

SECTION IX

THE AIR FORCE INVESTIGATION

Abstract

NICAP contends that the Air Force has practiced an intolerable degree of secrecy and withholding of information in its public policies on the UFO subject, and refuses to allow an independent evaluation of its data. There are two general schools of thought on the reasons for this secrecy:

(1) That the Air Force has obtained significant proof of UFO reality, and is withholding its evidence until the public can be psychologically prepared under a program guided by some higher agency;

(2) That the withholding of information is not because of any special knowledge on the subject, but results more or less unconsciously from red tape, lack of continuity to the UFO project, differences of opinion within the Air Force, etc.

In either case, the secretive public information policies are symptomatic of the general governmental secrecy which has mushroomed since World War II, and must be viewed in that context. Since official secrecy has become so commonplace, almost an accepted way of life, the topic is extremely complex. For the sake of simplicity, this section is presented mostly in outline form:

- A. Background of Government Secrecy
- B. Air Force Regulations & Policies
 - 1. History of the UFO Project
- C. Air Force Statements About Its UFO Investigation/NICAP Rebuttals
- D. Sample UFO Cases Involving Aspects of Secrecy.

A. GOVERNMENT SECRECY

It is a generally conceded fact in Washington that government secrecy, since World War II, has grown by leaps and bounds. Even high-ranking officers in the Pentagon, in testimony to Congress, state that there is considerable over-classification of information. Sometimes it appears to be a case of the tail wagging the dog.

There is no simple solution to this problem, though it should be a matter of concern to anyone who believes in democracy. It is worth examining the structure of this secrecy, to pinpoint some aspects of it which have been uncovered by Congressional investigators, scholars and newsmen.

The Cold War burden plainly has put a severe strain on the traditional American belief in freedom of information. Censors can (and sometimes do) make a case that almost any information released in this technological age is of value to a potential enemy. Often information is withheld in the name of the "public interest." But who defines the "public interest?"

Rep. John E. Moss (D.-Calif.), Chairman of the Government Operations Subcommittee on Government Information, has long been a champion of the public's "right to know." Hearings by his subcommittee over the past several years have brought out many specific instances of unwarranted secrecy, especially by the Executive Branch. The subcommittee was chartered on June 9, 1955. A year later, the parent committee unanimously adopted House Report No. 2947, which included a study of Defense Department secrecy. The report stated:

"The study of the Defense Department so far shows that the informational policies and practices of the Department are the most restrictive--and at the same time the most confused--of any major branch of the Federal Government." [2]

Two recent books indicate that there has been no appreciable change in Defense Department information practices. Clark R.

Mollenhoff, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for Cowles Publications, in his 1963 book Washington Cover-Up, states what he believes is the crux of the problem: ". . . the arbitrary secrecy of 'executive privilege' . . . There would be 'managed news' as long as executive departments and independent regulatory agencies were able to invoke an arbitrary secrecy to prevent the press and Congress from reviewing the record--and as long as newspapers indolently accepted the management." [2]

Power In Washington, by Douglass Cater, also probes Washington "sub-governments" and their influence on government policies. According to reviewer James MacGregor Burns, Cater considers the "military-industrial complex" (so phrased by President Eisenhower) a sub-government. Part of it is "news managers in the Pentagon who try to influence public opinion." [3]

In summary, these aspects of the secrecy brought out by the Moss subcommittee particularly concern us:

* The Defense Department, in practice, claims executive privilege to withhold information from Congress and the public; existing directives leave the decision in specific cases to an arbitrary judgment by the Defense Department.

* Because of over-classification, the public often is not kept properly informed.

* By existing regulations, Defense Department personnel are forced to justify release of information and are not required to justify withholding of it. (A natural desire on the part of individuals to avoid trouble on controversial issues by not releasing information about them results in excessive secrecy).

A more pervasive tendency has developed among the military services to issue reassuring statements, rather than facts; generalized statements putting the best face on the matter (as far as the agency is concerned), rather than useful detail. In short, the concept of "public information" has been perverted to public relations, which tries to put across a favorable idea or image rather than to inform.

B. AIR FORCE REGULATIONS & POLICIES

1. Regulations Governing the UFO Investigation

Air Force Regulation 200-2, "Intelligence; Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs), . . . establishes the responsibility and procedure for reporting information and evidence on [UFOs] and for releasing pertinent information to the general public."

Paragraph 3c, rather than furnishing objective guidelines, biases the investigation by clearly implying that all UFOs are explainable as misidentified conventional objects. (Thus the investigation assumes its own conclusion). Contrary to the oft-repeated public relations announcements about the investigation being "completely objective and scientific," the regulation states what the conclusion of the investigation must be:

"c. Reduction of Percentage of UFO 'Unknowns.' Air Force activities must reduce the percentage of unknowns to the minimum. Analysis thus far has provided explanation for all but a few of the sightings reported. These unexplained sightings are carried statistically as unknowns. If more immediate, detailed objective data on the unknowns had been available, probably these too could have been explained. . . [Due to subjective factors] it is improbable that all of the unknowns can be eliminated."

Paragraph 9 explicitly states that, in the area of occurrence, only explained cases may be released to the public:

"In response to local inquiries resulting from any UFO reported in the vicinity of an Air Force base, information regarding a sighting may be released to the press or the general public by the commander of the Air Force base concerned only if it has been positively identified as a familiar or known object." Follow-up queries about unexplained cases are to be referred to the Office of Information Services in the Pentagon (which seldom releases detailed information on a specific case unless it has been widely publicized).

