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CONSPIRACY**

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ever thought about UFOs.**



**Brad Steiger and
Sherry Hansen Steiger**

Chapter Four

The Philadelphia Experiment and the Rainbow Conspiracy

If it truly did occur, then the so-called Philadelphia Experiment and its tragic aftermath constitute one of the most bizarre government cover-ups of all. Those who insist that the ill-fated experiment actually took place maintain that in October 1943 the U.S. Navy accomplished the teleportation of a warship from the Philadelphia Naval yard to its dock near Norfolk, Virginia—and at the same time, the procedure caused the warship and its crew to become invisible.

At first the scientists in charge of the experiment were elated with its apparent success, and military officials were jubilant at the thought of being able to convert whole fleets of warships, bombers, and fighter planes into invisible avengers that would deliver sudden havoc and destruction to the Nazi and Japanese forces around the globe. With this new secret weapon of invisibility, World War II would be over within months.

Then, as a terrible by-product of the process of teleportation and invisibility, a number of the crew members report-

edly burst into flames in some kind of spontaneous human combustion. Others reportedly lapsed once again into complete or partial states of invisibility in front of their families or in crowded public places—while still others required confinement to psychiatric wards.

Accounts of the Philadelphia Experiment make great yarns, perfect for regaling drinking buddies around the bar or widening the eyes of the kids around a campfire. When we wrote an article on the alleged experiment for *Saga* magazine in the late 1960s, our approach was that it was another of the strange flying saucer mysteries that had attained mythic stature as a result of having become one of the favorite “twice-told tales” of UFOlogy. Therefore we were surprised to receive a great deal of mail from those who claimed some sort of personal involvement in the secret Navy project.

Men who claimed to have been crew members on the *Eldridge*, the warship they named as having been the vessel teleported to Norfolk from Philadelphia, scolded us for writing so matter-of-factly about such a tragic occurrence.

“You would not write of this so objectively if you were forced to live with this horror,” said one letter writer.

Others wrote graphically of having seen their buddies burst into flames days after the experiment was supposedly completed. Some said that certain of their fellow crew members had somehow melded directly into the metal of the *Eldridge* during the molecular mixup that had taken place during teleportation.

An anonymous letter writer informed us of witnessing a series of bizarre occurrences in 1947–48, which he believed may have been associated directly with the secret Navy experiment.

During the Second World War his landlady’s son had enlisted in the Navy, and our correspondent was led to believe that the young man had subsequently been killed in

action. Some years later, however, he met someone of the son's description in the hallway of the rooming house. According to our correspondent the young man greeted him with a friendly "hello"—and then "vanished like a ghost."

After that eerie hallway encounter, the boarder often saw the young man appear, then vanish. On one occasion the strange young man appeared, began to weep despondently, and begged the landlady for something to eat.

The matter became even more confused in the boarder's mind when the young sailor's widow, who had continued to reside with her mother-in-law for many years after her husband's alleged death, moved out after obtaining a *divorce*.

After he read our article in *Saga*, our correspondent began to wonder if his landlady's son might not have been one of those unfortunate seamen aboard the experimental vessel. Had he, even years later, still been lapsing into invisibility and suffering the torments of the damned? Thoughts that he, himself, had seen a ghost or was going insane plagued our anonymous correspondent for many years.

In our own case, in 1967, we received most of the data for our article from a friend named Steve, who, in turn, had acquired the material from a scientist-engineer named Alfred Bielek. We met Bielek himself around 1968, and we became good friends. Although he was a man of many parts with varied interests and an obvious mastery of things electronic, Al continued to be fascinated by all aspects of the Philadelphia Experiment. He had no doubt that the event had actually taken place.

We were probably as startled as the next person when, in September 1989, Al stepped before the large audience gathered in Phoenix for Timothy Green Beckley's UFO-New Age Conference and declared that he had been a participant

in the incredible experiment. Al said he had survived time-warping, teleportation, invisibility, electromagnetic bombardment, and a period of brainwashing by an ultrasecret agency to be able to tell his story.

After his mind-boggling speech, we arranged to have several interviews with Al in order to understand more completely what he believed had occurred during the legendary experiment—and the missing years of his life.

Bielek claimed that the initial stages of the experiment had begun in Chicago about 1931 under the aegis of a U.S. Navy-sponsored team of scientists composed of Dr. John Hutchinson, dean of the University of Chicago; the brilliant Nicola Tesla, and Dr. Emil Kurtenauer, an Austrian physicist. In 1933 the operation was moved to the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University. Joining them was Dr. John Eric Von Neumann, who would later become one of Bielek's mentors.

"Von Neumann, born in Budapest, Hungary, had exhibited a genius in mathematics at an early age," Bielek said. "He had been at the University of Berlin and the University of Hamburg when he emigrated to the United States. In 1933 he was invited to join the Institute at Princeton and to become involved in the Navy project, which was known as 'Project Rainbow.' Dr. Albert Einstein, who was also at the Institute, was aware of the project, though he did not participate directly in the nuts and bolts of it."

According to Bielek, the concept of the Philadelphia Experiment was set up by a group of ETIs who had met with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1934. "FDR met with the aliens somewhere in the mid-Pacific—I believe it was on board the *Pennsylvania*—and signed an agreement that would exchange alien technology for certain planetary privileges," Bielek explained.

The treaty, Bielek said, was with extraterrestrials that he

labeled the "K-Group," alien life-forms that could pass for humans. "Because their skin has a slightly greenish tint, they often bleach or dye their epidermis in order to pass among us as human beings," he stated.

According to Bielek, the meeting between FDR and the K-Group of ETIs was arranged by Nicola Tesla, who had been in contact with alien intelligences since 1895. "Tesla's communications with extraterrestrials accelerated in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, ever since he created the huge radio receivers for RCA," Bielek explained.

Tesla's initial communications had been with entities from the Pleiades, who appeared to be completely human and who stated that humankind had issued from their original stock. FDR met first with Pleiadean emissaries, then later with the K-Group, a "nearly human" species. Almost immediately after the second meeting, President Roosevelt signed a treaty of mutual noninterference, and our country's sciences enjoyed a remarkable acceleration of theory and application on nearly all levels of material endeavor.

Bielek maintains that a "partially successful" test in invisibility was accomplished by the research group at Princeton in 1936.

"By strange 'coincidence,' a UFO crashed in Germany in 1936," he said. "Since the craft was more or less intact, the artifact greatly stimulated Nazi science. Fortunately for the rest of the world, the Nazi scientists were never able to crack the problem of the UFO's basic drive mechanism."

The initial Navy experiment in invisibility was scheduled to take place on a cold day in March 1942. "All the levers were pulled—and nothing happened!"

Bielek is convinced that Tesla sabotaged that first attempt at placing a warship into a state of invisibility. The electronic genius had protested the presence of a live crew on board the *Eldridge*, a DE 173 destroyer, insisting that the experiment

should first be tried with the vessel alone. He had also demanded that the scientists be given more time to work out problems.

Tesla left the project at this point, arguing that the experiment was unsuccessful. Ten months later, on January 7, 1943, he was found dead in his New York City hotel room.

