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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA Headquarters

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The US Government and Unidentified Flying Objects

No branch of the United States Government is currently involved with or responsible for investigations into the possibility of alien life on other planets or for investigating Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO's). The US Air Force (USAF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have had intermittent, independent investigations of the possibility of alien life on other planets; however, none of these has produced factual evidence that life exists on other planets, nor that UFO's are related to aliens. From 1947 to 1969, the Air Force investigated UFO's; then in 1977, NASA was asked to examine the possibility of resuming UFO investigations. After studying all of the facts available, it was determined that nothing would be gained by further investigation, since there was an absence of tangible evidence.

*How would
NASA know?
What factual
evidence?*

In October 1992, NASA was directed by Congress to begin a detailed search for artificial radio signals from other civilizations under the NASA Towards Other Planetary Systems (TOPS)/High Resolution Microwave Survey (HRMS) program (also known as the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence project). Congress directed NASA to end this project in October 1993, citing pressures on the US Federal budget. The HRMS did not detect any confirmed signal before it was stopped. However, similar work will continue in a more limited manner through efforts of private groups and through academic institutions. The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute (SETI Institute) in Mountain View, CA, effectively replaced the Government project, borrowing the signal processing system from NASA. The SETI Institute is a nonprofit corporation conducting research in a number of fields including all science and technology aspects of astronomy and planetary sciences, chemical evolution, the origin of life, biological evolution, and cultural evolution.

During several space missions, NASA astronauts have reported phenomena not immediately explainable; however, in every instance NASA determined that the observations could not be termed

"abnormal" in the space environment. The 1947 to 1969 USAF investigations studied UFO's under Project Blue Book. The project, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, was terminated December 17, 1969. Of the total of 12,618 sightings reported to Project Blue Book, 701 remain "unidentified."

The decision to discontinue UFO investigations was based on an evaluation of a report prepared by the University of Colorado¹ entitled, "Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects;" a review of the University of Colorado's report by the National Academy of Sciences; previous UFO studies; and Air Force experience investigating UFO reports during the 1940's, '50's and '60's.² As a result of experience, investigations, and studies since 1948, the conclusions of Project Blue Book were: (1) no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force was ever a threat to our national security; (2) there was no evidence submitted to, or discovered by, the Air Force that sightings categorized as "unidentified" represented technological developments or principles beyond the range of modern scientific knowledge; and (3) there was no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as "unidentified" were extraterrestrial vehicles.

With the termination of Project Blue Book, the USAF regulation establishing and controlling the program for investigating and analyzing UFO's was rescinded. Documentation regarding the former Project Blue Book investigation was permanently transferred to the Modern Military Branch, National Archives and Records Service, in Washington, DC 20408, and is available for public review and analysis.

Since the termination of Project Blue Book, nothing has occurred that would support a resumption of UFO investigations by the USAF or NASA. Given the current environment of steadily decreasing defense and space budgets, it is unlikely that the Air Force or NASA will become involved in this type of costly project in the foreseeable future.

Since neither NASA nor the Air Force is engaged in day-to-day UFO research, neither one reviews UFO-related articles intended for publication, evaluates UFO-type spacecraft drawings, or accepts accounts of UFO sightings or applications for employment in the field of aerial phenomena investigation.

UFO Points of Contact

1. For further information on the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, please contact the SETI Institute, 2035 Landings Drive, Mountain View, CA 94043, (415) 960-4530.

2. News media requiring Project Blue Book files should contact the National Archives Public Affairs Office, (202) 501-5525. Public queries should be addressed to the Project Blue Book archivist at (202) 501-5385. For queries not related to Project Blue Book, contact the National Archives receptionist at (202) 501-5400. Documentation is available from: Modern Military Branch, National Archives and Records Service, Eighth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20408.
 3. The Air Force publication, "The Roswell Report: Fact vs. Fiction in the New Mexico Desert," a lengthy document providing all of the details available from the Air Force on the Roswell incident, is available for \$52 from the US Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328.
 4. There are a number of universities and professional scientific organizations that have considered UFO phenomena during periodic meetings and seminars. A list of private organizations interested in aerial phenomena may be found in *Gale's Encyclopedia of Associations*.
 5. Persons wishing to report UFO sightings are advised to contact law enforcement agencies.
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Responsible NASA Official: Mary F. Bell - [Comments](#)

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RECORD NO: 004201

SERIES: Biographies

SUBSERIES: NASA Administrators

FOLDER TITLE: Frosch [Robert A.] (Correspondence 1966-77)

DESCRIPTION: Miscellaneous correspondence re report to Congress on disposal of foreign excess property; NASA role in research of unidentified flying objects (UFO); agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA) for development of demultiplexers for Spacelab; NASA-industry cooperation on projects using Landsat data; NASA policy on items flown in astronaut personal preference kits (PPK); transition and costs for launch of Intelsat 5 on Space Shuttle; NASA facilities not in compliance with the Clean Air Act; contracts with Operations Research Inc.; NASA-Department of Energy (DoE) advanced automobile propulsion systems project; termination of Apollo Lunar Surface Experiments Package (ALSEP) monitoring; proposed use of balloons for transport of shuttle external tanks to Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB); review of the Technology Utilization Program and Calibration Program; Interagency Nuclear Safety Review Panel (INSRP); exclusion of blind workers from the Vertical Assembly Building (VAB) and Orbiter Processing Facility (OPF); personnel management and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs; comments on bill authorizing NASA to appoint senior officials; FY1978 authorization bill; government use of communications satellites; reliability of Space Shuttle in launch phase; work of Keith Glennan on the US Weather Modification Program; assignment of responsibility for planetary exploration to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory rather than the Ames Research Center (ARC); FY1976-FY1978 funding for LACIE remote sensing program; FY1978 budget for purchase of shuttle orbiters 3,4, and 5; assessment of the current space program by James Fletcher; NASA's relationship with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Navy proposal for experiments using data from Earth Resources Technology Satellites (ERTS) and the Skylab Earth Resources Experiments Package (EREP); NASA membership on the Earth Resources Survey Program Review Committee; NASA research on the F14 aircraft for the US Navy (USN); establishment of the National Oceanographic Instrumentation Center; and contracting for the hypersonic ramjet experiment project. Includes press releases re NASA reorganization and appointment of Isaac T. Gillam IV as Deputy Director of the Dryden Flight Research Center (DFRC).

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Bernhard M. Haisch
Editor, JSE

INVITED ESSAY

UFOs and NASA

RICHARD C. HENRY

Department of Physics and Astronomy, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD 21218

Abstract—In 1977 President Carter's Science Advisor recommended that a small panel of inquiry be formed by NASA to see if there had been any new significant findings on UFOs since the US Air Force-sponsored investigation of UFOs ("Condon Report") a decade earlier. Five months later, NASA responded to that recommendation by proposing "to take no steps to establish a research activity in this area or to convene a symposium on the subject." This article offers a partial inside look at how that decision was made at NASA.

Introduction

Forty years ago Kenneth Arnold's sighting of "flying saucers" inaugurated the modern era of observation of Unidentified Flying Objects, or UFOs. The possibility that some UFOs are actually spacecraft, bearing intelligent beings from another world, has focused intense public interest on the subject.

While only a very small number of reputable scientists has ever taken UFOs seriously, the related search for radio signals from other civilizations has slowly increased in "respectability" over the decades following the pioneering suggestion of such searches by Cocconi and Morrison (1959). A turning point occurred, however, when Hart (1975), and Tipler (1980), argued convincingly that an intelligent civilization in the galaxy would rapidly physically colonize the galaxy (see also Jones, 1981). Their suggested conclusion is that we are in fact the only civilization in our galaxy, if not the Universe.

An alternative conclusion is that one should perhaps take more seriously the possibility that some UFO reports do represent manifestations of galactic intelligence.

The canonical study of that possibility is "Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects" (Condon & Gillmor, 1968), the so-called "Condon Report," which concluded, despite Condon's clearly negative feelings about the value of UFO study, that of 59 cases studied, two involved "probable UFOs" and two "possible UFOs" (Sturrock, 1987).

Over the second half of the year 1977, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration found itself, as a result of a letter from the White House, considering whether more should be done on the subject of UFOs, and in particular, whether NASA should do it.

NASA's final response, which came at the end of 1977, was worded cautiously, but in effect said "no" to the White House. The present paper bears on how NASA coped with the White House request.

Acceptance by the establishment of the notion that alien intelligences are active in the vicinity of the Earth, would involve a profound change in a fundamental paradigm that governs our activity as a society. (For example, President Reagan has remarked, to Mikhail Gorbachev, that American and Soviet societies would bury their differences if the world were threatened by an alien intelligence.)

Also, NASA has a large science constituency. According to a *Science Magazine* report (16 December, 1977, p. 1128) "NASA seems to fear that the reopening of the question of the genuineness of visitors from outer space will legitimize a subject most establishment scientists consider phony and a waste of time."

How exactly did NASA cope with this "hot potato," and why did NASA decline the White House request? In the next section I describe NASA's interaction with the White House, and in the following section I specify more completely the aim of the present paper. The remainder of the paper details aspects of NASA's activity in dealing with the White House request.

UFOs: NASA and the White House

On July 21, 1977, Dr. Frank Press, Science Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, sent a "Dear Bob" letter to Dr. Robert Frosch, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The letter opens by indicating that the White House "is becoming a focal point for an increasing number of inquiries concerning UFO's," and Press suggests that NASA should instead become the focal point for general correspondence, and that those inquiries which come to the White House henceforth be sent to the designated desk at NASA.

Press goes on, however, to say that "since it has been nearly a decade since the Condon (sic) report, I believe that a small panel of inquiry could be formed to see if there are any new significant findings" on the subject of UFOs. He suggested that the panel of inquiry "could be formed by NASA," and stated that "since this is a public relations problem as much as anything else, people who are known to be interested in the problem and also highly known, such as Carl Sagan, ought to be involved."

His letter is reproduced at the end of the paper as Appendix 1.

