

UFO expert uncovers U.S. deceit

By Pat Hampton
Dispatch Staff Reporter

Once-secret documents prove the U.S. government has tried to discredit UFO sightings to "minimize concern and potential panic," a UFO expert said yesterday.

"I'm not condemning the powers-that-be, but I am challenging their right to continue this deception," Robert Hastings, 36, said.

"My specialty is getting military reports of UFO sightings from 1947 to the present day."

Hastings' 90-minute slide show, "UFOs: The Hidden History," can be seen at 8 p.m. Monday in the West Ballroom of the Ohio State University Student Union. He has lectured since 1981 about a government cover-up of UFOs. Hastings shares once-classified CIA, FBI and Air Force documents about sightings obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

UFOS CAUGHT his attention when he was involved in a sighting in late 1967.

"My father was in the Air Force stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base near Great Falls, Mont.," Hastings said. "I was there visiting in the control tower when five UFOs showed up on multiple radar scopes."

"They were doing things essentially that helicopters and jets can't do, both accelerating at extremely high rates of speed, then hovering in the air. It lasted for about half an hour."

Two jets were sent to investigate, Hastings said, but the objects "went straight up at plus or minus 4,800 mph" when the jets approached.

"Later I learned that they were hovering over nuclear silos in the southeast portion of the base."

"Virtually all nuclear facilities have at one time or another been visited by crafts and have been observed."

SINCE 1973, Hastings has devoted himself to pulling off the shroud of secrecy the government placed over UFO sightings. Documents he has acquired show sightings in 1966, 1967 and 1975 over nuclear facilities were common, he said.

"Virtually all nuclear facilities have at one time or another been visited by crafts and have been observed."

"For a 10-day period in 1975, they were both seen by security personnel and tracked by radar near Strategic Air Command bases over nuclear-related facilities," he said.

CIA memos dated 1950 and 1952 explain motives for discrediting UFO sightings, Hastings said. If such unexplained crafts were admitted to exist, for example, U.S. citizens would consider the country vulnerable.

THE CIA document suggests assembling a secret research committee to investigate UFO sightings and planning a misinformation campaign to make the public believe there was nothing to the phenomena.

Other documents show that in 1953 the CIA "did just that, using the mass media to plant the official line to minimize concern and potential panic," he said.

Other governments have admitted sightings, Hastings said.

"In 1979, France reversed a

longstanding policy of secrecy and announced to the French public that it had had a secret group studying UFOs since the early 1950s, and that it took them seriously."

IN THE LATE 1950s, the governments of Brazil and Argentina released several photos and reports of flying, disc-shaped objects, he said.

"The Soviet Union has been very tight-lipped with the exception of 1967 when several scientists from the Soviet Academy of Sciences published papers on UFOs, saying the consensus was

they were real and the least objectionable explanation was they were extraterrestrial.

"The Western media, including the *New York Times*, picked right up on it, and the lid went back on."

Public UFO sightings and access to government reports about them are in a lull, Hastings said. "By executive order, (President) Reagan has exempted the CIA from Freedom of Information requests," he said.

"And the sightings come in waves, with the last wave in late 1978 and early 1979."