Dr. Von Neumann was now in charge of Project Rainbow. At 0900 hours on July 22 [rather than in October as other accounts would have it], the switches were flipped once again. According to Bielek, "for twenty minutes the *Eldridge* was invisible to radar and to visual contact."

The ship returned with most of the crew demented, but in spite of the heavy loss of personnel to hysteria and near-insanity, the scientists and Navy personnel were given twenty-one days to try the experiment once again.

On August 12, with new crew members—and this time trying only for *radar*, rather than *optical*, invisibility—the *Eldridge* was successfully invisible to radar for around seventy seconds.

Then there was a brilliant blue flash—and the warship disappeared . . . for four hours.

"The ETIs had wanted the experiment to take place exactly when it did in August 1943," Bielek said. "They had been making a careful study of Earth's biorhythmic cycles for centuries, so they knew the precise date when they would be able to tear open a massive hole in hyperspace.

"The Philadelphia Experiment was a setup by the humanoid aliens to create an opening in the space-time continuum so the ETIs would have easy access to Earth," Bielek said. "The U.S. Navy, the many scientists assembled, the government officials privy to the secret experiment were all laboring under false assumptions when they believed that the

aliens were assisting them to achieve invisibility for U.S. military vessels. Although *we* were working toward the goal of invisibility, the aliens among us had a much larger and more self-serving goal in mind—to tear a massive hole in hyperspace.”

When the warship returned to visibility in the Navy yard, four seamen were embedded in various sections of the *Eldridge*. Some had burst into flames. Others were glowing. Most of the rest were insane. Only those, such as Bielek, who had been shielded by steel walls or decking survived unscathed.

“The whole incident was swept under the Navy’s rug,” Bielek said. “Cover stories were created. Men were placed into asylums. The experiment was classified as research on the atomic bomb.

“Those who might have asked embarrassing questions were too busy with the enormous war effort that was taking place at that time. We were taking our lumps in the South Pacific. The wounded were coming back from everywhere.”

UFO researchers themselves are divided as to the authenticity of the Philadelphia Experiment. Some years ago we discussed the matter with John A. Keel, one of the leading UFO investigators. Keel expressed the opinion that the legend may have grown up around a magician’s plan to create a new kind of camouflage to make warships appear to vanish from enemy view.

“During the Second World War, the leading magician in the United States was Joseph Dunninger, who was also a master showman,” Keel explained. “Dunninger proposed to the U.S. Navy that he would make ships invisible. He may have been talking about some form of camouflage—but in

time Dunninger’s claim did get publicity. . . . Perhaps a fantasy was built around Dunninger’s claim.”

Timothy Green Beckley, author, publisher, and long-time student of UFOs is convinced that a daring scientific experiment occurred in the Philadelphia Navy yard circa October 1943: “There have always been creative minds that have sought to recapture the ancient mysteries and apply them to modern technology. I believe the Navy’s experiment in invisibility was yet another of those attempts to recapture the super science of the ancients.”

Kevin Randle, a former captain in Air Force Intelligence, agrees that something unusual may have taken place that gave birth to the legend of the Philadelphia Experiment—but he does not believe that the experiment occurred in the manner in which it is most often described. He is amenable, however, to the suggestion that the U.S. Navy could well have been working on a radar cloaking device, such as that recently achieved by the Stealth bomber. “Such a device,” he acknowledges, “would have been of great benefit to the Navy during World War II.”

Other UFO researchers are convinced that *some* kind of secret experiment took place, quite likely dealing with incredibly high voltages of electricity, which may well have burned or scorched seamen—or even delivered a terrible kind of negative “electroshock” treatment that drove some of the crewmen mad.

Al Bielek claims that in spite of their failures, the Navy tried another experiment with the *Eldridge* sometime around October 27—this time without personnel. Once again the warship disappeared. When the *Eldridge* returned, there was some damage and half of the scientific equipment was missing.

“After this incident the ‘powers that be’ pronounced that they had had enough of such experiments, and the *Eldridge*

was placed on active duty until 1946," Bielek said. "After the warship was removed from duty, she was 'mothballed' until 1951 when she was transferred to the Greek Navy."

Supporters of the Authenticity of the Philadelphia Experiment believe that the hole ripped in the space-time continuum during the ill-fated event permitted the secret mass invasion of Earth in 1954 by the reptilian/amphibian, large-headed, bug-eyed species euphemistically known as the "Grays."

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(1939)CORDELL HULL and the ALIEN ARTIFACTS - Report by William E. Jones MUFON State Director for Ohio (Alien bodies and Roosevelt's Secretary of State)

<http://ufocasebook.com/81002.html>

(1939)Cordell Hull saw Aliens in glass containers

<http://ufocasebook.com/hull.html>

(1942)Battle of Los Angeles

<http://www.oregonuforeview.com/battle.html>

Also February 26, 1942 Memo to the President from General Marshall

http://www.totse.com/en/fringe/government_ufo_coverups/ufos25.html

(1945)U.S. government to issue a censored press release on January 1, 1945 related to Foo Fighters

<http://www.project1947.com/bg/ufogov.htm>

Actually this is Truman but Truman was very weak in the opening days of his presidency and most of the cabinet people were still Roosevelt.

Truman was not held in high regard "called a liar, cheat, fool, coddler of subversives, and worst president in history." Gained

popularity in 70s especially after Merle Miller's Plain Speaking appeared - a book featuring interviews with the former President (From Paul F. Boller, jr. "Presidential Anecdotes" Penquin 1981)

(1946) General Doolittle Goes to Sweden to Investigate Mysterious Rockets

<http://www.parascope.com/nb/cautionarytales/cautionarytales03.htm>

<http://www.project1947.com/bg/ufogov.htm>

see July 1946 Incoming State Department telegrams Secret and Top Secret

(1950) Eleanor Roosevelt shows interest in subject. March 22, 1950 UP New York. Mrs. Roosevelt invited airline pilots who reported sighting to appear with her on TV.

Majestic Documents has some "documents" but they are very questionable.

Ref: Emails from Supervisory Archivist Raymond Teichman that all Roosevelt documents processed and nothing like Majestic Documents leaks exist.

<http://majesticdocuments.com/documents/pre1948.html>

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PROJECT 1947

UFOS: GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT, SECRECY, AND DOCUMENTS

By Barry Greenwood

The modern UFO era began on June 24, 1947, after a report by private pilot Kenneth Arnold of a procession of unknown flying objects over Washington State. This event triggered a series of other reports, which spread rapidly through the northwestern United States and eventually throughout the world. The reports described the objects as being variously disc-shaped, cigar-shaped, or spherical, rapidly moving through the sky and often performing aerial maneuvers far beyond the capabilities our technology allows.

Yet this was not the first time that UFOs were seen. History is replete with incidents of strange vehicles flying through the atmosphere. Most UFO researchers are familiar with stories of mysterious airships seen during the late 1890s when witnesses reported huge, dirigible-type machines with wings, fans and propellers cavorting overhead. Many of the incidents were journalistic fantasies and the rest were never positively linked to any high performance aerial devices, human or extraterrestrial.