Paragraph 11 restricts Air Force personnel from publicly discussing UFOs: "Air Force personnel, other than those of the Office of Information Services, will not contact private individuals on UFO cases nor will they discuss their operations and functions with unauthorized persons unless so directed, and then only on a 'need-to-know' basis."

JANAP 146 is a Joint Chiefs of Staff directive: "Communications Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings [CIRVIS] From Airborne and Waterborne Sources." In addition to military aircraft and surface vessels, the directive also applies to civil aircraft under certain conditions.

Chapter II, Section I, paragraph 201 includes, under information to be reported, (1) (c) "Unidentified flying objects."

Section III, "Security: 210. Military and Civilian. a. All persons aware of the contents or existence of a CIRVIS report are governed by the Communications Act of 1934 and amendments thereto, and Espionage Laws. . . The unauthorized transmission or revelation of the contents of CIRVIS reports in any manner is prohibited."

The effect of this directive, relative to UFOs, is to silence even commercial airline pilots cooperating with the intelligence network, once they have made a UFO report through official channels. It is, of course, also binding on all military personnel.

2. Regulations Concerning Release of Information

There are only three classifications of military or national defense information authorized directly by law: Top Secret, Secret and Confidential. The types of information, and procedures of classification, are carefully spelled out. Legitimate security needs clearly necessitate withholding certain types of information from the general public. Theoretically, the public interest is protected by the limitations on the types of information which can be classified.

In practice, military (and other) agencies have adopted other quasi-legal means of withholding additional information from the public for reasons of their own. "Executive privilege" and the so-called "administrative classification" is the gray area of secrecy, where no clear standards delimit the withholding of information. The particular agency itself becomes both judge and jury in deciding what the public ought to know.

Any business (the U.S. Government is the world's largest business organization) may have justifiable reasons for withholding certain types of information beyond those which are clearly concerned with national defense. Personal information which if released might unfairly damage an individual's reputation, for example, might be considered private information. Files of correspondence or personnel records, in most cases, could be considered private information (unless needed for the defense of an individual on trial or for other overriding considerations).

However, there is a great potential for abuse of a system which, in effect, allows arbitrary withholding of government information from the public. To the maximum possible extent, government business should be public business. Clearly, the system is continually abused and "administrative classifications" are used to conceal facts which might embarrass an agency, or which might throw a spotlight on government activities that a significant segment of the public would oppose. The system continues to encroach on the public's right to know what its government is up to.

Worst of all, such pseudo-classifications as "For Official Use Only" are rapidly being given status by default, largely unchallenged by Members of Congress or the press. Many Air Force regulations, for example, (using a free interpretation of Federal Law) authorize Air Force personnel to judge what information they may withhold "in the public interest." About this practice Clark Mollenhoff said, "The broad right of arbitrarily

withholding information is not something that any officials should be permitted to arrogate to themselves." [4]

Air Force Regulation 11-30, "Administrative Practices; Custody, Use and Preservation of DOD [Department of Defense] Official Information Which Requires Protection in the Public Interest."

The euphemistic phrase "in the public interest" is repeated in paragraph 1, which explains the "Reason for Issuing Regulation." Among other things, the regulation is intended to "assure the proper . . . use of official information which in the public interest should not be given general circulation." In spite of outlining some apparently worthy uses of this administrative classification, the regulation nevertheless does give blanket authority to withhold information whenever someone in the Air Force considers it to be "in the public interest." It is difficult to imagine how the public benefits by this arrangement.

Air Force Regulation 11-7, "Administrative Practices; Air Force Relations With Congress."

This regulation goes one step further than AFR 11-30, and claims the authority to withhold "For Official Use Only" information from Congress in some cases.

After stating that most "For Official Use Only" information not given to the public is given to Congress, the regulation continues:

"However, the considerations set forth [in AFR 11-30] which preclude making information available to the public may raise a question, in rare instances, as to whether the particular information requested may be furnished to Congress, even in confidence . . ." This, it must be emphasized, refers to information whose release in no way endangers national security--or else it would be legally classified "Top Secret," "Secret," or "Confidential." This indicates the extent to which the Air Force has taken upon itself the right to decide what the public--and even Congress--should know.

Chronological History of the Air Force UFO Project

[One of the most informative sources regarding the conduct of the UFO investigation is the book Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, (Doubleday, 1956), by Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt, who headed the investigation from September 1951 to September 1953. Page references to this book are indicated after some of the following entries].

Early Investigation

July 1947: The Air Force began investigating UFO reports seriously after sightings by airline pilots, other qualified observers.

September 23, 1947: The Chief of Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) sent a letter to the Air Force Commanding General stating the conclusion of ATIC that UFOs were real, and urging the establishment of a permanent project to analyze future reports. (p. 31)

January 22, 1948: Project "Sign" (popular name "Saucer") established at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to investigate UFO reports.

September 1948: Top Secret "Estimate of the Situation", concluding UFOs were interplanetary, sent from ATIC to Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg. (Report was kicked back for additional proof; later declassified and burned). (ppg. 62-63, 67)

February 11, 1949: Project name changed to "Grudge." Because of internal disagreement about the significance of UFOs, reports were then "evaluated on the premise that UFOs couldn't exist." (ppg. 85-88)

April 27, 1949: Project Saucer report released: About 30% of the sightings investigated to date were said to be explained as conventional objects. An equal number, the report said, probably would be explainable after further probing.

