

JUST

CAUSE



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SOME OBSERVATIONS

In spite of a generally quiet quarter since our last issue we have a variety of things to discuss. First is the Freedom of Information Act.

As you will note on page six, the decline of FOIA is still of major concern. Agencies have continued to stall in complying with FOIA requests, sometimes waiting well over a year to answer. Of particular note is the next to last paragraph in which the State Department attempts to classify book authors as "commercial users" of the FOIA. As such they would be more likely to have to pay search/processing fees than would the general public. What we find strange in this is that authors, who are seldom rich and are among the bottom tier of wage earners, have the ability to make released documents widely available, thus reducing the need for others to request documents from the agencies. Apparently, the government is trying to turn FOIA offices into a marketplace by which they can barter documents to citizens according to a perceived level of income. What is also apparent is that, whether deliberate or not, ineptitude in running various FOIA offices is discouraging the flow of releasable information to the people. We are being forced to pay for the mess through assessments on our desire to learn about and understand our government's way of doing things. As usual, only those with the financial means to deal with the situation gain, while the rest of us look on and wonder what happened! An informed public is just not a priority right now.

Which leads us to another issue -

Recent surveys have revealed a serious lack of basic knowledge on the part of the public. One National Science Foundation study (Boston Globe, 10-24-88) said that fifty-five percent of adult Americans don't know that the Earth revolves around the Sun once a year. A more recent survey by MIT and Northern Illinois University (Boston Herald, 6-1-89) said that only fifty-five percent of adult Americans know that the Sun is a star, a fact leaving scientists and educators stunned!

This editor recalls giving a one hour presentation on the UFO phenomenon several years ago. When the session was opened to

questions and answers, the first question was a request to explain the difference between a star and a planet. I had to spend twenty minutes of allotted time making this difference clear! Much of the audience couldn't grasp why stars and planets look similar to the naked eye on one hand, while they are actually different bodies altogether on the other hand.

Our point is that in our very narrowly-defined area of seeking UFO documents from government agencies, can we transmit the importance of what we do to a population that is, to put it bluntly, ignorant of basic nature? Are we perpetually facing an uphill battle, never reaching an audience large enough to help us make a difference? Listen to the dumb questions one usually hears on TV and radio talk shows, from moderator and audience alike (and, yes, the frequently dumb answers from the guests!). One wonders how some of these people function in our technologically-complex society on an everyday basis. I once appeared on a radio talk show where the host was asking questions of me on government secrecy about UFOs, from "Hustler Magazine!!!"

To all serious UFOlogists who write and lecture, ponder this quote from the British journal, "Social Studies of Science," "Only a third of American adults have a minimally acceptable understanding of the universe." This is after decades of dazzling space achievements by the United States! It is a national disgrace and only makes our work that much harder.

I hope this commentary makes our readers aware of serious social problems that directly affect what we are able to do. I hope it makes you angry at our leadership for not fostering an atmosphere of knowledge and understanding, and at ourselves for intellectual laziness and for allowing things to deteriorate so badly. In this way maybe it is more understandable why serious UFO research has been so difficult to get across to people, while the bizarre, the sensational and the ridiculous rule the day.

A DISTURBING CONCEPT?

With the realization that the following suggestion will be regarded as heresy by much of the UFO community, we are offering it anyway. The intent is to shake UFOlogy out of the current high-flying, LSD trip it has been on lately with regards to unqualified acceptance of abductions, Gulf Breeze, MJ-12, John Lear theories; etc., from many quarters.

Whatever it was that created the UFO phenomenon over the last forty+ years seems to have, at least temporarily, left us!

Sightings, as we have known them in the past (CE 1,2,3; photos; daylight discs; etc.), have dropped significantly in recent years. How often does one hear of a humanoid report where no one is abducted; or of landing trace reports; or of quality film footage, especially with the proliferation of video cameras?

There is a clear lapse in press reporting of sightings, partly due to a negative attitude about the dominance of abduction reports in the UFOlogical community's repertoire, but also due to a minimal number of sighting reports in general.

A 1987 Gallup poll indicated an 8-point drop in the percentage of people thinking UFOs are real, meaning that UFOlogy has become less convincing in presenting it's case to the public. And we can put blame for this on evidence that the public has become less sophisticated, as we've mentioned earlier.