Government interest in the UFO phenomenon is commonly thought to have begun during World War 2 when reports of objects, nicknamed "Foo fighters" by allied pilots, were sporadically sent to military intelligence by pilots flying aerial bombing and intercept missions. The strange objects appeared to be globes of light, about one quarter to one half meter in diameter. They hovered near aircraft in flight, frequently maneuvering in front of, beside, behind, above and below in a seeming intelligent manner. The activity increased in late 1944, causing the U.S. government to issue a censored press release on January 1, 1945. In the story, carried in many U.S. newspapers, the government acknowledged the existence of the fireballs and blamed the Nazis for using them. Such was not the case, however, as Axis pilots encountered similar objects, blaming the Allied forces in turn. According to one record released later by U.S. Air Force Intelligence, Foo Fighters were studied after the war and were dismissed as natural phenomena, the nature of which was not made clear.

A bit over a year later a wave of so-called "Ghost Rockets" appeared over the Scandinavian countries during the summer of 1946, bringing sky mysteries once again into the news. Witnesses observed what appeared to be rockets hurtling over cities and towns in Sweden for several weeks. Some believed they were being launched from the Soviet Union, perhaps testing newly acquired German technology from the war. The government of Sweden reportedly solicited help from the United States in identifying the unknown rockets. Press stories had indicated that General James Doolittle, a famed WW2 aviator, had flown to

Sweden under a cover story that he was there on a business trip. The real nature of the trip was said to be the need for Doolittle to advise the Swedish government on how to deal with the ghost rockets. Doolittle said many years later, in a letter sent to this writer, that he knew nothing about the incidents at the time except what he had read in the newspapers.

While the events of 1944-46 are known to researchers, government interest in aerial phenomena is evident during World War 1 when mystery airplanes appeared in various areas during 1915-17, and most surprisingly the first instance on record is the "Blue Light" affair of December 12, 1813!

Working off fragmentary references, the following story emerged: Commodore Stephen Decatur, a distinguished U.S. naval officer and a participant in several heroic actions during the Barbary Wars of the early 1800s and during the War of 1812 against the British, was in command of a squadron of American ships in the harbor of New London, Connecticut, which at the time was under a British blockade. On the evening of December 12th, 1813, Decatur decided to "run" the blockade and bring his ships into open water where they could be more useful in battle. A short time after they began to make their way out of the harbor a set of blue lights appeared of the heights both at Groton, Connecticut and near the entrance to New London harbor. Rowing guards at the harbor entrance noticed the strange lights and immediately made their way back to the ships where the lights were reported. Fearful that these lights were a signal to the British fleet that a blockade run was under way, Commodore Decatur cancelled the run and returned the ships to anchor.

The incident angered Decatur because he believed that the lights were a signal to the British by traitorous New Londoners and he demanded an investigation. Repeated attempts to determine the origin of the blue lights failed. The press ridiculed the observations as unreal, which angered the witnesses.

The debate about the lights very quickly made its way to the U.S. Congress where one may find the specifics in the Annals of Congress, 13th Congress, 2nd Session, January 1814. An investigation was offered but there is no evidence that a solution to the mystery of the lights was made available. So much for the first government UFO inquiry!

Which brings us back to 1947. In the aftermath of the Kenneth Arnold report and the many hundreds of flying disc sightings in July of that year, the U.S. government decided that it was time to take these stories seriously. While a majority of the American people felt that the objects were not from another planet, the Army Air Force was left with the task of determining exactly what was being seen.

Reports were sent to the Technical Intelligence Division of the Air Materiel Command at Wright Field, Ohio for study. Many reports were certainly mistaken observations of weather phenomena, balloons, stars, planets; etc. Others were not so easily dismissed. In fact some of the reports were so compelling that the

commander of the Air Materiel Command, Lieutenant General Nathan Twining, wrote a letter to the Commander of the Army Air Forces on the subject of "Flying Discs" dated September 23, 1947:

- a) The phenomenon reported is something real and not visionary or fictitious.
- b) There are objects probably approximating the shape of a disc, of such appreciable size as to appear to be as large as a man-made aircraft.
- c) The reported operating characteristics such as extreme rates of climb, maneuverability (particularly in roll), and action which must be considered evasive when sighted or contacted by friendly aircraft and radar, lend belief to the possibility that some of the objects are controlled either manually, automatically or remotely.

These conclusions suggested that something extraordinary was being seen. Conversely, the public stance of the Army Air Force was that the objects were most likely mistaken observations of mundane phenomena and that there was nothing about which to be concerned. In this respect the military could continue to monitor the phenomenon without arousing public suspicion.

On December 30, 1947, the Army Air Force decided to establish **Project Sign** at Wright Field, Ohio in an effort to determine whether the flying disc phenomenon constituted a threat to the national security of the United States. The public was to know this program as **Project Saucer**.

The staff of Project Sign was philosophically divided into two factions. One had taken quite seriously the possibility that the saucers were extraterrestrial vehicles, while the other felt that nothing as extraordinary as that could be claimed from the available evidence. All sightings, they said, were explainable.

The pro-extraterrestrial faction of Sign would see their position enhanced by news reports of several incidents during 1948. One was the sighting of a flying object near Louisville, Kentucky on January 7, 1948.

Many witnesses reported their observations to police of a large, bright object in the sky. The police called officials at Godman Air Field for confirmation. A flight of F-51 Air National Guard planes were in the area and were asked by Godman to investigate the sighting. Led by Captain Thomas Mantell, three of the aircraft climbed to give pursuit. After running low on fuel, two of the planes ceased pursuit. Mantell continued the chase and as he attempted to climb to 20,000 feet, he reported seeing the object, describing it as "metallic" and of tremendous size. A short time after this Mantell's plane crashed, killing him. The official explanation for the crash was that Mantell had mistaken a balloon for a strange vehicle and in the heat of pursuit ignored the fact that without a plane equipped with oxygen he was flying too high. Mantell subsequently blacked out and died in the crash.

Press speculations fuelled a notion that Mantell was killed by a "flying saucer" and Project Sign found itself saddled with the job of defusing such speculations. As it turned out this was a hopeless task and the Mantell incident exhibited the first evidence of public concern that the government was covering up the facts about flying saucer reports. Only years later was it determined that a secret balloon experiment was in the area, having been launched from Minnesota the day before, and was certainly responsible for the sightings over Kentucky that day. The government was covering up, but not a flying saucer.

Another highly credible report was that of Eastern Airlines pilots Clarence Chiles and John Whitted on July 24, 1948. During a flight from Houston, Texas to Atlanta, Georgia, a large red light appeared in the east at 2:45 AM, and approached the aircraft. The pilots veered the DC-3 to avoid a collision. The object passed close to the plane, then moved upwards and disappeared. Both pilots described the object as cigar-shaped with a pointed front end and a double row of rectangular windows along the side. The bottom of the object glowed a brilliant blue and an orange-red flame spewed from the rear.

Once again the Air Force decided to publicly dismiss the sighting by highly-qualified witnesses as nothing more than a meteor. Few were satisfied with this, particularly the eyewitnesses.

