

(Sent to all members of Panel No. 2) on Extra Terrestrial Life

Dr. Matthew Messelson  
Mr. Malcolm D. Ross  
Dr. Carl Sagan  
Dr. Wolf Vishniac  
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Mr. R. W. Davies  
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Pasadena, California

Dear Mr. Davies:

This is to inform you that at a meeting in Washington on August 10 and August 11, the Executive Council of the Joint Armed Forces-NRC Committee on Bio-Astronautics took an action for formalizing what had, in fact, been accomplished by an order of President D. W. Bronk of the National Academy of Sciences some months earlier, following a meeting in Arcadia, California, on June 24 and June 25 of this year. That action was the dissolution of Panel 2 of this Bio-Astronautics Committee.

The reason for this is that by order of President Bronk, the National Academy of Sciences shall have one single representation at all of the government agencies in the area called bio-astronautics and that this shall be the Space Science Board. In the Space Science Board a new committee has been created (Committee 14) entitled Exobiology under the Chairmanship of Professor Joshua Lederberg of Stanford University, which will undertake to pursue the same objectives, or very nearly the same objectives, as those which we in Panel 2 had pursued. I think you will recognize the wisdom of this action, and will join with me in supporting the Committee 14 of the Space Science Board in any way they may see fit to call on us.

In the meantime, let me express the feeling of the Executive Council, as it made itself apparent at the meeting, that the services of Panel 2 in producing both its Woods Hole report and its various individual actions since then have been a major factor in the development of both scientific and public interest in the use of the new vehicles for the exploration of space. The status of the exploration of space for pre-biotic and strange biotic forms as a prime motive in the development of vehicles and devices has now reached a high level, and we can look forward to such explorations with a real hope that they will provide new insights both into terrestrial biology and its place in the universe.

My personal thanks to you all, and

Very truly yours,

Melvin Calvin  
Chairman, Panel 2