

● A Soviet newspaper said yesterday that the existence of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) should not be ruled out and revealed that a Soviet fighter plane had a brush with a mystery object two years ago.

The weekly Sovietskaya Kultura said there were still many unexplained phenomena behind various "flying saucer" reports and urged scientists to collect and collate as much information as possible on the subject.

In an example of recent strange happenings in the Soviet Union, the report said a fighter plane encountered a "fiery ball" 16 feet in diameter in 1981.

Scientists had at first assumed the phenomenon was ball lightning, but the damage to the plane did not tally with this.

It also revealed that the Soviet Union was working on plans for a long-distance, unmanned space mission to try to track down signs of civilisation on distant planets. —

Reuter

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