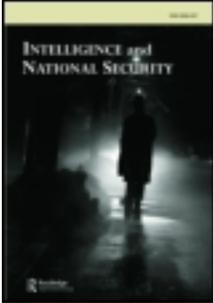


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UFOs and the US Intelligence Community

CHARLES A. ZIEGLER

UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) phenomena have been a prominent feature of the cultural landscape in the US for the past half century. Throughout this entire period, US intelligence agencies have been involved in one way or another with these phenomena. This article describes how, as an unintended consequence, that involvement has fostered public acceptance of the belief that some UFOs are spacecraft from another world.

In 1896–97, sightings of mysterious aerial vehicles, that in modern parlance would be called ‘unidentified flying objects’ or UFOs, were widely reported throughout the western half of the US. Most observers thought they had seen airships that had been invented and developed in secret, although a few held that the craft were from another planet. Scientists of the day, however, attributed the reports to misidentified astronomical bodies or to hoaxes, and that skeptical view appears to have been adopted generally. The wave of sightings was short lived (about six months) and left no lasting impression on the public or the culture.

In contrast, what UFO historian David Jacobs calls ‘the modern era of sightings in the United States’ has endured for half a century and UFO reports have become, by any standard, a significant aspect of the nation’s contemporary culture.¹ The era began with the Kenneth Arnold sighting on 24 June 1947. Arnold, a private pilot, avowedly saw nine rapidly moving disc-like objects while flying his light plane near Mount Rainier, Washington state. The incident sparked a media furor and in the weeks that followed dozens of similar sightings of ‘flying saucers’ (a term coined by reporters) were publicized in newspapers throughout the country.²

The initial public reaction to the wave of sightings that followed Arnold’s report was similar to that which occurred in the 1890s. An August 1947 Gallup Poll indicates that almost all Americans attributed the reports to illusions, hoaxes, misinterpreted conventional phenomena or secret military weapons. Some newspapers suggested that the sightings might involve visitants from another planet, but the poll reveals that few people thought of them in such terms. Unlike the 1890s, however, the wave of sightings which commenced in 1947 did not end within six months. Over

300 reports were recorded in 1948–49. Nevertheless, despite continuing speculation by some commentators about extraterrestrial visitants, the results of a 1950 Gallup Poll were essentially the same as those obtained in 1947 in that only a few percent of Americans thought the reported objects were something from another planet.³

In the decades that followed the 1947–49 sightings two phenomena occurred which were conspicuously absent in the decades following the 1896–97 wave: first, sightings of UFOs continued to be reported (and publicized) year after year after year and, second, public opinion about the nature of UFOs changed dramatically over time. For example, polls in 1985, 1988 and 1990 consistently show that slightly over 50 per cent of adult Americans avowedly believe that some UFOs are spacecraft from an extraterrestrial civilization.⁴

One explanation for these two phenomena is based on the extraterrestrial hypothesis: alien spacecraft visited the earth briefly in the 1890s, returned in the 1940s, and have been dropping by frequently ever since. When such visits occur, the publicity engendered by a few genuine sightings of these craft triggers a wave of UFO reports from a public preconditioned to see mysterious flying objects everywhere. Thus, as investigations have repeatedly demonstrated, most (but not all) reports can be shown to have mundane causes. The brevity of the alien visitation in the 1890s allowed all of the reports to be dismissed as aberrant but, because visits became more frequent after 1947, enough truly puzzling UFO reports have accumulated over the years to convince a majority of Americans that some UFOs are alien spacecraft.

An alternative explanation (*sans* extraterrestrials) is that the two phenomena are interrelated: belief in alien visitations prompts sightings and, in an ever-widening circle of media-driven public credulity, sightings foster belief. These two mutually reinforcing phenomena began to occur after the 1947–49 sightings, but not after those of 1896–97, because they are attributable to the combined effect of technological, social, and political factors that did not exist in the decades following the 1890s, but were increasingly operant after the 1940s. Among the most obvious factors are: the advent of human space flight, the vast increase in media capability (and motivation) to influence public opinion in ways favoring the extraterrestrial hypothesis, and a precipitous decline of public confidence in government.

The manner in which these and other factors have conspired to produce the change in public opinion revealed by the polls has been ably discussed by UFO historians and will not be elaborated on here.⁵ Instead, my purpose is to describe a contributing factor that has received little emphasis – that is, the UFO involvement of US intelligence agencies which, as an unintended consequence, created much of the evidence adduced by proponents of the

extraterrestrial hypothesis to support their claim that some UFOs are spacecraft from a far world. In documenting that involvement I will focus on both the policies of US intelligence agencies and the UFO-related activities of specific members or former members of those agencies.

THE ROSWELL INCIDENT

The first link between intelligence and the extraterrestrial explanation of UFOs was forged only two weeks after the Arnold report, when the publicity surrounding the many sightings that followed in its wake had peaked. On 7 July 1947, authorities at Roswell Army Air Field (RAAF) in New Mexico were informed that some unusual wreckage had been found by a local rancher who thought it might be the remains of one of the flying saucers he had read about in the newspapers. The base intelligence officer, Major Jesse Marcel, accompanied by the head of the counterintelligence unit, Captain Sheridan Cavitt, went to the ranch and collected the debris. Cavitt later recalled that, at the time, it was obvious to him that they had recovered the remains of some kind of balloon-borne meteorological device.⁶ That conclusion seems plausible since the rancher who found the wreckage described it as 'rubber strips, tinfoil, a rather tough paper, and sticks'.⁷

Major Marcel, however, had reached a different conclusion and he made sure his view was well publicized. The headline of the local newspaper on the following day read: RAAF CAPTURES FLYING SAUCER. The accompanying article stated that, 'according to information released...over the authority of Major J. A. Marcel, intelligence officer, the disc was recovered on a ranch in the Roswell vicinity'. And it went on to say that, after inspection, the recovered material 'was flown to higher headquarters'.⁸

When the wreckage arrived at the regional headquarters of Brigadier General Roger Ramey, it was immediately identified by a member of his meteorological staff, Warrant Officer Irving Newton, as the remains of a radar target (or reflector) and the weather balloon that carried it aloft. It is noteworthy that Marcel attempted to persuade Newton that the debris was from an alien spacecraft. According to Newton's later testimony, 'While I was examining the debris, Major Marcel was picking up pieces of the target sticks and trying to convince me that some notations on the sticks were alien writings'.⁹ Newton found Marcel's comments unpersuasive, and that evening General Ramey announced on a radio newscast that the alleged flying saucer was actually the 'remnant of a weather balloon and radar reflector'.¹⁰ The following day, newspapers around the country carried headlines such as: RAMEY EMPTIES SAUCER. The historical Roswell incident faded quickly from public memory and entered the limbo of

overpublicized non-events where it remained for the next 30 years. During this period, except for a few obscure references, it was never again mentioned in the literature of the 'UFO community' (constituted by people who share a common interest in UFOs and who participate in activities that support and promote their avowed belief in the extraterrestrial hypothesis). The Roswell incident reappeared in that literature only after its transfiguration into a tale that became central to the belief structure of the UFO community, a transfiguration that was initiated in 1978 by ex-Major Jesse Marcel.

In retrospect, Marcel's actions in 1947 strongly suggest that he was then among the very few Americans who thought flying saucers were alien spacecraft. He was perhaps one of the first intelligence officers to hold that view, but by no means the last. As will be seen, the UFO-related activities of Marcel and some like-minded members of the intelligence agencies, during and after their active service, would prove to have a profound effect on the controversy over the nature of UFOs that began in 1950 and has continued to the present day.