Project Sign personnel favoring flying saucer reality thought that it was now time to make their case to the Air Force upper echelons. They wrote an "Estimate of the Situation," something the Air Force often did when saddled with a problem. The document described the background of the flying saucer problem with an assortment of credible cases as evidence that the objects were extraterrestrial vehicles from another world. The staff members sent the document through various decision-making channels. It finally ended up on the desk of Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt Vandenberg. General Vandenberg was decidedly unimpressed with the report, believing that it lacked proof. The "Estimate" was rejected and subsequently ordered to be declassified and burned. At least two witnesses, Captain Edward Ruppelt and Major Dewey Fournet, attested to the fact that at least one copy of the document survived into 1952. Fournet, in a written statement to a UFO researcher several years ago, was unimpressed with the document as well. He believed that the extraterrestrial conclusion was an "extreme extrapolation" and that it contained discussions of the cases which were on the record at that time and known to people generally. There was no discussion of physical evidence either which raises questions about the reality of crashed-disc stories.

In hindsight, the value of the Estimate now is to illustrate the fact that at that time there was favorable opinion within the military toward the extraterrestrial hypothesis. The document, which was disposed of legally and properly, may have been destroyed more to hide an embarrassing conclusion by subordinates than to hide deep, dark secrets.

The consequences of the Estimate's rejection were far-reaching. The status of the

supporters of flying saucer reality had been reduced while that of the detractors had increased. In February 1949, Air Force UFO staffers wrote another report which said that while some twenty percent of the reports they had examined were unexplained, proof for the extraterrestrial explanation was not adequate. It was also said that while the objects did not appear to be the property of a foreign nation, it could not be said with certainty that they were not a threat to the United States. Therefore, policy on the UFO problem was based upon the premise that as the possibility of UFOs being a threat to national security existed, the Air Force would collect and investigate such sightings.

Reinforcement for this can be found in a January 31, 1949 FBI document sent to J. Edgar Hoover:

At a recent weekly intelligence conference of G-2, ONI, OSI and FBI in the Fourth Army area, officers of G-2 Fourth Army have discussed the matter of 'unidentified aircraft' or 'unidentified aerial phenomena,' otherwise known as 'flying discs,' 'flying saucers' and 'balls of fire.' This matter is considered top secret by intelligence officers of both the Army and the Air Force.

So UFOs were important but not spaceships, at least not yet. Project Sign was changed to **Project Grudge** on December 16, 1948, almost as if the Air Force were reacting to the change of attitude. Former Sign personnel who favored UFOs were reassigned to other duties and replaced with more critical staffers.

During this time of tightening of the Air Force's grip on the UFO issue, Major Donald Keyhoe, an aviation writer, took an interest in the subject. He had concluded in a January 1950 article for True magazine that UFOs were definitely interplanetary spacecraft. Keyhoe later expanded his ideas for a book, "The Flying Saucers are Real," later that year. Using the best sighting information available, plus various statements from the Air Force, Keyhoe felt that the government was hiding the truth about UFOs. This, he said, was done to prevent a panic similar to that caused by the 1938 radio broadcast **War of the Worlds**. Keyhoe was the first major proponent of the idea of a government cover-up of flying saucers and he had later named those in charge of the censorship the "Silence Group."

The Air Force's public statements often tended to be confusing and contradictory. They would refuse to release information and conclusions about sightings which were known to have occurred. The public agreed with Keyhoe's charges in light of hard evidence that censorship was indeed happening. They were in a very unenviable position of trying to investigate an unexplained phenomenon as quietly as possible, while at the same time trying to allay increasing public fears and pressures. This would lead to Air Force overreaction in several instances. Twice during this time the Air Force sponsored articles; a two-part series for the **Saturday Evening Post** on April 30 and May 7, 1949 and one for **Cosmopolitan** published in January 1951. The intention was to reduce public interest in UFOs by way of explaining how mistaken observations were made. While factually correct

in showing how this happens in a majority of sightings, the Post article admitted that some sightings were unexplained, and the Cosmopolitan piece was so demeaning in its characterization of witnesses as true believers and lunatics that it angered the reading public and actually prompted a libel suit. Instead of defusing the controversy, the Air Force assured a continuance of it.

But still, behind the scenes other things were happening. Due to numerous sightings reported in the vicinity of sensitive government installations at Los Alamos, New Mexico, a May 25, 1950 memo to the Air Force's Director of Special Investigations stressed that reports were made by scientists, special agents of the Office of Special Investigations for the Air Force, airline and military pilots, and Los Alamos security inspectors, among others. In other words this is a serious situation.

Such national security concerns about UFOs were not overlooked outside of the U.S. even if American citizens were not aware of it fully. In a Canadian Department of Transport memo dated November 21, 1950, Wilbert B. Smith, a senior radio engineer, forwarded a proposal to the Department's controller of telecommunications suggesting various studies such as using the Earth's magnetic field as an energy source. The memo also alluded to flying saucers:

- a) The matter is the most highly classified subject in the United States Government, rating higher even than the H-bomb.
- b) Flying saucers exist.
- c) Their modus operandi is unknown but concentrated effort is being made by a small group headed by Doctor Vannevar Bush.
- d) The entire matter is considered by the United States authorities to be of tremendous significance.

The memo had been classified "Top Secret." It was obvious that flying saucers were not about to go away.

(Since this article was first written, some doubt has been cast as to whether the security classification was legitimate or something merely inserted by Smith himself. Until further details are available, the memo should be viewed with caution - B.G.)

The year 1952 saw the largest increase in UFO sightings in history. 1501 reports filed and over 300 unexplained. The Intelligence Division of the Air Materiel Command was reorganized into the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC). Project Grudge would have to increase staff membership and activities to contend with the additional reports. Captain Edward Ruppelt was appointed to oversee the new operation.

Ruppelt was a believer in a systematic approach to the UFO problem. He was not tolerant of bias and actively sought outside help from the scientific community. Project Grudge would no longer be the negative, dour entity it had been over the previous several years. Shortly after Ruppelt took command of Grudge, it was

renamed **Project Blue Book** to reflect the change in approach. Ruppelt's influence even caused the Air Force to publicly announce that it was still investigating UFOs and that unexplained reports continued to be filed. Ruppelt also coined the phrase **unidentified flying object** during 1952.

A major article in *Life* magazine's April 7, 1952 issue emphasized the mysterious nature of UFOs. What was extraordinary about the article was that it was done with the complete cooperation of the Air Force. Times had changed and the negativity of Project Grudge was truly dead. The *Life* article concluded that UFOs could not be explained by present science as natural phenomena but only as artificial devices created and operated by a high intelligence.

Sightings continued to increase. The Air Force had received so many press inquiries that it appointed Albert Chop to handle press relations since Ruppelt's staff at Project Blue Book could not devote so much of its time to questioning by reporters.

Perhaps the peak of this intense interest in UFOs occurred on two weekends in July 1952. Radar scopes at Washington National Airport and at Andrews Air Force Base had detected swarms of UFOs over the portions of the restricted air space over Washington, D.C. These, coupled with many other reports that summer, created a virtual panic. The press frantically inundated the Air Force with inquiries. Hesitant and unsure, the Air Force could not answer the questions because it did not yet have any answers to give. Finally, a few days after the last radar trackings on July 27th, they were prepared to provide at least a semblance of an answer.

