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Due Date : 10/31/96

To: Dr. John Gibbons



Congress.ID :

Date Completed : 10/23/96

TO SCHEDULE?

From : Rockefeller, Laurance S.

Topic : Suggest it would be useful to convene an inter'l conference on UFOs and Extraterrestrial intelligence; enc ltr from Carl Sagan.

Action: None



Division(s) Director's



Technology



Assnd1 :

Copy1 : Dr. Gibbons

Assnd2 :

Skip Johns

File : Tech/UFOs

Remarks :

30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10112

ROOM 5600

10-21-96
SHG
Johns
9600956
(212) 649-5600

October 17, 1996

Dear Jack:

For some time in our review of extraterrestrial intelligence and unidentified flying object issues, we believe it will be useful to convene an international conference on this matter. Obviously, ETI and UFOs are international in scope and there are a number of other countries who are interested.

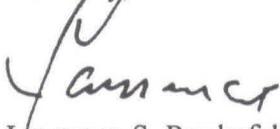
At the suggestion of Maurice Strong, we contacted Ms. Julia Marton Lefevre, Executive Director of the International Scientific Union, who thoughtfully responded. It turns out that ETI and UFOs are one subject of interest of one of the subgroups of her organization. Enclosed is my correspondence with Ms. Lefevre and a proposed letter to participants in a small group which would be convened to discuss the feasibility and usefulness of such a conference and to make plans for it if it does plan to be feasible and useful.

We may seek to supplement her list with additional non-U.S. attendees. A suggested supplemental list is also enclosed. Any suggestions you have as to the project itself or to the participants would be most welcome. We look forward to seeing you after the election and discussing how this and other matters are going.

Also enclosed is an interesting letter from Carl Sagan who apparently indirectly received word of our proposed seminar. As my response to him indicates, I have been puzzled by Carl's enthusiastic support of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence by radio telescope while he maintains a high degree of skepticism about other means of inquiry. There is anecdotal evidence in many areas of the UFO phenomenon but little or none for radio signals.

With warm regard, I am

Sincerely,



Laurance S. Rockefeller

John H. Gibbons, Ph.D.
Assistant to the President for
Science and Technology
Room 424
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

COPY

30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10112

Room 5600

(212) 649-5600

August 8, 1996

Dear Madame Lefèvre,

This is to follow up on your telephone conversation with my associate, Henry Diamond, regarding possible assistance from the International Council of Scientific Unions to further our interest in extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI) and unidentified flying objects (UFOs). I greatly appreciate your willingness to consider advising us. Our longtime friend and colleague, Maurice Strong, suggested that you and your organization might be particularly well situated to be of help.

My interest in ETI is prompted by the fact that I have long been concerned with the possibility of expanding man's spiritual and intellectual potential. This interest stems from a lifetime of concern and support for innovative thinking in fields such as philosophy, holistic healing, science and spirituality. I have become convinced that we must fulfill more of our human potential if we are to cope with the increasingly difficult problems which now challenge our quality of life and our very survival.

As part of this interest, my associates and I have been carrying out an informal survey of the existence, or nonexistence, of ETI and UFOs; essentially we have been addressing the question, "Are We Alone." If indeed we are not it would, of course, open an important aspect of expanding human potential and have enormous implications for science and religion. As part of this effort, we have met with a number of advocates of the existence of UFOs and with some who are skeptical of their existence.

We have also spoken with a number of present and former U.S. government officials who may have been in a position to know what information the U.S. government has on this subject. Our approach to the U.S. government has been focused on urging the release of information that it may have regarding UFOs that has been heretofore held as classified for national security purposes. We have urged that now that the Cold War is over, constraints on release of information can be relaxed.

Madame Julia Marton Lefèvre
August 8, 1996
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The American public interest in this field continues to grow. Such mainstream media as Time magazine, the Reader's Digest, and the public television program, NOVA, have recently devoted major attention to it. In an effort to bring together the best information available on UFO sites, I sponsored a study carried out jointly by the three major national organizations interested in UFOs. The report of that effort entitled, "Unidentified Flying Objects, the Best Available Evidence," is enclosed. While I do not necessarily endorse every finding and conclusion, the evidence presented in the report does indicate that this subject merits serious scientific study.

