↓SAM 215

L:200-7

May 24, 1978

Dr. Philip Morrison
Professor of Physics
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Phil:

I understand that Josh Lederberg called you earlier today regarding the "workshop" in Exobiology that he and I have been discussing with Dick Young at NASA headquarters.

For sometime, Dick has been thinking about sponsoring a symposium that would bring together various specialists in the field in order to discuss the current status of this subject. When Bob Frosch recently, independently, indicated that this might be a good idea, Dick decided to go ahead with such a project.

After discussing this with several people, Dick decided that Josh and I should initiate planning. We have had several discussions on the subject with the following conclusions:

1. We should conduct this as a "study" rather than as a single symposium.

2. We should pattern the study on the model of the SETI workshops.

3. We believe it would be very desirable for you to be the head of this study and for John Billingham to play a similar role for you here as he did in the SETI study.

4. We have discussed several people who might serve to help you organize the study and, for such an organizing committee, the following would be desirable: Josh, me, Alex Rich, Norman Horowitz, Ed Anders, Elso Barghoorn and Francis Crick. (Besides Josh and me, none of these has been contacted yet in this regard.)

5. Several - perhaps two to four - meetings might be held over the course of the next year, covering the major themes: planetary evolution, chemical evolution and early biological evolution. These topics could be discussed concurrently by separate panels - perhaps with a few overlapping panel members - or could be taken up by the full membership of the study. This decision would be up to you with the help and advice of the organizing committee.

Morrison, P.

not exo - biology - Dr. J. Lederberg

6. The final meeting would be held at the Rockefeller University in the Fall of 1979, at which time it would be useful to reserve all or part of the meeting time for summary "reports" to which the public might be invited.

I hope this summary will be helpful to you in arriving at a decision on whether or not you will be able to participate.

With best regards!

Yours sincerely,

Harold P. Klein
Director of Life Sciences

cc: JLederberg, Stanford University
RSYoung, NASA Headquarters