

Disposition:  
From: TCA420 122-Lines  
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To: TCA420 Cc: STZ114  
Subject: ASTRO LTR DRAFT

Jim & Ed: 22 Nov 83

Enclosed is a draft letter to go out to the Astro group for their response in moving forward with our planning meeting planning. I have not done much editing on this myself but thought it would be best to get it to you for comment asap. As soon as I have a draft of the statement of purpose I'll get that onto the loop also. Let me know your thoughts; and also what you feel might be included or excluded in the questionnaire. Rusty

Dear Astro:

As most of you know Mike Collins, Ed Mitchell and I traveled to the USSR this past March to meet with four of the Cosmonauts to discuss the possibility of establishing an ongoing dialog between those of us who have flown in space. This visit evolved from an earlier trip to Moscow which I made in the summer of 82. In preparation for that first visit I discussed with a number of former astronauts their interest in my exploring the idea with some of the Cosmonauts we had come to know. That response being affirmative I met and discussed this concept with Leonov, Sevastianov, Yelisev, and Grechko. They were supportive and indicated key individuals in the Soviet hierarchy whose support would be essential in their being able to move forward. I met with those people and, in a meeting immediately subsequent to my departure, formal approval for Cosmonaut participation was given. Prior to my departure for the US a short list of actions was assigned for each side (Leonov and I responsible) which would lead to the next step, i.e., a planning meeting in which a larger group from each side would participate. That planning meeting took place in March 83, again in the USSR, with Mike, Ed and me meeting with Yelisev(now in the lead), Leonov, Sevastianov, and Kubasov. The agenda and results of the meeting are enclosed seperately for your review.

As agreed in the March meeting, the next step in building to the first "annual" meeting open to all who have flown in space (Planetary Congress of Space Explorers(?)) would be a final planning meeting this fall in the US with 5 or so attendees from each group. This meeting was scheduled for the Thanksgiving weekend and plans were being finalized when the Korean Airliner incident occurred. In a conference call between most of the likely US participants (Mike, Ed, Tom Stafford, Deke Slayton, and Me; Gerry Carr being unavailable) we agreed that it would be inappropriate to continue with the planned meeting and that it should be postponed. This message was communicated to the Soviets and a copy is enclosed.

On a separate track we had been pursuing the issue of affiliation with an "umbrella" organization, a subject which had been raised at the Astronaut briefing in Houston at the end of April. This possibility (affiliation) had been considered from the beginning but until the Astro briefing in April 83 had been rejected as an initial modality on the basis that those participating should determine the directions taken in the shaping of the concept rather than some outside institution. Nevertheless eventual affiliation with an established institution had remained a possibility. After the April briefing we decided to move immediately in this direction respecting the concern expressed that notwithstanding the distinction between those who supported the concept through participation and membership and those who elected to have nothing to do with the idea, there would be implied support by all if there were no "umbrella" sponsorship. After considering several alternatives we approached the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the broader based (includes literature, history, philosophy, etc.) older sister of the National Academy of Sciences. Following exploratory discussions in May 83 and a meeting with the President and Executive Secretary in August(?), we were invited to present the concept to the Academy's Governing Council at their semi-annual meeting on November 9. The Academy took the proposal under consideration and established an advisory committee to offer advice and consultation to us on request and to recommend a course of action to the Academy at their next meeting. We are awaiting the Academy's nominees to the advisory committee at this time.

At this time, therefore, we are at the point of reconvening the final planning meeting to move ahead with the first of the annual Congresses. The task at this final planning meeting will be to fill in the gaps between the agreements which came out of the first planning meeting and the necessary specifics of agenda, logistics, timing, etc., which must exist to move ahead with the first Congress. I believe we should look toward a meeting in February to allow adequate time for pulling together a late summer Congress.

In order to move ahead both with the planning meeting and the First Annual Congress I would like to know of your interest and opinion on this initiative. Clearly it is controversial. However, I would suggest that it is primarily controversial out of misunderstanding and/or presumption, not out of knowledge or understanding. Therefore, in order to obtain thoughtful input on this matter I have decided to take an action which I have purposely avoided up to this point, in order to avoid misunderstanding. It's a bit of a catch 22. Mike, Ed and I have consciously avoided defining the basic purpose of the idea any detail in order to allow the purpose to emerge from the process as more people become involved. And this is most certainly what should happen. However, the lack of specific definition has caused uncertainty in some quarters and downright suspicion in others. Therefore, while I believe very strongly that the scope

and purpose of the Congress of Space Explorers should only emerge from the total group of those participating, I am including herein a draft of such a statement, with the strong caveat that it should be a living statement, reflecting the interests and thoughts of all those committed to the idea of such a Congress.

After reviewing the historical documentation enclosed and considering the statement of purpose, I would appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience. In order to provide specific information to meet our needs in moving ahead with the planning meeting and also to invite your full comment on this matter I have enclosed a short list of questions on which I would appreciate your response. Your answers will be held in privacy, except in aggregate, and even then used only in the context of setting the agenda, timing, and other logistics of the meeting to reflect your inputs.

I appreciate your thoughtful comments,

Rusty