NASA, and the country, were aware that President Carter himself had once reported a UFO sighting. In an early draft of an Information Sheet (Number 78-1), prepared in early 1978 (that is, following NASA's responses to Press's letters), NASA described Carter's sighting as follows:

PRESIDENT CARTER'S UFO SIGHTING—While serving as Governor of Georgia, Mr. Carter reported to NICAP that he had seen a bright, moving object in the sky over Leary, GA in October 1969. He said the object was visible for 10 to 12 minutes

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and, at one point, shone as brightly as the Moon. The regional NICAP representative investigated the sighting and reported there was no evidence to support anything beyond placing what Mr. Carter saw in its "unidentified" category.

Thus, it could not be completely clear to Dr. Frosch exactly what the significance of Press's letter was—simply an attempt to clear Press's desk of mail that he was not equipped to answer, or a White House expression of real interest in UFOs.

Frosch responded to Press on September 6, 1977 (Appendix 2), indicating that NASA was "inclined to agree with your recommendation," but indicating that "there are a number of questions that need to be resolved before any formal program is undertaken." In particular he noted that "a panel of inquiry such as you suggest . . . would require some additional resources [money] for the inquiry and for follow on activity . . . we should assure ourselves that an inquiry is justified. I believe we could do this by naming a NASA project officer to review reports of the last ten years and to provide a specific recommendation relative to any further inquiry by the end of this year. If you concur, I will initiate this action." He enclosed, for Press's information, a NASA Information Sheet (76-6) on "Unidentified Flying Objects" (Appendix 3). Press gave the requested concurrence on September 14, 1977 (Appendix 4).

Then, on December 21, 1977, Frosch, in a remarkable letter to Press, "proposed" that "NASA take no steps to establish a research activity in this area [UFO's] or to convene a symposium on the subject" (Appendix 5). There is no mention of a project officer, or of any review "of reports of the last ten years," but Frosch indicates that "we have given considerable thought to the question of what else the United States might and should do in the area of UFO research. There is an absence of tangible or physical evidence available for thorough laboratory analysis," and he indicates that "we stand ready to respond to any *bona fide* physical evidence . . ."

Purpose of This Paper

What happened within NASA, resulting in the two letters that Frosch wrote to Press? How does a government agency formulate a response to, in effect, the President of the United States, on a topic of the peculiar sensitivity, interest, and controversial nature, as UFOs? It is the purpose of the present paper not to actually answer that question, but to provide information bearing on that question. To actually answer the question, as we shall see, would require substantial additional information from many individuals. Thus, the present paper represents an "interim report" that might be followed in the future by a more global inquiry by others.

In order to understand why this paper is not more comprehensive, it is necessary to understand how NASA works, and its structure.

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NASA

NASA is a large organization, with Centers in various parts of the country. In 1976 (but to a much lesser extent today) the Directors of the various Centers played a powerful role in NASA policy making. Apart from those specific individuals, however, NASA policy making was concentrated entirely in persons at NASA Headquarters in Washington, DC.

The structure of NASA Headquarters, as of January 1978, is shown in Figure 1. From October 1976, to August 1978, I was Deputy to Mr. Bland Norris, Director of the Astrophysics Division, which was part of the Office of Space Science; that Office was directed by the Associate Administrator for Space Science, Dr. Noel W. Hinners; his Deputy was Mr. Tony Calio. Hinners reported directly to the Administrator, as did Dr. John Naugle, Science Advisor. Policy making stopped with Hinners, all of us below being providers of information and advice, and executors of policy.

NASA Headquarters was an interesting and, to an academic person, strange place. It had a great degree of vertical structure. Hinners would occasionally, and in an almost embarrassed manner, stroll around the fifth floor from the "front office" he inhabited. The Administrator (on the seventh floor) was even more inhibited—an Administrator's ramble in the building was a formal, prepared, activity. Such things did not happen often. This was not a reflection of the personalities of the two men (in fact both are personally warm, intelligent, and charming); it was a product of the institutional structure of NASA itself.

Coherence of policy and activity was maintained in a clever, effective way, best illustrated by an example. Suppose that scientist John Doe writes an angry letter to someone at some level in NASA. The letter is immediately copied (often without the recipient even seeing it) and sent to all the lowest levels in Headquarters that the secretary deems relevant, considering the content of the letter (Naugle joked that he had once received a letter from an old girlfriend, "and it had gone *everywhere*, since the subjects were so *general*!"). A draft reply is generated by the lowest-level person on the distribution, and this draft works its way up through the entire organization for, finally, signature and mailing by the original recipient (who now reads the letter perhaps for the first time). At any point in the chain, the draft reply letter may be rewritten by the higher official. Each level must concur with the version sent higher, by initialing in the appropriate place.

This system works extremely well. Everyone in NASA Headquarters who needs to know about the letter knows it, and attempts from outside to set the system against itself are doomed. This same mechanism is often used in areas of policy, to obtain comment from many levels.

The result of this vertical structure, however, is that it often is not clear in the end just where the policy that is "signed off on" by the responsible senior official actually originated, or what precisely motivated specific items or changes in items. Each individual sees only what flows up or down through



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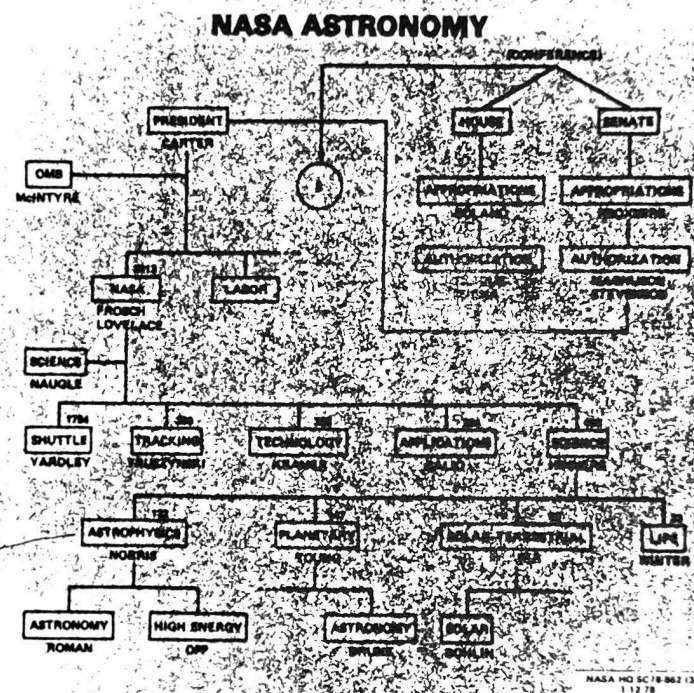


Fig. 1. The structure of policy making, policy administration, and funding, with regard to NASA, in January 1978. Numbers indicate annual budget in hundreds of millions of dollars.

his or her level, not the total picture, which is seen by no one. This of course holds true in the case of my personal perspective on the NASA-White House UFO activity. Thus, in the present paper on NASA's activity regarding the UFO question, I can only present certain documents, and attempt a little detective work toward the question of "who shot John?", that is, who made the basic NASA decision concerning UFOs, a decision apparently still in force today. Let us begin.

The Author at NASA

Bland Norris telephoned me (I was an Associate Professor at The Johns Hopkins University) from Woods Hole during the summer of 1976, and in effect offered me the position of his Deputy. He was almost certainly influenced to do this by George Field, the eminent astronomer who was then head of the Physical Science Committee (PSC) (the internal NASA Committee advisory to Hinners). At Woods Hole a high-level group was studying the Hornig Committee report on the proposed management structure for the proposed Space Telescope, and some of the group apparently felt that having a scientist (such as myself) from the astrophysics community move to NASA Headquarters for a few years would help in "selling" the Space Telescope to the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress. Norris, an excellent engineer and administrator, had no knowledge of astrophysics (although he did take a Community College night course in astronomy during my period at NASA). On my arrival at Headquarters, I found that in fact Space Telescope was in excellent hands with Warren Keller and Nancy Roman. Indeed, a pleasant surprise was the uniformly excellent quality of people I found in the Office of Space Science.

At about the same time that I arrived, David Morrison, a well-known scientist from the University of Hawaii, came to occupy a roughly similar position in the Planetary Division. Morrison was to try to sell Galileo (a mission to the planet Jupiter), while I sold Space Telescope, and there was friendly rivalry between us. (Both Space Telescope and Galileo did succeed in becoming approved missions but—a decade later—neither has been launched.)

Shortly after my arrival at NASA, Hinners' Deputy, Tony Calio, strolled down the hall to my office with something on his mind. I did not know, yet, how unusual this was. He wanted someone to handle SETI, the "Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence," and he had fixed on me. As this subject is clearly relevant to NASA's attitude toward UFOs, I will expand on this, my earlier (and later) involvement with SETI.

John Billingham, at NASA's Ames Research Center, was the person who was focusing an attempt to get NASA to fund, and indeed to carry out, a radio search for extraterrestrial intelligence. A detailed report, funded by NASA (Morrison, Billingham, & Wolfe, 1977) was in preparation. Calio asked me to look into the matter and recommend whether the Office of

Space Science should have been involved. The conclusion was that NASA's approach to SETI was essentially correct. In essence, Ames wanted to use nearby stars, at speeds that would be used by other stars, at a vast number of times, reduced sensitivity. The right one, and then to me that it was not to spend taxpayers' money on experienced, rich in transmitting power. from nearby stars. aware of us and might

A good indication of this was given by the letter (Appendix 6) written by the advisor (Appendix 7).

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Space Science should fund SETI, and at what level. An interesting complication was that NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) had a different approach to SETI than had Ames, and wanted to carry out its program. In essence, Ames wanted to look with very great sensitivity at small numbers of nearby stars, at specific frequencies which Ames had somehow deduced would be used by other civilizations, while JPL wanted to survey the whole sky at a vast number of frequencies, paying the price, of course, of greatly reduced sensitivity. I quickly became convinced that the JPL approach was the right one, and that the Ames approach was a waste of money. It seemed to me that it was not right for the young, new, poor civilization (us) to have to spend taxpayers' money to get great receiving sensitivity; instead, the old, experienced, rich civilization (them) should spend the money to get great transmitting power. Also, I felt that if there were civilizations broadcasting from nearby stars, we would already know it; that in fact they would be aware of us and might even be here (UFOs?).

A good indication of my attitude on these matters is given by the letter I wrote (Appendix 6) to Major Ret. Colman S. Von Keviczky, in reply to his letter (Appendix 7) to Ichtiague Rasool (who was Hinners' personal science advisor).