Assuming that one of the stimuli for UFOs is the ever-popular

extraterrestrial hypothesis, is it not possible to say that whatever work the ETs needed to do is finished and they have departed for home? The gathering of soil samples, water, the tapping of power lines, all characteristics of past sightings, no longer occur. And with this we are now left with a strange mythos that citizens are being abducted (sincerely believed by the "abductees" but not based on physical reality), filling a void left by the lack of "regular" sightings.

Naturally, implied in this is a rejection of the notion that abductions, as has been reported in waves lately, are hard evidence of UFO/alien visitations. We side with science on this issue. Until concrete evidence appears that individuals are being physically abducted aboard UFOs, we cannot accept such reports as proof of anything except that we believe most of the abduction "victims" believe this happened to them. There is no way we can commit to this idea otherwise. We hope that sincere persons who believe this happened to them can understand our position.

The Summer 1989 issue of The Skeptical Inquirer says this, "UFO organizations....depend on subscriptions and donations to keep the doors open and groups that become too skeptical soon find both drying up." CAUS believes that the UFO phenomenon is important but we will not support every pro-UFO concept at all costs. We believe that our readers want hard questions asked. We're sure that if we took a poll of our subscribers, that most, if not all, would say no when asked if they preferred to believe weak information. A balance between uncritical belief and unyielding skepticism is our preference.

ET PROTOCOL

On page seven is a NASA letter delineating protocol for the day when extraterrestrial intelligent life is finally confirmed. NASA's policy on this has always been a bit cloudy, limited mainly to open-ended discussions at various conferences. But since renewed interest in SETI funding (see Just Cause, December 1988) has enlivened new discussions, we now have a general statement on how our government will handle alien contacts.

SPACE AGENCY PROVIDES UFO REFERRALS

People writing to the Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena, California about UFOs will receive a form letter providing references to the Center for UFO Studies and the UFO Reporting Center's 24-hour telephone hotline. We are pleased to see UFOs listed along with other categories of referral like "Propulsion Systems," "Aeronautics," and "Weather Satellites." The reporting of unknown aerial objects is a serious matter and such data collection must be encouraged for legitimate study. The JPL should be congratulated for this simple but very useful service to the public.

MJ-12 UPDATE

The MJ-12 issue has been quite active behind the scenes, turning into an incredible debate over the minutest of detail. A sizable volume of correspondence is ongoing between many individuals arguing the pros and cons. Someday we will prepare a bibliography of this large body of information.

Former OSI agent Richard Doty has been responding to questions from a number of people about his statements previously made public.

Doty has promised that a book will appear soon giving his side of the story. It is not clear whether he is writing it himself or working with another individual who will write for him. We await whatever he decides to say.

Stanton Friedman has won a \$1000 bet with Philip Klass in a debate over the style of type used by the White House during the 1950s. Klass claimed that "Elite" type was the typewriter style used at the White House, while Friedman claimed, and subsequently had proof, that the White House used "Pica" type as well. "Pica" is the type style used in the famous Cutler/Twining memo mentioning MJ-12.

Klass' ill-advised bet was based on Friedman not being able to produce "Pica" memos from the National Archives, thus proving that the "Pica" Cutler/Twining was faked. Since Friedman has done a good deal of research at the Archives, his winning was a foregone conclusion.

What is particularly unfortunate for Klass is that the bet really did nothing to change the major questions about the Cutler/Twining memo. It's origin is still suspicious, an original hasn't been located, and no other legitimate MJ-12 documents have surfaced.

A curious item received recently is a paper called "Squire and the Knave." This is a dialog between two characters debating and debunking the merits of MJ-12 criticisms. The CAUS publisher and editor received special mention, along with others, as "Sir Larry 'the Drip'" and "Sir Barry 'the Unripe'." The paper is anonymous but is postmarked "Truth or Consequences, N.M." We have our suspicions who wrote the piece. Nevertheless, it's unfortunate that the author chose to resort to sandbox name-calling and occasional toilet humor to get points across. We might have taken it more seriously as a response to MJ-12 criticisms.

On page eight is a letter from Ed Reese of the National Archives. Reese is in charge of the records group containing the Cutler/Twining memo.

