

From: Rusi Taleyarkhan [<mailto:rusi@ecn.purdue.edu>]

Sent: 03 July 2006 16:57

To: Marchant, Jo

Cc: laheyr@rpi.edu; nigmar@[redacted]; blockr@rpi.edu; rusi@purdue.edu

Subject: Re: request for comment

Dr. Marchant:

I just noticed this request from Ms. Reich, a free-lance writer. Colleagues and legal advisors wish to have you confirm that you personally and/or Nature have indeed have commissioned her to write and have published her present, and earlier articles for which no official from Nature has ever contacted me or my colleagues to confirm or fact-check (as done routinely by other magazines/journals) the one-sided defamatory allegations made in her articles published in your magazine during March, 2006.

In the past I have advised Ms. Reich that technical questions requiring a thoughtful response should be addressed by fellow scientists to the journal editors where a cited article was actually published, as is the time-honored tradition. That way, the responsible technical editor acts as an unbiased reference, seeks anonymous reviews and opposing views are both published as submitted for the public to draw their own conclusions. This crucial step has been bypassed by Nature. While I and my co-authors can and do respond to technical questions and have in good-faith, despite hardships presented our data the way they developed experimentally, after intense worldwide reviews, it is difficult at best to address other human attributes such as those dealing with priority, jealousy and yes, competition.

My co-authors and I look forward to your understanding, response and assistance.

Sincerely,

Rusi Taleyarkhan

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On 7/4/2006 Marchant, Jo wrote:

Dear Dr. Taleyarkhan,

Thanks very much for your email. Yes, I have commissioned Eugenie Reich to look into a story for me, regarding Purdue's investigation into your work, and the funding of that work.

I believe however that there may have been a misunderstanding regarding the nature of the article she is researching. Scientific manuscripts published in Nature and other journals, and technical comments relating to those manuscripts, do indeed go through a process of peer review as you describe. But what I have commissioned from Eugenie is a news story, to run in our news section.

As I'm sure you understand, news stories are researched and written by news reporters, not by scientific editors. Eugenie is an experienced and well-respected news reporter, and by approaching you as part of her research for this story she is abiding by the conventions of good journalism. I believe that she will do a thorough and objective job, and I would appreciate it very much if you could cooperate with her, so that we can include your side of the story. Please rest assured that her aim and mine is to produce a balanced and accurate news article.

Best wishes,  
Jo Marchant

Jo Marchant PhD | News editor | Nature  
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Date: Tue, 04 Jul 2006 20:21:44 -0400  
From: "Rusi P. Taleyarkhan" <rusi@purdue.edu>  
To: Steve Krivit  
Cc: rusi@purdue.edu  
Subject: Re: investigation

Dear Steve:

FYI, I have just learned of another forthcoming tact to discredit our team; this time Putterman alleges research wrongdoing that my team did not acknowledge DARPA as having funded my work reported in January, 2006 in PRL journal. He has been helping Eugenie Reich to now write another news story in Nature that might be appearing in the coming week. The charge is totally off-the-wall and based on naive wishful accounting, and perhaps desperation.

Not getting anywhere in the technical arena, this group is resorting to absurdity. In the past when DARPA supported any specific research we warmly acknowledged as was done in Science(2002) and Phys.Rev.E(2004). The work of the type reported in PRL(1/06) involving alpha (not external neutron) based

bubble fusion studies required years of preparation - which started in earnest in 2003 as I joined Purdue and could do what I wished to pursue from my State of Indiana(Purdue Univ.) funds and importantly, contribute our own time beyond the normal 8h day-which folks like Lahey, Nigmatulin, Block, West gamely contributed to. By the time DARPA funding came to Purdue in late May,2005 a draft of the paper was already being prepared for reviews and for sending to journals. As most of us know, the process of peer reviews and editing and final publication can take several months if not years after the paper is prepared and submitted. The charge that just because I supported (est.) about 20% of my salary time along with part support for post-doc and about 15% support from a colleague from ORNL from the new DARPA funds that would mean any paper I write on a totally "different" line of research in bubble fusion are somehow to be attributed to the present DARPA/UCLA funds. Simple math would suggest that 20% is not equal to 100%. I'm deeply disgusted at this gross unprofessionalism and regret accepting in good faith to work with that group at UCLA. My entire team (esp. Lahey, Block and Nigmatulin) are convinced that Putterman can simply not be trusted.

Anyway, once again there will be feathers rustled at Purdue and I'll have to waste more time on this relentless barrage that is heavily impacting my health leave alone having severely damaged my professional standing and ability to get research funding, etc.

The fact that Nature allows such items to be considered newsworthy is a sign of the times with the present leadership there. I contacted the Nature editor J. Marchant and she wrote back today stating that she did commission this story and past ones not because these would be scientifically useful and peer reviewed but because they would make news. Some at Science have hinted all of this from Nature could simply be them getting after Science magazine with me/my group's work caught in between.

Rusi