December 27, 1949: Project Grudge report released: Explained away all reports to date as delusions, hysteria, hoaxes and crackpot reports. Announcement that project had disbanded.

Phase Two

1950-51: This period has been called the "Dark Ages" of UFO investigation. Following the Project Grudge report, the project was not disbanded. However, those who believed in a more positive

investigation could not win support for their views--until late in 1951 when the situation was reviewed partly due to public protests.

UFO PROJECT CHIEFS

After reorganization of the UFO project during 1951, it became an organization in its own right, at ATIC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Summer 1951: Lt. Jerry Cummings

Sept. 1951-Sept. 1953: Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt

(Ruppelt's assistants at various times during this period were Lt. Bob Olsson, Lt. Henry Metscher, Lt. Andy Flues, and Lt. Kerry Rothstien. From May to July 1953, Lt. Olsson was acting chief while Ruppelt was away on temporary duty. The position devolved on A/IC Max Futch briefly in July 1953, when Lt. Olsson was discharged).

1954-1956 (approx): Capt. Charles A. Hardin

1957-1959 (approx.): Capt. George Gregory

1959-early 1964: Lt. Col. Robert Friend

Early 1964 to date: Capt. Hector Quintanilla

PENTAGON UFO SPOKESMEN

April 1952-March 1953: Al Chop

1953-1957: Various officers including Capt. Robert White (circa 1955), Maj. Robert F. Spence (circa 1957).

1958-March 1961: Lt. Col. Lawrence J. Tacker

April 1961-January 1962: Maj. William T. Coleman

Feb. 1962-Summer 1963: Maj. Carl R. Hart

Summer 1963 to date: Maj. Maston M. Jacks

September 15, 1951: Lt. Jerry Cummings, and a Lt. Col. from ATIC, were called to Washington to brief a General (and a disgruntled group of industrialists and scientists) about the conduct of the investigation. Received orders to set up a new project. (ppg. 128-130)

September 1951: Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt became chief of the newly revitalized project.

October 27, 1951: New project officially established. (p. 154).

March 1952: Project Grudge had become a full-fledged organization, the "Aerial Phenomena Group." Soon thereafter, the code name was changed to "Blue Book." (p. 176)

April 1952: Al Chop appointed public information officer for UFOs.

Air Force Letter 200-5 gave Project Blue Book authority to cut red tape, contact any Air Force unit in the U.S. without going through channels; provided for wire transmission of reports to ATIC, followed with details via Air Mail.

Life article "Have We Visitors From Space?," inspired by several top officers in the Pentagon. (ppg. 177-178)

May 8, 1952: Capt. Ruppelt and a Lt. Col. from ATIC briefed Air Force Secretary Thomas K. Finletter for one hour. (p. 185)

Mid-June 1952: Capt. Ruppelt briefed General Samford, Director of Intelligence, others; given directive to take further steps to obtain positive identification of UFOs. (ppg. 196-199)

Mid-July 1952: Every Air Force installation in U.S. swamped with UFO reports. (p. 205)

August 1952: Study of UFO maneuvers initiated, to determine whether objects displayed intelligent control. (ppg. 250-251)

November 1952: Panel of four scientists convened at ATIC to make preliminary review of accumulated reports. Recommended convening panel of top scientists. (p. 264)

January 12, 1953: The Air Force (reportedly with the assistance of the Central Intelligence Agency) convened a panel of top scientists to weigh the accumulated evidence. The panel was to decide whether the evidence indicated UFOs were interplanetary, whether it was all explainable, or whether the project should continue and seek better data. (p. 275). A study of UFO maneuvers concluding the objects were interplanetary was presented to the panel by Maj. Dewey Fournet. (p. 285)

January 17, 1953: The conclusions of the scientific panel were not made public at the time. Since then, two conflicting versions have been released:

Conclusions Reported by Ruppelt, 1956

The panel recommended that the UFO project be expanded, the investigative force quadrupled in size and staffed by trained scientists; that tracking instruments be established all over the

country, and that the public be told "every detail of every phase" of the investigation. The scientists believed this program would "dispel any of the mystery" created by military security procedures, and also keep the investigation on a scientific basis. The recommendations were not adopted. (ppg. 293-298)

Summary Released by Air Force, 1958

The panel concluded that UFOs constituted no "direct physical threat to national security," there was no evidence of "foreign artifacts capable of hostile acts," and no "need for the revision of current scientific concepts." The panel recommended "immediate steps to strip the Unidentified Flying Objects of the special status they have been given and the aura of mystery they have unfortunately acquired." The panel suggested "an integrated program designed to reassure the public of the total lack of evidence of inimical forces behind the phenomena."

Phase Three

The 1958 summary issued by the Air Force Office of Public Information--five years after the fact--first released the names of the scientists on the panel: H. P. Robertson, Luis W. Alvarez, Lloyd V. Berkner, S. A. Goudsmit, and Thornton Page.

Exactly what transpired at the conclusion of this meeting is not clear, though it is strongly suggested that the whole story has not been told. If the decision of the panel had been clearly negative, as the 1958 summary implies, there would have been no reason to be so secretive about it. On the contrary, there would have been every reason to make an immediate public announcement.

