



# FIRST ENCOUNTER

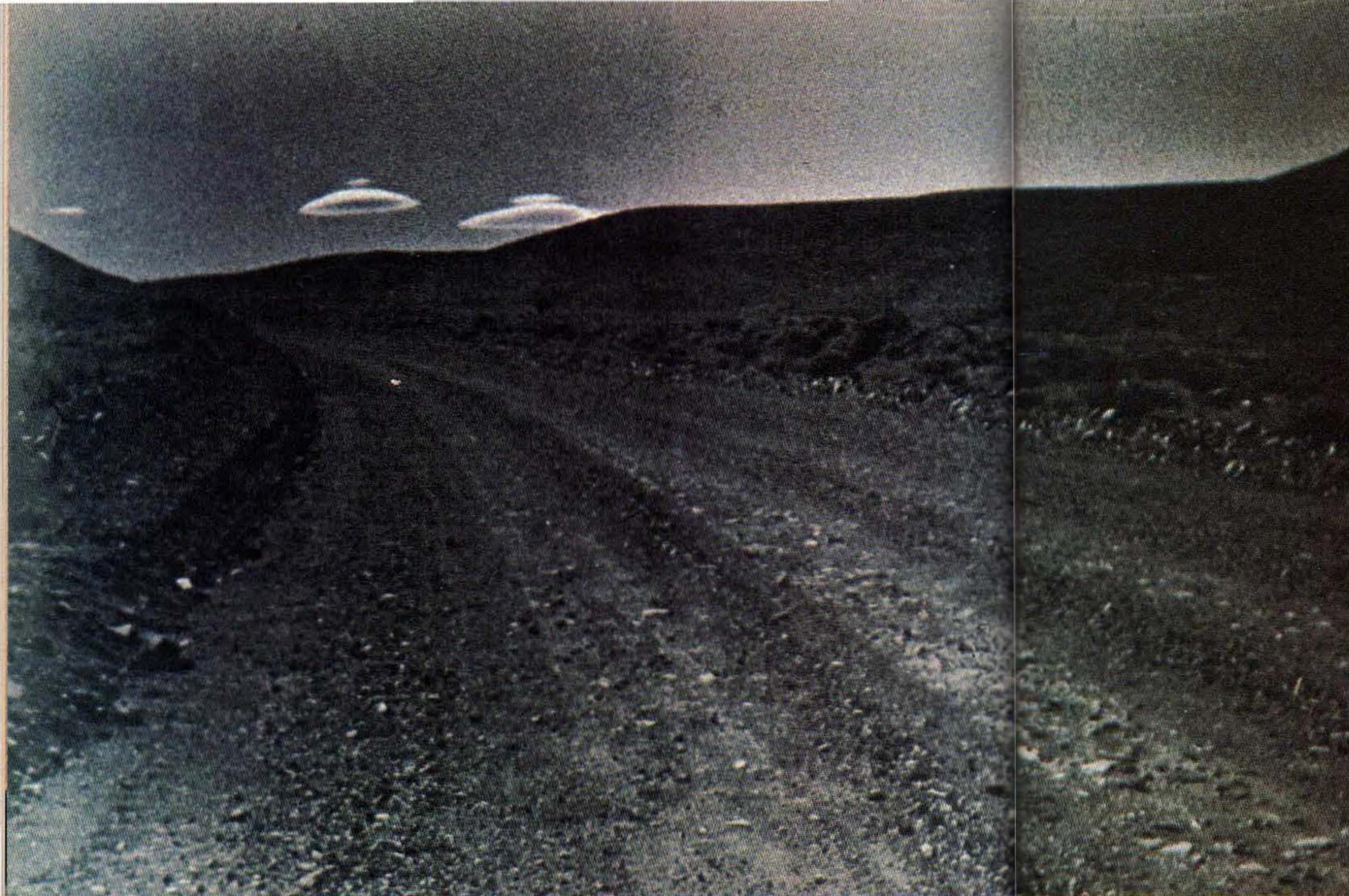
Scientists urge the United Nations to act now on the matter of UFOs

BY E. LEE SPEIGEL



**A** highly unusual meeting occurred recently at the United Nations. It went virtually unnoticed in the press. Some top investigators momentarily gained the attention of a world body whose millions of constituents have traditionally cast a deaf ear to their cause, the UFO phenomenon. This serious group, keenly sensitive to global skepticism, viewed the UN encounter as an opportunity to lend credibility to UFOs. Astronomer J. Allen Hynek had waited thirty years to speak at the United Nations. Formerly a consultant to the US Air Force during Project Blue Book, Hynek's reputation as the chief scientific debunker of UFOs has turned a