It is clear, of course, that if ETI or UFOs do exist it is very much an international phenomenon. We have become convinced that the international scientific community is essential to full inquiry. At one point we considered suggesting a conference by an entity of the United Nations to bring together both the international and the scientific aspects of this issue. However, Maurice Strong suggested, based on his experience with the United Nations, that bringing governments together would more than likely elicit formal and probably quite conservative positions rather than bringing out new knowledge and a free exchange.

Maurice suggested that working with the International Council of Scientific Unions might be the more fruitful approach. He highly recommended you as a person to contact about the possibility of bringing together a small group of international scientists with an interest in ETI and UFOs to explore whether a full scale conference or other efforts would be useful. I understand that Henry Diamond spoke to you about this, and you indicated that although you had no particular knowledge in this area, you would be willing to put us in touch with a group who might have. Further, as I understand it, you indicated that the organization of astronomers affiliated with your organization has a subgroup which does deal with ETI and UFOs. This is just the kind of international group with strong scientific credentials we had hoped to find, and we would be very grateful if you would make some suggestions to us.

Specifically, we are thinking of a small meeting in New York sometime this fall of 6-10 people who might advise us as to the feasibility of bringing together an international scientifically oriented conference on ETI and UFOs, or to suggest other approaches that might be useful. We have found that such small forums can be quite productive. It would be

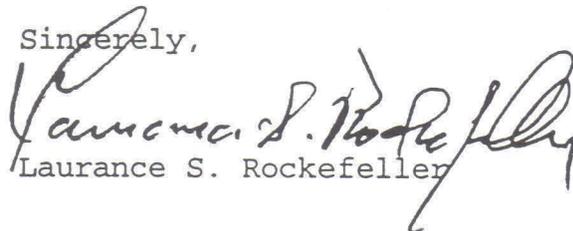
Madame Julia Marton Lefèvre
August 8, 1996
Page 3

informal and off the record. It would be our hope that Maurice Strong could attend and, if you were available, we would be delighted to have you as well. The Fund for the Enhancement of the Human Spirit of the Laurance S. Rockefeller Fund would defray travel and other expenses for such a meeting.

Therefore, if you could suggest who might be part of the small group, and perhaps who might be a logical co-convenor with us, it would be a great favor indeed. By copy of this letter, we are keeping Maurice informed, and we will call you after you have had time to review this letter to seek your advice.

With warm appreciation, I am

Sincerely,



Laurance S. Rockefeller

Madame Julia Marton Lefèvre
Executive Director
International Council of Scientific Unions
51 Boulevard de Montmorensay
Paris, France 75016

Enclosure

cc: The Hon. Maurice F. Strong



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC UNIONS CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES UNIONS SCIENTIFIQUES

5.01

12 September 1996

The Honourable Laurence S. Rockefeller
Room 5600
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112
USA

Dear Mr. Rockefeller,

Please forgive this slow response to your letter of 8 August which reached here only on the 19th. I have now received responses from our members both in the International Astronomical Union and in our Committee on Space Research, and I am able to confirm their interest in cooperating with you in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.

Having consulted these bodies in their general interest I have also asked them to provide me with names of persons you might wish to involve in your initial meeting to advise you on the feasibility of organizing an international scientifically oriented conference at a later date. I am now pleased to communicate the names suggested, as follows:

Suggestions from the International Astronomical Union (IAU) were based on extensive consultations with members of the IAU Commission 51 (Bioastronomy: Search for Extraterrestrial Life):

Professor Stuart Bowyer
Astronomy Department
University of California
601 Campbell Hall
Berkeley, California 94 720
Phone: (510) 642 1648
Fax: (510) 643 8303

S. Bowyer is a professor of astrophysics and a leading expert in the field of UV and FUV astronomy. He is the founder and Director of the SERENDIP search project for extraterrestrial life.

Professor Philip Morrison
Department of Physics
MIT, Room 6 205, Box 165
Cambridge, MA 02139
Phone: (617) 253 5086

P. Morrison is an eminent expert in the field of cosmology.

Professor Carl Sagan
Cornell University
302 Space Science Building
Ithaca, NY 14853
Phone: (607) 256 4971

C. Sagan is best known for pioneering work in the exploration of the planetary system and for his outstanding popular books on science.

Dr. Jill Tarter
SETI Institute
Project Phoenix Office
2035 Landings Drive
Mountain View, CA 94043
Phone: (415) 960 4555
Fax: (415) 968 5830

J. Tarter is the President of IAU Commission 51 and Director of the SETI Institute which operates the most comprehensive present search programme for extraterrestrial intelligence. Her participation in the planned meeting would be particularly important as a link to the international scientific community through the Commission she chairs.