Billingham pressed me hard to come up with some immediate funding for his SETI activity and, quite remarkably, I was able to do so. Someone had told me that the front office had some few hundred thousand dollars available, as a result of some reprogramming. This was unusual; normally only the lowest level people at NASA Headquarters actually had money, and if you tried to take it from them, they made you very aware of how much damage you were doing. Ed Wash, Hinners' excellent financial man, told me in his usual worried way that he had wanted to reserve the reprogramming money for solar sailing (which was about to enter a "shoot-out" with the solar electric propulsion over which was to become the planetary program propulsion "new technology" of the 1980's—rather pathetic in retrospect!). However, he gave me half the money, which I gave to Ames.

In formulating our budget for the next fiscal year, Norris and I placed the JPL program adjacent to, but above, the Ames program, with both of them right at the very bottom of our Astrophysics Budget priorities, and then we sent the budget up to Hinners for possible re-prioritization and for merging of our budget with those of the Planetary, Solar-Terrestrial, and Life Sciences (see Figure 1) Divisions.

Tony Calio himself was quite enthusiastic on the subject of SETI. Hinners was considerably less enthusiastic; in fact Calio told me at one point "this is the only thing Noel and I have ever come apart on." Possibly Hinners did lack belief in the reasonableness of SETI, but I suspect that his greatest concern was for the stature of his science program and its prospects. At a public lecture at Princeton, Hinners asked the audience to "vote" as to whether SETI represented a proper use of public funds (they agreed it did).

It was my understanding, some weeks after budget submission, that I had

won a victory, albeit a Pyrrhic one: The NASA budget that emerged, and was sent to the President's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), contained only the JPL program, but unfortunately at too low a priority level to survive OMB. I was astonished that when the budget was returned from OMB, SETI was still included; that is, it had been moved to a sufficiently higher position in the Carter "zero-based budgeting" priority that it had survived OMB's financial knife.

This is a vivid example of how one can seldom be certain of "who shot John." For example, at whose level was the JPL program separated from the Ames program? Hinners? Frosch? And who at OMB did the reprioritizing, and why? On the latter question, I was able to obtain some information, much later. On May 17, 1978, Alan Lovelace, Frosch's Deputy, wrote to W. Bowman Cutter, Executive Associate Director for Budget, Office of Management and Budget, inviting him to come over to NASA Headquarters some evening for dinner, and an informal briefing on astronomy by me and David Morrison. Cutter had apparently expressed an interest in such a briefing some time in April. The dinner took place on July 13, 1978. Frosch was not able to be present, and neither was Hinners. The senior NASA person present was Adrienne Timothy, who had replaced Rasool, who had left NASA. The dinner and subsequent slide shows went very well; in particular, Morrison did his usual brilliant job expounding the spectacular NASA planetary images. At dinner things were sufficiently informal that I felt able to mildly enquire about how it had happened that SETI had survived OMB. Cutter replied "I took astronomy at Harvard from Carl Sagan, and I did it for Carl."

The subsequent history of SETI on Capitol Hill, was the award of a Golden Fleece by Senator Proxmire (February 16, 1978), and the rejection by Congress of initiation of a SETI program. I was the person who was invited to the Hill to expound the program to Proxmire's aide, in preparation for the Fleece—rather fun, but sad for SETI. (After I left NASA, SETI was given to Life Sciences, and Proxmire's acquiescence was somehow obtained. A SETI program—JPL and Ames—is moving forward today.)

Our presence at the Cutter dinner is an example of the special role that Morrison and I played while at NASA, as active scientists with much greater technical knowledge of our fields than almost anyone else at Headquarters (but, I must add, negligible administrative ability, at least in my case, compared with almost anyone else at Headquarters). We were called on when technical substance and scientific depth were needed. I will end this section with another example of this, which is of special interest because President Carter was directly involved.

On November 15, 1977, I found on my desk a note for Bland Norris from David Williamson, Jr. I later learned that Williamson was "Code AX," Special Projects (Hinners was Code S, Science, and I was Code SAD, Science Astrophysics Deputy; the reader can use these Codes to track "who saw what," in certain of the appendices). Williamson was located on the

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seventh floor, with the Administrator (Code A). (Williamson will play a prominent role in the discussion, below, of the UFO situation.) The note said "Bland . . . Jeff is expected to be calling Dick starting November 16 in the morning . . . Jeff has a 3" reflector . . . Frank Press hopes we can come up with a 7" Questar electric . . . the 7th floor offers its appreciation to the 5th floor for such an effective and controlled reaction." Bland let me know that my guess was right: "Jeff" was Jeff Carter, son of President Carter.

At Bland's request, I telephoned Frank Press, who let me know that the President and/or his son (it was not clear which) wanted to borrow a small telescope to take to Camp David over Thanksgiving.

To NASA Headquarters, "telescope" is a budget item that the astron-
omers want too many of. What it is physically, and where one might be
obtained, was unknown. I exaggerate, but certainly, Headquarters con-
tained only paper; no telescopes. The request had been routed from Frosch
(an oceanographer) to Hinnens (a geologist) to Henry (an astronomer).
Someone found out that Marshall Spaceflight Center, in Huntsville, Ala-
bama, had a 7" Questar telescope, and that furthermore, by great luck, a
NASA plane was flying from Huntsville to Washington the next day (Press
was emphatic that the President wanted no special flights or other waste of
taxpayer dollars). I called Jeff, and later I had my wife, Dr. Rita Mahon,
meet me at National Airport with my car. We loaded the large wooden crate
in the trunk, and arrived at the White House about seven p.m. on Friday,
November 18, 1977.

Rita and I spent about half an hour with President and Mrs. Carter, Amy
Carter, and Jeff and Annette Carter, assembling the Questar and trying it
out on the upper floor balcony of the south side of the White House. The
night was mostly cloudy, but the moon was visible. President Carter kept the
telescope for about a week, and then Bland Norris and I retrieved it from
Jeff, who said that his father had made good use of it at Camp David.

UFOs

The reader now has some understanding of the environment at NASA
Headquarters at the time that Frosch's letter of July 21, 1977 (Appendix 1),
was received. Action (see Appendix 1) was assigned to Code F, but I don't
recall a Code F, and my August 1978 Headquarters telephone book does not
include any Code F. On July 29, Herbert J. Rowe, Associate Administrator
for External Affairs (Code L), sent a note, confirming a meeting to be held
August 3, 1977, 3:30-4:00 p.m., "to discuss the position NASA should take
in regards to Dr. Press' recommendation," to the following persons: Gen.
Crow, Dr. Hinnens, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Newman, a person representing Joe
Allen, and Dr. Henry. Dr. Joseph P. Allen, who was Director of the Office of
Legislative Affairs (Code C), is the well-known astronaut ("we deliver").
Duward L. Crow was Assistant to the Deputy Administrator, Alan M.

Lovelace. Robert A. Newman was the Director of the Public Affairs Division, located in Code L. I am not certain what Chapman's position was; possibly he was Deputy to Rowe. My memory of the meeting is of desultory conversation, including General Crow saying in a bemused manner that his daughter believed implicitly that as a former Air Force General, he knew all about UFOs and was keeping it secret from the public. I believe that the only result of the meeting was that action (jargon for responsibility) was handed to Dr. Hinners, to formulate a recommendation to the Administrator.

After the meeting, I spoke in the hall with Hinners, letting him know that for many years I had been Astrophysics consultant to the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), a private UFO research group that was located in Tucson, Arizona. My motivation was partly to let Hinners know that I had some specific relevant expertise on the subject at hand, but also to "warn" him that I was not a completely disinterested neutral party on the controversial question of UFOs.

From that point on, the only meetings on the subject that I recall attending were one or two very small (or even one-on-one) meetings in his office with David Williamson Jr. Williamson impressed me as being the most intelligent person in the building. He discoursed on UFOs to me at some length, and in an extremely knowledgeable way, and, as we shall see, he formulated for Hinners' signature the recommendation that finally went to Frosch.

In the meantime, it had leaked out to the world that Henry might be designated the NASA project officer for UFOs (in the end, no one was). For example, on September 22, 1977, Alan C. Holt, of VISIT, Inc., wrote to me "We understand that your assignment as Project Officer is forthcoming and that the 2-3 month study will begin approximately October 1." I sent the letter up to Hinners, with that sentence highlighted. Hinners replied "you sure do draw 'em in, SAD. I suspect they got word of this from out there somewhere." I received a November 7, 1977 newsletter from Stanton T. Friedman which contained the item "NASA will be taking a look at the UFO question in response to a lot of pressure on the White House which in turn pressured the Science Advisor which then pushed NASA. The scientist in charge of the inquiry is Dr. Richard Henry, Department of Astrophysics at NASA Headquarters." On November 1, 1977, someone in Senator Hatfield's office telephoned NASA, and Herbert Rowe (Code L) wrote, on November 3, to Senator Hatfield, in response "... NASA at this time is conducting a study of the literature for approximately the last ten years to determine whether it might be worthwhile to conduct any further investigation of UFO's at this time. A project officer has been assigned to the task of reviewing the UFO literature and he is presently organizing this task..." Of course, by this time Frosch and Press had had an exchange of letters (Appendices 2 and 4), and Rowe surely believed that a project officer must by now have been designated. Blind copies of Rowe's letter went to two Code L files (chronological and subject) ... and to "SA/Henry." A type-

written note was attached. I formed that a number of investigators at the time of these studies would be marked. The mark appeared at the first sentence was correct.

In addition to a copy received two communications (October 1, 1977) a copy of "To Richard Henry controversy—And the late Dr. Ed Cond the Committee for the ... be prepared to the country, and even UFO investigators, v believers in every state have not yet been as people who may write

Of course, at this response to Press should anything at all, much

On October 20, 1977, a letter to Press concerning to Hinners' interest more than he could "the NASA Project advance, and also be prepared his need to know re say that "If this project a barn door in any on UFO's."

