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Researchers accuse government of keeping lid on flying saucers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers, trying to document that the government recognizes the existence of unidentified flying objects, believe that Washington has tried to keep UFO information under wraps.

"We've been dealing with a kind of cosmic Watergate," said UFO researcher Stanton T. Friedman at a briefing Friday on this weekend's "International Symposium on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena, 1947-1987."

Friedman is one of the scheduled participants in the weekend session at American University coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the first reported UFO sighting on June 24, 1947.

A later incident that summer was the alleged crash in July of an alien craft outside Roswell, N.M. The so-called "UFOlogists" contend that the government retrieved the crashed object and covered up all traces of it. ◀

Friedman said that the government has been able to keep the lid on its UFO program, which began with the so-called Majestic 12 group under the Eisenhower administration, because only a few people keep the information.

The only reference to the group in official government documents is a declassified July 14, 1954, letter from Robert Cutler, special assistant to the president, to Gen. Nathan Twining, with a reference to an "MJ-12" briefing.

The "Majestic" group, however, is identified in a "briefing document" on UFO research that a UFO researcher learned about when he received an unsolicited package of film copies of the documents in the mail 2½ years ago.

The researchers won't say they are certain the copies are of authentic documents, but they say they have no reason to believe they are phony.

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