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BROOKINGS INSTITUTE

# UFO POTPOURRI

John F. Schuessler, 9862 West Unser Ave., Littleton, CO 80128

E-Mail: [schuessler@ufo.net](mailto:schuessler@ufo.net)

Web Page: <http://home.ufo.net/schuessler/>

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## THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION REPORT

On November 30, 1960, the Brookings Institution submitted a report to the NASA Committee on Long-Range Studies entitled "Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs.

In his report transmittal letter, Brookings President Robert D. Calkins states: "The report recommends for the consideration of NASA a wide range of studies regarding the social, economic, political, legal, and international implications of the use of space for peaceful and scientific purposes." Further, it states: "The agreed-upon multiple objectives of the report would be well served if it generates research activities within as well as outside of NASA in accordance with the interests of those in the academic community, private research organizations, industry, and other Government agencies. Therefore, some material is included which, while familiar to NASA, is felt to be necessary background for those who have not been close to some of the problems discussed."

The report was submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives of the 87<sup>th</sup> Congress in House Report No. 242. On April 18, 1961, it was committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

Some very interesting statements were contained in the section of the report entitled: THE IMPLICATIONS OF A DISCOVERY OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE. Those statements are listed below.

Report page 215, Artifacts: "The recent publicity given to efforts to detect extraterrestrial messages via radio telescope has popularized -- and legitimized -- speculations about the impact of such a discovery on human values. It is conceivable that there is semi-intelligent life in some part of our solar system or highly intelligent life which is not technologically oriented, and many cosmologists and astronomers think it very likely that there is intelligent life in many other solar systems. While face-to-face meetings with it will not occur within the next 20 years (unless its technology is more advanced than ours, qualifying it to visit Earth), artifacts left at some point in time by these life forms might possibly be discovered through our space activities on the Moon, Mars, or Venus. If there is any contact to be made during the next 20 years it would most likely be by radio -- which would indicate that these beings had at least equaled our own technological level."

Report Page 215, Unity of Man: "The knowledge that life existed in other parts of the universe might lead to greater unity of men on Earth, based on the "oneness" of man or on the age-old assumption that any stranger is threatening."

Report Page 215, Society Disintegration: "Whether earthmen would be inspired to all-out space efforts by such a discovery is a moot question. Anthropological files contain many examples of societies, sure of their place in the universe, which have disintegrated when they had to associate with previously unfamiliar societies espousing different ideas and different life ways, others that survived such an experience usually did so by paying the price of changes in values and attitudes and behavior."

Report Page 216, Withholding Information: "How might such information, under what circumstances, be presented to or withheld from the public for what ends. What might be the role of the discovering scientists and other decision makers regarding release of the fact of discovery?"

Report Page 225, Religionists: "The Fundamentalist (and anti-science) sects are growing around the world and, as missionary enterprises, may have schools and a good deal of literature attached to them. One of the important things is that, where they are active, they appeal to the illiterate and semiliterate (including, as missions, the preachers as well as the congregation) and can pile up a very influential following in terms of numbers. For them, the discovery of other life -- rather than any other space product -- would be electrifying."

Report Page 225 Devastating to Scientists and Engineers "It is speculated that, of all groups, scientists and engineers might be the most devastated by the discovery of relatively superior creatures, since these professions are most clearly associated with the mastery of nature, rather than with the understanding and expression of man. Advanced understanding of nature might vitiate all our theories at the very least, if not also require a culture and perhaps a brain inaccessible to earth scientists."

Report Page 226, Avoiding the Question: "It is perhaps interesting to note that when asked what the consequences of the discovery of superior life would be, an audience of *Saturday Review* readership chose, for the most part, not to answer the question at all, in spite of their detailed answers to many other speculative questions. Perhaps the idea is so foreign that even this readership was bemused by it. But one can speculate, too, that the idea of intellectually superior creatures may be anxiety-provoking. Nor is it clear what would be the reactions to creatures of approximately equal and communicable intelligence to ours."

Credit for the revival of the Brookings Institution material goes to MUFON's Robert Bletchman.