On October 21, 1977, enquiring whether I any previous association; frequently I decided to previously explained 9. The only part of it literally mean "other John Keel's book, I pressed me as nonsense our present world-view intended to convey ;

About this time, I project officer (Appendices

: Public Affairs Division's position was; meeting is of desultory used manner that his General, he knew all I believe that the only (responsibility) was handed to Administrator.

getting him know that the Aerial Phenomena Research group that was to let Hinners know that at hand, but also to neutral party on the

that I recall attending meetings in his office as being the most UFOs to me at some time, as we shall see, when that finally went to

that Henry might be (end, no one was). For MIT, Inc., wrote to me that it is forthcoming and October 1." I sent the Hinners replied "you of this from out there letter from Stanton T. taking a look at the White House which in NASA. The scientist's comment of Astrophysics came in Senator Hatfield (Code L) wrote, on NASA at this time is by the last ten years to any further investigation assigned to the task of finalizing this task . . ." In exchange of letters a project officer must be; his letter went to two "SA/Henry." A type-

written note was attached: "Who is the project officer? He should be informed that a number of definitive overview documents have been (sic) by investigators at the request of the Committee on the subject of UFO's and these studies would be of help to him in compiling this information." A blue mark appeared at the disjoint point in the second sentence, and in blue the first sentence was crossed out and "Info for Dr. Henry for Code C." inserted.

In addition to a certain number of letters from "pro"-UFO types, I had received two communications from "debunkers"—Phil Klass sent me (October 1, 1977) a copy of his book, *UFOs Explained* (Klass, 1976) marked "To Richard Henry with the hope this may shed useful light on an old controversy—And help you and NASA avoid the fate of 'Tar Baby' and the late Dr. Ed Condon!" And Robert Scheaffer wrote to me on letterhead of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, ". . . be prepared to be deluged by mail from every kook and crackpot in the country, and even worse, be prepared for letters from the 'scientific' UFO investigators, who will appear reasonable and sane enough, yet are true believers in every sense of the word . . .". I replied (October 5, 1977) "I have not yet been assigned . . . you are very kind to warn me about other people who may write to me with views that differ from your own."

Of course, at this time I was attempting to think through what NASA's response to Press should be. However, Hinners had not asked me to do anything at all, much less prepare options or recommendations.

On October 20, 1977, I apparently saw for the first time Frosch's September 6 letter to Press (Appendix 2), and I immediately communicated my concern to Hinners (Appendix 8). My concern was that Frosch had promised more than he could deliver. I took the opportunity to recommend that "the NASA Project Officer chosen be given the highest U.S. security clearance, and also be provided with a letter from President Carter establishing his need to know regarding unidentified aerial phenomena." I went on to say that "If this procedure is not followed, there will be a hole as big as a barn door in any NASA 'specific recommendation' that is negative on UFO's."

On October 21, 1977, I received a telephone call from Phil Klass, mildly enquiring whether I was indeed the project officer, and whether I had had any previous association with UFOs. I answered him frankly, and subsequently I decided to put down formally on paper for Hinners what I had previously explained to him verbally. My memo is reproduced as Appendix 9. The only part of the memo that needs clarification is item 3B; I did not literally mean "other dimensions"; this phrase is a result of having read John Keel's book, *Operation Trojan Horse* (Keel, 1970). The book impressed me as nonsense, but left me with an openness to the possibility that our present world-view is *fundamentally wrong*; it is this possibility that I intended to convey succinctly.

About this time, I must have learned of Press' concurrence on naming a project officer (Appendix 4) and I was surely expecting to either be named

project officer, or at least asked for advice as to who should be named. It appeared to me that Frosch was now *committed* to naming a project officer.

I expressed my thoughts as to what I would recommend be done, if I were named, in a draft memo for Hinnners to send to Frosch, but it was never typed or submitted to Hinnners for consideration, because I wasn't asked. According to the draft, Hinnners would ask Henry to ask Dr. Stephen P. Maran (of NASA's Goddard Spaceflight Center, in Greenbelt, Maryland) to be the Project Officer. Maran would spend "two months full time" assembling information on "post-Condon" UFO reports, from APRO and other "pro"-UFO organizations, and obtain comment on these reports from Klass and Schaeffer. Maran would then draft a conclusion "as to whether or not further investigation of these incidents is warranted. He will not attempt to come to a specific conclusion on any one incident; that would be the goal of a full investigation. Rather, he will examine the whole pattern of incidents and ask, and suggest an answer to, the global question, is further work indicated. In the event that he feels that the answer is yes, he will sketch the nature of such an investigation, and indicate how it might come to some definite conclusion. His report will be reviewed by Dr. Henry, myself, and David Williamson, and presented to you on January 2, 1978."

At this point, I had not spoken with Maran, but the question was moot. The request from Hinnners never came.

We now reach what, to my best information, is the critical point in NASA's efforts to deal with the UFO/White House situation. On October 31, 1977, Dave Williamson generated and distributed a draft memorandum, to be from Hinnners to the Administrator. My copy arrived in an envelope marked "EYES ONLY SA/Dr. Henry." Despite the dramatics, the document, like all documents that I read at NASA, was not classified, even so much as "Confidential."

The draft memorandum is reproduced as Appendix 10, and as far as I recollect is identical to what I finally concurred in (verbally to Hinnners) and that was sent by Hinnners to Frosch. I will not summarize Appendix 10 here, as it needs to be read in its entirety at this point.

I thought the draft masterful. I also felt that while the draft recommended Option 2, anyone reading it would instantly grab for Option 1.

There was one thing that was wrong in the memo: the claim of lack of "tangible or physical evidence." There is in fact plenty of such evidence (for what it is worth). In the event, the Administrator's final decision, clearly based on this memo, dealt directly with that defect by stating to Press (Appendix 5) "we stand ready to respond to any bona fide physical evidence from credible sources." Frosch's letter to Press in fact combines parts of each of the two options, and was drafted by Williamson (see the last line of Appendix 5).

I had mixed feelings about the situation, before and after Frosch wrote his final letter to Press. A clear anomaly in the draft memo is the recommendation that the first phases of Option 2 be run out of Headquarters, and particularly at an extraordinarily high level (Hinnners, Williamson, Chap-

man). NASA did *nothing* not sufficient manpower budget/policy activity title was Assistant Adm

This fact was rapidly Stanford University ast following public release know, in effect, where presented to Headquarters O. B. Lloyd, Jr. (Chief received this memorandum to Ken Chapman read Chapman replied on worked by Naugle/Hindling any evidence. The material evidence. Ser proceed." The slip is typed and finally scrawled on

This finally gave me detail, and I did so in a thought that (a) NASA activity should take place activity. I had by now Maran at Goddard, as Project Scientist. As near the job.

And this is the end of my memo. Sturrock, analyse a sample of many UFOs, marked by me file," contains a letter supporting Hinnners' and certainly did not do much Appendix 15) represents no hand in generating information on UFO is mentioned in 78-1 evidence, but no suggestion

I left NASA in the Johns Hopkins University

Why did NASA turn There is only fragmentable. We can, however

man). NASA did *nothing* substantive at Headquarters itself. There is simply not sufficient manpower for Headquarters to carry out its administrative/budget/policy activity *and* projects as well (although of course Williamson's title was Assistant Administrator for "Special Projects").

This fact was rapidly brought into focus by a letter (Appendix 11) from Stanford University astrophysicist Peter A. Sturrock to Frosch, immediately following public release of Frosch's final letter to Press. Sturrock wanted to know, in effect, where to send the tangible evidence. The problem that this presented to Headquarters was nicely summarized in a memorandum by O. B. Lloyd, Jr. (Chief, Public Services Branch, Code L; Appendix 12). I received this memorandum with a copy of a "buck slip" from Bob Newman to Ken Chapman reading "Bill raises some good points here. Comments?" Chapman replied on the same form, "the original science problem was worked by Naugle/Hinners—I suggest we ask them for a position on handling any evidence. There are now two letters in suggesting or offering material evidence. Send a note to Naugle/Hinners asking how they plan to proceed." The slip is then marked "S-1 1. Hinners," and "P-1 2. Naugle," and finally scrawled on it is "Action to SC-Henry."

This finally gave me a chance to lay out my views to Hinners in some detail, and I did so in a memorandum on January 17, 1978 (Appendix 13). I thought that (a) NASA should be active, not passive, and (b) the substantive activity should take place at a NASA Center, as with any other NASA activity. I had by now spoken briefly, on one occasion, with my friend Steve Maran at Goddard, and he had not declined the role I envisaged for a Project Scientist. As my memo makes clear, I thought he would be ideal for the job.

And this is the end of the story. There was no response from Hinners to my memo. Sturrock, I understand, pursued an attempt to have NASA analyse a sample of material believed by some to be from a UFO. My file on UFOs, marked by me (for better or for worse), "The Secret NASA UFO file," contains a letter (Appendix 14) indicating that I did a little work supporting Hinners' and Williamson's handling of the follow-up, but I certainly did not do much. The final version of Information Sheet 78-1 (Appendix 15) represents to the world NASA's official position on UFOs. I had no hand in generating it. The draft of it that I have, indicates that the information on UFO groups was provided to Code L by Williamson. There is mention in 78-1 of Frosch's offer to respond to *bona fide* physical evidence, but no suggestion as to how to go about this.

I left NASA in the fall of 1978 to resume my academic position at The Johns Hopkins University.

Conclusion

Why did NASA turn down the President of the United States on UFOs? There is only fragmentary evidence, and so no definite conclusion is possible. We can, however, look at various possibilities.

a) *Inhibition by Aliens*

A reason that I have maintained an interest in UFOs since graduate school is that they are a perfectly possible "unscientific" element in the world. By "unscientific," I mean the following. Einstein's famous dictum, "Raffiniert ist der Herrgott, aber Boschaft ist Er Nicht,"* clearly does not apply to aliens, who might be very "Boschaft" ("malicious, spiteful, mischievous, malignant, wicked") indeed. With perhaps a billion years of biotechnology behind them, they could, if so inclined, insert agents at will into our society. You might not even be aware that you are an alien agent, if you are.

No conclusion on this possibility seems possible.

b) *Inhibition by the US Government*

Does the US government know all about UFOs and did a carefully placed person within NASA act to deflect/discourage any NASA investigation of UFOs?

There is some evidence, although it may well be fraudulent, of a US government "cover up" on UFOs (Moseley, 1987).

The person who "shot John" on UFOs, at NASA, surely was Dave Williamson (although he clearly had aid from others, including the author). His role in doing so was not at all hidden. On Saturday, November 26, 1977, while President Carter was using the Questar at Camp David, I was in a swimming pool in Florida. I happened to glance at a newspaper vending machine, and an eerie feeling of unreality swept over me. Staring at me was Dave Williamson, in a front-page photograph.

