

U.S. Keeps Lid on UFOs — Researcher

By ROBERT GREENE

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.



(AP Laserphoto)

STANTON FRIEDMAN
Sees 'Cosmic Watergate'

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.

The more than 350 people attending the weekend session will be dealing mostly with two key issues, said conference spokesman Fred Whiting.

One is the government response to the UFO question. The other focus will be reports of people being abducted by aliens.

Budd Hopkins, a New York City artist who researches UFOs, says extraterrestrial beings briefly abduct people for experiments in breeding.

"It would seem to be pretty much the central purpose," Hopkins said in an interview.

The session is sponsored by the Fund for UFO Research Inc. in Mount Rainier, Md.

British Jet Crew Reports UFO Over Russia

LONDON (AP) — A British Airways jetliner made a diversion over the Soviet Union to avoid what the crew reported as an unidentified flying object, airline spokesman Alan Solloway said Saturday.

The incident occurred in April, but first came to light in a front-page article Saturday in *The Times of London*.

Solloway confirmed that the crew of the Boeing 747 jumbo jet

reported seeing a UFO over the Soviet Union on April 22 while flying from London to Bangkok, Thailand.

He said it was the first such case in the airline's history.

"We have had crews report seeing space debris burning, but we can't recall a UFO being sighted and being logged as a UFO," Solloway said.

"Usually, there is a scientific explanation for whatever was

seen, but there doesn't seem to be a scientific explanation for this."

The Times said all five crew members reported seeing an object with twinkling lights fly directly toward them and then vanish quickly over the Kazakhstan horizon.

"It was definitely not an aircraft," the paper quoted First Officer Anthony Colin, 42, as saying. "Of that I am positive. None of us had ever seen anything like it before. We are all bitter, cynicalaviators who like a scientific explanation for everything. But this has got us foxed."

Solloway said the crew checked with Soviet air traffic control, which reported no other aircraft were in the vicinity.

Howard Miles, director of the artificial satellite section of the British Astronomical Association, told *The Times* that the crew could have seen a satellite re-entering the atmosphere.

But he said satellites normally burn up at an altitude of about 80 miles and the aircraft was flying at about 10 miles.

"It must therefore have been an optical illusion, with the actual lights being much further away," he was quoted as saying.