As far as the Air Force was concerned, something had to be done to dispel what had become a wild situation. The Air Force's communications centers had become overwhelmed with reports, public inquiries, press inquiries, and political inquiries from worried members of the Senate and Congress. This was intolerable for a military body responsible for the security of the country not to be able to adequately understand what was happening.

A press conference was held on July 29th, headed by Major General John Samford. He explained that the Washington sightings were most likely temperature inversions, a peculiar layering of air masses of differing temperatures which can create radar targets. He did explain that experts would examine the matter more fully. He added that the Air Force was still studying UFOs and, while acknowledging that the sightings were made by "credible observers of relatively incredible things," he quickly said that UFOs appeared to be no threat to national security.

The press conference succeeded in reducing the flood of questioning and, moreover, began a wave of skepticism from the press which further reduced public interest. Since UFOs had not actually done anything beyond looking strange and frightening people, the press felt that perhaps they were nothing but misunderstood natural phenomena after all.

The Air Force hierarchy now recognized the danger of being too open about UFOs. An attitude change was once again about to take place.

Toward the end of 1952, Project Blue Book refined investigative techniques, planned a photographic network of special cameras in an attempt to obtain hard scientific data about UFOs, and sponsored a statistical study of reports by the Batelle Institute. But at the same time, certain elements in intelligence circles felt that UFO reports were a serious hinderance. Somehow, they said, the interest in UFOs could be exploited by foreign nations at odds with the United States in an effort to create distrust of government pronouncements. This became a very powerful argument to leaders of a country that, at that moment in time, was highly paranoid about the infiltration of "Communists" into the government.

Early in 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency convened a panel of experts in Washington. Chairman of the panel was Dr. H.P. Robertson, Director of the Weapons System Evaluation Group for the Secretary of Defense. Other members included Dr. Samuel Goudsmit, discoverer of electron spin; Dr. Luis Alvarez, physicist and, later, a Nobel Prize winner; Dr. Lloyd Berkner, a director of the Brookhaven National Laboratory; and Dr. Thornton Page, Deputy Director of the Johns Hopkins Operations Research Office. Additional participants included Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Captain Ruppelt, and Frederic Durant, aeronautical authority and eventual author of the panel's report.

These experts heard testimony and studied films and UFO cases for a grand total of twelve hours, after which they concluded that UFOs were no direct threat to national security. They also expressed their negative opinion that UFOs were extraterrestrial and that undue Air Force attention to UFOs would foster public belief that the government gave UFOs more serious consideration than they deserved to be given. The reports themselves, not the UFOs, were the threat to national security in that they tended to flood intelligence channels with relatively unimportant sightings, hindering more serious information reporting.

The Robertson Panel suggested a program of "training and debunking" to reduce mistaken UFO reports and to convince the public that UFOs were not an important issue any longer.

The panel's conclusions were far-reaching. The Air Force's serious consideration of UFOs was reversed and the old Project Grudge policies were to become dominant once again. UFO reports continued on but the government would not treat the subject with respect in the future as it had in the previous year. Many reports still were found to be mysterious and unexplained, yet they did not prove the hypothesis regarded as so favorable by personnel during the early days of Project Sign - that UFOs were extraterrestrial vehicles from another world.

The battle lines were drawn between the new government position and the public critics of Air Force policy, who were led by the pro-extraterrestrial advocate Major Donald Keyhoe. A continuous debate would carry on for many

years thereafter.

As another attempt to stifle criticism, the Air Force released Project Blue Book Special Report 14 in 1955. It was a revised version of the Batelle Institute statistical study initiated in 1952. The document was clearly released as a debunking effort by the Air Force. However, it contained many ambiguities and contradictions. For example, after concluding that the likelihood of flying saucers being real was very small, the report argued that, as far as the unknowns in the case sample were concerned, the more detailed the report, the more likely the report withstood intense scrutiny and survived as a truly unexplained incident.

Sporadic waves of UFO activity occurred after the decisions of the Robertson Panel, though nothing like that in 1952. Shortly after Sputnik Two was launched by the Soviet Union in November 1957, a UFO wave began in the midwestern U.S., making national headlines. A Coast Guard vessel, the *Sebago*, experienced a spectacular UFO encounter in the Gulf of Mexico when crew members tracked a highly maneuverable object on radar. Security guards at atomic facilities saw huge, egg-shaped objects flying over and hovering near very sensitive sites. Many witnesses saw a UFO fly over and land repeatedly in various sections of Levelland, Texas, often causing the electrical systems of cars to black out.

Through all of this the Air Force maintained a posture of disinterest, considering the seriousness of the situation. If there was concern behind the scenes, they were very careful not to let the public know about it.

The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) became prominent in 1957, under the leadership of Major Keyhoe. Resistance to government UFO policy was now organized. NICAP's board contained many prominent names from the military, government and business fields. All believed that the debunking policy was wrong. Keeping the public ignorant of a mysterious phenomena in our skies was, to NICAP, a travesty. NICAP monitored government statements and responses to public inquiries, exposed deception and misinformation when it was recognized, and issued reports showing that UFOs were most probably high-technology vehicles from another planet.

In 1958, NICAP pressured the government for Congressional hearings, hoping that such public exposure of their evidence for a UFO cover-up would break the monopoly that the Air Force had on analysing sensitive UFO sightings. The Air Force had managed to thwart such scrutiny by assuring the Congress that Project Blue Book's UFO investigations had shown no security threat by the phenomenon and that proof of extraterrestrials was lacking. Vital questions about the Air Force's handling of UFOs were, for the moment, pushed into the background.

In the meantime, debunking became more intense within Project Blue Book. The Air Force was compelled to reduce the percentage of unknowns to virtually zero, no matter how outlandish the explanations were. While the government's frequent public relations errors enhanced the claims of a deliberate Air Force debunking program by organizations like NICAP, such gains were offset by the rise

of contactees, who were persons claiming direct contact with extraterrestrials in flying saucers. The infiltration of this element into serious UFO research would prove to be extremely damaging to efforts in turning about government UFO policy. There was a certain "guilt by association," causing officials to look at every UFO organization as a potential lunatic fringe group to be ignored or made the object of ridicule. Avoiding the pressures that UFO organizations could apply was easy, as long as sightings did not increase and become public as they did in 1952. The UFO scene remained quite inert from 1958 to 1964.

The sighting of a UFO on April 24, 1964, by Socorro, New Mexico policeman Lonnie Zamora was another turning point in official UFO policy. Zamora's story not only became a public issue but, moreover, proved to be a very difficult case to ridicule.

As he chased a car on the outskirts of town, Zamora heard an explosion in the direction of a nearby remote area. Driving out to the site, he saw a strange, metallic, egg-shaped object with four legs sitting on the ground. Two figures, dressed in white coveralls, were seen standing beside the object. Zamora watched both individuals quickly enter the landed UFO, apparently startled by Zamora's arrival. Under the impression that an accident had taken place, he rushed over to the landing site. The UFO began to belch flame from underneath and, as Zamora dove for cover, the object lifted up and moved away. Upon examination of the landing spot, he noticed a patch of burned ground where the flame had struck.