What is known about the affair is the public manifestation of the UFO project following the meeting. After a period of apparent serious interest in gathering better data (which supports Ruppelt's version of the panel conclusions), the Air Force began debunking UFOs. Since then the Air Force does not admit to having the slightest shred of evidence that anything at all out of the ordinary is taking place. Concurrently, a noticeable public relations policy has been adhered to by the Air Force through the Public Information Office: A policy of public reassurance. Members of Congress or citizens who request current information on the subject are told repeatedly that UFOs do not present any danger, or threat to the national security.

About the same time as the panel meeting, or shortly thereafter, the Air Force (reportedly through its own RAND Corporation) had an independent study conducted. This resulted in the Project Blue Book "Special Report No. 14." What relationship this had to the scientific panel meeting is not known. However, the introduction to the Blue Book report states (p. vii): "The special study which resulted in this report started in 1953. . . the information cut-off date was established as of the end of 1952."

August 26, 1953: AF Regulation 200-2 issued by Secretary of Air Force; procedures for reporting UFOs, restrictions on public discussion.

December 1, 1953: The Air Force announced in Washington it had set up cameras around the country equipped with diffraction gratings to analyze the nature of light from UFOs.

January 6, 1954: Reporters seeking information on UFOs were banned from Wright-Patterson AFB. [Cleveland Press]

February 23, 1954: Scripps-Howard papers said the Air Force had worked out a plan with commercial airline companies to report sightings quickly.

May 15, 1954: General Nathan F. Twining, Air Force Chief of Staff, stated the best brains in the country were working on the UFO problem; Air Force could not explain 10 per cent of the sightings. [Quoted by United Press; Amarillo, Texas].

May 5, 1955: Project Blue Book "Special Report No. 14" declassified.

October 25, 1955: Summary of Blue Book report released to press; linked with statement that Air Force would soon have its own saucer-shaped aircraft, the AVRO disc. (The AVRO disc project subsequently was scrapped without producing a flying model). Reported no evidence that UFOs "constituted a threat to the security of the United States. . ."

1956-1957: UFOs all but faded out of the news. Queries to the Air Force were answered by a "fact sheet" referring back to the 1955 report. A 1957 "fact sheet" stated the unexplained cases had been reduced "from approximately 10% in 1954 to 3%, as of now."

November 1957: When the "flap" of UFO reports began about November 1 [See Section XII; November 1957 Chronology], "fact sheets" were issued on the letterhead of the Department of Defense, Office of Public Affairs. These emphasized the percentages of explained cases, and again the lack of evidence of "a threat to the security of the country."

1958-1959: "Fact sheets" were issued approximately semi-annually reiterating the above position.

Statement by Former Air Force UFO Project Monitor


At the request of Major Keyhoe, I would like to confirm the existence of two USAF documents which were recently denied by an official USAF representative. These are:

1. An intelligence summary on UFOs prepared in 1948 by the organization which later became the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson AFB.
2. An intelligence analysis on specific aspects of UFO data which I prepared in 1952 while acting as UFO program monitor for Headquarters USAF, Washington, D.C.

Since both documents were classified when I last saw them, I am not at liberty to reveal their contents. I would also like to add a qualification about #2: I completed it in rough form just a few hours before my departure from Washington (following my release from active duty) and turned it over to one of my associates in the Directorate of Intelligence. Therefore, I never saw it in its published form. However, since I had prepared it - as well as other reports which I recorded on tape - at the specific request of my Branch and Division Chiefs, I am certain that it was published.

Another word of caution is necessary on the latter document: I prepared it primarily as a weapon for use against the apathy and/or bias on the subject which prevailed in certain official quarters. Although the processes of logic employed would stand up under ordinary circumstances, they become somewhat tenuous and difficult to defend completely when applied to the task in question. The important point should be, therefore, that such a document did exist - not that it did or did not establish anything about UFOs.

There is also a question about the report prepared by the panel of civilian scientists convened in January 1953 to examine the UFO data. I met with this panel during part of its deliberations; this was during the week when I was being processed off active duty. Since I had departed by the time the panel adjourned, I did not see any report which it may have prepared. However, since it was convened for the specific purpose of reviewing all available data and making recommendations on the UFO program, it must necessarily have left some sort of report, undoubtedly written. (I have since been informed that it did, although let me repeat that I never saw it.)


Dewey J. Fournet, Jr.
Baton Rouge, La.
May 4, 1958

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USAF STATEMENTS

BLUE BOOK:
"SCIENTIFIC & OBJECTIVE"
 "Some cases arise which, on the basis of information received, are of a weird and peculiar nature. The objects display erratic movements and phenomenal speeds. Since maneuvers and speeds of this kind cannot be traced directly to aircraft, balloons, or known astronomical sources, it is believed that they are reflections from objects rather than being objects themselves... Reflections may be projected to clouds and haze both from the ground and air. Many things which are common to the sky have highly reflective qualities, such as balloons, aircraft, and clouds." ("Fact sheet," November 1957).

"...the Air Force does not proceed with an investigation unless the sighting is reported directly to the Air Force." (Col. George M. Lockhart, USAF, Congressional Inquiry Division, Office of Legislative Liaison, to Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr., 2-21-63)

"Four frames from the films taken by Mr. Diaz in Venezuela [Dec. 1962--See Section VIII] were forwarded to the Air Force for evaluation. However, the negatives of these frames were not submitted and therefore, without them, it has been impossible to make any investigation." (Maj. Maston M. Jacks, USAF, Public Information Division, Office of Information, to Richard Hack, 12-31-63).

