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# UFOs are just a load of gas, claim MoD scientists

Western Mail reporter

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A SCIENTIFIC explanation to solve the mystery of unidentified flying objects has emerged from an inquiry by defence intelligence.

After a four-year study, they concluded that most sightings could be explained by a little-known atmospheric phenomenon.

Scientists of the Defence Intelligence Staff, part of the Ministry of Defence, described how glowing "plasmas" of gas were created by charges of electricity. Air flows then sculpted the plasmas into aerodynamic shapes which appeared to fly at extraordinary speeds through the sky.

The researchers were emphatic that UFOs did not come from alien civilisations, but equally did not dismiss those who claimed to have seen them as fantasists or hoaxers.

Instead, they said such plasmas could play tricks on the mind, creating vivid impressions. They noted that "local electromagnetic fields... have been medically proven to cause responses in the temporal lobes of the brain".

As a result, people who thought they'd seen a UFO were instead suffering from "extended memory retention and repeat experiences" induced by the plasmas.

The scientists reportedly concluded that although UFOs had "defied credible description" as to their cause, they were confident that they now had "a reasonably justified explanation".

The report was released under the Freedom of Information Act following an application by Dr David Clarke, a lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, and his fellow researcher Gary Anthony.

The research began in 1996 and analysed 30 years of evidence on UFOs.

The document says, "Credited with the ability to hover, land, take off, accelerate to exceptional velocities and vanish, they can reportedly alter their direction of flight suddenly and clearly can exhibit aerodynamic characteristics well beyond those of any known aircraft or missile."

While some sightings of UFOs may have been caused by wrongly identifying aircraft, various optical illusions or obvious natural phenomena, the project concluded that the most common explanation was "several types of rarely encountered natural events within the atmosphere and ionosphere".

It described how an "electrically-charged... gaseous mass" could form in the atmosphere which was often invisible to radar, but resembled the bright, fast-moving, round or cigar-shaped objects typically reported by UFO spotters.

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