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CETI FOCUS OF SPECIAL ISSUE

By: Editors

A special CETI issue of *Acta Astronautica* has just been issued. The International Academy of Astronautics is the professional organization behind the journal, *Acta Astronautica*, and special CETI Sessions have been held at their Annual Meetings of the International Astronautical Federation since 1972. The special CETI issue contains papers from the most recent meetings, and given below for the information of **COSMIC SEARCH** readers, and through the courtesy of the

editors of the *Acta Astronautica* special issue, is the Foreword prepared by John Billingham and Rudolf Pešek.

FOREWORD

John Billingham and Rudolf Pešek

This Special Issue of *Acta Astronautica* is devoted to the subject of Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence (CETI).* (*The term CETI has been used for many years as a generic title for all aspects of Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence. The term SETI was introduced in the United States in 1976 to reflect the widely held view that the primary endeavor should be a *Search* for Extraterrestrial Intelligence.)

The appearance of this volume is a reflection of a steadily growing interest in the possibility that intelligent species may be widely distributed in the Universe. This hypothesis is based on major advances over the past twenty to thirty years in the sciences of astrophysics, astronomy, planetary formation, exobiology and biological evolution. To make a long story short, it is now believed that planets are the rule rather than the exception, that life will arise in suitable planetary environments, and that in many cases life will evolve to the stage of intelligence, given several billion years of comparative stability of the planetary environment.

The crucial question is immediately apparent. Is there any way in which we can establish communication with other civilizations? The probability of the existence of a second intelligent species in our own solar system is vanishingly small. Hence we are driven to examine possibilities for interstellar communication. It transpires that advances in communication theory and technology over the last decade or two do indeed offer some reasonable approaches to the formidable problems involved.

Thus the development of a scientific basis for the evolution of intelligence is proceeding in parallel with the emergence of technologies which allow our first attempts at interstellar communication. In both areas the challenge has been seized by a small but growing number of investigators of widely differing disciplinary backgrounds. The papers in this volume are the results of a rich variety of approaches to the challenge.

CETI was introduced to the International Academy of Astronautics by Rudolf Pešek of Czechoslovakia in 1966. The First International Review Session on CETI

took place in 1972 as a part of the XXIIIrd Annual Meeting of the International Astronautical Federation. In subsequent years the CETI Review Session has been a regular feature of the program. In 1977 the Program Committee approved the introduction of a second CETI Review Session in response to increasing interest in the subject.

This volume contains most of the papers presented at these Review Sessions in 1975, 1976 and 1977. It contains also a paper on a design concept for a large space radiotelescope, by V. I. Buyakas and several other Soviet authors from the Space Research Institute, USSR Academy of Sciences, which was presented in another session at the 1977 IAF meeting. We have introduced one further paper. It is the first part of a recent publication entitled "The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence: SETI" prepared for the NASA Ames Research Center by a team of U. S. Scientists under the chairmanship of Philip Morrison. We feel it is of interest because it represents an up-to-date condensation of many of the fundamental questions and conclusions about SETI at this time.

On the whole, the papers in this volume deal with concepts and studies related to the science, technology, and observational techniques of CETI. Indeed, they include prominent papers by Soviet authors dealing with searches that have actually been carried out. One of the papers, by Pešek, is a summary of major CETI activities in science technology and other areas during the years 1966 through 1976. Finally, we have included one or two papers dealing with some very advanced concepts of communication.

We consider it an honor to have been involved in the publication of this Special Issue of *Acta Astronautica*. We hope that this volume will serve as a useful store of knowledge about some of the CETI activities in recent years. And we trust it will stimulate debate on the complex and important issues involved for years to come.

The CETI issue is published in two parts in journal form, and is available in book form. Ordering information is:

Special CETI (Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence) issue of *Acta Astronautica*

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