"The images on the photographs which were made by the U.S. Coast Guard on 16 July 1952 at Salem, Mass., were evaluated as being due to a double exposure." (Maj. Carl R. Hart, USAF, Public Information Division, Office of Information, to George D. Fawcett, 2-12-63).

"The Long Beach sighting of November 5, 1957 [See Section XII; Nov. 1957 Chronology] has been evaluated as possible reflections on sheet-ice, from either the sun or from lightning. Also there was a balloon in the area, and there were 10 aircraft in the vicinity. . . ." (Maj. Maston M. Jacks, USAF, Public Information Division, Office of Information, to Herbert S. Taylor, 11-18-63)

REBUTTALS

NICAP: Air Force logic appears to be that, if something is observed which out-performs conventional aircraft and balloons, it must not be a real solid object. The "objective" Air Force investigation denies the possibility that UFOs could maneuver as reported, in effect concluding that all witnesses have been deluded. The hypothesis that UFOs represent a superior technology--and may be space ships--is not even considered. The "investigation" therefore consists of searching for the conventional phenomenon--or phenomena--most nearly resembling the reported UFO. If none is found, complex speculative "light reflection" theories are invoked.

NICAP: A scientific investigation of any phenomenon would set out to gather objective and quantitative data about that phenomenon. It would not ignore potentially valuable data merely because it was not reported through official channels.

NICAP: There is no such thing as negatives of movie film. Upon learning of this statement, NICAP had its adviser in Caracas, Dr. Askold Ladonko, contact Mr. Diaz again. The film was loaned to the Air Force attache with permission to make copies or stills if desired, and was returned intact with no frames missing. Apparently the attache did not have a copy of the film made; just four stills.

"The unidentified flying objects in the photographs taken at Salem, Mass., on July 16, 1952 have been evaluated as light reflections on the window through which the photos were taken." (Maj. Maston M. Jacks, USAF, Public Information Division, Office of Information, to John P. Speights, 8-5-63).

NICAP: A good example of "shotgun" explanation for a sighting which is difficult to explain in conventional terms; in this case, six shiny circular objects making sharp turns and maneuvers. It is obvious guesswork, hardly a "scientific" evaluation. This is one of many similar cases during the November 1957 "flap" which the Air Force lists as "explained."

Re: April 8, 1956 sighting by Capt. Raymond Ryan, American Airlines pilot; "The Air Force concluded that the object viewed during this sighting was the planet Venus." (Air Force "fact sheet", 1963).

"The objects which appeared in the film taken at Great Falls, Montana on 15 August 1950 were identified as F-94 aircraft." (Maj. Carl R. Hart, USAF, Public Information Division, Office of Information, to George D. Fawcett, 2-12-63).

"The Air Technical Intelligence Center reports concerning the Washington Airport Control Center sighting of July 1952 state there were radar blips observed and that they were caused by a temperature inversion." (Maj. Gen. W. P. Fisher, USAF, Director of Legislative Liaison, to Senator Kenneth B. Keating, 6-19-59).

"...the Air Force feels that public hearings would merely give dignity to the subject out of all proportion to which it is entitled. The sensation seekers and the publishers of science fiction would profit most from such hearings, and in the long run we would not accomplish our objective of taking the aura of mystery out of UFOs." (Maj. Gen. W. P. Fisher, USAF, Director of Legislative Liaison, to Senator A.S. "Mike" Monroney, 6-4-59).

"The Air Force has a tremendous task in defending this country against weapon systems which we know exist. To divert more men and money from this mission into a greatly enlarged program for investigation of and defense against UFOs would jeopardize the security of this country against a known threat and would, in our opinion, be grossly imprudent." (Col. Carl M. Nelson, USAF, Congressional Inquiry Division, Office of Legislative Liaison, to Senator Philip A. Hart, 4-8-60).

NICAP: In a taped description of his sighting, Capt. Ryan states that the UFO zoomed through a 90 degree arc from off his wingtip to dead ahead. Control tower operators reported seeing a silhouette of a UFO. [See transcript, Section V]

The F-94 aircraft were observed by the photographer behind him coming in for a landing. Photogrammetric analysis [See Section VIII] states there are "several factors which make such a hypothesis quite strained." Persistence of reflection from alleged aircraft "would require a very rare coincidence of airplane maneuver."

NICAP: Gen. Fisher failed to mention that visual observations often coincided with the unexplained radar blips; that the degree of inversion was insufficient to account for the sightings; and that Project Blue Book classified the sightings as "unknown," contrary to public announcements at the time. [Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, Ruppelt, p. 226; also see Section XII]

NICAP: Nothing would remove the "aura of mystery" about UFOs more rapidly than Congressional hearings. Presumably, the Air Force believes hearings would prove its case. If so, the alleged "myth" of UFOs would be punctured. Sensationalists and opportunists thrive only because of public confusion about UFOs. Hearings could help to establish the facts and clarify the entire picture. Continued refusal to give out detailed information encourages an "aura of mystery."