Each investigation of the story, from the Air Force to NICAP to the FBI to the press, found that Zamora was an impeccable witness. Project Blue Book, which now had a reputation of being a debunking group, was stymied. About a year later, writing in a classified intelligence periodical, "Studies in Intelligence," the head of Blue Book, Major Hector Quintanilla, stated that, "This is the best documented case on record, and still we have been unable, in spite of thorough investigation, to find the vehicle or other stimulus that scared Zamora to the point of panic."

It was an impressive statement of support by the Air Force for a UFO incident. By this, the Air Force saw signs that, once again, official UFO debunking was coming into a period when it would be seriously challenged by the difficult-to-kill UFO phenomenon.

1965 saw a sharp increase in the number of sighting reports, particularly during the summer. Air Force dismissals had by now come under escalating criticism by the press. All of the previous debunking efforts had not completely eliminated the UFOs from the mind of the population. Reports by the hundreds filtered into the Air Force, causing the press to issue editorial remarks to the effect that an unknown phenomenon was present, that the Air Force was hiding the facts, and that the public had a right to know the "truth." At one point, an Air Force spokesman had declared that sightings over Oklahoma were merely the belt stars in the constellation Orion, when in fact these stars had not yet risen above the

horizon!

Such errors fueled the media frenzy into a belief that a cover-up was in effect. Something had to be done to alleviate this new situation.

The Air Force asked a panel of six scientists to review the Project Blue Book operation. Called the O'Brien Panel, all of the members were a part of the Air Force's Scientific Advisory Board, except for the inclusion of Dr. Carl Sagan, noted for his advocacy of the existence of intelligent life in the universe. Sagan was not, however, a UFO enthusiast.

The panel met for one day in February 1966, and, after endorsing Project Blue Book's activities, went further to suggest that a detailed study of UFOs be conducted by a university to relieve the Air Force of the burden of the UFO problem. Just a month after the recommendation, UFO sightings exploded again, this time in Michigan.

On March 20, 1966, numerous witnesses reported seeing a large, glowing object in a swampy area near Hillsdale College. Additional sightings were reported the next day in Dexter. Not particularly spectacular when compared to other reports in years past, the press decided to devote a large amount of coverage to these sightings. The reason for this is still unclear except that after a previous year of high activity, and a winter season which historically had been slow for UFO sightings, the press was anxious for the first big UFO blast of the coming warm weather season.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, then Blue Book's scientific consultant, was rushed to Michigan by the Air Force to investigate the sightings, and to give quick answers. At a large press conference in the Detroit Press Club, Hynek suggested the possibility that the sightings were caused by gases from rotting vegetation which, when spontaneously ignited, creates a glowing ball of light. Hynek's speculation became fact for the press, eager to report a quick solution from the Air Force. The Air Force's consultant recalled watching in horror as a reporter circled the phrase "Swamp Gas" in his notes as he ran for a phone. "Swamp Gas" was broadcast to the world as the Air Force's answer to UFO's. The public, the media, and even many political leaders almost universally ridiculed the suggestion, openly laughing at Hynek and the Air Force for offering such an unlikely explanation for the Michigan sightings.

The Air Force's anti-UFO policy at this point had struck bottom and there became greater urgency to pass the UFO problem to a university.

A few days after the "Swamp Gas" affair, the House Armed Services Committee of the U.S. Congress held a one-day hearing on April 5, 1966. Only three people appeared, all Air Force representatives: Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Major Quintanilla of Project Blue Book and Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown. Hynek parted ways with the government at this hearing, advocating that UFOs deserved more serious attention than they had received at the hands of the Air Force. He added

that the Air Force's debunking policy could be an obstacle impeding scientific research.

It was clear that the House committee wanted to see the Air Force implement the O'Brien Panel's recommendation that a university be contracted to do a major UFO study. Air Force Secretary Brown wasted no time after the House committee hearing and urged the Air Force Chief of Staff to begin such a program.

The Air Force approached many universities before finding one interested in participating. On October 7, 1966, the University of Colorado accepted the offer. Dr. Edward U. Condon was appointed to head the project.

Most everyone was pleased that finally a scientific and objective study was to be conducted on UFOs. Advocates of UFOs felt sure that the evidence they had to offer would vindicate their position, while the Air Force was certain that the study would support their stance and defuse the entire UFO controversy. But trouble appeared early in the Condon Committee's existence.

In a speech before the American Chemical Society on January 25, 1967, Dr. Condon expressed his opinion that the government should get out of the UFO business immediately as "there's nothing to it." Other apparently biased remarks were made by Condon, sending a shudder through the UFO individuals and organizations cooperating with the committee. Internal strife among committee members with opposing beliefs about UFO reality caused more problems. Finally, the discovery of a memo written by the Project Administrator, Robert Low, in August 1966, was reported by a staff member in July 1967. The memo defined the problem, as Low saw it, of presenting the UFO study as objective, when, in reality, it consisted of a group of non-believers appearing to be objective but never having any expectation of proving UFO reality. Low described this public visage as a "trick."

When the memo circulated to several scientists in the project, then to outside UFO researchers cooperating with the project, then to the large-circulation Look magazine, the committee's credibility began to fall apart. NICAP and Major Keyhoe, who had a tenuous cooperative agreement with Condon, terminated any future forwarding of sightings for study, feeling that the Air Force was exerting its debunking influence on the study. Condon fired two staff members for leaking the Low memo to outsiders. Condon's own administrative assistant resigned over a lack of confidence in Low's ability to manage.

A flurry of negative public reaction to these events ensued, but it was tempered by the fact that since the committee's final report had not yet been released, many chose to wait until they were able to read it fully. The objectivity of the Condon study was rendered impure by these events. It was a damaging blow to government attempts to reduce the UFO controversy. All that was left was to await the final report and hope that it would be well received.

Ironically, in the midst of this public relations setback, another round of

Congressional hearings were held on July 29, 1968. A number of prominent scientists who had supported UFO reality testified, along with several others against their reality. Overall, the hearing aired a more favorable view on UFOs than in the previous hearing in 1966. Most people were distracted from the hearing by anticipation of the final Condon report. Little came of the presentations for practical purposes.

The report was released to the public early in 1969. Most reporters, intimidated by the sheer size of the report (1485 pages), read only the summary section at the beginning of it, authored by Dr. Condon himself. In it, Condon thoroughly debunked UFO reality and suggested that no scientific benefit could come from a study of the phenomenon. Condon's summary was a crushing rebuke to anyone who even entertained the possibility that UFOs were other than mistakes and hoaxes.

Those who read beyond Condon's summary found a curious thing. Of the ninety-one case histories studied, thirty remained unexplained. This was a figure approximately six times higher than the Air Force's estimate of unknowns from their own study. The evidence in the body of the Condon report argued strongly for the presence of an unexplained phenomenon, yet somehow the press largely ignored such contradictions and, accepting the conclusions of Dr. Condon, effectively stopped reporting on UFOs after that. The Air Force had gotten what it wanted; an excuse to once and for all divest themselves of the obligation to publicly investigate UFOs. Project Blue Book was closed at the end of 1969. Sighting reports dropped drastically for three years.