SIGN, GRUDGE AND BLUE BOOK

The first official word on flying saucers, as enunciated by an Army Air Force spokesman early in July 1947, was that they were misidentified natural phenomena.¹¹ A few days later, however, authorities became alarmed by UFO reports from pilots and other seemingly qualified observers, and ordered the Air Materiel Command (AMC) to investigate. On 23 September, AMC's commander, Lieutenant General Nathan Twining, reported to the head of the newly independent Air Force that the findings of AMC's Technical Intelligence Division (TID) indicated that the sightings were based on 'something real and not visionary or fictitious'.¹² He noted that, although some UFO reports may have been caused by natural phenomena, it was possible that others may have been due to a domestic secret project of which the Air Force was unaware or to a novel foreign aircraft. Because of the latter possibility, he recommended the creation of a permanent project to investigate UFO reports. Twining's suggestion was approved and a classified project, code named Sign, became operational on 22 January 1948 under the aegis of TID (later ATIC or Air Technical Intelligence Center).

At the time, there was ample reason to initiate such a project. Indeed, there were recent precedents that preconditioned intelligence analysts to avoid dismissing UFO sightings without first eliminating the possibility that they were attributable to a US secret project and then ascertaining whether or not they were foreign aircraft of unusual design. The possibility of a domestic project unknown even to high-ranking officials had many

precedents, most notably the wartime construction of the atomic bomb. The possibility that the sightings involved a novel foreign aircraft flying over the US for sinister purposes had its precedent in the wartime experience of military intelligence with Japanese 'balloon bombers.'¹³ In 1944–45, intelligence analysts had not ignored reports of mysterious objects seen in the sky and prompt investigation had revealed that the US was being attacked by a hitherto unsuspected aerial weapon. The likelihood that the 1947 sightings might also portend a foreign threat was reflected in the official purpose of Project Sign which was to ascertain the national security implications of UFO reports.

Project Sign personnel soon found that while most sightings were explainable as hoaxes or misperceptions of conventional phenomena, some reported objects appeared to be unidentifiable aerial vehicles whose unusual flight characteristics precluded their being explained as part of any domestic secret project. The possibility that such sightings involved innovative foreign (possibly Soviet) aircraft was also rejected for various military and technical reasons. Thus, a small residue of UFO reports remained unexplained.

Sign personnel were split on how to categorize this residue. Some believed such reports did not contain sufficient information to arrive at any explanation, but that if more information were available they would prove to be due to the same prosaic causes that characterized the explained reports. Others, however, held a different view. According to Captain Edward Ruppelt, who later headed the UFO project, some Sign analysts 'were convinced that UFOs existed and that only some unknown race with a highly developed state of technology would build such vehicles'. He goes on to say that those who held that view prevailed and Project Sign produced a Top Secret document entitled 'Estimate of the Situation' in which 'the UFOs were the situation; the estimate was that they were interplanetary!'¹⁴

The evidence for that startling conclusion rested entirely on those few UFO reports that analysts could not explain in terms of terrestrial aircraft of advanced design or misidentified natural phenomena, but were nonetheless regarded as highly credible. Most of the cited reports were by military pilots.¹⁵ Analysts gave such reports great credence because they assumed that the professional training and experience of pilots somehow qualified them as accurate observers of unusual aerial phenomena. That questionable assumption was not shared by Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt Vandenberg, for when a draft of the 'Estimate' reached his desk, he promptly rejected it on the basis that the evidence cited was insufficient to warrant the conclusion put forth. By ensuring the 'Estimate' did not become an official report Vandenberg apparently thought he had consigned it to oblivion, but it would later resurface and seriously undermine Air Force credibility regarding UFOs.

Chastened by the rebuff from on high, the Sign staff produced another secret (and final) report which was officially approved. In that report Sign analysts suggested various ways of accounting for the residue of unexplained reports, including the extraterrestrial hypothesis. But they admitted that their comments 'on the possible existence of space ships from another planet ... have been largely conjecture'. And in an appendix that explored further the extraterrestrial hypothesis, it was concluded that 'although visits from outer space are deemed possible, they are believed to be very unlikely'. The report recommended that future activity on the project be carried on 'at the minimal level' and be terminated 'if and when a sufficient number of incidents are solved to indicate that these sightings do not represent a threat to the security of the nation'.¹⁶

In April 1949, the Air Force issued a press release, partly based on Project Sign's final report, in which it was admitted that a small percentage of UFO reports remained unexplained. 'Sign' was terminated, but the project was continued with a new staff under the codename 'Grudge'. In December, a report on the findings of 'Grudge' was made public in which *all* UFO sightings were explained.¹⁷ The contradictory results of 'Sign' and 'Grudge' were interpreted by many in the press as an attempted cover-up, a notion promulgated by a freelance writer, Donald Keyhoe, in magazines and a 1950 book *The Flying Saucers are Real*. Later, Keyhoe would carve out a new career for himself as spokesman and leader of the then embryonic UFO community.

In December 1949, the Air Force announced the termination of 'Grudge', but it appears that it was continued from January 1950 to September 1951 at 'the minimum level' recommended by the Sign final report. Early in September 1951, a two-day wave of sightings, including radar signals and visual observations by military pilots, occurred at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. The concern of authorities about UFOs was reawakened by the seeming credibility of the observers. The Air Force decided to revitalize 'Grudge' and a new officer, Captain Edward Ruppelt, was assigned to spearhead the effort. Ruppelt introduced more rigor into 'Grudge's' analytical procedures and the Fort Monmouth UFO reports were among the first he investigated. In view of the consternation they had created it is somewhat ironical to record that he found three of the four reports to contain enough information to allow them to be readily explained. The radar signals had been misinterpreted and the flying saucers reported by the pilots were balloons (an outcome contra to assumptions about the reliability of pilots' observations). Impressed by Ruppelt's performance, the Air Force upgraded the UFO project to the status of a formal organization within ATIC, called Blue Book. Major Dewey Fournet was assigned to work with Ruppelt as the Pentagon's liaison officer.

In what would eventually prove to be a fateful move, Ruppelt named J. Allen Hynek, an Ohio State University astronomer, as his chief consultant (in later years Hynek would capitalize on his status as a former Air Force consultant to become the guru of the UFO community). In the early 1950s Hynek, Fournet and Ruppelt appear to have adopted an objective approach to the investigation of UFO reports. Nevertheless, they became bemused, like some of their predecessors, by the small residue of unexplained reports made by individuals whose professional backgrounds were presumed to make them competent, hence credible, observers. The later writings of both Hynek and Ruppelt strongly suggest that, as the number of unexplained UFO reports by putatively credible observers mounted, it seemed increasingly probable to them that such reports involved alien spacecraft. It also appears that other intelligence officers, not associated with Blue Book, held that view.

