

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SPACE SCIENCE BOARD

June 2, 1961

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Palo Alto, California

Dear Josh:

I have a copy of your 2 May 1961 letter to the Vice President. Quite independent of this, recently I had a discussion with Lloyd Berkner in Dallas on a number of topics relating to the Board. Among these, Berkner raised, as a major area for a fresh look, particularly in the light of the President's policy position on the objectives of our space program, the topics of exobiology and contamination (to and fro).

You may perhaps say that you and your committee have already provided satisfactory recommendations to the government on the above topics. To this I would respond as follows:

First, a good deal of time has passed; we have a new administration, and the director of NASA is looking pointedly and specifically to the Board for help; and even if it turned out that your recommendations would be a reiteration of what you have said, this would be most important.

Second, in view of the new and heavy commitments made by the President in the space area, it seems to me that it would be worthwhile to reconsider the problems before your committee, also following up specifically on the two policy papers that came out of the last Board meeting ("Man's Role in the National Space Program" and "Support of Basic Research for Space Science") from your point of view. The listing of experiments and their ordering would be particularly helpful to NASA. In the course of this study you could get into the Mars question, and you could also get into the problem of research support (see the last paragraph of your letter to Vice President Johnson).

May I have your views on the above comments -- and please call me collect if a conversation would be helpful.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours



Hugh Odishaw

Executive Director

cc: Dr. Berkner
Mr. Derbyshire