

Report on Exoplanet-3

Briefing intercepted by the Voyager probe in Earth year 2163. Automatic translation.

[Begin]

Dear colleagues,

It is my sad duty to confirm the rumours affecting our most precious planetary treasure, Exoplanet-3, third planet in orbit around the star Sol.

You will recall that astronomers within the galaxy of Andromeda discovered this exoplanet when it was no more than a mass of aggregated dust orbiting an undistinguished star in an unremarkable galaxy. One of eight exoplanets in the same solar system, it displayed no significant potential.

Over time, our scientists became aware that a number of factors made this exoplanet unique. Its distance from its star, its orbit and axial tilt, all conspired to create an environment of extraordinary richness. Large quantities of liquid water surrounding substantial masses of land comprise a surface of immense diversity: vast oceans, widespread arboreal growth, extensive grasslands, arid plains and towering mountains.

Exoplanet-3 is an exceptional and unique specimen, not only in its own galaxy, but in every galaxy of which we have knowledge. It has the greatest number of complex life forms, the richest and most diverse habitats, the most nurturing climate, and a truly breath-taking mechanism of maintenance in which every species plays its part. As a living planet, it is complex and intricate, yet simple and resilient.

It grieves me, therefore, to confirm the rumoured diagnosis of an aggressive cancer on Exoplanet-3. Very recently, and in an astonishingly brief time, a single rogue species has massively overgrown and mutated into a virulent, destructive force. Recently evolved and previously understood to be the planet's best hope of intelligence, this mutated life form devours resources, wages war on other species including its own, and has significantly degraded the climate, oceans and land masses.

Exoplanet-3 is experiencing multiple points of breakdown as the rogue species proliferates out of control. We are recording dramatic levels of die-back across all animal species, the inexplicable disappearance of many arboreal and aquatic habitats and an equally baffling rise in harmful chemical compounds across all vital systems.

Dear colleagues, Exoplanet-3, our greatest hope of securing our own long-term future, has entered a terminal decline.

Devastating as this news may be, there is worse. Our astronomers have detected a probe, launched from Exoplanet-3, on a trajectory to reach Andromeda within just a few millennia. The conclusion is inescapable. Not only is this cancer highly destructive, it is also highly contagious. While we can intercept and destroy the first probe, the risk of another launch, faster and more deadly, is too high to ignore. With regret, therefore, but in the interests of the galaxies, nebulae and star systems represented here today, the recommendation of the committee is that Exoplanet-3 be destroyed.

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