For example, Ruppelt says that, in June 1952, he attended a meeting chaired by Major General John Samford, Air Force Director of Intelligence, during which a member of Samford's staff expressed the conviction that some UFOs were extraterrestrial visitants and others present thought that idea worthy of serious consideration.¹⁸ In July 1952, General Samford held a press conference in response to media interest in a recent wave of UFO reports from Washington DC. He said that, while the causes of most UFO sightings were understood, the Air Force remained concerned about the small residue of unexplained reports, 'that come from credible observers of relatively incredible things'.¹⁹ His remark summed up in a catchy 'sound bite' the basic argument put forth by Keyhoe and other proponents of the extraterrestrial hypothesis. According to UFO historian Phillip Klass, 'this phrase would become the cornerstone of UFO-proponents' argumentation.'²⁰

At that press conference Samford made another comment that would have significant repercussions. He indicated that the Air Force had no reason to classify UFO reports. That remark prompted Keyhoe to ask Al Chop, the Pentagon UFO information officer, for numerous classified UFO reports; a request that was routinely denied by the Office of Information. But Keyhoe persisted and, according to Jacobs,

Chop, who was leaning toward the extraterrestrial hypothesis, asked Dewey Fournet to help. Fournet, who also tended toward the extraterrestrial theory, went to Ruppelt and had all the sightings that Keyhoe requested declassified and turned over to him. With these sightings, Keyhoe had enough information for his new book.²¹

That 1953 book, *Flying Saucers From Outer Space*, became one of the most influential early books on UFOs (over half-a-million were sold). In it,

Keyhoe claimed that UFO reports obtained directly from Air Force files showed that some UFOs were alien spacecraft and that the government knew it. This 'evidence' validated the accusation of a cover-up made in his 1950 book. He also claimed there were Air Force officers who believed in the extraterrestrial hypothesis, but feared the effects of a public admission. The book thus laid the foundation for beliefs about the alien nature of UFOs and a government cover-up that have remained part of the belief structure of the UFO community to the present day.

THE CIA BECOMES INVOLVED

The wave of Washington sightings that prompted Samford's press conference also attracted the attention of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which had heretofore evinced little interest in UFOs. The agency produced three briefing papers in August 1952 whose purpose, as stated in the first paper, was 'to make an evaluation of the Air Force study [of UFOs]...and to try to reach some conclusions as to the intelligence implications of the problem - if any'.²²

The second paper was an overview of Air Force explanations for the sightings, including psychological explanations. Regarding the latter, the Grudge report had concluded that 'there are sufficient psychological explanations for the reports of unidentified flying objects to provide plausible explanations for reports not otherwise explainable'.²³ The CIA briefing paper described various UFO incidents that aptly illustrated that conclusion.

For example, one such incident was witnessed by the medical staff at an Air Force base in Ohio, including the senior psychologist. The sighted objects were described as 'violently maneuvering "saucers" of various shapes and colors'. The pilot of a plane sent aloft to intercept the objects was able to unambiguously identify them as a cluster of three Skyhook balloons known to have been launched earlier. But the witnesses turned in a report stating that the pilot must have been mistaken and that 'the sighting had been of some other unknown origin'.²⁴ Had this sighting not occurred over an air base where a plane could be deployed to identify the objects, it would have been logged as an unexplained report made by witnesses who were utterly convinced they had seen flying saucers. Their report, moreover, would have been assigned high credibility because multiple witnesses were involved and because of the professional scientific background of the observers.

The third paper dealt with the intelligence implications of UFO reports. In the context of the Cold War, the CIA was concerned by the possibility (originally raised by the Air Force) that UFO sightings might be used by the

Soviets as a psychological warfare weapon. The paper noted that the US air warning system depended on a combination of radar and visual observation. Thus, by coordinating an attack with a wave of UFO sightings, the Soviets could overwhelm the system with a flood of false reports. The paper ended by stating, 'the Air Force study is valid', but that further investigation, particularly of the psychological warfare possibilities, was needed.²⁵

At its 4 December 1952 meeting, the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred with a CIA proposal to establish a panel of consultants to review and appraise UFO evidence in the light of pertinent scientific theories. The agency retained H. P. Robertson, a California Institute of Technology physicist with experience in intelligence, to recruit the consultants. He quickly assembled a panel of scientific luminaries: Luis Alvarez, Samuel Goudsmit, Lloyd Berkner and Thornton Page. Frederick Durant and J. Allen Hynek were named as associate members. Durant became the secretary of the 'Robertson Panel', as it became known, and prepared the report on its findings.

The panel met from 14 to 17 January 1953 to review Air Force UFO data and to hear briefings. One of the briefing officers was Major Dewey Fournet, whose presentation confirmed the fact that alien visitations were being given serious consideration by Blue Book. Fournet gave a paper on cases involving UFO maneuvers for which he had concluded that the extraterrestrial hypothesis was the most likely explanation. After discussion, the panel rejected that conclusion because more prosaic explanations had been suggested for some of the cases and the sightings in the remainder were so brief that the visual impression was suspect.²⁶

Those UFO reports that ATIC believed were among the best documented but least well understood cases were examined by the panel. It found that mundane explanations could be adduced for most of the sightings and that 'it could be induced (given additional data) that other cases could be explained in a similar manner'. Accordingly, the panel concluded that there was 'no residuum of cases which indicates phenomena which are attributable to foreign artifacts capable of hostile acts'. Although UFOs were not seen as a direct threat, the panelists concurred with those intelligence officers who argued that it was possible for a hostile nation to exploit UFO reports by using them to clog the communication channels of the air defense system or to create a harmful distrust of government. To counter those possibilities, they recommended that the government take steps to strip UFOs 'of the special status and mystery they have unfortunately acquired' and to educate the public to recognize 'true indicators of hostile intent or actions'.²⁷

The Robertson Report and all CIA documents on UFOs were classified. And one of the agency's division heads urged that 'no indication of CIA

interest [in UFOs] ... reach the press or the public'.²⁸ He feared that the agency's legitimate intelligence concerns about UFOs would be misinterpreted as evidence in support of the extraterrestrial hypothesis, a fear that future events would amply justify.

INTELLIGENCE INVOLVEMENT AFTER 1953

The year 1953 represents a watershed in the official stance on UFOs. In 1947–48, authorities shared the public's uncertainty about the nature of UFOs. The extraterrestrial hypothesis, although considered improbable, was included within the range of official speculation. By the end of 1948, that range had begun to narrow, as evidenced by Vandenberg's veto of the 'Estimate'. And in 1953, Air Force and CIA leaders narrowed it further by accepting the Robertson Panel's conclusions and recommendations. A new official stance was adopted incorporating the notion that all UFO reports had mundane causes and unexplained sightings were merely those for which the attribution of such causes was precluded by the lack of sufficient information. As part of that stance, UFO reports were perceived as a potential psychological warfare weapon, but the CIA was content to let the Air Force handle that aspect of the UFO problem. Indeed, CIA historian Gerald Haines claims that 'after the report of the Robertson panel, Agency officials put the entire issue of UFOs on the back burner'.²⁹

In May 1953, the CIA's Physics and Electronics Division was given the task of maintaining current knowledge of UFOs. The division chief responded by saying that, except for periodic review, 'the [UFO] project will be considered inactive'.³⁰ In December 1953, he wrote a summary of the degree of UFO interest at various intelligence agencies. He noted that CIA was merely maintaining an awareness of ATIC's activities; the Office of Naval Intelligence was devoting a small part of one analyst's time to UFO reports; and Army intelligence had essentially no interest in UFOs. His description of the level of UFO-related activity at these agencies would remain applicable in the decades that followed.³¹

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National Security Agency (NSA), and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) also displayed little interest in UFOs, although over the years they produced some UFO-related documents (later declassified). This documentation does not suggest that they were investigating UFOs *per se*. Rather, it resulted largely from the normal investigatory activities of these agencies. For example, the Air Force, in exploring the possibility that the Soviets might use UFO reports as a psychological weapon, called on the FBI for background security checks of certain individuals and organizations involved in the UFO movement. As part of the same research, the Air Force asked NSA and DIA for information

about UFOs reported in the USSR and other foreign nations. Similarly, although there was no formal UFO project within the CIA, the agency produced documents during the 1970s and 1980s on certain counter-intelligence aspects of UFOs such as the possibility that the Soviets might use UFO groups to obtain information about stealth aircraft.

