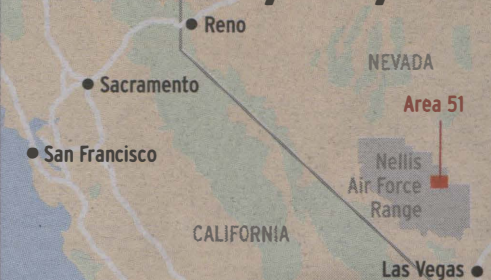


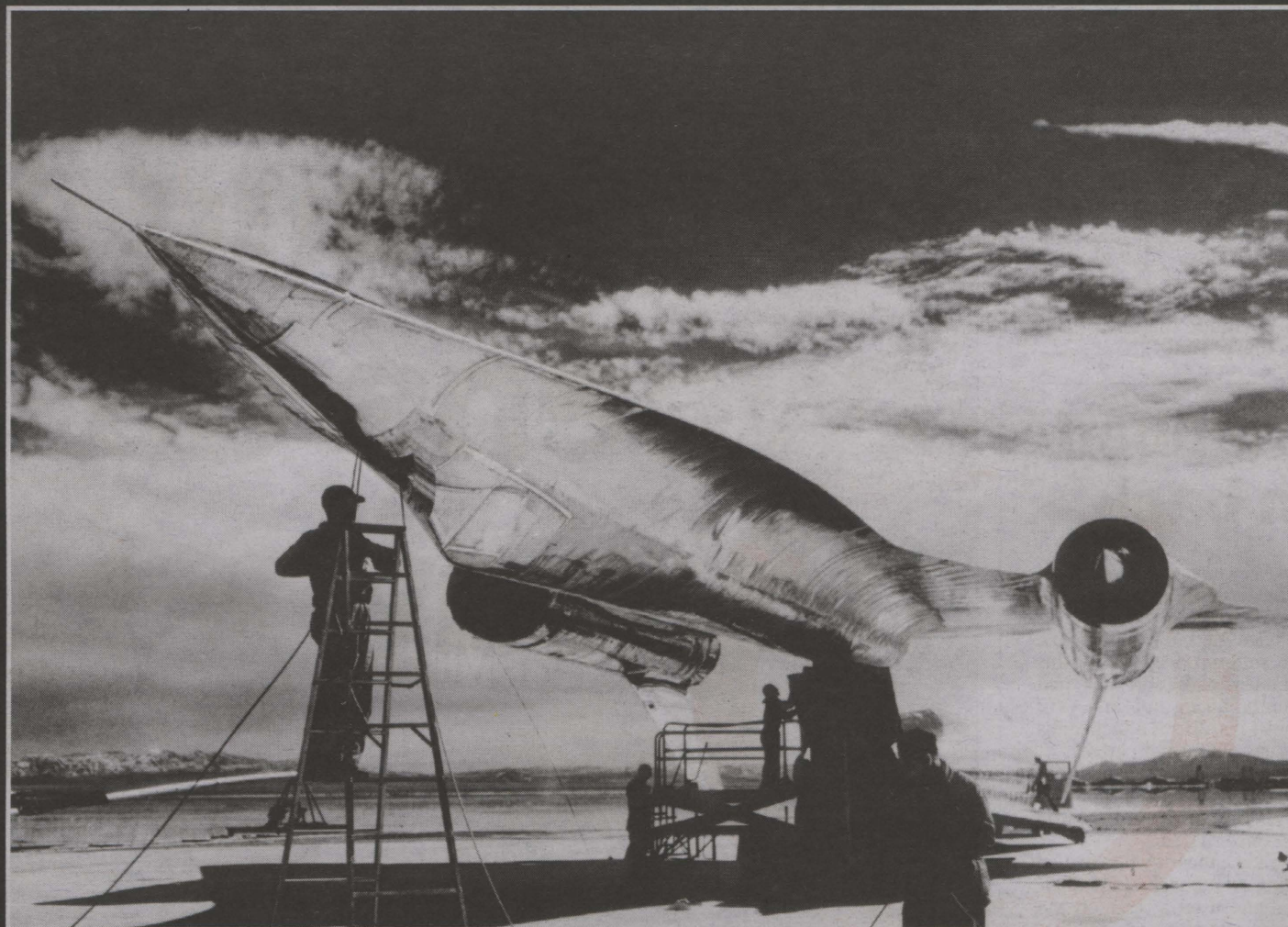
Truth is out on Area 51

Desert of mystery

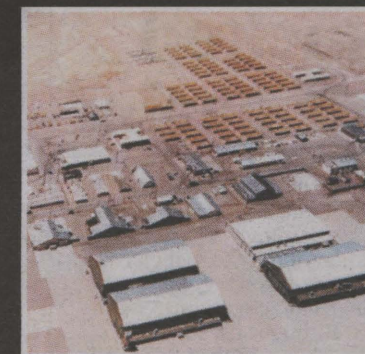
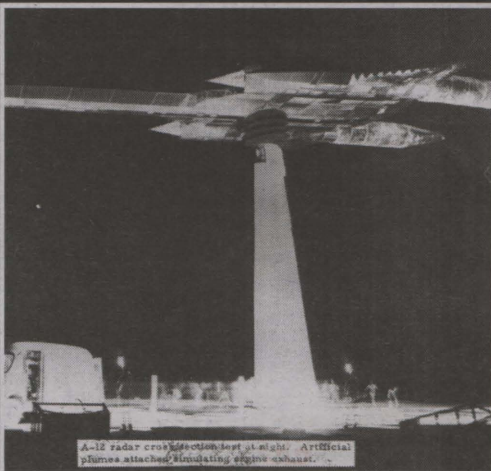


Conspiracy theories

- That in 1947 a UFO crashed near the town of Roswell and the US government seized the craft and the bodies of several aliens
- That the 1969 Moon landing never happened - it was filmed at Area 51
- That the latest revelations about Area 51 are the biggest cover-up of all



Shrouded in mystery: The US military says the A-12 spy plane (main picture) was often mistaken for a UFO and (bottom left to right) testing the A-12, a pilot ejects, a top secret transport approaches Area 51 and an aerial view of the base Pictures: National Geographic/Area 51's Secrets



Joe Hildebrand

AMERICANS have always liked to believe in something, whether it be God, the flag or spindly bug-eyed aliens who look like an albino version of Spiderman. But after today they might have to strike this last one from the list, with extraordinary new pictures of Area 51 confirming every conspiracy theorist's worst fear. There is

no conspiracy. The legendary top secret military base in Nevada — and officially not anywhere — has captured the imagination of UFO-spotters for half a century. It was 1963 when a futuristic-looking craft crashed in the nearby desert. The US Government quickly recovered it and covered it up, which sparked suspicions they had found an alien spaceship. But phenomenal pictures un-

earthed by *National Geographic* and to feature in its documentary *Area 51's Secrets* reveal it was an A-12 spyplane, pictures of which have been released for the first time by the CIA. The incredibly streamlined titanium vessel would have looked at home in a *Star Wars* movie but was in fact developed by the US Government in the 1950s. "Nearly undetectable to radar, the A-12 could fly at 2200 miles an

hour (3540km/h), fast enough to cross the continental US in 70 minutes," the *National Geographic* website reveals. "From 90,000 feet (27,400m), the plane's cameras could capture foot-long (0.3m) objects on the ground below." Area 51 workers even built fake cardboard planes and lit decoy fires so as to fool Soviet satellites spying from overhead.

The ruse was so elaborate that even the fake planes themselves were not intended to be seen but, rather, to cast misleading shadows that would keep the Russians chasing red herrings. The fires were used to simulate aircraft landings. It was an extraordinarily elaborate ruse and incredibly effective at deceiving the Russians. The only catch was it deceived a few Americans too.

Sydney Australia
 Daily Telegraph
 4 June 2011 John Palazzo