Against a cloudless Mediterranean sunset (above), needlelike, rotating "black cloud" was photographed near Alicante, Spain; below left, part of a sequence shows small craft preparing to land; right, symbol-embossed flying object over Denmark.



weird somersault. "Only in the face of stubborn facts and data have I been forced to change my opinion. There's no question that this is a very real phenomenon; any attempt to explain away UFOs as imagination or as natural events is, today, nonsense."

Addressing the UN Special Political Committee, Hynek focused on the global nature of the phenomenon: "UFO reports have been assembled from 133 different countries and have been made in significant numbers by highly responsible persons. Radar experts, astronauts, pilots, government officials, and scientists have all given eyewitness accounts."

French astronomer-mathematician Jacques Vallee, emerging

*Dome-topped UFOs observed near Cordillera Mountain, Argentina (above); famous UFO "formation" over Capitol, thought by many to be a reflection in camera lens (above right); similar formation (below left) over Canada defies conventional explanation; (right) Denmark, May 3, 1974.*

☞ "They seem to be programmed in some way," says Hynek, "implying some sort of intelligence." ☞



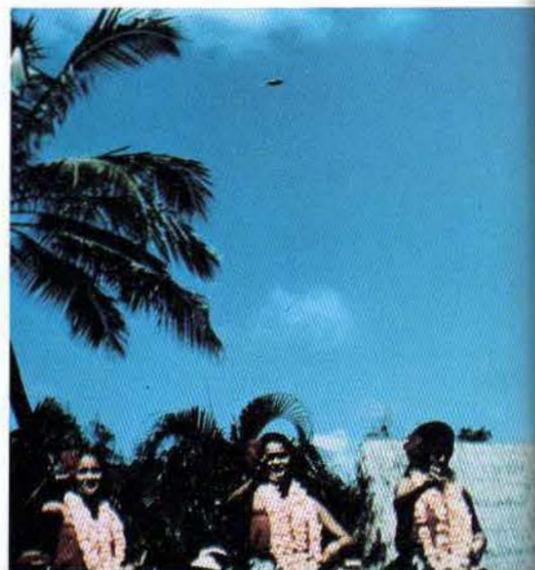


*This striking sequence shows the close proximity in which UFOs come to eyewitnesses. The photos, taken in 1963 by a southwestern electrical engineer, show the craft hovering (above and left) in a forest area and then (right) turning on its side, a maneuver often reported worldwide. "I think we can navigate equally as well as they do, but we certainly don't have the sophisticated propulsion systems that they apparently have," opines former astronaut Gordon Cooper. He was among a key group of UFO experts who participated in the recent UN presentation.*



as an intelligent new proponent of the phenomenon, stressed the social implications of UFOs and the need to finally determine whether they do, in fact, exist. "The lack of serious, open-minded research in the field has encouraged witnesses to think that science is incapable of dealing with it," said Vallee. "An open exchange of information on the subject is needed."

Astronaut Gordon Cooper, a key member of the UFO advisory group, believes that the UN should establish "a top-level, coordinated program to collect and analyze data from all over the world and to determine how best to interface with these [UFO] visitors in friendly fashion." Cooper, whose scientific background cannot be ignored, had several startling UFO encounters during the 1950s.



Dr. Felix Zigel, a leading scientist at the Moscow Aviation Institute, asserted that "the important thing is for us to discard any preconceived notions about UFOs and to organize on a global scale a calm, sensation-free, and strictly scientific study of this strange phenomenon. . . . International cooperation is vital."

All statements were entered into the official UN record. The delegates have been asked to study them closely. A consensus vote was taken on December 8, 1978, and the UFO matter will be reexamined when the UN Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space convenes in June. A team of UN-sponsored investigators might be the outcome of such deliberations. ☐

*From a sequence photographed in '74 near St. Lorenzen, Austria (top left); tourist photo of hula girls in Honolulu revealed UFO in background (below right); at left, close-up of object. Above, dark object exits from what one analyst suggests is a vaporlike "exhaust"; Shasta, Calif. 1970.*

“I believe,” asserts Vallee, “that UFOs are heralding a major change in social belief patterns.”