In sum, apart from ATIC, the UFO-related activities of other agencies in the US intelligence community were purely nominal after 1953. And within ATIC, support for such activity declined. By the end of 1953, key officers who had regarded the extraterrestrial hypothesis as a possible explanation for some UFO reports – Ruppelt, Fournet and Chop – had left government service. Hynek soldiered on as Blue Book's consultant. But he was afraid to speak out against the Robertson Panel's findings and the new official stance on UFOs because, according to Jacobs (who interviewed Hynek in 1972), 'he would have jeopardized his standings with the Air Force and the astronomical community'.³²

Blue Book, in accord with the Robertson Panel's recommendations, thus became largely a public relations effort to convince the American people that UFOs were explainable in prosaic terms. To that end, Air Force regulation 200-2 was issued late in 1953. It prohibited the release of any Air Force information on a sighting until it could be explained. Although it was motivated by the goal set forth by the Robertson Panel of stripping the aura of mystery from UFO reports, to proponents of the extraterrestrial hypothesis 200-2 would become a 'smoking gun' pointing to a government cover-up.

Perhaps the most damning evidence in the eyes of Keyhoe and other members of the UFO community was the continuing policy of secrecy that cloaked all aspects of the government's UFO activities. Indeed, from 1947 to 1956, the only official information about these activities was that provided by Air Force press releases, the Grudge report, and the UFO reports given to Keyhoe. In other words, the government had been able to control the flow of information about its UFO activities. This meant that the claims about such activities made by Keyhoe and others who promoted the cover-up thesis lacked authoritative confirmation. That situation ended in 1956 when ex-Captain Ruppelt became the first, but not the last, of the 'whistleblowers' (i.e., former intelligence officers who, in interviews, articles or books, purportedly describe hitherto hidden UFO-related government activities in a way that deprecates or contradicts the official stance on UFOs and lends credence to the extraterrestrial hypothesis and the cover-up theory).

In a guarded manner that apparently circumvented security regulations, Ruppelt revealed the existence of classified documents such as the Twining memo (UFO are 'real'), Estimate of the Situation (UFOs are

'interplanetary'), and the Robertson Report (UFOs should be debunked), and he accurately described much of their content. As I have previously noted, he also discussed the schism in Project Sign over explaining UFOs as alien spacecraft and he indicated that some other Air Force intelligence officers espoused that explanation. He even speculated on the possibility that, as head of Blue Book, he had been an unwitting 'front' for another intelligence project on UFOs operating under deeper cover (a notion that would later be taken up by conspiracy theorists within the UFO community). He stopped short of explicitly endorsing the extraterrestrial hypothesis and, years later, he would publicly reject it. His book, however, was perceived as an authoritative validation of key claims Keyhoe had been making since 1950. Keyhoe's status was thus greatly enhanced in the eyes of people within and outside the UFO community, an outcome that would have an immediate effect on the organizational structure of that community.

Until 1956, the more active members of the UFO community had been loosely organized in small, local, and usually short-lived, flying saucer clubs. In mid-1956, Keyhoe, now recognized as the leading UFO spokesman, helped one of these groups to become an umbrella organization called National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). In January 1957, he became its director and, capitalizing on his newly enhanced status as a 'serious' UFO researcher, he assembled a stellar Board of Governors that included two generals and three admirals. Dewey Fournet and Al Chop, both formerly associated with Blue Book, also joined NICAP; Fournet as a board member and Chop as 'special advisor'. Although other ex-intelligence officers were on the board, Vice Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, former CIA director, was by far the most important. Keyhoe masterfully exploited the admiral's authoritative intelligence background during the five-year period that Hillenkoetter was a board member. Richard Hall, Keyhoe's assistant, later recalled that 'Admiral Hillenkoetter's comments during this period carried great weight with newsmen.'³³

NICAP, under Keyhoe's direction from 1957 to 1969, thus became an enormously effective publicity mechanism for proponents of the extraterrestrial hypothesis. According to Hall, 'we functioned as a tactical operation center in an ongoing "battle" (as we often expressed it) to counteract Air Force debunking'.³⁴ Indeed, the mere existence of a 'battle' attracted media attention which, in the interest of presenting both sides of the debate, gave Keyhoe's views publicity they would not otherwise have received. By opposing Keyhoe, ATIC was thus providing him with a forum for his ideas. The Air Force began to realize this and in 1966, when Blue Book's explanations of certain UFO sightings attracted adverse congressional comment, the Air Force decided to respond by sponsoring an outside UFO study.

In October 1966, the Air Force funded such a study at the University of Colorado. It was carried out over the next two years under the leadership of Edward Condon, a physicist of international repute. In January 1969, the results of the study were published in what became popularly known as the Condon Report.³⁵ The investigators concluded that UFO research over the previous 21 years had not added to scientific knowledge and that science would not be advanced by further study of UFOs. Their findings were evaluated by the National Academy of Science, which appointed a panel of distinguished academicians to perform that task. They concluded that the Condon study had been 'a very creditable effort'. They also said the study had demonstrated that 'the least likely explanation of UFOs is the hypothesis of extraterrestrial visitations by intelligent beings'.³⁶

The Condon Report aroused considerable controversy and was roundly criticized in the literature of the UFO community, but the Air Force welcomed its conclusions. By 1969, an improved air warning system had been created which did not include a visual observation component that could be confounded by UFO sightings. Since such sightings no longer posed a threat to national security, the Condon Report's conclusion that UFO studies served no scientific purpose sounded the death knell for Blue Book. In December 1969, the Air Force Secretary terminated the project and in the press release announcing that fact he noted that 21 years of investigating UFO reports had produced 'no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as "unidentified" are extraterrestrial vehicles'.³⁷

So ended the period in which the intelligence agencies actively investigated UFO reports. Since 1969, their involvement has been largely passive in the sense that their UFO-related activities have been either part of normal intelligence functions or responses to the importunities of the UFO community. The latter type of activity, of course, also went on prior to 1969. For instance, in 1958 the Air Force was pressured into admitting the existence of the 1948 Estimate of the Situation and the Robertson Report that had been described in Ruppelt's book.³⁸ After 1969, however, responses to such requests for information and/or documents constituted a large part of the UFO activities of the intelligence agencies. In the 1970s and 1980s they declassified thousands of UFO documents that were demanded by members of the UFO community under the Freedom of Information Act. More were released as a result of legal actions taken against the CIA and other intelligence agencies by a UFO organization called Ground Saucer Watch. And in the 1990s, in response to New Mexico Congressman Steven Schiff's request, the archival centers of the intelligence agencies carried out an extensive search for documents related to the 1947 Roswell incident. That investigation resulted in a two-volume report totaling over 1,200 pages.³⁹

A perusal of the UFO community's literature reveals that the information derived from the thousands of declassified documents has not created new beliefs, but rather has confirmed old ones. In that literature, for example, the core belief in a government cover-up of alien visitations (promulgated by Keyhoe and partially validated by Ruppelt) is further validated by interpreting the rather pedestrian contents of intelligence agency documents as 'evidence' in support of that belief.⁴⁰ Thus, although the more active phase of their UFO involvement ended in 1969, the intelligence agencies have continued to influence the belief structure of the UFO community through the medium of agency documents.