The notion that Williamson, or someone else at NASA, knowing that UFOs do include clear evidence for alien intelligence, deflected the inquiry to protect this government-held secret, can, I think, probably be rejected, simply because if it were true, why would the President or his science advisor have made the request in the first place? Of course, one could still imagine a "John Poindexter"-type isolation of the President, but this seems unlikely.

c) *Belief by NASA That UFOs Are Nonsense*

All I can say regarding this possibility is that I myself do not think that UFOs are nonsense, and no one at NASA Headquarters ever expressed such views in my presence. The general attitude seemed to me to be what I might call "repressed open mindedness."

d) *Fear of Ridicule*

I felt this myself, and expressed it to Hinners (Appendix 9).

NASA Headquarters scientists and administrators had no fear of the scientific community. As no man is a hero to his valet, so no Nobel Prize

winner is a hero to his UFO studies clearly ha

e) *More Important Th*

I have a note, date "Dave" [Williamson] Option 1 will buy us decision based on no cussing."

The Option 1 that draft memorandum (A

This suggests that Hinners' attitude on SETI desire not to cloud his with activity that might this affair, having a more aggressive stance it: If you are the one who and I considered it with spite feeling that UFO feel that a Goddard project result than did Cond Colorado project was stance of the investigation that is due to the doubtful to me that the "Colorado" or my preliminary investigation ability. Carl Sagan has proof, and he is right. easily come from us; i

The manuscript of David Williamson, arriving for himself and Hinners of hard evidence was entertained a great new we developed a simple NASA (with a quick glad we had the courage responded but had not marked it "I don't have sentence "The most

* "The Lord God is subtle, but He is not malicious."

winner is a hero to his grant administrator. But the negative reputation of UFO studies clearly had its effect on NASA.

e) More Important Things To Do

I have a note, dated November 29, 1977, from "Noel" [Hinners] to "Dave" [Williamson] reading "A sampler! It's obvious that going route of Option 1 will buy us neg. kudos but let's just be prepared. An Option 1 decision based on *no* look is fraught with the difficulties we've been discussing."

The Option 1 that is mentioned is presumably that in the Williamson draft memorandum (Appendix 10).

This suggests that Hinners favored Option 1. Just as in the case of Hinners' attitude on SETI, I speculate that his fundamental motivation was a desire not to cloud his extremely effective NASA space science program with activity that might detract in some way. I felt the same way. Perhaps in this affair, having a positive attitude to UFO study, I should have taken a more aggressive stance than I did, but I was worried about having to pay for it: If you are the one who wants it, generally you are the one who pays for it, and I considered it wrong to spend astrophysics funds on UFO study, despite feeling that UFO study was a worthy use of public funds. Also, I did not feel that a Goddard project was very likely to produce a more substantial result than did Condon's Colorado project. The only real defect in the Colorado project was in the Director's inaccurate summary, not the substance of the investigation itself. If the UFO phenomenon includes an element that is due to the presence of an alien intelligence in our vicinity, it was doubtful to me that that fact could ever be established by a "Blue Book" or "Colorado" or my proposed "Goddard" and its follow-up, that is, by incremental investigation and accumulation of cases of varying degrees of credibility. Carl Sagan has said that extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof, and he is right. Extraordinary proof of the "reality" of UFOs cannot easily come from us; it must surely come from the UFOs, if it will.

Postscript

The manuscript of this paper was sent to President Carter, Frank Press, David Williamson, and Noel Hinners for comment. Williamson, responding for himself and Hinners, made clear that the NASA program of analysis of hard evidence was considerably more extensive than I had realized: "We entertained a great number of inquiries and ran a number of analyses . . . we developed a simple procedure for anyone's getting a suspect sample to NASA (with a quitclaim so we could cut, drill holes, and so on) . . . I am glad we had the courage to do the right thing for the right reason." Press responded but had no comment to make. Carter returned my letter and marked it "I don't have any comment, except below"; and below, beside my sentence "The most important point that you could clarify, if you will, is

whether you yourself were behind Frank Press' letter of July 21, 1977, to NASA," is the word "no."

July 21, 1977,

Author's Note. Photo reproduction (rather than typesetting) has been used for the Appendices, in order to leave clear and apparent all of the tracking notes and approvals that are on the original documents. Some price is paid, of course, in terms of legibility.

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Dear Bob:

We have discovered a focal point for UFO's. As you are of interest in the problem, those involved. Those equipped to handle

It seems to me that the focal point ought to be in the hands of a small panel of experts on any new significant problem as much as we are interested in it. Carl Sagan, our best hope that could be

The second thing is the focal point of inquiries which designated des

Robert Frosch
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D.C.

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Appendix 1

July 21, 1977, Letter From Dr. Frank Press to Dr. Robert Frosch

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20500

July 21, 1977

Dear Bob:

We have discovered that the White House is becoming the focal point for an increasing number of inquiries concerning UFO's. As you know, there appears to be a national revival of interest in the matter with a younger generation becoming involved. Those of us in the Executive Office are ill-equipped to handle these kinds of inquiries.

It seems to me that the focal point for the UFO question ought to be in NASA. I recommend two things: since it has been nearly a decade since the Condon report, I believe that a small panel of inquiry could be formed to see if there are any new significant findings. Since this is a public relations problem as much as anything else, people who are known to be interested in the problem and also highly known, such as Carl Sagan, ought to be involved. This is a panel of inquiry that could be formed by NASA.

The second thing I would like to suggest is that NASA become the focal point for general correspondence and that those inquiries which come to the White House be sent to the designated desk at NASA.

Yours sincerely,

Frank

Frank Press
Director

Robert Frosch
Administrator
National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Washington, D.C. 20546

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Dissemination Date 8-8-77
Prepared Reply for A
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R. C. Henry

Appendix 2

September 6, 1977, Letter From Dr. Robert Frosch to Dr. Frank Press

by: SA/D. Henry

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SEP 6 1977

Honorable Frank Press
Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Frank:

In your letter of July 21 you expressed the view that NASA should be the focal point for UFO matters, and specifically recommended that a panel of inquiry be formed by NASA to see if there are any significant new findings since the Condon report and that NASA become the focal point for general correspondence and inquiries.

While we are inclined to agree with your recommendation, there are a number of questions which need to be resolved before any formal program is undertaken. You may know that the Air Force served as the focal point for UFO matters during the 1960's and devoted considerable resources to the program. It, however, concluded, in the absence of significant findings, that the program warranted no more than routine form letter answers to inquiries and has been handling the program in that manner since about 1970. It now handles a small number of inquiries, perhaps 10 to 12 monthly. NASA, likewise, handles routine inquiries by form letter response, 10 to 12 formal inquiries and a somewhat larger number of public inquiries monthly. NASA uses the information sheet attached in its responses. The Air Force uses similar data.

From the point of view of the Administration as a whole, this is economical. However, it fails to provide a recognized focal point for technical appraisal of sightings and understandably results in some frustration to individuals making what they consider to be serious inquiries.

A panel of inquiry such as you suggest might possibly discover new significant findings. It would certainly generate current

interest and could be a focal point for resources for the future. I am committing to the fact that an inquiry naming a NASA panel in ten years and to any further I will initiate

Very truly yours:

Original Signed By
Robert A. Frosch

Robert A. Frosch
Administrator

Enclosure

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Dr. Frank Press

interest and could lead to the designation of NASA as the focal point for UFO matters. It would require some additional resources for the inquiry and for follow-on activity. Before committing to this, I feel that we should assure ourselves that an inquiry is justified. I believe we could do this by naming a NASA project officer to review reports of the last ten years and to provide a specific recommendation relative to any further inquiry by the end of this year. If you concur, I will initiate this action.

Very truly yours,

Original Signed By
Robert A. Frosch

Robert A. Frosch
Administrator

Enclosure

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Appendix 3

NASA Information Sheet 76-6, "Unidentified Flying Objects"



INFORMATION SHEET

FGM

76-6

Prepared by

FGM/Office of Public Affairs

NASA Headquarters

Washington, D.C. 20546

The panel of the these conclusions present knowledge the hypothesis of gent beings."

Although the U.S. and personnel to continuing under Studies, P.O. Box 312/491-1870) is on UFO phenomena on Aerial Phenomena Kensington, Maryland. replies to requests investigations objects.

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

NASA is not involved in research concerning unidentified flying objects. Reports of unidentified objects entering U.S. air space are of interest to the U.S. military as a regular part of defense surveillance, but no government agency is conducting an ongoing investigation of UFOs at this time.

An extensive study known as Project Blue Book was undertaken in the 1960's by the U.S. Air Force through a contract with the University of Colorado. Based on the findings of this study as reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences, the Air Force terminated the project December 17, 1969.

The University of Colorado report, entitled Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects, was published in paperback by Bantam Books. A three-volume photoduplication (AD 680:975-6-7) may be purchased for \$18 from the National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, Virginia 22151. The complete reports were transferred from Air Force storage in July 1976 to The National Archives, 8th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20408. Those wishing to view the report must obtain a researcher's permit from the National Archives and Records Service.

The University of Colorado study reached the following conclusions: (1) there was no evidence that the subject of UFOs had been "shrouded in official security"; (2) UFOs did not constitute any hazard to national security; (3) two decades of UFO study had made no significant contribution to scientific knowledge; and (4) further extensive study of the general topic could not be expected to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of science.

ying Objects"

The panel of the National Academy of Sciences agreed with these conclusions and further commented, "On the basis of present knowledge the least likely explanation of UFOs is the hypothesis of extraterrestrial visitations by intelligent beings."

Although the U.S. government no longer dedicates funds and personnel to the study of UFOs, investigations are continuing under private auspices. The Center for UFO Studies, P.O. Box 11, Northfield, Illinois 60093 (telephone 312/491-1870) is a source for publications and information on UFO phenomena. The National Investigating Committee on Aerial Phenomena, Suite 23, 3535 University Boulevard, Kensington, Maryland 20795 (telephone 301/949-1267) also replies to requests for general information. Both organizations investigate reported sightings of unidentified flying objects.

pared by
W/Office of Public Affairs
SA Headquarters
hington, D.C. 20546

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R. C. Henry

Appendix 4

September 14, 1977, Letter From Dr. Frank Press to Dr. Robert Frosch

December 21, 1977,

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON D.C. 20500

September 14, 1977

Dear Bob:

I have your letter of September 6 responding to my letter of July 21 recommending that NASA become a focal point for Federal activity in UFO matters.

