the remarks were processed by a subcommittee and did affect the deliberations of the committee in several small ways, even though they were not specifically identified

in the minutes of the meeting. It is regrettable that the replies to those informal comments were misplaced. We discussed this at the November 1987 WG14 meeting in Amsterdam, at which point I thought the matter closed.

Mycroft's (updated) comments were submitted to the December 1987 X3J11 meeting, along with other BSI comments. They received considerable committee attention, resulted in a number of changes to the draft, and were thoroughly documented in both the minutes of that meeting and the response document for the first public review. Follow up comments from BSI were similarly addressed at the April 1988 X3J11 meeting (second public review) and at the September 1988 X3J11 meeting (third public review).

If Mycroft was feeling unheard, despite all of this attention, then why did he not attend the June 1988 WG14 meeting in London? I was disappointed that he was not there to help give me the specific guidance that I requested from BSI in addressing your concerns before X3J11. If Brian Meek was concerned even then, as he apparently asserted in Tokyo, why did he not attend the London meeting? I appreciated his advice at the September 1987 SC22 meeting in Washington, D.C., and would have welcomed any additional suggestions from him.

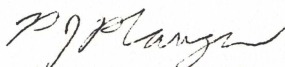
I have been presented with an SC22 resolution that expresses concern over the synchronization of X3J11 and WG14 activities. I hear from you that the BSI C Panel wishes to register its concern. It is now my turn to register my concern. This process must converge, and it must converge to a single standard for the C programming language.

X3J11 could have completed its work almost two years earlier, had we chosen not to deal with international issues. The fact remains that we did, however. We listened hard and we worked hard to make a standard that accommodates many diverse local needs. If not all the nations of the world are completely satisfied with the result to date, then neither are all the U.S. members of X3J11. We have all made contributions, and we have all made concessions. I believe the C standard is a good one. More important, it is good enough.

I urge BSI to review the record, and the latest draft standard, most carefully. If you do, I believe you will find that your concerns have been given due consideration. I further urge BSI to grant me permission to submit this draft for voting as an ISO DIS. If you do not, I believe you have an obligation to help me deal with the consequences of such an action.

I await your reply.

Sincerely,



P.J. Plaugar
ISO WG14 Convenor