Putting this on hold for a moment, we refer to a paper titled, "Background Comments about the Roswell Incident and the Majestic-12 Operation (The Real UFO Story), August 25, 1987, by Stanton Friedman:

"In March 1985, during a visit to Washington, D.C., I learned that USAF Records Group 341 was being classification reviewed by a team of AF people at the National Archives. When the review was completed, I notified Bill and Jaime who went to D.C. and spent almost a week going through more than 100 boxes of files and discovered among other interesting items the Cutler Twining memo of July 14, 1954"

Three points:

1) Referring back to the letter on page eight, how could Reese not recall seeing the memo if it was supposedly discovered by Moore and Shandera and presented for clearance in 1985? Reese was in charge of the records group and he certainly would have been made aware of it, especially with a clear problem like not having a proper registration number on it.

2) No mention is made that Moore and Shandera were led to the memo by mysterious post cards from unnamed sources. The impression given here is that the memo turned up as a random discovery, disconnected from any strange circumstances.

3) Once again, where is a copy of the memo cleared in 1985 for release?

MAIL TAMPERING

We are aware of scattered charges that UFOlogists have experienced mail tampering or loss. The incidents seem to center on UFO-oriented mail only and doesn't affect other business with which these persons are involved. The implication is that the government is searching and seizing UFO materials with the purpose of gathering private gossip or of harassment of UFOlogists.

CAUS is in a unique position to render expert help in this area. Larry Fawcett is a police lieutenant with years of investigative experience and access to information sources in criminal investigation. This editor has been with the U.S. Postal Service since 1970 and is very familiar with the behind-the-scenes activity in mail processing, classification, and finances.

In cases of alleged mail tampering, anyone who has experienced this should contact me at Box 176; Stoneham, Mass. 02180. Save all the evidence, meaning envelopes, contents and any stickers, tape; etc., on the outside. Explain why you believe that tampering has taken place. There could be a mundane explanation for things that initially seem suspicious. Only someone who has worked behind the window can explain fully all the different situations in which mail can be damaged.

If one is concerned about the safety of sending such materials to us, any evidence sent for study should be sent "Certified Mail - Return Receipt Requested," or in the event that one desires high security for their evidence, send by "Registered Mail." Certified would cost a minimum of \$2, while Registered would be a minimum of \$4.40, plus postage.

It should be stressed that the only legal way that first-class mail may be opened by other than the addressee or an authorized agent is via a court order.

We'd like to be able to study evidence of UFO mail tampering so that we may document such claims, if they are legitimate. We may also allay the fears of people who are worried about tampering, with possible alternative explanations for damage or loss.

I've interviewed hundreds of postal employees over the years to see if mail interception was a common event in relation to the UFO phenomenon. I won't say whether it is or not at present, not to be suspenseful but to obtain a response free from suggestion one way or another.

We will report on the results of this invitation in due course.

JUSTICE FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL (JMP)

Several correspondents in Australia have contacted us regarding claims by the JMP, a group we briefly discussed in CAUS Bulletin, March 1988. We were curious as to why a sudden burst of interest in this group came from "down under." Then we discovered that an Australian magazine, "Simply Living," had reprinted the whole of JMP's claims in a recent issue.

As snowballs grow rolling down hill, so do stories like this! We would like to reiterate; we have no connection to JMP. We are unaware of who they are and have received only one communication from them, the one alluded to in CAUS Bulletin. We do not trust anonymous sources because of their ability to evade questioning. We do not have time to play games with such sources either.

Foot-Dragging on FOIA?

State Dept.'s 'Shoddy Performance' in Processing Requests Assailed

By Bill McAllister
Washington Post Staff Writer

When Katherine Ellison, a member of a California newspaper team that won a Pulitzer Prize for tracing how deposed Philippine leader Ferdinand Marcos hid his wealth, decided to write a book on Marcos' wife, she got an unexpected surprise from the State Department.

Her requests for information from the department were "virtually useless," Ellison wrote in her recently published book, "Imelda, Steel Butterfly of the Philippines." Ellison began filing her requests under the Freedom of Information Act in November 1986, but by January 1988 only one of her requests had been processed. And that, she said, was probably because someone else previously had requested the same information.

"I think there's something wrong with those kinds of delays, and with the fact that one not only must wait, but, in many cases must also hire lawyers to pry meaningful information from the U.S. government," she wrote in the book's preface.

A new General Accounting Office (GAO) report, to be released today, confirms Ellison's concerns. It finds that the State Department's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office is ill-managed and poorly prepared to handle the 2,700 requests it receives each year. Although that gives State one of the lightest case-loads of any department, the agency typically took more than six months to handle most requests during a test period, the report said.

The requests include many that required as little as 30 minutes of research time, the GAO said. State began 1988 with a backlog of more than 3,700 requests and little prospect of gaining added staff to process them, the report said.

