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For First Time, U.S. Govt. Admits That It Believes . . .

Intelligent Life Exists in Outer Space

. . . 12 Top Scientists Working on Equipment to Make Contact Within 15 Years

By **LEE HARRISON**

For the first time ever, the U.S. government has officially admitted it believes there's intelligent life in outer space — and it's aiming to make America the first nation to contact these alien civilizations.

To reach this incredible goal, our government has set up a crack study team of 12 top scientists — who are working to design amazingly sensitive equipment capable of picking up signals from other worlds.

The group has been ordered to report to the President by year's end on the best way to contact outer-space civilizations, how long it should take, and how much it will cost.

"There's no doubt in our minds that intelligent life — far more advanced and complex than our own — is widespread in outer space," declared Dr. John Billingham, head of the investigation team.

"And the U.S. wants to become the

first nation to discover solid proof of extraterrestrial life and contact it.

"When we make contact — possibly within the next 15 years — it'll be the biggest breakthrough in the history of mankind. These advanced civilizations could help us conquer problems like disease, pollution, food and energy shortages, and natural disasters."

Dr. Ichtiague Rasool of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said the study is the first official government investigation to design equipment for detecting life in outer space.

"This study is of major importance.

It's the first step toward actually contacting extraterrestrial life," he declared.

"And by funding this study, the government is declaring its belief that there's intelligent life out there somewhere.

"We feel there are other planets already communicating with one another. Our dream is to make Earth a part of that interstellar communication network. It's a dream we're determined to make come true."

NASA is spending \$450,000 on the study, which is being conducted full-time at Ames Research Center in

Mountain View, Calif. Dr. Billingham heads a team of 12 top researchers — space physicists, astronomers and planetary scientists — designing an elaborate system of radio telescopes and data processing equipment to pick up and decipher signals from space.

"The purpose of our study is to determine precisely what kind of equipment will be needed and how much it'll cost," said Dr. Billingham. "By the end of this year we're to report to the President on how to contact life in outer space. I can tell you now, we have the brains to make contact — all we'll need is the go-ahead from Congress.

"We're convinced that other civilizations in the universe are desperately scanning the skies, trying to make radio contact with another living planet such as Earth."

Dr. Billingham said the investigation was triggered by "the growing belief among scientists — particularly at NASA — that Earth isn't the only living planet in the universe."

He explained: "We now have convincing data that life was created from simple chemical substances in our atmosphere — hydrogen, methane, ammonia, carbon dioxide and water — when our planet was formed 4.5 billion years ago.

"So any planet formed before Earth that also had these basic building blocks of life in its atmosphere is likely to be populated by intelligent beings more advanced than us.

"We believe some planets are billions of years older than Earth — so their civilizations will be billions of years ahead of ours. It's a mind-boggling thought, but I'm sure there are space civilizations so advanced that ours will seem Stone Age by comparison.

"The aliens' bodies will have retained certain human characteristics and discarded others because, over billions of years, evolution throws out parts of the body that are no longer used. For example, humans no longer have elongated toes because we don't swing from trees anymore.

"I feel sure the aliens will have large brains and an upright posture, because these are useful characteristics we humans have retained. But it's possible these advanced beings' legs have almost disappeared. They probably have incredible systems of transportation — run by energy sources unknown to man — that have reduced their dependence on legs."

Dr. Billingham added that in the course of their evolution, aliens also may have found that two eyes, a mouth and a nose aren't necessary, "in which case their faces wouldn't be the same as ours.

"To us they may appear the most frightening monsters we've ever seen — but they would be the most intelligent and advanced beings we've ever encountered!"

Drs. John Billingham and Ichtiague Rasool, quoted in the story above, are top scientists for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Dr. Billingham is chief of the Bio-Technology Division at NASA's Ames Research Center, and is the government's official spokesman on extraterrestrial life.

Dr. Rasool is chief scientist in NASA's Office of Space Science in Washington — the control center for all of the agency's scientific research throughout the world.

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