Another way in which the agencies have continued to play a role in the development of the UFO community's belief structure is through whistleblowers. These individuals have not only made statements that confirm old beliefs, but they have also introduced new ideas which have been enthusiastically embraced in the UFO literature and have captured the interest of the public at large. The role played by the intelligence agencies in the whistleblowers' success is one in which the agencies are ineluctably linked to the whistleblowers in a relationship that can be characterized as 'an affiliative conferment of authority' – that is, the whistleblowers' status as former agency members implies 'insider' knowledge that confers the cachet of authority upon their comments about agency activities. Nor can that authority be diminished – in the eyes of those predisposed to accept it – by agency denials. Since the remarks of whistleblowers contradict the official stance on UFOs, agency denials can be plausibly dismissed as a continuation of the cover-up. That, in fact, has been the fate of the 1,200-page government report on the Roswell incident referred to above.⁴¹

To illustrate the importance of the several whistleblowers that appeared after Ruppelt, it is instructive to describe the stories of two such individuals: ex-Major Jesse Marcel, and ex-Colonel Phillip Corso. Central to the tales they have woven is the Roswell incident, which after 1980 became a vital element in the belief structure of the UFO community. Indeed, it is not an overstatement to say that Roswell is now the linchpin of that structure. For example, one prominent member of the UFO community, Jerome Clark, editor of *International UFO Journal*, calls Roswell 'the most crucial case of all time' and, according to Frederick Whiting, an official of the Fund for UFO Research, 'the reality of the UFO phenomenon can rise or fall on this case alone'.⁴²

ROSWELL REVISITED

Marcel left the Air Force in 1950, but did not 'go public' with his Roswell story until 1978–79. The significance of his tale can be best understood in

the context of the growth and institutionalization of the UFO community and the change in the public's attitude toward UFOs that occurred between 1950 and 1978.

From 1950 to 1959, largely through the efforts of Keyhoe, the views of the UFO community were well publicized and several flying saucer clubs were formed. After the umbrella organization NICAP was established in 1959, UFO buffs became linked through its publications. By 1969, Keyhoe and other members of the community, through their writings and other forms of interaction, had evolved a system of beliefs centered on their shared interest in UFOs. And according to historian Curtis Peebles, 'both Keyhoe and NICAP had based a large part of their belief system on Capt. Edward Ruppelt's book'.⁴³

In 1969, irregularities in NICAP's finances led to Keyhoe's resignation as director. Without him at the helm NICAP went downhill, but new organizations modeled on NICAP's successful institutional format soon appeared. For example, the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) was started in 1969 and in 1973 Hynek founded the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS). After the termination of Blue Book (and his Air Force contract) Hynek had 'come out of the closet' and openly espoused the extraterrestrial hypothesis. His background as an ATIC consultant imbued his writings with the kind of authority that Ruppelt's book possessed, and Hynek soon donned Keyhoe's mantle as the leading spokesman for the UFO community. He lacked Keyhoe's flair for publicizing the community's core belief in a government cover-up of alien visitations but, by the 1970s, tabloids such as the *National Inquirer* had found it lucrative to assume that task. Another factor that contributed to the publicity given to that core belief was the emergence within the UFO community of a class of professional 'ufologists' (i.e., individuals claiming an expertise in analyzing UFO phenomena who derive income from books and articles on UFOs).

By 1978, the UFO community had become largely institutionalized and the extraterrestrial hypothesis had achieved a high degree of public acceptance that was lacking in 1950. MUFON, CUFOS and many smaller organizations flourished. They funded UFO studies, published newsletters and journals, and coordinated the political activities of the members such as, for example, in petitioning the government to declassify UFO-related documents. A nagging problem within the community, however, was the lack of truly convincing evidence of alien visitation. In the 1950s Keyhoe had said that a provable case would soon appear and subsequent leaders had echoed that prediction. But their assurances had begun to wear thin when, in 1978, Marcel came forth with what seemed to be just such a case.

Marcel explained to an interviewer that he had not come forward earlier with his story because 'I'd just about dismissed the whole thing from my

mind.⁴⁴ By 1978, however, UFO publicity and the increased public acceptance of the extraterrestrial hypothesis had apparently revived his original beliefs about the 1947 Roswell incident. He began to regale associates with his story about recovering the wreckage of a flying saucer and, through the 'grapevine', news of his tale reached the ears of two professional ufologists, Stanton Friedman and William Moore, who sought him out. The ufologists were electrified by Marcel's story; indeed, they would later describe the transfigured Roswell incident as a 'cosmic Watergate'.⁴⁵

To understand the ufologists' enthusiasm it is pertinent to note that what Marcel told them was, generically, a 'crashed saucer' story. More than a dozen such tales had surfaced between 1947 and 1978, the most notorious of which appeared in a 1950 book *Behind the Flying Saucers*. According to Jacobs, among UFO buffs the book 'had a large impact'.⁴⁶ But its subsequent exposure as a hoax had created disillusionment and a lasting bias within the UFO community against crashed saucer stories, most of which were second-hand accounts by individuals of dubious background. Marcel's tale, however, was a crashed saucer story with a difference, namely, it was a firsthand account by a credible witness having impressive military intelligence credentials.

For crashed saucer stories, witness credibility is of enormous importance in establishing the putative factuality of the tale since no unambiguous physical traces of such crashes are ever found. Accounting for the absence of physical traces is always a problem in crashed saucer stories and Marcel's tale carried the additional cachet of plausibly explaining how the wreckage disappeared – it was sequestered by the government (some earlier crashed saucer tales had relied on the clumsier mechanism of introducing *another* flying saucer which swooped down and removed all traces of the crash). The notion that the government was secretly holding the wreckage also meshed perfectly with the cover-up thesis that, by 1978, had been part of the traditional belief structure of the UFO community for three decades.

In 1979 Marcel was interviewed by a National Inquirer reporter and through publication in that tabloid (which is known to pay informants) his tale soon reached more than a million Americans. A verbatim transcription of that interview is available in which Marcel expounds first on his military background (in 1947, when the Roswell incident occurred, he was the intelligence officer of the 509th Bomb Group, then the world's only nuclear strike force). He goes on to recount the events surrounding the recovery of the wreckage reported by a rancher and its sequestration by the Air Force. In describing the debris he is most emphatic about its alien nature (some material was almost weightless yet harder than any terrestrial metal and marked with undecipherable hieroglyphics). 'It was', he said, 'nothing that came from earth'.⁴⁷

In 1980, the ufologists who had 'discovered' Marcel produced a book touted as an investigative report based on nearly two years of research on the Roswell incident.⁴⁸ They had interviewed a number of people whose remarks confirmed Marcel's tale and provided the basis for a much more elaborate reconstruction of the incident. In their book, the rancher's story about finding some 'strips of rubber, tinfoil, a rather tough paper, and sticks' is transfigured into a story about military personnel finding a wrecked flying saucer replete with the dead bodies of small, humanoid alien beings spewed forth from a gaping hole in the craft's hull. To those unfamiliar with the study of folklore such a transfiguration may seem incredible, but the step-by-step process by which it was effected is not mysterious.

I have detailed that transfiguration process in a 1997 book.⁴⁹ It is beyond the scope of this article to recapitulate that description but, in brief, I argue that the interviewees' stories verbally told to the ufologists are akin to what folklorists call 'memorates' or personalized legends compounded of fact, distorted fact, and invented 'fact'. Via textual analysis I demonstrate that, by basing their account on these memorates, the ufologists have produced a transfigured 'history' of the Roswell incident that is similar to traditional folk narratives in terms of transmission, structure, and central motif. And in their 'history' the motif is identifiable as a well known, antique folk motif clothed in modern garb.

A body of fact and theory produced by social anthropologists over the last century indicates that some motifs recur in many cultures separated by time and/or geography because they resonate with universal or quasi-universal human experiences and, when embodied in a myth, they serve various societal functions. The presence of such a motif, in a story that displays other known characteristics of folk narratives, reflects negatively on the objective factuality of the story and reinforces the story's status as a social construct. In that context, the ufologists' 1980 book can be seen, not as an 'investigative report', but as a collection of folk narratives artfully assembled in the form of a traditional myth expressed in a modern, technoscientific idiom – a 'technomyth'.