"I am concerned by the State De-

partment's shoddy performance in providing information," said Rep. Robert E. Wise Jr. (D-W.Va.), newly elected chairman of the House subcommittee on government information, justice and agriculture, which received the requests. "... I knew that there were problems with FOIA operations at some agencies. I had no idea that things were so bad."

Wise said State has shown some improvement since the GAO study, but said he has requested Secretary of State James A. Baker III to advise the subcommittee in 60 days what steps the agency has undertaken to improve its compliance with the disclosure law. "If any one place should be up to speed with the act, it should be State," he said.

Wise said that the agency may have security concerns but that "I can't see why they would have more a problem than the FBI or DEA" [Drug Enforcement Agency], two law enforcement agencies with better compliance records than State.

Officials at the National Security Archives, a private, nonprofit Washington library that helps individuals obtain foreign policy information under the act, said the report may understate the problem. Thomas S. Blanton, the organization's director of planning and research, and subcommittee officials said State has the worst reputation of any executive agency for compliance with the act. "Their volume is low, but their response is slow," he said.

Richard C. Faulk, deputy assistant secretary of state for operations, declined to comment on the report, saying he had not read the final version. He said, however, that

the report's suggestion that the FOIA office has limited resources may be "a valid one."

Blanton and congressional staff members familiar with the report said that one problem not directly addressed in the report is what they described as the department's obsession with secrecy and an unwillingness to declassify papers. "More than other agencies, the State Department loves secrecy," said a staff member.

The archive, a member of the American Library Association, has clashed with State over its refusal to provide the organization documents without charge. Former deputy secretary of state John C. Whitehead was quoted by the association as stating in an FOIA denial letter: "Merely making records available to those who may request them will not itself contribute significantly to the public's understanding of the operations of government."

Archive officials contend that State, faced with budgetary problems in running its FOIA operations, has taken a narrow view of who can receive its documents without charge. In 1987, Frank M. Machak, State's information and privacy coordinator, sought to redefine book authors and organizations "seeking to establish private repositories of public records," such as the archive, as "commercial" users and thus more likely to have to pay for search and processing fees.

Blanton said the Department of Health and Human Services has one of the best FOIA response records in the government, receiving 140,000 requests a year and missing the 10-day statutory deadline in about 40 cases.



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Washington, D.C.
20546

LN

April 10, 1989

Reply to Attn of:

Mr. Peter A. Gersten
Gagliardi, Torres & Gersten, P.C.
895 Sheridan Avenue
Bronx, NY 10451

Dear Mr. Gersten:

This is in response to your letter of October 13, 1988 requesting the status of protocol concerning "controlling information pertaining to the discovery of or contact with extraterrestrial life forms".

As of this writing, there is no official written record that specifically addresses the handling of information related to the discovery of extraterrestrial life. However, protocols for handling the dissemination of information concerning the discovery of extraterrestrial life and extraterrestrial intelligent life have been discussed on international levels with NASA participation for the past 20 years. An emerging consensus from these discussions emphasizes the following point: that the detection of extraterrestrial life is a discovery with such profound implications that it transcends national boundaries and should be the property of all humankind. This is in keeping with the National Space Act of 1958 and the NASA philosophy of providing the widest possible distribution of results from space-related research for the greatest good of the people of Earth. This is also in accord with the 1968 Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to which the United States is a signatory. In the absence of a specific policy dealing with successful verification of an ETI signal, NASA and non-NASA SETI researchers in the United States (and abroad) have adopted this policy as an unofficial guiding principle.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Riep
Freedom of Information
Act Officer

National Archives



Washington, DC 20408

May 26, 1989

Reply to: NNRM89-6180-ER

Mr. Robert G. Todd
2528 Belmont Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003-2617

Dear Mr. Todd:

This is in response to your letter of May 20, 1989. I have no recollection of seeing the Cutler/Twining memorandum in 1985. It would be very unusual to find a document filed between folders. In some cases careless refiling can result in a document being filed between folders, however, we can usually match the file to it's folder in the box. In the case of the Cutler/Twining memorandum contained no TS register number. I found it after a researcher cited the TS register when requesting a copy of the memorandum.

If documents are found out of order in a box the researcher usually calls it to our attention. I do not recall Moore or Shandera calling my attention to anything unusual concerning the files they were examining.

Sincerely,

EDWARD J. REESE
Military Reference Branch
Textual Reference Division

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