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Confirmation of ETI: Initial Organizational Response

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The most crucial initial responses to the confirmation of extraterrestrial intelligence will come from organizations, rather than from individuals. Among the organizations that will shape world reaction are legislative and political bodies, military and security organizations, religious organizations, professional societies, and even private enterprise. Although organizational responses may reflect popular culture and individual beliefs, they will rest upon higher-level variables including organizational structure, processes, and culture. Prompt and effective responses will be blocked by sociopolitical constraints, jurisdictional disputes, cumbersome structures and procedures, stress-induced distortions in organizational functioning, needs to coordinate with other organizations, and counterproductive efforts to maintain a positive image. Efforts undertaken by governmental agencies will be hampered by perceptions of low credibility. Foresight and advance preparation could help organizations prepare for confirmation day, but conservative values, skepticism towards SETI, competing priorities and outside pressures leave advance preparation in doubt.