Professor Virginia Trimble
Astronomy Department
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20 742
Phone: (301) 405 5822
Fax: (301) 314 9067

V. Trimble is a well known expert on high energy astrophysics and a Vice President and member of the Executive Committee of the IAU.

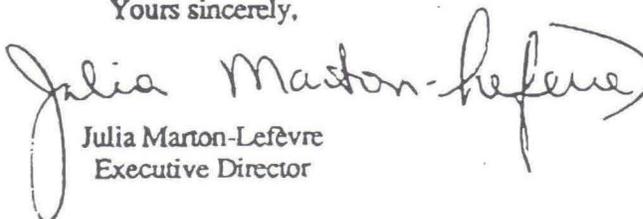
Suggestions from the ICSU Committee on Space Research (COSPAR):

Professor W. Flury
European Space Agency/ESPC
Robert Bosch-Str. 5
64293 Darmstadt, Germany
Phone: (49 6151) 902 270
Fax: (49 6151) 902 625

W. Flury is an expert on statistics of artificial objects such as satellites, rockets and their debris observed in circumterrestrial space.

I hope that you will find this information useful and that you will let me know in what other way I may be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,


Julia Marton-Lefevre
Executive Director

cc: M.F. Strong

SAMPLE LETTER TO SCIENTISTS INVITING THEM TO ATTEND PLANNING SESSION

Dear _____:

I am writing you at the suggestion of Ms. Julia Marton Lefevre, the Executive Director of the International Council of Scientific Unions, regarding our interest in examining extraterrestrial intelligence and unidentified flying objects. We are planning to convene a small leadership group of internationally recognized scientists to explore whether an international conference on this subject might be useful. We approach the issue with no preconceived conclusions, only on the assumption that there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to warrant serious scientific inquiry.

My interest in ETI is prompted by the fact that I have long been concerned with the importance of expanding man's spiritual and intellectual potential. This interest stems from a lifetime of concern and support for innovative thinking in the fields of philosophy, holistic healing, science and spirituality. I have become convinced that we must fulfill more of our human potential if we are to cope with the increasingly difficult problems which now challenge our quality of life and perhaps our very survival.

As part of this interest, I and my associates have been carrying out an informal survey of the existence or nonexistence of ETI and UFOs, interviewing both advocates and skeptics. We have been addressing the question, "Are We Alone?" If indeed we are not, it would, of course, open an important aspect of expanding human potential and have enormous implications for science and religion.

We have also spoken with a number of present and former U.S. government officials who may have been in a position to know what information the government has or has had on this subject. Our approach has been focused on urging the release of information regarding UFOs that has been heretofore held as classified for national security purposes. We have urged that now that the Cold War is over, constraints on release of information can be relaxed.

In an effort to bring together the best information available on UFO phenomenon worldwide since the end of the Second World War, I sponsored a study carried out jointly by the three major national organizations interested in UFOs. The report of that effort entitled, "Unidentified Flying Objects, the Best Available Evidence," is enclosed. It is reportorial rather than scientific in approach. While I do not necessarily endorse every finding and conclusion, the evidence presented in the report does confirm that this subject merits serious scientific study with international participation and cooperation.

The American public interest in this field continues to grow. The recent exciting disclosure about the meteorite from Mars indicating possible life there or primitive life in the distance past will doubtlessly stimulate more interest and serious study. Such mainstream media as Time magazine, the Reader's Digest, and the television networks have recently devoted major attention to it. One of the season's most popular films involves aliens.

Most of the research of which we are aware has not been rigorously scientific. For the most part, publications and conferences worldwide tend to focus on informal, anecdotal, and often sensationalized aspects of the issue. We are not aware of a coordinated, international,

scientific inquiry. We want to explore the possible value of a conference which would convene scientists from a number of countries for a serious discussion.

It is clear, of course, that if ETI or UFOs do exist it is very much an international phenomenon. We have become convinced that the international scientific community is essential to full inquiry. At one point, we considered advocating a conference sponsored by an entity of the United Nations to bring together both the international and the scientific aspects of this issue. However, Maurice Strong wisely advised that bringing governments together would more than likely elicit formal and probably quite conservative positions rather than bringing out new knowledge and a free exchange.