That 1980 book on Roswell, however, was accepted as factual by the UFO community, as attested to by reviews, commentaries and letters in UFO journals, and by some people outside that community as well. The 'authoritative' testimony of Marcel played no small part in that acceptance. The ufologists who produced the book were well aware of the credibility Marcel's tale lent to their version of the Roswell incident, and the importance of his background in establishing that credibility. For example, in an article about how the book came to be written, they point to the 'special character of the military people involved'. They describe the 509th as 'an elite group with a unique mission.' And in a later article, one of them

notes that 'the best testimony about Marcel's reliability and trustworthiness is the simple fact that he served as Intelligence Officer for the 509th'.⁵⁰

Other ufologists re-investigated the case and over the next 14 years published five more books on Roswell. The story became more complex with each retelling, but all of these books recapitulated the central plot of a cover-up of the government's recovery of a crashed saucer. In 1994, that plot was reenacted in *Roswell*, a widely aired television 'docudrama'. In that same year, New Mexico Congressman Steven Schiff, allegedly at the request of constituents incensed by the cover-up, demanded a government investigation. This was duly carried out at the cost of many hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and it resulted in the two-volume report cited previously.

Despite its impressive length, the report can be summarized briefly: there was no crashed saucer, no alien bodies and no cover-up. Merely the wreckage of a balloon-borne radar reflector, as reported by General Ramey in 1947. The investigators were able to add information not revealed by Ramey, namely, that although the debris was from an unclassified project, that project was in turn part of a secret project, codenamed 'Mogul'. 'Mogul' was an (abortive) attempt to detect Soviet atomic bomb tests sonically from afar.⁵¹ Investigators speculated that information about such balloon flights, given out shortly after Ramey's announcement, may have been an attempt to protect the secrecy of Project Mogul by misdirection. They also speculated that the tales about sighting alien bodies that became part of the transfigured Roswell incident may have been inspired by a later Air Force project involving the recovery of life-like dummies ejected from airplanes to test parachutes and other survival gear.

In the journals of the UFO community the two-volume government report was uniformly rejected and condemned as a continuation of the cover-up, and even the mainstream press found the explanation of the alien bodies to be factitious. And despite government debunking, for many millions of Americans the transfigured Roswell incident continues to validate their belief that alien beings have actually touched down upon the earth. Polls suggest that about one in four adults hold that belief, hence, any book that 'authoritatively' confirms and expands on the core scenario of the transfigured Roswell story is assured of a large potential readership.

The Day After Roswell, published in 1997, is such a book and it soon appeared on a *New York Times* bestseller list. Its credibility stems from the 'affiliative conferment of authority' enjoyed by its author, ex-Colonel Phillip Corso, a career military intelligence officer with impeccable credentials. On the book's jacket he is described as a 'key Army intelligence officer who served on General MacArthur's staff in Korea and later on President Dwight D. Eisenhower's National Security Council'. He claims to

have been the head of the Pentagon's Foreign Technology Desk in Army Research and Development (ARD). 'Part of my job', he avers, 'was as intelligence advisor to [ARD's chief] General Arthur Trudeau'. Corso makes it clear that he was in the right place at the right time to obtain the information he reveals in his book. 'I was working', he says, 'in the most secret areas of military intelligence'.⁵²

Corso's book is derivative in the sense that his 'revelations' confirm and expand upon the speculations about a cover-up made by earlier whistleblowers and by ufologists. For example, in 1956, Ruppelt wondered if Blue Book was a 'front' for another more secret UFO project; in 1979, Marcel opined that the Air Force 'had something they want to sit on'; and, in 1981, the ufologists who produced the first book on Roswell theorized that the recovery of a crashed saucer had to be kept secret because of 'the potential for military utilization of the technology used by the saucer'.⁵³ In 1997, Corso tells us that all of these suppositions were correct. The government did indeed have something to 'sit on', namely, the recovery of a crashed saucer near Roswell.

Corso says that the saucer became the centerpiece of an elaborate 'reverse engineering' project so shrouded in secrecy that a new category beyond Top Secret had to be invented for it. The project was aimed at leaking alien technology to US industry to create the scientific 'breakthroughs' needed to win the Cold War. Corso recites a long litany of inventions that appeared to an unknowing public to be breakthroughs (such as the laser), but which were really derived from saucer technology. One newspaper critic has accurately pointed out that 'other than referring to some of the real and bogus documents long known to UFO researchers, Corso provides nothing to back up his incredible claims'.⁵⁴ Hence, the credence given to Corso's claims by members of the UFO community and the large segment of the public who accept the cover-up thesis must necessarily be based chiefly on his credentials as a former military intelligence officer.

Although a bestseller, it is too early to judge whether Corso's book will be accepted by the UFO community. The guarded comments about Corso that have appeared in UFO journals thus far (until January 1998) have been largely noncommittal.⁵⁵ This stance is understandable. In Corso's picture of the consequences of Roswell the broad brush strokes of ufologists' speculations are overlaid with detailed sketches. But he tells us too much. In the end, the image he creates is dangerously close to caricature.

In summarizing the significance of whistleblowers, Ruppelt and Marcel loom larger than Corso. Ruppelt provided the authoritative basis for the UFO community's belief structure and Marcel provided that structure with its keystone – Roswell. Corso is bound to be a lesser figure. If his book is

accepted it merely constitutes added confirmation of Roswell; if rejected, it will be because the book is seen for what it is – a *reductio ad absurdum* of the community's most cherished beliefs.

CONCLUSIONS

In pursuing legitimate intelligence goals, the UFO-related activities of US intelligence agencies had unintended consequences that proved to be antithetical to those goals. In what can be called the 'open-minded' period from 1947 to 1953, ATIC and CIA were attempting to understand the national security implications of UFOs. But the documents reflecting that intent had a consequence unforeseen when they were written – that is, their contents would be construed later by UFO buffs as a cover-up of extraterrestrial visitations. From 1953 to 1969, the intent of the agencies was to keep secret the psychological warfare threat posed by UFO reports and to allay public concern about such reports by debunking them. The policy adopted to implement that intent, however, produced a whole chain of unwanted side-effects that fostered public acceptance of the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

For example, the official stance on UFOs alienated Hynek and Ruppelt who later became vocal critics of that stance. Ruppelt's book, by confirming some of Keyhoe's allegations, enhanced Keyhoe's ability to initiate the process of institutionalizing the UFO community which, until then, had been fragmented and ineffective. The organizations that resulted from that process – NICAP and its successors – became potent mechanisms for promulgating the beliefs of the UFO community in what was regarded as a 'battle' to counter ATIC's debunking policy. While all this was happening, ATIC and other agencies continued to produce secret documents related to the psychological warfare and counterintelligence aspects of UFOs that would be later declassified and interpreted by UFO buffs as additional evidence for their beliefs. And, although the more active phase of UFO involvement of the agencies ended in 1969, whistleblowers have continued to appear.

As noted previously, the current widespread acceptance of the extraterrestrial hypothesis is generally attributed by historians to a concatenation of factors rather than to a single cause. The UFO involvement of the intelligence agencies is among the more significant of these factors since it not only contributed indirectly to the organizational effectiveness of the UFO community in promoting the extraterrestrial hypothesis, but also provided much of the evidence (documents and 'authoritative' statements of whistleblowers) cited to support that hypothesis.

