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... **this is our**

Flying Saucers—The Official Air Force Position

As General Thomas D. White has indicated, the Air Force investigation and analysis of UFOs over the United States are directly related to its responsibility for the defense of the United States. Because prompt reporting and rapid identification are necessary to carry out the second of the four phases of air defense, detection, identification, interception, and destruction, the Air Force maintains the unidentified flying object program.

Statistics on the number of objects sighted and reported to the USAF for the past 13 years are as follows:

1947	79	1954	429
1948	143	1955	404
1949	186	1956	778
1950	169	1957	1,178
1951	121	1958	573
1952	1,501	1959	364
1953	425	1960	173
		TOTAL	6,523

In analyzing the above figures the reader will see that the Air Force's peak years for UFO reports were 1952 and 1957. Further analysis shows that there are usually definite reasons or specific incidents causing a peak year or a rash of sightings. In the year 1952 the famous Washington sightings took off a rash of sightings for the last six months of the year. In 1957, *Sputnik 1*, the Russian satellite, was launched in October. Seven hundred and one of the total sightings for that year took place in the last six months of the year. This is most significant.

In all the correspondence received by the Air Force over the past 13 years there are a number of allegations and charges against the Air Force which are repeated time and time again and which should be specifically answered.

The first charge states that there is a document dated September 23, 1947 which is a *Secret* conclusion of the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center that flying saucers were real.



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From the book *Flying Saucers and the U. S. Air Force*, by Col. Lawrence J. Tacker, USAF. Reprinted with permission of D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc.

The second charge states there was a 1948 *Top Secret* document concluding that the unidentified objects were interplanetary spaceships.

The third charge states that a *Secret* Air Force intelligence analysis of UFO maneuvers concludes that the objects are interplanetary.

The fourth charge states that a *Secret* report by a panel of top scientists convened in the Pentagon in January 1953 urges that the Air Force quadruple its UFO project and that the Air Force give the American people all UFO information, including *Secret* Air Force conclusions, unsolved sightings and photo analyses.

In answer to the first charge, there is no official Air Force report or document which states that the so-called flying saucers are real. The writer does not doubt that in the early days of the UFO program many possibilities, including this one, were probably listed in order to develop an adequate investigation and evaluation program for the Air Force. Also, it is conceivable that some person or persons associated with the Air

Force program were personally convinced that flying saucers might be real and could be interplanetary spaceships.

In answer to the second charge, there has never been an official Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center estimate of the situation which stated that so-called flying saucers were interplanetary spaceships. Again, individuals associated with the early Air Force program, listing all possibilities, would probably have considered such a category but such a conclusion or document reaching such a conclusion is non-existent.

The answer to the third charge is that such a report or intelligence analyses is non-existent. There is no such report. Again, there has never been an Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center conclusion that any of the UFOs were interplanetary.

The answer to the fourth charge is a simple one. On January 14, 15 and 16, 1953, at the request of the United States Air Force, a scientific advisory panel was established to consider the UFO program and to make recommendations based upon their conclusions. The recommendations of the panel as reported in the fourth charge above are completely erroneous. The final conclusion reached by the panel since declassified and released to the public were that UFOs (a) held no direct physical threat; (b) were not foreign developments capable of hostile acts against the U. S.; (c) were not unknown phenomena requiring the revision of current scientific concepts, and (d) the panel further concluded that unless de-emphasized, UFOs, or the subject itself, could constitute a threat to the national security because a rash of sightings could affect defense communications, national hysteria could be induced by skillful hostile propagandists, and a mass of false reports could screen planned hostile actions against the United States. As a result of this 1953 meeting, the panel made the following basic recommendations:

(a) That immediate steps be taken to strip the UFOs of the aura of mystery which they had unfortunately acquired;

(b) that the public be reassured of the total lack of evidence of inimical forces behind the phenomena;

(c) that Air Force investigative personnel be trained to recognize and reject false indications quickly and effectively.

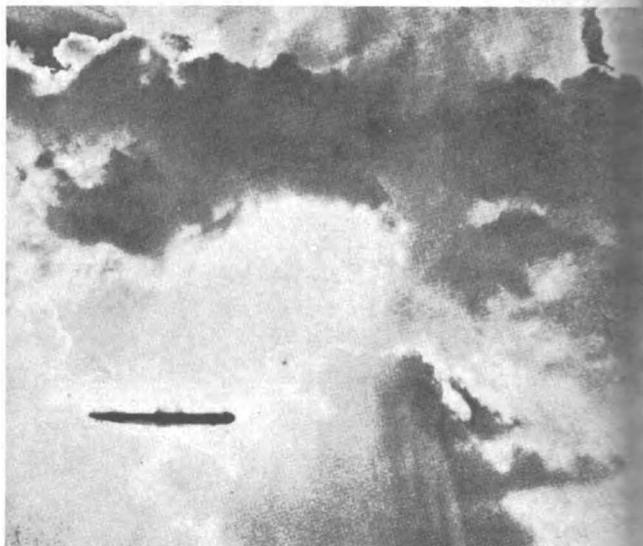
An additional charge against the Air Force is that it is afraid to tell the public the truth concerning flying saucers because of the national hysteria and panic which will result. This is, of course, a ridiculous argument because the same groups hurling these charges and allegations against the Air Force are continually telling the public the same thing they want the Air Force to say and there is no resulting panic. The real truth of the matter is that the public itself trusts our government and our Air Force and does not believe that space people are visiting our planet in extra-terrestrial vehicles.