UFOs returned in 1973 in a wave that rivaled the ones of the past. The government was not responsive to UFO questioning this time. Scientific UFO research, however, gained favor once again. The Center for UFO Studies, headed by the Air Force's former consultant, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, was born in 1973. This was the last great UFO wave that the U.S. would see up to present time.

Research into the UFO phenomenon has reached a crossroads. With this, the 50th anniversary of the modern era of UFO sightings, we continue to debate not so much the reality of UFOs (UFOs, as unknowns, surely are real inasmuch as people report seeing aerial events which they sometimes can not identify) but the answers as to what they are. Are they extraterrestrial vehicles, time machines, passages to parallel universes, living organisms, psychic projections, or merely planets, stars, balloons, aircraft, hallucinations or other mundane things? The crossroads is that after half a century we have not been able to decisively settle the controversy. It churns on year after year, decade after decade and has remained at the very least as one of the most persistent of curiosities in the broad field of phenomenology, my definition of this being the study of transient, superficially inexplicable events.

UFO studies have been dominated by serious, scientifically oriented people trying to make sense of the reports on one end of the spectrum, and on the other end by a far-out, high-strung collection of odd balls, con-men and opportunists. The

rest of us fall somewhere along that line. The vast dichotomy of opinion in a subject barely governed by any rules or regulation has given the public the notion that often the population within UFO research is odder than the phenomenon itself!

Whatever the case of the subject's peculiarities, there are still areas of research well worth pursuing. I had chosen the area which I felt held the most promise for a resolution: government UFO documents and investigations. Why? The reasons are easily argued.

For many years during the time of official U.S. government involvement, 1947-1969, the questionable handling of UFO reports by agencies strongly suggested that information was being hidden from the public. The fact that the information was being hidden says loudly that the information is sensitive and contradicts the official point of view -- that there was nothing to UFOs. Military information about jets being scrambled to chase exotic aircraft which utterly out-performed their pursuers tantalized thinking individuals who consequently could not dismiss the stories out of hand. Leaked reports of photographs, gun camera films, radar trackings and other types of instrument detection argued for a removal of UFOs from an imaginary or psychic realm into a category of harder evidence.

But such hard evidence was not as available in the civilian reports with which the UFO investigators and organizations were accustomed to dealing. The government's reports promised to take the quality level of evidence one step higher. Yet if the information was being withheld, how was one to make it publicly available for study?

Everything changed for research into government documents in 1975 with the advent of the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Suddenly the law, enacted as a reaction to government misconduct during the Vietnam War and most particularly the Nixon "Watergate" scandal, allowed private citizens to access government records with a mere written request, providing that the records did not fall under any of nine categories of exemption that allowed the withholding of papers. Such categories included violations of personal privacy, national security, internal government decision-making processes; etc. Indeed the categories seemed broad enough to allow continued withholding of just about anything.

Prior to this time UFO researchers had to settle for government press releases, reports that were designed for public consumption like the famous Condon Report debunking of UFOs which ended the Air Force's UFO involvement, and tidbits from Project Blue Book investigations which had only recently been made available before the FOIA began.

The new law opened the floodgates to a wide variety of UFO information from many different government agencies.

UFO researchers could not believe their good fortune. They began requesting files

from the Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Air Force, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, and a host of other agencies known to have been involved in the UFO controversy over previous decades.

Large numbers of papers appeared in researchers' mailboxes. Sometimes lawsuits had to be initiated to gain access to withheld and censored documents. The CIA tried to resist releasing their files to the public but, in a headlined court case in 1979, they were ordered to give up nearly 900 pages of records to a UFO organization, Ground Saucer Watch.

The FBI followed with a release of nearly 1700 pages. Other agencies released numerous documents dating back to the dawn of the UFO era.

Several things became clear in reading these newly released files. One was that the documents tended to be low-priority information, with little of it having shown evidence of being classified at high levels. Many former military officers have testified that UFO documents were classified at "Top Secret" levels so it appeared that much work was ahead in working the records from the lower levels to the higher categories. The released papers alluded to other documents which the agencies often did not acknowledge as being in their possession. Also, hundreds of documents were acknowledged as existing but could not be released due to concerns for national security, among other reasons.

Major Keyhoe's claims of cover-up in the early 1950s rang truer than ever before. Much of his information at the time tended to be anecdotal in nature, though still very convincing in a circumstantial way. But he had little access to the documentation that we now have.

If Keyhoe had had the papers we have in this decade, who knows how different the history of the UFO subject might have been in terms of press and public attitudes. Imagine if Keyhoe had the kind of information in the following instance:

A North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) document dated November 11, 1975 said that in October and early November 1975, military personnel at five U.S. and Canadian air bases along the northern border between the two countries had sighted strange objects. The sightings occurred in the proximity of missile control facilities, aircraft runways, and nuclear weapon storage sites where security is extremely sensitive. One sighting at Loring Air Force Base, Maine prompted the Air Force to report that the UFO seen there "demonstrated a clear intent in the weapons storage area," implying intelligent control and clarity of purpose. Whenever strange vehicles appear near buildings storing nuclear devices, and when the military appears powerless to prevent the presence of the vehicle, a national security threat is evident. The perpetrators in this case were never caught, but fortunately there appeared to have been no tampering with the nuclear devices.

Such was not the case however on November 7, 1975, when remote electronic sensors triggered an alarm at the "K-7" nuclear missile silo under the control of Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana. In the launch control area underground two officers noticed the signal and contacted a Sabotage Alert Team (SAT), consisting of anywhere from four to six security men.

As the team drove to the missile site they could see a huge, orange glowing object hovering over K-7. They kept their distance and described a football field-sized disc that illuminated the area. A short time later, as the object rose, radar picked up the UFO. Two F-106 interceptors were scrambled and headed towards K-7 but the UFO had already risen to 200,000 feet where it disappeared from radar. As a witness described the aftermath of the event in a September 1980 issue of Denver magazine, targeting teams and computer specialists were called in to check the missile. When the missile's warhead was examined it was discovered that the targeting figures programmed into the computer had mysteriously changed. The missile was removed from the silo and replaced. Another military source recently related that because of the problem with the missile, it was used as part of a scheduled competition at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California known as the "Olympic Missile Roundup," a contest to determine the best missile launch crew much like the "Top Gun" competition (as depicted in the Hollywood film of the same title) determines the best fighter pilots. The K-7 missile was said to have been refitted and, with a dummy warhead, launched at Kwajelein Atoll in the Pacific to determine the competing missile crew's targeting accuracy. No word on who won.

Or what could Keyhoe have done in the 1950s with this:

The Air Force's former Chief of Staff, General Curtis Le May, in his autobiography "Mission With Le May" (Doubleday, 1965) said that while the bulk of UFO reports were explainable, some could not be dismissed so easily. "There's no question about it," he said. "These were things which we could not tie in with any natural phenomena known to our investigators." This from an individual who was once an overseer of large aspects of the national security structure of the U.S. military.

It is obvious that the government in its public assertions that the UFO phenomenon was not a serious topic and of no concern for national security, had misled observers of the UFO situation for years. Federal mishandling of the public relations aspect of UFOs created suspicions for years that they were hiding the "truth" about them, whatever that may have been. Is there a truth to be discovered?