I am pleased that you agree that NASA can handle the public inquiries on UFOs. The fact that my Office and the White House can direct such inquiries to NASA will relieve my small staff of a responsibility we are not equipped to handle. Therefore, I have asked my assistant, Stan Schneider, who has discussed this matter with your Executive Officer, Ed Andrews, to forward all our UFO inquiries to NASA.

Regarding the recommendation for NASA to become a focal point for the scientific and technical appraisal of the UFO phenomenon, I can understand your reluctance to commit the agency to a formal program before evaluating the current status and recent history of UFO activity and determining what might be involved in conducting a serious study on this matter. Therefore, I concur with your idea of assigning a project officer at NASA to review the situation before deciding whether to undertake a more formal inquiry.

By copy of this letter, I am informing Jim Purks of the White House Media Liaison Office of our exchange of ideas on this subject so that they are in the communications loop on this situation. I will suggest that he forward all public inquiries on UFOs to the White House to NASA (Code 4) for response.

I would appreciate it if NASA could keep my office, through Stan Schneider, informed of any progress the agency makes toward a decision on a possible UFO study.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Press
Director

Honorable Robert A. Frosch
Administrator
National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Washington, D.C. 20546

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Field in NASA 9-19-77

Signature Date NONE

Signature Date

Signature Date

Honorable Frank Press
Director
Office of Science and
Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Frank:

In response to your letter of September 6, I am pleased that NASA's possible role at this time to coordinate along the same line of element of hard evidence in the future, it would be a laboratory to analyze and explain organic or inorganic sources. We intend to respond to any bona fide sources. We intend to establish a research program on such a possibility.

We have given considerable thought to the United States' UFO research. The evidence available because of the ability to devise a disciplinary framework for these phenomena. We feel that we could start from a starting point that I would therefore like to establish a research program on this

Appendix 5

December 21, 1977, Letter From Dr. Robert Frosch to Dr. Frank Press

Dr. Robert Frosch

Dr. Henry

December 21, 1977

Honorable Frank Press
 Director
 Office of Science and Technology
 Policy
 Executive Office of the President
 Washington, DC 20500

Dear Frank:

In response to your letter of September 14, 1977, regarding NASA's possible role in UFO matters, we are fully prepared at this time to continue responding to public inquiries along the same lines as we have in the past. If some new element of hard evidence is brought to our attention, in the future, it would be entirely appropriate for a NASA laboratory to analyze and report upon an otherwise unexplained organic or inorganic sample; we stand ready to respond to any bona fide physical evidence from credible sources. We intend to leave the door clearly open for such a possibility.

We have given considerable thought to the question of what else the United States might and should do in the area of UFO research. There is an absence of tangible or physical evidence available for thorough laboratory analysis. And because of the absence of such evidence, we have not been able to devise a sound scientific procedure for investigating these phenomena. To proceed on a research task without a disciplinary framework and an exploratory technique in mind would be wasteful and probably unproductive. I do not feel that we could mount a research effort without a better starting point than we have been able to identify thus far. I would therefore propose that NASA take no steps to establish a research activity in this area or to convene a symposium on this subject.

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R. C. Henry

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I wish in no way to indicate that NASA has come to any conclusion about these phenomena as such; institutionally, we retain an open mind, a keen sense of scientific curiosity, and a willingness to analyze technical problems within our competence.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Frosch
Administrator

bcc: A, AD, S-1, L-1, AX, NHS-23
LF/Waggoner, NHS/Lichty

AX-1/D.Williamson, Jr.:djs:12-20-77

August 17, 1977, Letter

SA(RCH:jb)

Major Ret. Colman S. V
Director of ICUFON
35-40 75 Street, Suite
Jackson Heights, NY 1

Dear Major VonKeviczky

Dr. Ichtiague Rasool
letter of August 9, 19

NASA's Office of Space
at the present time, v
search for intelligent

If there were clear evidence
presently in the vicinity
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such a clear evidence
is a baffling collection
for mysterious phenomena
I have personally followed
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that nothing substantial
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is not real, but it does
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The Office of Space Science
environment of the earth
priority on straightforward
Even a radio search for
speculative, and I am
in selling the concept

I fully recognize that
taking the wrong approach
judgement. I am persuaded
search is a very worthwhile

Yours sincerely,

Richard C. Henry

Appendix 6

August 17, 1977, Letter From Dr. Richard Henry to Major Ret. Colman
S. Von Keviczky

AUG 17 1977

SA(RCH:jb)

Major Ret. Colman S. VonKevicsky, MMSE
Director of ICUFON
35-40 75 Street, Suite 4G
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Dear Major VonKeviczky:

Dr. Ichtiague Rasool has asked me to reply to your
letter of August 9, 1977.

NASA's Office of Space Science is indeed considering,
at the present time, whether to go ahead with a radio
search for intelligent extraterrestrial signals.

If there were clear evidence that extraterrestrials were
presently in the vicinity of the earth, we would certainly
cast our investigation in that direction instead. However,
such a clear evidence does not exist. Instead, what exists
is a baffling collection of intriguing anecdotal evidence
for mysterious phenomena, usually referred to as "UFO's."
I have personally followed the UFO phenomenon for many
years, as Astrophysics consultant to a major UFO investigation
group. I have been disappointed, as the years have gone by,
that nothing substantial has emerged from the intensive
research efforts of several very competent independent
research group. This does not mean that the phenomenon
is not real, but it does mean that extracting verifiable
information from it is a formidable problem.

The Office of Space Science is charged with exploring the space
environment of the earth, and studying the universe. We place first
priority on straightforward scientific investigations of the cosmos.
Even a radio search for intelligent signals is considered very
speculative, and I am sure the we will have our work cut out for us
in selling the concept.

I fully recognize that the possibility exists that we are
taking the wrong approach. It is a matter of management
judgement. I am personally convinced that the radio
search is a very worthwhile undertaking.

Yours sincerely,

(original very faint; re-typed May 1988)

Richard C. Henry

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R. C. Henry

Appendix 7

August 9, 1977, Letter From Major Ret. Colman S. Von Keviczky to
Dr. Ichtiague Rasool

October 20, 1977, Mei

NASA

National Aeronautics
Space Administration

Washington D C
20546

• ICUFON •

INTERCONTINENTAL U.F.O. GALACTIC SPACECRAFT - RESEARCH AND ANALYTIC NETWORK®

DIRECTOR OF PROJECT COLMAN VONKEVICZKY, MMSE, MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF
AERONAUTICS AND ASTRONAUTICS (AIAA)

OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR OF PROJECT

HEADQUARTERS
35-40 75TH STREET, SUITE 4G
JACKSON HEIGHTS, N. Y. 11372
TEL. (212) 672-7948 U S A

August 9, 1977

Reply to Attn of SA (RCH:abv)

Dr. Ichtiague Rasool, Chief Scientist
NASA Office of Space Science
Washington D.C., 20546

MEMORANDUM

TO: S/.

FROM: SA

SUBJECT: UF

Dear Dr. Rasool:

It is my obligation to inform you about our memorandum addressed to the United Nations Secretary General and the member nations' Permanent Representatives regarding the taped messages which will be launched by the Voyager I and II sounds to contact possible extraterrestrial intelligence within the solar system and beyond.

I am sorry to express our firm belief resulted of our 25 years of military, scientific and technological research and their evidences, that the time urge the NASA's scientific community to change their views upon the project SETI and seek rather communication with the exploring galactic forces and their operation authorities, than wasting time and \$ billions to search ETI in the depth of the Universe.

Existence of Galactic Powers and their earthbound operation has been officially verified from the year of 1947 by the highest responsible authorities of the US national defense and security: as the Presidents and their Chiefs of Staff. Disposals for armed and retorting confrontation by the strategic defense global emergency are still in effect up to date, which should constitute also a logical explanation of the radio astronomy contact's fiascos, - why are we ignored by the ETI.

In deliberation, that the UFO problem is above all an international security problem, your orthodox scientists should pay serious attention that their wilfull negligence and further habitual polemy on the UFOs, in case of a fatal impact - which is a step from open hostilities - could easily lead not to a "Scientific Watergate" but to a "Nuremberg Trial". Namely the crime against the peace and humanity is qualified as a "supreme war crime" in the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly on February 14, 1946.

Your kind attention to the enclosures would be gratefully appreciated.

Yours respectfully,

Colman S. Von Keviczky
Major Ret. Colman S. Von Keviczky, MMSE
Director of ICUFON

Enclosures.

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Appendix 8

October 20, 1977, Memorandum, Dr. Richard Henry to Dr. Noel Hinners

National Aeronautics and
Space AdministrationWashington, D.C.
20546

ANALYTIC NETWORK®

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HEADQUARTERS
35-40 75TH STREET, SUITE 4G
JACKSON HEIGHTS, N. Y. 11372
TEL (212) 672-7948 U.S.A.

August 9, 1977

Reply to Attn of SA (RCH:abw)

OCT 20 1977

MEMORANDUM

TO: S/Associate Administrator for Space Science

FROM: SAD/Deputy Director of Astrophysics Programs

SUBJECT: UFO's

Memorandum addressed
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nKeviczky, MMSE

I have now seen A's letter of September 6, 1977, to Frank Press, on the subject of UFO's, and I am a bit concerned on a few points. Frosch has agreed to "... name a NASA Project Officer to review reports of the last ten years and to provide a specific recommendation relative to any further inquiry by the end of this year." My concern is that the volume of reports for the last ten years is far beyond what even a moderately, well-staffed project at a NASA center could possibly reevaluate between now and the end of the year. For NASA to make a "specific recommendation" on the basis of what could actually be accomplished in that period of time would open NASA to a valid charge of either whitewash or idiocy (depending on which way the recommendation went).

I have a second concern. There is belief among some Americans that the government knows all about UFO's, but that it is all highly classified. I recommend that the NASA Project Officer chosen be given the highest U.S. security clearance, and also be provided with a letter from President Carter establishing his "need to know" regarding unidentified aerial phenomena. If this procedure is not followed, there will be a hole as big as a barn door in any NASA "specific recommendation" that is negative on UFO's.

