

AMERICANS NO LONGER RIDICULE FLYING SAUCER STORIES

(From a Reuter correspondent in Washington)

MANY Americans no longer ridicule stories of "Flying Saucers," and belief is mounting that the strange disc-like objects are a super-secret United States aeronautical development, despite flat official denials. Some radio and press correspondents, claiming the advantage of unsecured "inside information," are now predicting that the United States defence authorities will, at some later date, reveal that the "Flying Saucers" are both real and American.

FIRST reports of circular flying objects having been seen from shortly after the war zooming over different parts of the United States were generally ridiculed as figments of imagination.

But recently there has been a spate of new "flying saucer" reports from such people as Air Force and commercial airline pilots and ground officers who testified to seeing the strange objects in controlled flight.

Such reports from such sources appear to have strengthened the impression among many of the reading public that there was, after all, something solid in the saucers stories.

The press section of the Defence Department in Washington has been kept busy answering a stream of inquiries about the mysterious flying objects.

The official answer has always been the same: "The flying saucers do not exist, despite eye-witness stories.

RELIABLE REPORTS

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Those who are convinced that the flying saucers are real and are connected with secret aeronautical development work in the United States have compiled the following list of "reliable" reports to back up their beliefs.

1. The captain and first officer of a Chicago and Southern Airlines plane, flying at 2000 feet over Arkansas last March, got a thirty-second "good look" at a mysterious circular aircraft in controlled flight at between 500 and 600 miles an hour. It had "soft and fuzzy fluorescent lights" along its rim and a strange "blue-white light blinking rapidly from its top."

2. Another pilot, a former aircraft inspector with ten years' flying experience, saw a "flying disc" while flying at 5000 feet over Washington last March, and dived towards it to get a better look. He said it was "glittering on top" and sped away from him at 400 to 500 miles an hour, leaving a vapor trail.

3. Two Eastern Airline pilots, narrowly missed colliding with a flying saucer over Georgia in July, 1948.

4. A group of scientists at a base in New Mexico, where the first atomic bomb was exploded in test, "tracked" with instruments a flying saucer for several minutes last year.

5. A flying saucer was seen by a

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5. A flying saucer was seen by a group of Air Force officers at Fort Knox, in Kentucky, and was chased by three military pilots whose planes were outdistanced by the strange flying object..

Many other reports of flying saucers were rejected as being either hoaxes or simple imagination. One such report, quickly proved to be without foundation, was that a flying saucer had crashed with a 23-inch man aboard.

Some scientists were quoted in the press as saying that the flying objects reportedly seen were probably meteors.

And there were the inevitable rumors that the mysterious discs were either Martian spaceships surveying the earth, or Russian secret weapons.

SECRET AIRCRAFT

Front-page treatment was given by many United States newspapers to a report published by the United States News and World Report magazine recently that the flying saucers were secret American ex-

perimental aircraft of a revolutionary type—a combination of helicopter and fast jet plane.

This weekly news magazine, regarded as a responsible publication, did not quote by name any author-

did not quote by name any authority for its statement that the saucers were real aircraft, but based its conclusions on reports by "engineers competent to appraise reports of reliable observers."

It said the flying saucer plane conformed to well-known principles of aerodynamics, was 105 feet in diameter, circular in shape and about ten feet thick.

The magazine added: "Each saucer appears to have a series of variable-direction jet nozzles around its rims. Fuel used is unknown. Direction of the aircraft and its velocity evidently are controlled by the angle at which the jet nozzles are tilted, the number operating and the power applied."

What appeared to strengthen the magazine's "real story" of the flying saucers was its statement that an early model of the flying saucer was designed by Charles Zimmerman, of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, in 1942 and made 100 successful flights before the Navy took over development to create more advanced models.

It also published photographs of the 1942 model, which was elliptical in shape and powered by two piston engines with twin propellers.

A Defence Department spokesman when questioned about the story admitted the

ABOUT THE STORY ADMITTED THE Navy had developed a "pan-cake-shaped" aircraft called the chance-vought XF5U-1, but said it had never flown, and was scrapped more than a year ago.

He added that a small 3000-lb. scale model of the plane was flown, and pictures of it had been released, but this model was now awaiting shipment to the National Air Museum.

FLAT DENIAL

Then came the flat denial of the magazine story that the flying saucers were in reality new American aircraft.

The Defence Department spokesman was emphatic that "the Navy is not engaged in conducting research on, or in flying any jet-powered circular-shaped aircraft. There is absolutely no evidence that these things exist."

The Air Force, which had investigated many flying saucer reports, had stated earlier that the evidence indicated "misinterpretation of various conventional objects, a mild form of mass hysteria or hoaxes."

But many Americans remained unconvinced. Their belief that the saucers do exist was strengthened by a report from Italy quoting one of Italy's leading turbine engineers,

of Italy's leading turbine engineers, Professor Giuser : Belluzzo, as saying that designs for flying saucers were prepared for Hitler and Mussolini in 1942, and he had personally designed one.

The flying saucer controversy swirled down to Florida, where President Truman was vacationing in his winter White House.

Through his press secretary, Charles Ross, the President issued a statement that he knew absolutely nothing of such flying objects being developed by the United States, or any other nation.

The United States Secretary of Defence (Mr. Louis Johnson) announced that he was satisfied there was nothing in the reports, and emphasised that the joint chiefs of staff had assured him the denials issued by the military departments were sincere and truthful.