NICAP: These letters pinpoint the real issue between the Air Force and its scientific critics. No one denies that the Air Force mission is to defend the country against attack, and that this is an important mission. The thinking is clear: UFOs are evaluated in the light of being a potential threat to the country. If preliminary investigation satisfies the Air Force the country is not under attack, "an understandably lower priority is placed on the further evaluation of the sighting." But what about scientific investigation of the reported objects thereafter? The Air Force should not be expected to carry through a job for which it is

October 29, 1953--Lt. Col. F. K. Everest in F-100 Super-Sabre set speed record, 755.149 mph.

October 30, 1953--Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Round, silver object circled at low altitude. [VII]

November 3, 1953--London, England. A huge apparently metallic UFO, "completely circular" and white, was tracked on radar and observed visually through a telescope by the 256th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment. [VIII]

November 12, 1953--Canadian Government announcement of flying saucer observatory (Project Magnet) near Ottawa.

November 14, 1953--Nr. Toledo, Ohio. UFO flashing various colors observed climbing. [VII]

November 23, 1953--Kinross AFB, Michigan. Air Force F-89 vanished while pursuing UFO over Lake Superior. [VIII, IX]

December 1, 1953--Air Force announced in Washington it had set up "flying saucer" cameras around the country equipped with diffraction gratings to analyze nature of UFO light sources.

December 13, 1953--Central Ohio. Rocket-like UFO with white lights at both ends observed by Ground Observer Corps. [VII]

December 16, 1953--Toledo, Ohio. Group of lights changing from red to white, each appearing to revolve. [VII]

December 17, 1953--Sweden. Defense high command ordered a full scale investigation of sightings of a wingless circular object which sped over southern Sweden. [X]

1954

1954--Dayton, Ohio. Air Force Lt. Colonel saw two maneuvering UFOs. [III]

January 1, 1954--Australian Airline pilot saw huge, apparently metallic, elliptical UFO. [V]

January 4, 1954--Quantico, Va. Red revolving or blinking lights, hovering and moving soundlessly at tree-top height reportedly seen for six nights above Marine Corps base. [IV]

January 6, 1954--Cleveland Press headline: "Brass Curtain Hides Flying Saucers." Reporters seeking information were banned from Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

February 13, 1954--Jim G. Lucas of Scripps-Howard, reported that representatives of major airlines would meet in Los Angeles with Military Air Transport Service Intelligence officers to discuss speeding up UFO reporting procedures. "Airline pilots are asked not to discuss their sightings publicly or give them to newspapers," Lucas said.

(In a follow-up report, Feb. 23, Scripps-Howard papers said that "the nation's 8500 commercial airline pilots have been seeing a lot of unusual objects while flying at night, here and overseas." Plans for a detailed reporting system were agreed upon so Air Force jets could quickly investigate. Each airline was to have an "internal security specialist" for liaison between civilian and military organizations.)

February 15, 1954--Dorothy Kilgallen column: "Flying saucers are regarded as of such vital importance that they will be the subject of a special hush-hush meeting of world military heads next summer."

March 1954--Rouen, France. Disc-shaped UFO photographed.

March 24, 1954--Baltimore, Md. Maneuvering formation of UFOs observed by Civil Defense official. [VII]

March 24, 1954--Florida. Marine Corps jet pilot saw round object streak downward, stop, speed away when pursued. [IV]

April 16, 1954--Grand Canyon, Ariz. School superintendent, explorer, watched elongated UFO with "portholes" pass overhead. [VII]

April 26, 1954--Newburyport, Mass. Round UFO making sharp turn observed by architect. [VII]

May 1954--True article, "What Our Air Force Found Out About Flying Saucers"; by Edward J. Ruppelt, former UFO Project Chief.

May 10, 1954--Northern Sweden. Week of UFO sightings investigated by military authorities. Scores of residents reported strange glowing objects maneuvering low over forests.

May 13, 1954--Washington, D. C. Several large glowing objects maneuvered over National Airport for three hours; observed visually and on radar. [VIII]

May 14, 1954--Nr. Dallas, Texas. Marine Corps pilots chased formations of 16 UFOs. [IV]

May 15, 1954--Vienna, Austria. Three discs in formation. [X]

May 24, 1954--Dayton, Ohio. Photo officer and scanner on RB-29 saw and photographed circular UFO below plane. [III]

May 30, 1954--Bainbridge, N. Y. Silvery elliptical UFO with four "portholes" accelerated and shot away. [XII]

June 1, 1954--Nr. Boston, Mass. TWA pilot en route from Paris, control tower operators, saw large white disc. [V]

June 11, 1954--Nr. Baltimore, Md. Huge glowing object seen by GOC observers; alternately hovered, moved rapidly. [VII]

June 23, 1954--Columbus-Vandalia, Ohio. Round white light followed Air National Guard F-51. [V]

June 26, 1954--Idaho Falls, Idaho. Brilliant light source flared up over AEC station, climbed out of sight. [XII]

June 30, 1954--Mobile, Alabama. UFO observed from tower of Brookley AFB, tracked on radar. [VIII]

June 30, 1954--Nr. Oslo, Norway. Two silvery disks observed and photographed from eclipse expedition planes. [VIII]

June 30, 1954--Nr. Goose Bay, Labrador. Airliner crew saw large UFO with smaller satellite objects. [X]

July 3, 1954--Albuquerque, N. M. Nine green spheres sighted visually, tracked on radar. [VIII]