Maurice suggested that working with the International Council of Scientific Unions might be the more fruitful approach. We wrote Ms. Julia Marton Lefevre, the Executive Director of the Union, explaining our interest in this area and asking for recommendations as to a few outstanding scientists with an interest in this area who might serve as a small leadership planning group. She suggested your name.

Specifically, we are thinking of a small meeting in New York during the first quarter of 1997 of 6-10 people who might advise us as to the feasibility of bringing together an international scientifically oriented conference on ETI and UFOs or to suggest other approaches that might be useful. We have found that such small forums can be quite productive. It would be informal and off the record. The objective of the meeting would be to assess the usefulness of an international conference or commission grounded thoroughly in scientific inquiry to bring together reliable information about ETI and UFOs. We would commission a short preparatory paper to lay out the

issues and circulate it in advance. We anticipate that this planning meeting would involve a day and a half in New York with a dinner on the first night of the meeting.

A preliminary list of other invitees to this meeting is enclosed. The Fund for the Enhancement of the Human Spirit of the LSR Fund would defray travel and other expenses.

We would greatly appreciate your advising us of your potential availability and hope you can be with us.

Sincerely,

Laurance S. Rockefeller

SUGGESTED INVITEES FOR THE MEETING OF SCIENTISTS

From Julia Marton-Lefevre, of the International Council of Scientific Unions

Stuart Bowyer
Astronomy Department
University of California, Berkeley

Philip Morrison
Department of Physics
MIT

Carl Sagan
Cornell University

Jill Tarter
SETI Institute

Virginia Trimble
Astronomy Department
University of Maryland

W. Flury
European Space Agency/ESPC
Darmstadt, Germany

Supplemental Suggestions

Rodney Nichols
President and CEO
New York Academy of Sciences

Peter Sturrock
Director of the Center for Space Sciences &
Astrophysics
Stanford University

Harold Puthoff
Director, Institute for Advanced Studies
Austin, Texas

William Golden
Former President & Chairman
New York Academy of Sciences

Charles M. Vest
President
MIT

Daniel S. Goldin
Chief Administrator of NASA

Frank D. Drake
President
SETI Institute

Gordon Cooper
Former U.S. Astronaut

Harold Aspden
Formerly Visiting Senior Research Fellow
Department of Electrical Engineering
University of Southampton
England

Claude Poher
Aerospatiale, Cannes
Formerly Affiliated with the French Space Agency (CNES)

Major General Wilfried De Brouwer
Former Deputy Chief
Belgian Air Force

Lord Hill-Norton
Former Chief of Defense Staff
Former Chairman, Military Committee of NATO
England

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
Center for Radiophysics and Space Research

SPACE SCIENCES BUILDING
Ithaca, New York 14853-6801

Telephone (607) 255-4971
Fax (607) 255-9888

Laboratory for Planetary Studies

October 2, 1996

Dr. Jill Tarter
Director, Project Phoenix
SETI Institute
2035 Landings Drive
Mountain View, California 94043

Dear Jill,

I think I've said all I've had to say on the UFO business in *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. If Mr. Rockefeller has any questions on the content of the book, I would be more than happy to engage in a one-on-one dialogue.

With every good wish,

Cordially,



Carl Sagan

P.S. I think this is no more a task for the International Council of Scientific Unions as is the investigation of a haunted house in Dorset.

CS:lkp

cc: Henry Diamond ✓
Immo Appenzeller

30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10112

Room 5600

(212) 649-5600

October 17, 1996

Dear Dr. Sagan:

Your letter to Dr. Tarter of October 2 has found its way to my desk and I am delighted that you are available to continue a dialogue. We found our visit to you and Ann in the spring of 1994 very useful and remain grateful for your counsel and warm hospitality.

We continue to share your interest in assessing the probability of extraterrestrial intelligence. We believe that while the approach through radio telescope inquiry might prove useful, other inquiries might be productive as well. As you well know, there is substantial anecdotal evidence on the existence of ETI and UFOs and little or no evidence of radio signals. Thus, we believe other avenues are worthy of serious scientific inquiry.

As you suggest, we shall re-read your UFO views in *The Demon-Haunted World* with interest, and hope to have the pleasure and privilege of future conversations.

Sincerely,



Laurance S. Rockefeller

Carl Sagan, Ph.D.
Center for Radiophysics and Space Research
Space Science Building
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853-6801