RC Henry
Richard C. Henry

R. C. Henry

Appendix 9

October 21, 1977, Memorandum From Dr. Richard C. Henry to
Dr. Noel Hinners



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Washington, D C
20546

October 21, 1977

Reply to Attn of SAD(RCH:ap)

MEMORANDUM

TO: S/Associate Administrator for Space Science
FROM: SAD/Deputy Director, Astrophysics Programs
SUBJECT: My Previous Experience in the Study of UFO's

Some weeks ago I was invited to attend, with you, a meeting in Herb Rowe's office to discuss a letter that Dr. Frosch had received from Dr. Frank Press on UFO's. I did not solicit that invitation. Immediately after the meeting, I informed you verbally that I had an interest of long standing in UFO's, and that I was consultant in astrophysics to a leading "amateur" UFO organization. I explained these facts also to my immediate supervisor, Bland Norris.

Yesterday I received a call from Phil Klass of Aviation Week. He asked if I were in charge of UFO's for NASA, and I said that I had not been selected for the task, but that I might well be. He asked if I had any previous association with UFO's, and I detailed it. Klass is the author of "UFO's Explained".

I would like to make explicitly clear to you what my involvement with UFO's has been, and what my views on the subject are:

1. I have been a member of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) for more than ten years, and their consultant on astrophysics for perhaps eight years. APRO is run by Coral and Jim Lorenze, in Tucson, Arizona. Membership in APRO does not involve acceptance of any particular views on the nature of UFO's, but Coral and Jim most emphatically believe that visitors from other worlds are involved!

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Richard C. Henry to

As astrophysics consultant, I have performed one task for APRO. I analyzed a supposed "star map" that had been received by radio in some mysterious way. I showed that the "map" was not a map of the region of sky claimed. This was published in the APRO bulletin.

On another occasion, I became suspicious of a sighting reported in the APRO bulletin and showed that the sighting was almost certainly Venus. I wrote to Coral and she published my finding.

October 21, 1977

Space Science

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Study of UFO's

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2. For the past several years, I have been a member of Alan Hynek's "invisible college" - qualified scientists who feel that the UFO phenomenon deserves attention. Hynek himself is the former Air Force consultant on UFO's. He was a great scoffer, but in recent years he has come to take UFO's very seriously. I have performed no tasks for Alan.
3. My views on UFO's are:
 - A. The UFO-report phenomenon exists, is widespread, and is of great interest to a large segment of the American people.
 - B. I see no a priori reason why some of the UFO reports could not be due to sightings of visitors from other worlds or other dimensions.
 - C. I see no overwhelming indication that any UFO report is due to "extraterrestrials".
 - D. I confess to occasionally feeling, about UFO's, like the small boy who on Christmas morning found only a pile of horse manure under the tree. Undeterred, he cheerfully dug away, reasoning that there had to be a pony somewhere!
 - E. I feel that the Condon investigation did not adequately deal with the UFO phenomenon, and that further government investigation is warranted.
4. In previous "impartial" investigations it has been deemed essential to have, as a leader, a person who has had no significant previous interest or experience in UFO's. The result, in my view, has been

R. C. Henry

- 3 -

very unsatisfactory: total immersion in UFO's rapidly produces in such people a polarization of opinion one way or the other that compromises the integrity of the investigation. Despite this, the alternative is perhaps even more unsatisfactory.

5. My view 3E above indicates that I already have an opinion on the particular subject that NASA has been asked to investigate.
6. UFO's are (as Phil Klass indicates, in a note to me in the copy of his book, which he kindly sent me) a "tar baby". A scientist who touches the tar baby once, as I have, runs the risk of getting deeper and deeper in goo. I don't have a strong stomach for it, and would prefer to avoid it. But, I also want to make sure that ~~NASA itself~~ does not get badly tarred.

R.C. Henry

Richard C. Henry

October 31, 1977, Draft 1
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D R A F T
X: DWilliamson, Jr.
10-31-77

MEMORANDUM

TO: A/Administrative
FROM: S/Associate
SUBJECT: UFO Study (

Following the recent Frank Press, I have especially the quest in both the short an

The environment since changed:

- o There is a wide related paran dismissed lig the populatic believes that phenomena exist
- o The UN is currently establish a :
- o In France, the setting up a
- o There are many in the United are following view points.
- o There seems the "near end Prospect, Ky
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Appendix 10

October 31, 1977, Draft Memorandum (by D. Williamson) From Dr. Noel
Hinners to Dr. Robert Frosch

D R A F T

X: DWilliamson, Jr.

10-31-77

MEMORANDUM

TO: A/Administrator

FROM: S/Associate Administrator for Space Science

SUBJECT: UFO Study Considerations

Following the recent exchange of correspondence with Frank Press, I have been giving the UFO matter some thought, especially the question of what NASA could reasonably do in both the short and long term.

The environment since the 1969 Condon report seems to have changed:

- o There is a widespread interest in UFO's (and in related paranormal phenomena) that cannot be dismissed lightly as involving only a fringe of the population; probably 50% of the United States believes that "something" in the way of persistent phenomena exists or has existed.
- o The UN is currently considering a resolution to establish a specialized agency for UFO matters.
- o In France, the CNES has been formally charged with setting up a UFO study activity under Claude Poher.
- o There are many apparently viable private organizations in the United States with responsible memberships that are following the UFO phenomena from several different view points.
- o There seems to have been an increase in reports of the "near encounter" type (Pascagoula, Miss., 1973; Prospect, Ky., 1977) over the last few years.
- o There is a general feeling among the UFO organizations at least that the United States Government "knows" far more than it has released, and may even have pieces of UFO hardware in hand.

Open-mindedness about UFO and paranormal phenomena seems to be becoming more "respectable" in the general public. Books and articles flourish. The IEEE is often a forum for matters that would have been rejected out of hand ten years ago. Classified and unclassified research supported by Federal agencies has brushed the UFO community (proponents of "remote viewing" often cross-couple with UFO proponents). At the same time, there are vocal "debunking" groups active on the other side of the issue; the matter seems rather polarized in modern society.

There are two major problems involved in considering any review of the UFO phenomenon by NASA: first, an apparent lack of any tangible or physical evidence available for laboratory analysis; second, the absence of any sound scientific protocol for investigating the phenomenon firsthand. There is a plethora of secondary source material -- human observation and reports thereon -- but hearsay is difficult to deal with scientifically. There are, of course, other problems as well: the probability of hoaxes, the tendency for any investigator to pre-judge, the delicate interface of the Government with any private individual reporting an incident, and the danger of projecting an inaccurate NASA or Administration image. All in all, undertaking a formal study at this time appears fraught with perils.

It appears that NASA has two immediate choices, each with its follow-on implications:

1. We could, on the basis of the situation outlined above and without taking further action, recommend to OSTP that we see no responsible way at this time for the Federal government, and especially NASA, to investigate the UFO phenomenon.
 - a. This approach might encourage the vocal pro-UFO groups to continue their charges of cover-up and bureaucratic blindness.
 - b. It might avoid fomenting controversy and division within the science community NASA deals with.

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- c. It would require no change in our current PIO responses to the public.
 - d. It would divert no resources from those higher priority applications, science, and technology activities which are our legislated charges.
 - e. It would also be begging the question.
2. We could make a formal request, from my office or Ken Chapman's, to the largest and best-known of the UFO organizations (APRO, NICAP, MUFON, CUFOs, etc.) requesting them to submit their "best" cases to aid us in determining the Government's possible role. We could then compile this material into a usable format, do some first-order checks (probably involving some interviews and data-gathering), and, before drawing our own conclusions, ask for a "peer review"--possibly by the Smithsonian Institution. NASA would then make its own assessment as to whether further research were warranted or not, and if so, in what direction it should proceed. As a minimum, having gone this far and this publicly, NASA should stand ready to investigate new hard evidence that might come in -- this could logically be an added assignment for ARC and MSFC, depending on the physical or biological character of the evidence.
- a. This approach commits NASA and the Administration publicly to at least some review of the phenomenon; an eventual negative decision will not satisfy the enthusiasts and a positive one will enrage the non-enthusiasts.
 - b. It will encourage a great deal of correspondence on both sides of the question; it may lead to a rash of sightings, hoaxes, and/or public excitement.
 - c. It will place severe demands on the few NASA people involved in the first phase: there will be problems of workload, peer pressure, and pre-judgment.

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R. C. Henry

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- d. If any follow-through becomes necessary, the resources needed could be quite large -- travel, tests, interviews, and reports.

I recommend that: we proceed with the first phases of Option 2, under a Headquarters team of myself, Chapman, and Williamson; that we take time to tap the private organizations properly and not establish an arbitrary deadline; and that we consider further actions early next year.

Noel W. Hinners

December 30, 1977, L



December 30, 1977

Dr. Robert A.
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Frosch:

Thank you for the information learned from the investigation. The key reason for the investigation are not available.

The news of the hard evidence is entirely appropriate. The letter dated December 30, 1977, regarding the Phenomena has been material sample helpful in obtaining the information.

For this information in line with the metallurgical investigation.

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Appendix 11

December 30, 1977, Letter From Dr. Peter Sturrock to Dr. Noel Hinners

INSTITUTE FOR PLASMA RESEARCH
STANFORD UNIVERSITY
VIA CRESPI, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305



December 30, 1977

Dr. Robert A. Frosch
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space
Administration
Washington, D.C. 20546

Dear Dr. Frosch:

Thank you for your kind letter dated December 22. I have subsequently learned from news articles that you have decided that NASA should not undertake an investigation of the UFO problem. I understand from your letter that a key reason for this decision is the difficulty of conducting a scientific investigation "where the criteria of reproducible or recurrent observations are not available."

The news reports have quoted you as stating that "if some new element of hard evidence is brought to our attention in the future, it would be entirely appropriate for a NASA laboratory to analyze and report upon an otherwise unexplained organic or inorganic sample." As I mentioned in my letter dated December 2, my colleagues and I in the Study Group on Anomalous Phenomena have obtained access to some physical evidence such as films, material samples, etc. The cooperation of NASA laboratories would be most helpful in obtaining meaningful assessments of these items of evidence.

For this reason, I would greatly appreciate your advising me whether, in line with your quoted statement, I may seek photographic, chemical and metallurgical analyses of such samples from NASA laboratories.