If there is any lesson to be learned from the history of the UFO

involvement of US intelligence agencies it is that the effect of any government effort to debunk the extraterrestrial hypothesis is weakened because, through the cover-up thesis, the government itself is part of the UFO mythos. Hence, the 'knee-jerk' reaction of believers is to discount such debunking as part of the cover-up. Nor, apparently, has debunking of the extraterrestrial hypothesis by distinguished non-government scientists been much more successful.⁵⁶ For instance, a recent study found that scientists' skeptical comments debunking the extraterrestrial hypothesis did not diminish its acceptance level among members of a test group relative to a control group.⁵⁷ This finding is understandable because it is impossible to prove that some UFOs *are not* alien spacecraft. And, for some people, the belief that some UFOs *are* alien spacecraft satisfies a deep-seated need to understand the universe in ways that transcend the mundane.

In other words, the extraterrestrial hypothesis is akin to some of the central tenets of the great religions in that it is unfalsifiable and it conforms to a panhuman tendency to impose transcendental meanings on aspects of reality that are perceived as mysterious. It thus continues to have meaning for believers despite the carping of skeptics who claim that the basis of the meaning is illusory. Although the skeptics may be correct, the extraterrestrial hypothesis is likely to remain a prominent feature of the cultural landscape in the US. For, as social anthropologist James Lett points out, although the search for meaning is a human universal, 'the sad conclusion of cross-cultural anthropological research is that most individuals, and all human cultures, are content with the illusion of meaning'.⁵⁸

AFTERWORD

If – as I have argued at length elsewhere⁵⁹ – the core belief promulgated by ufologists is a modern form of myth, does it matter that tens of millions of Americans espouse that myth? It matters from the perspective of the intelligence agencies because the existence of millions of believers portends the further politicization of UFO phenomena and it is likely that the agencies will have to deal with the consequences of that politicization.

In the US, the widespread acceptance of the core belief of a small, vocal group of activists has often presaged official policies and actions favoring that belief because public acceptance is an 'enabling factor' that allows politicians to take such initiatives without fear of adverse reaction.⁶⁰ Of course, for politicization to occur in this way it is also necessary (if not sufficient) for the activist group to maintain an aggressive lobbying effort. Beginning in the 1960s, the UFO community has consistently lobbied to change the government's stance on UFOs (e.g., by seeking congressional hearings) and there are signs that such efforts are continuing.

For example, in December 1994, MUFON, CUFOS and other UFO organizations circulated the so-called 'Roswell Declaration' in an attempt to mobilize signators in all 50 states in petitioning Congress and the president to declassify all government UFO documents. Nor does the lobbying of the UFO community lack influential supporters. In November 1995, Laurance Rockefeller drafted a letter to President Clinton urging the appointment of a UFO coordinator to collate and declassify all UFO-related government documents (the letter was the outcome of a two-year dialog on UFOs that Rockefeller conducted in meetings and correspondence with John Gibbons, Clinton's Science Advisor, during 1993–95⁶¹). And in 1998, a new 'first' in US politics occurred when a politician running for high office, Frances Barwood, formally incorporated in her platform a pledge to seek new government UFO investigations – an action that reportedly garnered worldwide publicity for her campaign.⁶² Such examples of undertakings aimed at politicizing UFOs suggest that Congressman Schiff's insistence on a government investigation of the Roswell incident may be a harbinger of things to come.

If further politicization of the UFO mythos occurs, the demands for the few UFO documents that remain classified and for reinstating government UFO investigations may place the intelligence agencies in a 'no-win' situation.⁶³ Proactive steps, based on an understanding of the sociopolitical dimensions of the UFO movement, on the one hand, and the quasi-religious basis for the popular appeal of its core belief, on the other, might mitigate potential problems.⁶⁴ But the history of the UFO involvement of the agencies does not inspire confidence that such steps will be taken.

NOTES

1. David Jacobs, *The UFO Controversy in America* (Bloomington: Indiana UP 1975) p.36.
2. The 1947 sightings also prompted a reexamination of reports of unusual aerial phenomena that had been recorded prior to Arnold's sighting, including the 'foo fighters' reported by military pilots in 1944–45 and 'ghost rockets' seen over Sweden in 1946. See Jacobs (note 1) pp.35–7.
3. George Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935–1971* (NY: Random House 1972) pp.666, 911.
4. Kendrick Frazier, 'UFOs as ET Spacecraft', *Skeptical Inquirer* 16/4 (1992) p.346; G. Gallup and F. Newport, 'Belief in Paranormal Phenomena Among Adult Americans,' *Skeptical Inquirer* 15/2 (1991) pp.137–46. Not only do most Americans believe that some UFOs are alien spacecraft but, according to the latter poll, 27 per cent believe that alien beings have actually touched down upon the earth.
5. See, for example, Curtis Peebles, *Watch the Skies* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Instn Press 1994).
6. 'Statement of Sheridan Cavitt' in R. Weaver and J. McAndrew, *The Roswell Report: Fact and Fiction in the New Mexico Desert* (Washington DC: US GPO 1994) Atch. 17.
7. *Roswell Daily Record*, 9 July 1947, p.2.
8. *Ibid.* 8 July 1947, p.1.

9. 'Statement of Irving Newton' in Weaver and McAndrew (note 6) Atch. 30.
10. *Lowell Sun*, 9 July 1947, p.3.
11. *New York Times*, 4 July 1947, p.26.
12. Maj. Gen. L. Craigie to Commanding General, Wright Field, 'Flying Discs', 30 Dec. 1947, reproduced in D. Gillmor (ed.), *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects* (NY: Bantam Books 1969) pp.896-7.
13. In World War I the US developed 'balloon bombers' (unmanned wind-driven balloons carrying incendiary bombs) designed for use against Germany. See C. Ziegler, 'Weapons Development in Context', *Technology and Culture* 35/4 (1989) pp.750-7. In World War II they were used by the British to bomb occupied Europe and by the Japanese to bomb the US.
14. Edward Ruppelt, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (NY: Doubleday 1956) pp.46, 62.
15. Michael Swords, 'The Lost Words of Edward Ruppelt', *International UFO Reporter* 20/2 (1995) pp.14-15.
16. 'Unidentified Aerial Objects: Project Sign,' Feb. 1949. No. F-TR-2274-1A, Record Group (hereafter RG) 341, US Air Force Commands, Activities and Organizations folder, National Archives (hereafter NA).
17. 'Unidentified Flying Objects: Project Grudge,' Aug. 1949. No. 102-AC 49/15-100, RG 341, US Air Force Commands, Activities and Organizations folder, NA.
18. Ruppelt (note 14) pp.197-8.
19. *Ibid.* p.34.
20. Phillip Klass, *UFOs: The Public Deceived* (NY: Prometheus Books 1983) p.20.
21. Jacobs (note 1) p.100.
22. CIA Briefing Paper, 14 Aug. 1952, reproduced in Klass (note 20) pp.16-17.
23. Grudge Report (note 17) App. B.
24. CIA Briefing Paper, 15 Aug. 1952, reproduced in Klass (note 20) pp.18-19.
25. *Ibid.*, 19 Aug. 1952, reproduced *ibid.* pp.20-21.
26. Peebles (note 5) p.83.
27. 'Report of the Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects,' Jan. 1953, partially reproduced in Peebles (note 5) pp.83-5. The complete report is available from Computer UFO Network, PO Box 832, Mercer Island, WA 98040, USA.
28. Edward Tauss, Acting Chief, Weapons and Equipment Division, to Deputy Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence, 1 Aug. 1952, reproduced in Peebles (note 5) p.74.
29. Gerald Haines, 'CIA's Role in the Study of UFOs, 1947-90', *Studies in Intelligence* 1/1 (1997) pp.67-89, 73.
30. Todos Odarenko, Physics and Electronics Division, to Assistant Director of Scientific Intelligence, 27 May 1953, reproduced in Peebles (note 5) p. 89.
31. Todos Odarenko, 'Current Status of Unidentified Flying Objects,' 17 Dec. 1953, reproduced in Peebles (note 5) p.89.
32. Jacobs (note 1) p.96.
33. Richard Hall, 'The Quest for the Truth About UFOs' in MUFON 1994 Symposium Proceedings (Seguin, TX: Mutual UFO Network [MUFON] 1994) pp.186-222, esp.187. Hillenkoetter resigned from NICAP in 1962 because he became increasingly skeptical about the extraterrestrial hypothesis. See C. Allen, 'Admiral Hillenkoetter: From Believer to Skeptic', *International UFO Reporter* 20/2 (1995) pp.15-17.
34. Hall (note 33) p.193.
35. Gillmor (note 12).
36. *Ibid.* Appendix U.
37. Air Force Press Release No. 1077-69, 17 Dec. 1969, reproduced in Hall (note 33) p.220.
38. See Air Force Statements on the 1948 'Estimate' and the Robertson Report Summary, reproduced in R. Hall (ed.) *The UFO Evidence* (NY: Barnes & Noble 1997 [1964]) pp.107, 109.
39. Weaver and McAndrew (note 6); James McAndrew, *The Roswell Report: Case Closed* (Washington DC: US GPO 1997).
40. See, for example, Peter Gersten, 'What the Government Would Know About UFOs If They Read Their Own Documents' in *MUFON 1981 Symposium Proceedings* (Seguin, TX:

MUFON 1981) pp.21–31.

41. The two-volume report (note 39) elicited a flood of negative letters and articles in UFO journals. Representative examples are: P. Davids, 'Deflating Balloon Claims', *UFO Magazine* 9/6 (1994) pp.37–8; M. Rodeghier and M. Chesney, 'The Air Force Report on Roswell: An Absence of Evidence', *International UFO Reporter* 19/5 (1994) pp.3, 20–4.
42. J. Clark, 'UFO Crashes', *Fate* 41/1 (1988) pp.41–56, 42; F. Whiting, 'Raiders of the Lost Archaeologists' in G. Eberhart (ed.), *The Plains of San Agustin Controversy*, July 1947 (Washington DC: Fund for UFO Research 1992) pp.33–35, 33. Further evidence of the importance of the Roswell incident is that the town fathers are considering registering 'Roswell' as a global trademark to capitalize on its use in books and films and on the souvenirs purchased by the tens of thousands of annual visitors to the 'crash site'. Roswell is now the 'UFO Lourdes' (*Albuquerque Tribune*, 14 Dec. 1997, p.3).
43. Peebles (note 5) p.139.
44. R. Pratt, 'Interview with Jesse A. Marcel, Sr., 8 Dec. 1979' in K. Pflock, *Roswell in Perspective* (Washington DC: Fund for UFO Research 1994) pp.119–26, 123.
45. S. Friedman and W. Moore, 'The Roswell Incident: Beginning of the Cosmic Watergate' in *MUFON 1981 Symposium Proceedings* (Seguin, TX: MUFON 1981) pp.132–53, esp.133.
46. Jacobs (note 1) p.59.
47. Pratt (note 44) p.125.
48. C. Berlitz and W. Moore, *The Roswell Incident* (NY: Grossett and Dunlap 1980).
49. B. Saler, C. Ziegler and C. Moore, *UFO Crash at Roswell: The Genesis of a Modern Myth* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Instn Press 1997) pp.1–73.
50. Friedman and Moore (note 45) pp.134–5; S. Friedman, 'The Roswell Story, 1997' in *MUFON 1997 Symposium Proceedings* (Seguin, TX: MUFON 1981) pp.196–205, esp.202.
51. For a description of Mogul, see C. Ziegler and D. Jacobson, *Spying Without Spies: Origins of America's Secret Nuclear Surveillance System* (Westport, CT: Praeger 1995) pp.41–5.
52. Phillip Corso (with J. Birnes), *The Day After Roswell* (NY: Simon and Schuster 1997) p.1.
53. Pratt (note 44) p.124; Friedman and Moore (note 45) p.146.
54. *Albuquerque Journal*, 29 June 1997, p. C-8. The bogus documents referred to by the reporter are the notorious 'MJ-12 papers' including SOMI-01, which are purportedly official documents related to the recovery of an alien spacecraft near Roswell. These crude forgeries were apparently produced by ufologists to support claims made in their books. See J. Nickell and J. Fischer, 'The Crashed Saucer Forgeries' in G. Eberhart (ed.), *The Roswell Report* (Chicago, IL: Center for UFO Studies 1991) pp.119–29.
55. See, for example, Friedman (note 50) p.204.
56. See, for example, D. Menzel and E. Taves, *The UFO Enigma* (NY: Doubleday 1977).
57. Glenn Sparks and Marianne Pellechia, 'The Effect of News Stories About UFOs on Readers' UFO Beliefs: The Role of Confirming or Disconfirming Testimony From a Scientist', *Communication Reports* 10/2 (1997) pp.165–71.
58. James Lett, 'The Persistent Popularity of the Paranormal', *Skeptical Inquirer* 16/4 (1992) pp.381–8, esp.385.
59. See Saler, Ziegler and Moore (note 49).
60. Prohibitionists, Suffragettes, pro-abortionists are examples of movements whose core belief, although initially rejected by the public, was eventually accepted by a majority and subsequently became the basis for official policies and actions.
61. Laurance Rockefeller to John Gibbons, 1 Nov. 1995, 'Draft of Letter to President Clinton.' Folder of Gibbons/Rockefeller, Gibbons/Scott Jones correspondence, 1993–95, consisting of 17 items obtained from the Office of Science and Technology Policy, under the Freedom of Information Act.
62. *Arizona Republic*, 13 Jan. 1998, p.1.
63. The 'no-win' aspect of declassification stems from the refusal of the UFO community, and an increasing fraction of the public, to accept the government's statements about the extent of its UFO documentation. Hence, even if all UFO documents are declassified, declarations to that effect will be met by skepticism. The example of how the intelligence unit of the Spanish Air Force dealt with this problem is pertinent – that is, a prominent member of the UFO community in Spain was allowed to become involved in the declassification process.

See V. Ballester Olmas, 'Monitoring Air Force Intelligence' in *MUFON 1997 Symposium Proceedings* (Seguin, TX: MUFON 1997) pp.139-78. There is convincing evidence that such an approach will not be useful in the US. See P. Klass, 'The Top-Secret UFO Papers NSA Won't Release', *Skeptical Inquirer* 14/1 (1989) pp.65-68.

64. Certain proactive steps the intelligence agencies might take regarding UFO documents are suggested by the Schiff-Roswell investigations. For instance, an interagency committee might be formed to periodically review and upgrade the records management procedures used by each agency in handling UFO documents. The aim would be to demonstrate a coordinated, 'best-effort' attempt to find and declassify all UFO documents. Those that cannot be declassified could be channeled routinely to a congressional intelligence oversight committee whose members would thus be positioned to affirm that such documents provide no evidence of a UFO cover-up and remain classified only for legitimate security reasons (e.g., to avoid compromising sources). For reasons given previously, these procedures would not convince UFO activists or the segment of the public disposed to accept conspiracy theories that there is no cover-up, but they would moderate and perhaps forestall any congressional or White House initiatives for a replay of investigations like Schiff-Roswell.