July 8, 1954--Lancashire, England. British astronomer saw a silvery object with 15-20 smaller satellite objects. [II]

July 11, 1954--Hunterdon, Pa. USAF bombers reported a disc. [III]

July 28, 1954--North Atlantic. Dutch ship observed disc with apparent portholes. [XII]

August 28, 1954--Oklahoma City, Okla. Fifteen UFOs in precise triangular formation observed by hundreds of citizens, Tinker AFB radar. [VIII]

August or September, 1954--New York State. Round UFO tracked on radar, plotted across state by Ground Observer Corps. [VII]

September 7, 1954--Origny, France. Hovering luminous disc flared when lights were shone at it. [II]

September 9, 1954--Nelson, N.Z. Hovering disc photographed. [VIII]

September 15, 1954--Bihar, India. Gray disc hovered, emitted smoke and climbed away at high speed. [X]

September 16, 1954--Nr. Roanoke, Va. Shiny, round object buzzed radio tower; transmitter failed to operate properly. [VIII]

September 17, 1954--Rome, Italy. Thousands of citizens, Italian Air Force radar watched disc-like object which departed upwards. [VIII]

September 19, 1954--Danane, French West Africa. Officials watched oval UFO with dome and "searchlights". [X]

September 20, 1954--Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Dark saucer-shaped UFO arced overhead, levelled off and moved into distance. [XII]

October 1954--Cherry Valley, N. Y. Engineer sighted maneuvering disc. [I]

October 3, 1954--Nr. Waben, France. UFO paced car. [II]

October 4, 1954--North Weald, Essex, England. Saturn-shaped disc buzzed RAF Meteor jet. [X]

October 7, 1954--Isles-sur-Suippes, France. UFO shaped like "giant artillery shell" with "portholes"; landing or near-landing case. [XII]

October 22, 1954--Marysville, Ohio. School principal, teacher, 60 students saw silver cigar-shaped UFO with "portholes" hover over school, then speed away; "angel's hair" fell. [VIII]

October 23, 1954--New Yorker magazine. "Letter From Paris" column detailed recent French sightings.

October 24, 1954--Prof. Herman Oberth's American Weekly article, "Flying Saucers Come From A Distant World."

October 24, 1954--Porto Alegre, Brazil. Formation of silver, circular objects sped over Air Force base. [X]

October 25, 1954--Belgrade, Yugoslavia. High speed objects some egg-shaped seen by hundreds. [X]

October 28, 1954--Rome, Italy. Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, American Ambassador, others sighted luminous, round UFO. [X]

Fall 1954--Korea. Marine Corps weather observer saw 7 discs oscillating in formation. [XII]

November 5, 1954--Lookout Point, N.Z. Orange elliptical object with blue "portholes" observed. [XII]

November 12, 1954--Louisville, Ky. Spherical object moved quickly south, hovered for long period. [VIII]

November 21, 1954--Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Crew, passengers of Brazilian airliner saw 19 glowing UFOs. [X]

November 25, 1954--Cordoba, Argentina. Meteorologist, control tower operator at airport watched two hovering luminous objects (official report from Argentine Embassy). [X]

November 26, 1954--Matasquan, N. J. Formation of round objects. (Confidential report from college professor.) [VII]
Millville, N. J. Disc with four body lights. [II]

December 3, 1954--Wilmington, N. C. Civil Aeronautics Administration personnel watched round, yellowish UFO through binoculars. [V]

December 5, 1954--North East, Pa. Domed object with double row of square "ports" hovered low over Lake Erie. [XII]

December 7, 1954--Upington, Cape Province, So. Africa. Meteorologist tracked white hemispherical object with theodolite. [X]

December 15, 1954--Nr. Nowra, Australia. Royal Australian Navy pilot paced by two UFOs, confirmed on radar. [VIII]

December 19, 1954--Vienna, Austria. High-speed UFOs reported. [X]

December 20, 1954--Pontiac, Mich. Red-orange circular UFO, with white glow from "portholes" at front, sped overhead. [XII]

1954 or 1955--Coos Bay, Oregon. District Judge observed maneuvering disc. [VII]

1955

1955--Virginia, nr. Washington, D. C. Navy pilot observed domed disc. [IV]

January 2, 1955--Nr. Punta San Juan, Venezuela. Airliner en route to Maracaibo approached by luminous UFO. [X]

February 2, 1955--Nr. Merida, Venezuela. Aeropost Airlines pilot reported a top-shaped object with "portholes" and central ring paced airliner. [X]

February 11, 1955--Miami to New York. Pan American Airways flight saw two reddish-green objects speed past under wing. [V]

April 22, 1955--Tintinara, Australia. Saturn-shaped UFO made sharp turn, ascended. [XII]

April 24, 1955--Albuquerque, N. Mex. April 23 (AP) Dr. Lincoln LaPaz: "I'm sure the yellow-green fireballs aren't ordinary meteorite falls. I've been observing the skies since 1914, and I've never seen any meteoric fireballs like them."

During the week of April 3-9, five green fireballs were reported in New Mexico and two in northern California. After a number of sightings reported about mid-morning April 5, LaPaz said: "This is a record. We believe we have it narrowed from the many reports to three. But they were seen within a very few minutes of each other. . . ."