People who believed UFOs were real were generally inclined to think that they were vehicles of aliens from other planets exploring the Earth. It was not a completely unreasonable thing in which to believe. We know that there is life in the universe, we are an example of it. And since we are now clearly established as a space exploring civilization, having sent hundreds of space vehicles beyond our atmosphere and some to explore other planets, how much of a stretch would it be to imagine that another civilization in space, more advanced than us, could

have mastered interstellar travel and have come to the Earth? In the radio portion of the electromagnetic spectrum of energy the Earth radiates into space quite conspicuously, being probably one of the brightest spots in the galaxy. Surely such a beacon of intelligence could have been detected easily by a similarly talented civilization elsewhere and create a curiosity which could culminate in direct visits and contact. An astonishing variety of life forms exist on planet Earth, some of which we know exist now would not have been believed in the past. Machine intelligence is growing by leaps and bounds. Why not elsewhere?

The catch for this is that we need proof of such a scenario.

Tantalizing but scientifically inconclusive evidence repeatedly has become known in the public sector regarding UFOs over the last half century. Compelling but not decisive. If the UFO situation were as true as the speculations of UFO proponents have suggested for the extraterrestrial hypothesis, then the evidence might lie behind the curtain of secrecy that the government seemed to have established around some aspects of the UFO phenomenon. The lack of candor and misinformation virtually ensured that UFOs would be with us for a long time.

So does the government have proof or not? The answer so far is no. "So far" only because we have not seen all that there is to see of the government's UFO papers. At one time spokesmen insisted that the Project Blue Book files were all that existed on UFOs. Numerous insiders in the military had said otherwise but prior to the freedom of Information Act there was little that could be done to prove it without breaking the law. Since the Act, UFO specialists in government documents have gleaned roughly 10,000 pages of records.

With the passage of time it is expected that more of the older files will be brought into the open, providing that they have not been destroyed already. We know for example that a fire at a government archive in St. Louis in 1973 destroyed a certain number of UFO records from the earliest years of UFO investigations. Copies of raw intelligence gathered by the military are generally destined for destruction by regulation after a relatively short period of time. As an example of this there were a number of times that in attempting to confirm sightings with Federal Aviation Administration radar tapes we had discovered that the tapes were erased as a normal administrative process. In fact it is entirely likely that records that had been released under FOIA, say twenty years ago, no longer exist. Which means that the only copy of a particular government record on UFOs might be in the hands of a private researcher out amongst the multitudes, and if that person says nothing about it, the information could be lost for a long time.

Other records have survived only by the barest of margins. The Air Force in 1952 had subscribed to a clipping service in an effort to upgrade the flow of sighting information to their investigators. The service lasted from April through September of that year and was terminated only because during that particularly active year for the Air Force so much information had been received that there

was no longer time or room to manage it. When the Project Blue Book records were turned over to the National Archives in 1975 the vast clipping file was not there, apparently a victim of time and Air Force record down-sizing.

However by pure chance the matter was revived in correspondence with Dr. Herbert Strentz, dean of the School of Journalism at Drake University. It seems that when Strentz was a graduate student in journalism he had visited Project Blue Book at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio sometime in 1967. During that visit he had noticed a pile of old microfilm that was destined for the trash and had asked about it. He was told that the material was of no use to Blue Book. They asked him if he wanted it. Strentz quickly replied yes. It turned out that the microfilm was a copy of the long-destroyed original 1952 clippings, some 32,000+, along with uncensored copies of old Project Sign case summaries that were sent to scientists for study during the early years of the Air Force's investigations, and hundreds of pages of letters sent to the Air Force following an April 7, 1952 Life magazine article on UFOs with which the Air Force had cooperated. These records were perhaps just hours from total destruction.

FOIA requests now often take months or even years to fulfill. High search fees have been levied, from hundreds of dollars to as much as a quarter of a million dollars. Twice researchers were forced to go to court to obtain documents, once against the CIA in 1979 cited earlier and once against the National Security Agency. The NSA suit was a landmark case in the pursuit of UFO documents. A U.S. District Court reviewed a top secret, twenty-one page affidavit regarding the NSA's withheld UFO documents which at the time amounted to 239 specific papers comprising a mix of administrative material, sightings around the world, and communications and signals intelligence reports (COMINT and SIGINT), i.e. intercepted broadcasts from NSA's monitoring of world communications.

The affidavit was released on May 18, 1982, with more than three-fourths of the document censored. What was the explanation? The court declared in its conclusion that release of the documents "could seriously jeopardize the work of the agency and the security of the United States." The court further determined that "public interest in disclosure is far outweighed by the sensitive nature of the material."

What is the sensitive material? During the late-1990s, the NSA slowly began to lift much of the censorship, revealing the reasons for their reticence at releasing documents.

UFO reports are discussed in some detail and considerable censorship remains. Yet it is clear from the readable portions of the affidavit that it is not so much the release of the UFO reports that is of concern. The concern rested in the details of how those reports were acquired, whether through satellite monitoring, communication intercepts, code breaking; etc. Revealing these facts could seriously compromise U.S. intelligence activities by disclosing locations of monitoring facilities, specific times and targets of monitoring efforts and internal discussions on how to deal with "surprise material," like UFO reports. Under such

circumstances, there may always be UFO reports that will never be made public, fueling conspiracy theories until the end of time.

We have had fifty years to mull over these possibilities. In asserting that the UFO phenomenon is real, the burden of proof lies on those claiming the subject's strangeness. But even if UFOs are proven strange, it doesn't prove an answer. As unusual as the phenomenon has occasionally been, it still wallows in a nether world of fact mixed with fiction.

In all likelihood UFOs will be with us for another fifty years, creating controversy, tantalizing many, angering some and frustrating others. We should be used to it by now. We have had a lot of practice. Now the task should be in testing the best of the information with hard work and common sense, to prevent the mistakes of the past and reduce the noise level in the future.

Barry Greenwood, Stoneham, Mass. 1-22-97

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Cc:
Subject: Re: Roosevelt item

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Grant,

Re Roosevelt: As you may know, FDR apparently had discussed plans to colonize Mars and Venus. How he planned to travel there, I don't know.

Sorry to say I don't have any specific press references for this, but remember reading it several years ago. Curious.

Lou

Date: Sat, 18 Jan 2003 14:38:31 -0500

From: "Grant Cameron" <presidentialufo@presidency.com>

Subject: Re: Roosevelt item

To: "David Rudiak" <DRudiak@earthlink.net>

Cc: robertbarrow@usadatanet.net, "Lucius Farish" <web1f123@webtv.net>

Thanks David

The date is March 22, 1950. The "digest of data" from Fortean Society Magazine says

Mar.22 UP New York. Mrs. Roosevelt invited airline pilots who reported sighting to appear with her on TV.

An archivist at the Roosevelt library is pulling the documents from the LA Air Raid. Some sites have presented the documents but always retyped. I wanted to make sure there was a document, so I filed for it. There is a memo from General Marshall to FDR about the LA incident, and there is a document from Roosevelt to Stimson, (I believe Secretary of War). The Marshall memo was in a one year file