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July 18, 1963  
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MEMORANDUM FOR

Mr. Robert F. Packard  
Office of International Scientific Affairs  
Department of State  
Washington 25, D.C.

SUBJECT: Thoughts on the Space Alien Race Question

During recent discussions the question has occasionally, though rarely, arisen that perhaps we should consider the policy question of what to do if an alien intelligence is discovered in space. Some discussion of this occurred, as you will recall, during deliberations on BNSP Task I. This memo contains some miscellaneous thoughts on the question.

The consensus of scientific view says, with quite good reasons, that the possibility of running across an alien intelligent race in our solar system is negligible. This is due primarily to the presumed unsuitability of conditions upon other planets to support life as we know it. The flying saucer advocates claim, of course, that the scientific viewpoint is nonsense, and that there is overwhelming evidence of such beings. In my own mind, I find it difficult to side with the flying saucer advocates, but the almost total impossibility envisioned by most scientists also is disturbing. Therefore, I present the problem in current perspective, as I see it.

Up until a few decades ago it seemed very improbable that intelligent life existed anywhere outside of the solar system. The chief reasons for this were a combination of scientific theory, scientific knowledge, and religious belief. The most widely accepted scientific theory as to the formation of the solar planetary system held that it was a result of the near collision of two stars. Since such a precise near-miss

Space Council  
from Hunter

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