

Condon To Head UFO Study

The Air Force, beset for years by charges that it considers reports of unidentified flying objects to have a psychiatric rather than an aerodynamic basis, took steps last week to establish what it hopes will be regarded as an impeccably objective scientific investigation of the UFO issue. It announced that the distinguished physicist Edward U. Condon, who is noted for speaking his mind, has agreed to serve as scientific director of a far-ranging, no-strings UFO inquiry backed by \$313,000 of Air Force money. The study, under contract from the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, will be centered at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where Condon, 64, is professor of physics and astrophysics and a fellow of the Joint Institute for Laboratory Astrophysics.

Condon, who declined to work at Los Alamos during World War II because of what he considered stifling and unnecessary security arrangements, served as director of the National Bureau of Standards from 1945 to 1951. During that time he was attacked by the House Un-American Activities Committee as "one of the weakest links in our atomic security," a charge that caused widespread indignation throughout the scientific community. In 1954, while he was director of research and development for Corning Glass Works, the Navy suspended his security clearance after he had been cleared by three government agencies. Condon publicly denounced the procedure and, rather than reapply for a clearance, resigned from Corning. He later

assailed the Eisenhower administration for "callous indifference" to political attacks on scientists.

Condon was president of the American Physical Society in 1946 and president of the AAAS in 1953. Prior to joining the Colorado faculty, in 1964, he was professor of physics at Washington University, St. Louis.

Associated with him in the UFO study will be Franklin E. Roach, an astrophysicist and air glow specialist on the staff of the Environmental Science Services Administration, Boulder, and Stuart W. Cook, chairman of the Colorado psychology department. Cooperation will be sought from other institutions, and, as a final certification of scientific purity, the National Academy of Sciences will review the results of the study.

One of the first steps will be a conference around mid-November in Boulder at which Air Force officials will brief Condon and his associates on earlier UFO reports and investigations. It is hoped that detailed plans for the new study can be formulated by the beginning of February.

In connection with the study, the University announced that "the Air Force has given assurances that all information in its possession which bears on the subject will be made available to the University investigators. The University will be given everything, not merely that which it requests." The contract for the investigation is for 15 months, but the Air Force said the study may be extended if necessary.—D.S.G.



Edward U. Condon

Drawing at right by Alan Dunn; © 1966
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