



FLYING SAUCER HERE IS ARTIST'S CONCEPTION . . . OR IS IT?

McNamara Debunks Flying Saucer Reports

By DANIEL RAPOPORT

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara has gone on record to "categorically deny" there is any substance to recent sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFO).

But the Pentagon chief said the Air Force has and will continue to treat each sighting as the report of "a sincere individual" and will be thoroughly investigated.

The secretary expressed his views on the current wave of "flying saucer" reports on March 30 during a closed hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. A transcript of the session was made available Saturday.

McNamara was discussing the foreign aid program when Rep. Cornelius Gallagher, D-N. J. noted the UFO reports. He asked McNamara if he would not mind commenting on them, especially, Gallagher said, with tongue in cheek, when they might result in new customers for the U.S. aid program. This exchange followed:

GALLAGHER: Is there anything at all to any of this, in view of the publications like *Life* and the rest of them starting to take some of it seriously?

McNAMARA: I think not. I have talked to the Secretary of the Air Force and the director of research and engineering, and

neither of them place any real evidence in the reports we have received to date. That doesn't mean that a report tomorrow may not be sound and warrant the full investigation that we give it.

Gallagher: Up until now with these photographs and things that might have appeared in *Life*, more people than before are beginning to attach significance to this matter.

McNamara: There is no indication that they are anything other than illusions.

Gallagher said he disliked taking up so much time on the subject of UFO's but many congressmen were getting mail on the subject "and we would like to be in a position to say the Defense Department categorically denies there is anything in it."

"We do categorically deny it," McNamara replied.

THE SECRETARY said the optical illusions were usually created by "the condition of the viewer and the physical circumstances in the environment."

Earlier in the exchange, Mc-

Namara explained why the Air Force took UFO reports seriously.

"It is our responsibility to defend this country against potential aggressors," he said. "We don't know what form that aggression might take. We recognize the possibility that it might take a form different than anyone has anticipated in the past."

McNamara said he had complete confidence in the Air Force's objectivity in this area.

"If anything I am inclined to think the investigations are more extensive than actually required," he added.

About a week after the Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, the Air Force announced that it would hire an independent panel of scientists to investigate in depth the small percentage of UFO reports that have not been explained.

An Air Force advisory board had recommended such a step and the move satisfied the House Armed Service's Committee which had been asked by House GOP leader Gerald Ford, Mich., to conduct its own investigation.

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