Sincerely yours,

P.A. Sturrock
Professor of Space Science
and Astrophysics

PAS/gc

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R. C. Henry

Appendix 12

January 6, 1978, Memorandum From O. B. Lloyd, Jr., to LF-6/Director
of Public Affairs

NASA

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Washington, D.C.
20546

Reply to Attn of LFF-3

MEMORANDUM

TO: LF-6/Director of Public Affairs

FROM: LFF-3/Chief, Public Services Branch

SUBJECT: Procedure for Receiving Alleged UFO-related "Physical Evidence"
for Analysis by NASA

The attached letter from Professor P. A. Sturrock seeking NASA analysis of certain physical evidence concerning anomalous phenomena is probably a prelude to similar communications. Should it be the only such letter, NASA still needs a procedure for receiving, documenting, processing and safeguarding the materials.

It would seem appropriate that before any such material would be received by NASA the sender be required to advise NASA of certain specifics, such as:

- o the nature of the evidence
- o is this all of the evidence or is this a portion of a larger amount known to exist?
- o what is the size, weight of the materials?
- o liability - will the government be expected to return the materials in the precise condition they are received?
- o what about loss through testing, evaporation or other processes?
- o if accepted by the government, would NASA be expected to provide security (such as is now required for lunar samples)?

In the interest of security and documentation it would appear that one point should be designated to receive all evidence. Further, a person with technical expertise should be responsible for:

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Professor Sturrock.

O. B. Lloyd, Jr.

Att.

*Ken Chapman -
Bill Taisei some
good points here.
Comments? Not necessary
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January 6, 1978

B. B. Lloyd

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byd, Jr., to LF-6/Director

- o application of policies and procedures, as established by NASA headquarters, in processing evidence at NASA centers
- o selection of the appropriate testing facility or facilities
- o transportation of the evidence from the receiving point to the appropriate NASA facility
- o compiling and forwarding of findings resulting from the analysis
- o return to the sender, or such other disposition as may be determined, of the evidence.

Since the letter to Dr. Press from the Administrator invites submission of bona fide physical UFO evidence, NASA would appear obligated to proceed toward ultimate acceptance of the materials offered by Dr. Sturrock. I would propose he be sent an interim letter outlining the preparatory actions noted above, assure him of the agency's interest in his offer and request such detailed information as noted above.

Meantime, I would suggest bringing together to agree on a procedure representation embracing all aspects of the activity, including scientific, legal, security and Public Affairs. In expectation that there may be submissions from foreign as well as domestic sources, representation should probably be included from International Affairs.

Finally, NASA liaison with other branches of the government should be kept apprised in event there is a development of importance.

If you concur in this general approach, I will prepare an interim response to Professor Sturrock.

O. B. Lloyd, Jr.

Att.

January 6, 1978

2-related "Physical Evidence"

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R. C. Henry

Appendix 13

January 17, 1978, Memorandum From Dr. Richard Henry to
Dr. Noel Hinners



JAN 17 1978

SC(RCH:jb)

MEMORANDUM

TO: S-1/Associate Administrator for Space Science
FROM: SC-7/Deputy Director of Astrophysics Division
SUBJECT: UFO Matters

I write this memo in response to your request, of 17 January 1978, that I provide you with a suggested response to Bob Newman's request for suggestions on how to deal with the issues raised by Peter Sturrock's letter on UFO "hard evidence."

Let me move back a few steps and review the whole NASA UFO situation.

Some time ago I gave you by telephone my concurrence on the draft memo that Dave Williamson provided you to use in advising the Administrator concerning a response to Frank Preuss' request. I have just re-read that draft, and I still think that it is a fine memo. There is only one point in it that I would now (too late!) question, and that is the statement that there is an "absence of any sound scientific protocol for investigating the (UFO) phenomenon first hand." The National Academy of Sciences endorsed the Condon study of UFO's, and specifically endorsed their procedures (protocol). It hardly does for us to say that no sound protocol is possible! I do agree with Dave that a protocol is extraordinarily difficult. The point is, that to be meaningful the protocol must cover the possibility that the UFO phenomenon is due in part to intelligences far beyond our own. I very much doubt that an intellectually inferior species can study an intellectually far superior species if the superior species chooses not to be studied. They could run rings around us!

Be that as it may, the memo offered to Dr. Frosch two suggested options: 1) Try to duck out of it completely, or 2) Do a study. Your recommendation to Dr. Frosch was to follow option two some ways, and review matters early

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Dr. Frosch's letter indicates that he chooses features of each of Frank Press before the study (feature "e" (it seems) a NASA UFO ("UFOHEAP"). Further intellectually direct officials, scientist is a "reaction" program whoever in the world "hard evidence" to N

What to do?

I suggest that there

Option 1. Consistent
6 January 1978 memo well--including many The activity should although the actual depending on the type Center there should and he/she must be a politically astute.

In favor of this option

Consistency

Against this option:

It places NASA in a program and no positive Pope of UFO Evidence will attack every N

Option 2. Dodge. 1 no activity results. cost in credibility.

In favor of this option

All the virtues of

Against this option:

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Dr. Richard Henry to



JAN 17 1978

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Dr. Frosch's letter of 21 December 1977 to Frank Press indicates that he chose, in my judgement, the worst features of each of the two options. We turned down Frank Press before the world; we dismissed UFO's without a study (feature "a" of Option 1); yet!...We started (it seems) a NASA UFO "Hard Evidence" Analysis Program ("UFOHEAP"). Furthermore, UFOHEAP is not a program intellectually directed and given coherence by NASA officials, scientists, and technologists, but rather is a "reaction" program, controlled in key respects by whoever in the world chooses to submit what they consider "hard evidence" to NASA.

What to do?

I suggest that there are three options that are sustainable:

Option 1. Consistent Follow-through. Bill Lloyd's 6 January 1974 memo to Bob Newman covers this option very well--including many things I would not have thought of. The activity should be run out of one Center--a focal point--although the actual analysis would be done at various centers, depending on the type of analysis needed. At the chosen Center there should be one key person in charge of the operation, and he/she must be scientifically/technically sound and politically astute.

In favor of this option:

Consistency

Against this option:

It places NASA in an intolerable position. We have no UFO program and no position on UFO's as such, yet we are the Pope of UFO Evidence. Ravening hordes of bunkers and debunkers will attack every NASA "pronouncement from the chair."

Option 2. Dodge. Interpret "hard evidence" so strictly that no activity results. This would return us, at some additional cost in credibility, to the joys of Dave's original Option 1.

In favor of this option:

All the virtues of the original Option 1.

Against this option:

In addition to the defects of the original Option 1, we violate the apparent spirit of Dr. Frosch's 21 December 1977 letter to Frank Press.

Option 3. Bull-by-the-Horns.

Pretend NASA is simply following through on the 21 December letter, but actually mount a modest active (rather than passive) activity. Have NASA run UFO's, not UFO's run NASA. This would be, in effect, deciding to follow the Option 2 that you originally offered to Bob.

In favor of this option:

It faces up to a real national concern, and furthermore it does so in a much more low-key way than if NASA had directly proceeded with the original Option 2.

Against this option:

All the defects of the original Option 2. Also, there is the danger of it appearing that NASA is conducting a "secret" UFO study.

Recommendation

I recommend Option 3. My feeling is that NASA is now stuck to the tar-baby, so lets deal with it properly.

If Option 3 is chosen, there are certain key decisions to be made. My recommendations on these follow. The activity should be run by the Office of Space Science. Additional resources should be provided to you to cover this activity (of course!). Management of the activity should be assigned to the Astrophysics Division, and a Program Scientist/Manager (Frank Martin) should be assigned. The activity should be based at a single Center (GSFC), although of course technical resources of many Centers would be used. A Project Scientist should be appointed. My strong recommendation is that this should be Dr. Stephen Maran of GSFC. He is a fanatic on UFO's; he is extremely sharp and energetic; and he is politically acute.

Dr. Maran should be instructed to take a low-key but positive approach to the UFO problem. He should approach the reputable independent UFO groups (APRO, CUPOS, NICAP, MUFON) and make NASA's technical expertise directly available to them. In addition to this, he should work toward the definition of a coherent larger-scale active UFO program that would deal with the continuing phenomenon in a coherent and intellectually sophisticated manner--this has never been done (to my knowledge!).

Changes would be necessary in the draft PIO UFO material that exists.

The Administrator
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on UFO's.

Dr. Richard C. Henry

Richard C. Henry

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The Administrator may prefer to choose Option 2 (Dodge!). I wouldn't blame him for this, but if he does, he should do it solidly and consistently. We should not be mushy on UFO's.

Dr. Richard C. Henry

Richard C. Henry

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January 31, 1978, Draft Letter (by Henry) From Dr. Noel Hinners to
Dr. Harley Rutledge

Dr. Henry

D R A F T
RCH:jb
1/31/78

Dr. Harley D. Rutledge
Chairman, Physics Dept.
Southeast Missouri State University
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Dear Dr. Rutledge:

I am replying to your letter of January 5, 1978,
concerning the possibility of NASA support for
your work on UFO's.

You have indicated that you are aware of NASA's
position on UFO's. In his letter of December 21, 1977,
to the President's Science Advisor, Dr. Frosch stated
that with regard to UFO's, NASA "retains an open mind,
a keen sense of scientific curiosity, and a willingness
to analyze technical problems within our competence."
He also indicated that NASA does not feel that a research
effort could be mounted without "a better starting point than
we have been able to identify thus far." Because of this,
NASA is taking no steps to establish a research activity in
this area. We do "stand ready to respond to any bona fide
physical evidence from credible sources."

I gather from the newspaper account which you enclose
that you have not yet acquired examples of the type of

From Dr. Noel Hinners to
ge

Dr. Henry

D R A F T
RCH:jb
1/31/78

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"physical evidence" which Dr. Frosch referenced. Thus,
I am not in a position to encourage you to submit a
proposal.

If you have substantial "non-physical" evidence on specific
sightings or encounters, I do suggest that you provide details
to Allen Hynek (P. O. Box 11, Northfield, Illinois 60093,
Phone 312/491-1870). He has just started a compilation of
case reports for the Government of France.

Sincerely,

David Williamson, Jr.
Assistant for Special Projects

5, 1978,

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Original Signed by
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