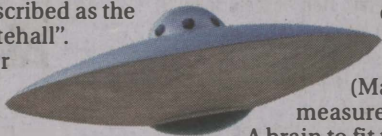


WITH BRITAIN'S CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

BRITAIN has released an archive detailing government briefings on UFOs, Agence France-Presse reports. The 25 files released by The National Archives include "a lengthy briefing on UFO policy to then prime minister **Tony Blair's** office" along with a job description for the post of UFO desk officer, described as the "weirdest job in Whitehall".

According to a former employee of the UFO desk, which closed in 2009, the perception it consisted of "top secret teams of specialist scientists scurrying around the country in a real-life version of *The X-Files*" was "total fiction". Instead, daily duties included providing briefings on the Ministry of Defence's position on UFOs, undertaking UFO investigations, and managing ufologists (UFO "experts"). Investigations included one into a UFO sighting by a police officer at

Chelsea football club, and another into a visit by three "men in black" to a person who reported a UFO encounter in Lincolnshire, east England. A hotel owner in Wales complained to her MP after a UFO landed in a field "from which two tall silver-suited faceless humanoids" emerged and began "making measurements".



(Making measurements? For what?

A brain to fit the whistling void in her cranium?) Also included in the files are details of a 1995 briefing by one of the ministry's UFO intelligence officers which speculated on why aliens would visit Earth. The officer explained any visit would likely be motivated by military reconnaissance, scientific development or tourism. In a briefing in 1979, a UFO officer noted that no radio tracking systems had picked up alien transmissions.

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Australia John Palazzi Sydney