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PART THREE
AIR FORCE UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT REPORT

The Air Force investigation and analysis of unidentified flying object sightings over the United States is known as Project Blue Book. This program is related directly to the Air Force's responsibility for the role in the defense of the United States. The air defense role is provided into four phases - Detection, Identification, Interception, and Destruction (if national security is threatened). The UFO investigation effort falls under the second of these four phases.

The Air Force interest in UFO's is three-fold: first, as a possible threat to the security of the United States and the Forces abroad; to determine the technical or scientific characteristics of any such unidentified flying objects; and third, to explain or identify all sightings.

The Air Force is often asked just what is an unidentified flying object? It is any airborne object which by performance, aerodynamic characteristics, or unusual features, does not conform to known aircraft or missiles, balloons, blimps, gliders, parachutes, aircraft navigation and communications beacons, astronomical bodies or phenomena, jet engine exhaust, condensation trails or known meteorological phenomena, and remains unidentified long enough to be reported.

The initial investigation of an unidentified flying object sighting is the responsibility of the nearest Air Force unit in the area of the sighting. If this organization cannot identify the object, the sighting and results of the preliminary investigation are reported to Office of Aerial Phenomena for further investigation and evaluation. With this move, the responsibility for release of information regarding the sighting is transferred to U. S. Air Force Headquarters. The Office of Aerial Phenomena is part of the Air Force's research and development arm known as the Air Force Systems Command. Each case is objectively and scientifically analyzed without regard to the outcome. If necessary, as in many cases, part of all of the scientific disciplines available to the Air Force can be invoked to assist the office in arriving at a conclusion. This is also true of the many facilities available in the Air Force, such as materials laboratories where many of the parts of missiles and space vehicles are tested. Other government facilities outside the Air Force are also utilized from time to time.

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