May 25, 1955--Alexandra Park, London, England. Circular, luminous object approached B-47, quickly reversed direction and shot away. [II]

June 16, 1955--Eastern U. S. UFOs observed over wide area, jets scrambled. [III]

June 17, 1955--Nr. Adelaide, Australia. Silver oblong UFO viewed through binoculars; hovered; moved away behind clouds as an aircraft neared. [XII]

July 9, 1955--Santa Catalina Channel, Calif. Family aboard boat saw a round cylinder, greyish and white, surrounded by a "haze of fumes." UFO zig-zagged upward, then sped away. [XII]

July 17, 1955--Canton, Ohio. Disc hovered, climbed away as airliner approached. [XII]

July 26, 1955--Lasham, Hants, England. Members of British Gliding Association watched boomerang-shaped object (or flattened triangle) hover above glider then speed away. [XII]

July 26, 1955--Washington, D. C. A brilliant round object with trail 4 or 5 times its own length approached National Airport, stopped, oscillated, and moved off at high speed. Ceiling lights at airport went out when object approached; returned to operation when UFO left. [VIII, XII]

July 29, 1955--Cincinnati, Ohio. Zigzagging UFO made shrill sound. [VII]

August 6, 1955--Cincinnati, Ohio. Oval-shaped UFO observed ascending at high speed. [XII]

August 21, 1955--Chalmette, La. Glowing-white Saturn-shaped object hovered, rotating; turned sideways and shot away. [XII]

August 23, 1955--Cincinnati, Ohio. SAC jets "dogfight" with UFOs first detected by radar. White spheres and discs observed by Ground Observer Corps. [VIII]

August 28, 1955--Yonkers, N. Y. Board of Education official and others saw a white Saturn-shaped object through a telescope. [XII]

October 2, 1955--Akron and Alliance, Ohio. Hovering disc-like UFO observed over wide area. [VII]

October 28, 1955--Galloway, England. Disc with row of blue lights on rim, maneuvered slowly over car on lonely road. [XII]

October 31, 1955--Nr. Auckland, N. Z. Bright object passed National Airlines DC-3. [X]

November 1, 1955--Mojave Desert, Calif. Astronomer observed cigar-shaped UFO and smaller disc. [VI]

November 2, 1955--Williston, Fla. Police, others saw many as six oval-shaped objects in formation. [VII]

November 5, 1955--Cleveland, Ohio. Minister observed elliptical UFO with square "windows". [VII]

November 9, 1955--Philadelphia, Pa. Newspaper photographers and others saw 12 silvery-white round objects in formation. [VII]

November 14, 1955--San Bernardino Mts., Calif. Pilot saw a globe of white light approach plane, blinked landing lights; object blinked in seeming response, reversed course. [V]

November 20, 1955--Oak Ridge, Tenn. Two shiny, elliptical UFOs "like two dirigibles" traveled over restricted area. [IX]

November 23, 1955--Spirit Lake, Iowa. Ground Observer Corps spotters reported a brilliant object which changed color, moved erratically. [VII]

December 6, 1955--Ashfield & Greenfield, Mass. Several people watched a cigar-shaped object with long rows of brilliant, reddish body lights, moving slowly south. [XII]

December 11, 1955--Nr. Jacksonville, Fla. Navy jets in dog-fight with round, reddish UFO. [IV]

December 29, 1955--New Britain, Conn. Shiny object hovered, sped away. [XII]

1956

1956--North Atlantic. Large disc paced Navy transport. [IV]

January 17, 1956--Orangeville, Canada. Disc-shaped UFO seen at close range; rings of light visible on bottom. [XII]

January 22, 1956--Gulf of Mexico, nr. New Orleans. Pan American Airways flight engineer saw a large elongated object, emitting yellow flame or light, pass aircraft from horizon to behind a weather front. [V]

February 17, 1956--Paris, France. Large UFO tracked on radar at Orly Airport, observed by airline pilot as red light source. [VIII]

March 5, 1956--Honolulu, Hawaii. UFO formation photographed. [VIII]

April 8, 1956--Nr. Schenectady, N. Y. American Airlines pilot followed UFO across state. [V, IX]

June 27, 1956--Trieste, Italy. Luminous object hovered, sped away. [XII]

July 19, 1956--Hutchinson, Kansas. Naval Air Station reported tracking "a moving unidentified object" on radar, observed visually by state police as "teardrop shaped" light source. [VIII]

Noticeable maneuvers of UFO "vertically and horizontally over a wide area of the sky" mapped by Wichita Eagle.

July 19, 1956--Phoenix, Ariz. Luminous round object hovered, sped away. [XII]

July 29, 1956--Pasadena, Calif. Hovering/speeding light seen by Ground Observer Corps, tracked on radar. [VII]

August 1956--Boulder City, Nevada. Research technician observed formation of five flat, circular UFOs. [VI]

August 8-19, 1956--Connecticut. Concentration of sightings over 12-day period. Retired fire department engineer in Hartford saw an oblong UFO with halo (August 8); an egg-shaped UFO was seen over West Redding (August 11); unidentified white lights reported over West Hartford by Ground Observer Corps (August 14);

August 19, 1956--Newington, Conn. Fiery object made turn, dimmed, window-like markings became visible. [XII]

August 20, 1956--Citrus Heights, Calif. Man & wife saw 25 or more bright, Saturn-like UFOs in a rough semi-circle formation. [XII]

August 21, 1956--Wyoming-Montana. Dumbbell-shaped UFOs approached plane. [VII]