

# Professor defends UFO stance

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CAMBRIDGE (Agencies via Xinhua) — Even by the sometimes eccentric standards of his colleagues on the teaching staff at Harvard, Dr John Mack is an oddity.

Mack, a psychiatrist attached to Harvard's prestigious Medical School, believes millions of humans may have been abducted by space aliens. His work is being investigated by a panel appointed by the dean of the medical school — a rare and uncomfortable position for a tenured professor.

This week Mack, breaking a long silence, agreed to take questions from reporters on a conference call. He seemed to be a man wrestling with two parallel universes.

While admirers have compared his voyage into the realm of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) with that of Columbus, critics are raising serious questions about his methods for treating people who believe they have been kidnapped and subjected to experiments by sometimes-hostile aliens.

Asked if he has paid a price for exploring a topic many people regard as just plain kooky, Mack responded, "absolutely." The cost, he said, has come in "energy, time, money, attack and criticism. On the other hand, it's been worth it because I think it's contributed to opening people's minds to some shift in consciousness."

In many ways, these are the best and the worst of times for the talented Harvard professor, who won a 1977 Pulitzer Prize for his biography of T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia).

His hardcover bestseller "Abductions: Human Encounters with Aliens" recently released in paperback has already put him on virtually every major US talk show. And he is the man of the moment among UFO enthusiasts because his Pulitzer prize and Harvard credentials have lent an air of credibility to beliefs and theories long shunned by academia and the serious scientific community.

But Mack is also frequently the butt of jokes and derision —

none of which has done Harvard's image any good. For example, a lengthy article on Mack in the Boston Globe last year bore the headline "E.T. phone Harvard."

And one alleged abductee counselled by Mack turned out to be a writer working undercover, who told Time magazine she had fooled Mack into believing that, while aboard a UFO in 1962, she had met President John Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev during the Cuban missile crisis.

After the deception was revealed, Mack responded by suggesting that the woman may have been abducted by aliens after all and later tried to suppress the experience.