Reporting, investigating, analyzing, and evaluating procedures have improved considerably since Kenneth Arnold's sightings of the flying saucer on June 27,

1947. The study and analysis of reported sightings of UFOs is continued today by selected scientific personnel under the supervision of the Air Force and by qualified scientists and engineers from outside the Air Force on a contract basis.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Professor of Astrophysics at Northwestern University and Associate Director of the Astrophysical Observatory for the Smithsonian Institution, Cambridge, Mass., is the chief scientific consultant to the Air Force on the subject of UFOs. In this capacity Dr. Hynek presided at a committee meeting held by the Department of the Air Force in the Pentagon on February 17, 1959, for the purpose of discussing the Air Force philosophy toward, and policy regarding, the unidentified flying object program.

Recommendations resulting from this meeting were as follows. The Air Force must continue to take a



This cigar-shaped mystery object in the sky is really a B-36 type aircraft in beam of sunlight.



Natural phenomena, such as this bright fireball meteor, are often mistaken for "Flying Saucers."

positive approach toward the UFO program. Air Force investigations of reported sightings must be thorough and scientific with all possibilities considered. The entire resources of the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center must be made available to help with the overall analysis and evaluation program of reported UFOs and the *public must be kept fully informed* of the Air Force position regarding UFOs. These recommendations have been carried out and today a special Air Force UFO committee meets each month to make sure that every means available is being used in pursuit of a positive UFO investigation program and that a thorough information program is being conducted to keep the public informed.

The official Air Force position can be summed up in a few words. In its attempt to put the UFO subject in proper perspective, it appears that the Air Force cannot compete with the science-fiction writer in satis-

fying the desires of those people who wish to believe in spaceships. The Air Force believes that the investigation of the UFO phenomena is in responsible hands and that an adequate, thorough, and honest program is being conducted. Regardless, a small but articulate segment of people are under the mistaken belief that the Air Force has not sought the assistance of outstanding authorities from outside the Air Force to assist in its evaluation of UFO sightings and that it is withholding vital UFO information from the public, thereby preventing proper evaluation. On numerous occasions the Air Force has publicized its conclusions relative to UFOs and explained the evaluation process. This group, nevertheless, continues to claim that UFOs are objects from outer space and demand Congressional hearings on the subject. The continued interest of this small segment is understandable because the subject is so novel and fascinating that it supports over a hundred organizations of one type or another. Most of these organizations publish news releases or magazines and they expect the Air Force to furnish them grist for their publication. Needless to say, the Air Force does not have the resources allotted to this project to fill these numerous individual requests which organizations make for copies of investigative reports and other related material.

In addition, the Air Force would be remiss in its duty to the American public if by its assistance, it encouraged these organizations in their sensational claims and contentions. The Air Force cannot give them individual attention but rather makes periodic releases available to those groups through established news channels. In so doing, it shows no partiality to any person or organization, nor does it place itself in the position of placing its stamp of approval on or giving preferential treatment to any one of them.

This press release approach, used by all branches of

Government, is considered censorship by many of these organizations and because the Air Force will not favor them with individual attention they contend that it is keeping vital information from the public. The Air Force was compelled to adopt the press release approach because in the past when it furnished factual information to certain writers of UFO books upon their individual requests, the action was interpreted as granting approval and clearance to the books in which the information was used.

If the Air Force withholds certain information from the public on UFOs, such as the names of individuals reporting sightings, it is not done for the purpose of depriving the public of vital information necessary for proper evaluation. Nor is it done because there is scientific proof of the existence of spacecraft from other planets and it does not wish to alarm the American public. It is done in the majority of instances to protect the people involved from the idle curiosity of the sensation seekers. In a few instances it is done to keep from compromising investigative processes and if necessary, it is done for legitimate security. This last instance is one this small group fails to recognize as legitimate and yet every citizen must recognize that specific information could benefit a potential enemy. An example of this would be a reported radar UFO sighting by one of our defense radar installations which was caused by some specific weather condition such as a temperature inversion. If this certain set of atmospheric conditions would always, or generally, produce spurious radar returns on the scope, it would become classified information. The reason for this is obvious. Any potential enemy could try to penetrate our defense radar at the particular geographical point when the atmospheric conditions were just right.

In this regard, it should be repeated here that there is no classified material on file in the Air Force which

proves or concludes that interplanetary space travel exists in reverse.

The Air Force has a tremendous task in defending this country against weapon systems which we know actually exist and are in the hands of our potential enemies. To divert more men and money away from this most serious mission into a greatly enlarged program for the investigation and defense against UFOs about which we have been unable to discover one iota of tangible scientific evidence, would seriously jeopardize the security of this country against a known proven threat; would be allowing the sensation seekers to dictate our defense policies and would lay the Air Force open to the charge of gross imprudence.

The Air Force does not deny that unknown objects have been seen by responsible people. It is in the interpretation of these sightings that they are questioned. From its investigations covering the past 13-year period, the Air Force contends that when the evidence of these sightings has been sifted through the scientific criteria it has always led to the conclusions that the objects were not spacecraft and they did not constitute a threat against the security of this country. As an act of faith, the UFO can be considered manned or unmanned craft from outer space. But as a scientific fact there has been no authenticated scientific evidence presented to or discovered by the Air Force to support this conclusion.

Finally, when space travel is accomplished by the United States or should the Air Force discover that spaceships exist from out of this world, official government announcements would be made immediately through the Department of Defense to this effect.

And that's the story to date. There just are not any manned spaceships yet. There are what might be called "flying saucers" under development but they are really aircraft which operate within the atmosphere and are definitely not spaceships. . . . 

*Aircraft in a tight turn
in rainy, misty weather
assumes appearance
of flying saucer
over the heads
of spectators.*

