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"In a nutshell, what they indicate is that UFOs exist," Hastings said.

The UFOs, Hastings said, seem to show a special fondness for cruising over nuclear weapons sites.

Taking the view that they are benevolent beings, Hastings thinks they may be concerned that we are on the eve of nuclear destruction.

"They — whoever they are — may intervene if it appears we are about to commit the ultimate stupidity," he said.

Four months a year, Hastings does the college lecture circuit, spreading the word that the government is keeping the sightings under wraps.

He starts out by flashing a slide of a "Washington Whispers" page from U.S. News & World Report, which speculated that the Carter administration would reveal information about the government's UFO investigations.

It never happened, but the whisper helps give a certain authority to Hastings' claims.

He said CIA documents from the early 1950s indicate that fear of public panic kept the documents secret, but he argues that eventually the information will be released, and that the public should be prepared for the shock.

Some of his audiences are already true believers, although Hastings doesn't necessarily agree with their deductions, such as Fundamentalists who tell him, "I believe every word you say, because the Bible says these things are in the employ of Satan, and Satan is the prince of the air."

On the other extreme are professors of physics and psychology who upbraid him for having gall to make such claims, but who are generally quieter at the end of the slide show.

One of the most interesting docu-

ments is a 1950 memo from an FBI special agent to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, concerning the recovery of three flying saucers in New Mexico.

"They were described as being circular in shape with raised centers, approximately 50 feet in diameter. Each one was occupied by three bodies of human shape but only 3 feet tall, dressed in metallic cloth of a very fine texture."

UFO researchers have been unable to turn up anything else about the alleged crash, but researchers have seen only a fraction of the government's documents on UFOs, said Hastings, who estimates that the CIA has 10,000 to 12,000 unreleased documents.

"Basically, the climate is much chillier under the Reagan administration, as far as releasing documents, than it was under Carter," Hastings said.

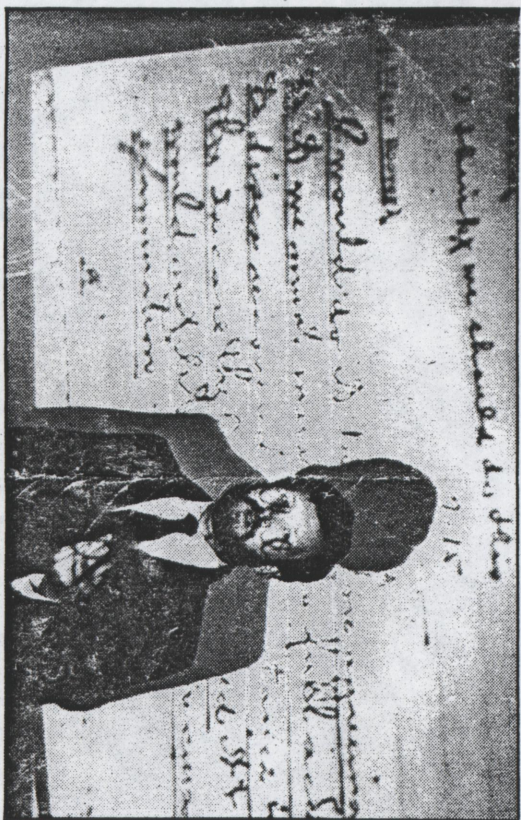
Documents could help explain a July 1947 memorandum from the Air Force to the FBI asking for help in interrogating witnesses of alleged UFOs. The postscript to the memorandum, written by Hoover, reads:

"I would do it, but before agreeing to it, we must insist upon full access to discs recovered. For instance in the L.A. case, the army grabbed it, and would not let us have it for cursory examination."

Hastings speculates that "L.A." refers to Los Alamos, the New Mexico town where the first atomic bomb was tested.

Working with a former National Security Administration employee, Hastings, a free-lance photographer from South Carolina, hopes to write a book soon about UFOs and the government's alleged coverup.

"We are simply, openly, publicly challenging the right for the deception to continue," he said. *STG*



UFOs — 'This is for real'

By JIM SPARKS
Staff writer

For credibility's sake, Robert Hastings wears a blue pin-striped suit when he gives his slide show.

He doesn't bring photographs of fuzzy round objects flying low over South Dakota, and doesn't claim to have chatted with aliens himself.

But his message is that UFOs are out there, they're buzzing our nuclear missile sites and the CIA is keeping mum. "This is for real," Hastings

told a group of six at Eastern Washington University's Higher Education Center on Monday. "It's not science fiction."

The son of an Air Force officer, Hastings backs up his claims with documents released by the FBI, CIA and the Air Force through the Freedom of Information Act.

The documents refer to the recovery of flying saucers containing 3-foot-tall aliens, a dog-fight with a UFO over Iran and strange green fireballs spotted from Los Alamos, N.M.

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Robert Hastings at Eastern Washington University.