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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:20,800

They are mysterious stories that have captured the imaginations of UFO believers and sparked

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00:00:20,800 --> 00:00:22,800

covert government investigations.

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00:00:22,800 --> 00:00:27,200

It was a gigantic object 300 meters in diameter.

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00:00:27,200 --> 00:00:29,520

It made very strange aerial maneuvers.

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00:00:29,520 --> 00:00:33,200

These are not celebrated American paranormal incidents.

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00:00:33,200 --> 00:00:37,920

These UFO episodes took place in a country for years, shrouded in secrecy.

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00:00:39,440 --> 00:00:44,160

Behind the scenes, the Russian government, the Russian military take this phenomena very seriously.

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00:00:44,160 --> 00:00:46,960

They've been lying directly to their own people.

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00:00:46,960 --> 00:01:02,000

May 2002, in a remote area 100 miles outside of Moscow, an investigative team from CosmoBoysk,

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00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:06,240

a group that studies UFO sightings searches for signs of UFO activity.

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00:01:08,880 --> 00:01:10,560

We are going to enter the forest.

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00:01:11,200 --> 00:01:16,480

This is the place pointed out by local people to be the destination of different types of UFOs.

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00:01:17,760 --> 00:01:21,520

Soviet ufologists have been active since the 1960s.

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00:01:21,520 --> 00:01:25,440

They claim that for decades thousands of citizens have witnessed the appearance of

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00:01:25,440 --> 00:01:28,400

unexplainable objects in the skies over Mother Russia.

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00:01:28,400 --> 00:01:48,880

Today, ufologists in Russia work in the open and report their findings freely.

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00:01:49,840 --> 00:01:54,960

This was not always the case.

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00:01:55,520 --> 00:02:01,680

Before the policy of Glasnost was introduced in 1985, independent investigations of UFOs

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00:02:01,680 --> 00:02:05,680

in the former Soviet Union were conducted in a climate of secrecy and fear.

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00:02:06,560 --> 00:02:12,560

At times, official government policy denied the existence of UFOs and any UFO activity

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00:02:12,560 --> 00:02:15,040

and prohibited anyone from reporting otherwise.

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00:02:15,920 --> 00:02:23,760

The UFO research in the former Soviet Union was a very complicated matter because one had to deal

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00:02:23,760 --> 00:02:26,000

with overall state secrecy.

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00:02:26,960 --> 00:02:31,840

Meanwhile, the Soviet government was involved in covert UFO investigations of its own.

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00:02:32,400 --> 00:02:37,600

We know that the Russian government studied this secretly for a period of 40 years.

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00:02:37,600 --> 00:02:40,080

We know that they took it very seriously.

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00:02:40,080 --> 00:02:43,840

We also know that there have been various attempts, including more recent ones,

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00:02:43,840 --> 00:02:46,480

to put a spin on this to say, ah, there's nothing to it.

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00:02:46,480 --> 00:02:47,440

That's a bunch of baloney.

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00:02:48,880 --> 00:02:54,640

The results of the Soviet's most far-reaching secret UFO study became public in the year 2000.

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00:02:55,520 --> 00:02:59,840

The inquiry started in 1978 and took 13 years to complete.

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00:03:00,640 --> 00:03:04,960

The investigative team consisted of top scientists and military experts

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00:03:05,520 --> 00:03:07,200

and was completely clandestine.

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00:03:08,000 --> 00:03:14,480

Certainly, this collaboration between the Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Defense was not

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00:03:14,480 --> 00:03:17,520

paraded. I mean, formally, these studies were closed.

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00:03:18,080 --> 00:03:21,200

Classified organizations took part in these studies.

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00:03:21,200 --> 00:03:23,600

This research should have a secret character.

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00:03:24,480 --> 00:03:27,680

Colonel Boris Sokolov was the coordinator of the investigation.

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00:03:28,640 --> 00:03:33,840

Shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union, he met with American investigative journalist George Knapp.

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00:03:35,680 --> 00:03:41,360

Sokolov told us that just as in America, 90 to 95 percent of these cases could be explained away.

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00:03:43,440 --> 00:03:46,640

But the remaining 5 to 10 percent could not be easily explained.

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00:03:47,680 --> 00:03:53,520

The 13-year Soviet UFO study scrutinized some of the most puzzling sightings in Russian history.

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00:03:54,160 --> 00:04:00,000

In 1968, a cameraman documenting a test of a Soviet jet fighter noticed a huge triangular

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00:04:00,000 --> 00:04:04,880

object in the sky. He focused his camera on the object and caught it on film.

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00:04:09,360 --> 00:04:16,320

In 1977, an unusual aerial display sent tentacles of light streaming down over the town of Petrozovsk.

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00:04:17,040 --> 00:04:21,440

Some claim the event caused fine holes to be glazed in glass windows and concrete.

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00:04:23,600 --> 00:04:28,080

In 1982, military personnel at an intercontinental ballistic missile base

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00:04:28,080 --> 00:04:30,880

witnessed several brilliantly lit orbs overhead.

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00:04:33,600 --> 00:04:38,240

Seconds later, a warning light indicated a missile had switched to the prepare to launch mode.

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00:04:40,320 --> 00:04:43,840

Had an alleged UFO come close to starting a nuclear attack?

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00:04:49,600 --> 00:04:53,200

UFO sightings over Russia are not limited to the recent past.

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00:04:53,680 --> 00:04:57,280

Reports of peculiar looking airborne objects date back centuries.

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00:04:58,400 --> 00:05:03,040

However, no formal investigations were undertaken until the early 20th century

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00:05:03,040 --> 00:05:06,240

when an event of epic proportions demanded analysis.

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00:05:08,560 --> 00:05:15,600

Tunguska, July 30, 1908. In a remote area of Siberia, the morning calm was rocked by an explosion.

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00:05:16,480 --> 00:05:19,440

The powerful blast was heard a thousand miles away.

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00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:30,720

There was an enormous fireball blast, something on the order of 15 megatons of equivalent energy,

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00:05:30,720 --> 00:05:35,840

which is roughly a thousand times that of the Hiroshima blast at the end of the Second World War.

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00:05:35,840 --> 00:05:37,520

This was an extraordinary event.

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00:05:38,240 --> 00:05:42,800

Because of the remoteness of the Tunguska region, it was almost 20 years before any

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00:05:42,800 --> 00:05:48,160

government researchers visited the site. The first expedition to reach Tunguska was headed

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00:05:48,160 --> 00:05:50,320

by Russian mineralogist Leonid Kulik.

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00:05:51,520 --> 00:05:58,720

When the initial expedition got to the Tunguska area in 1927, the natives were reluctant to

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00:05:58,720 --> 00:06:04,240

show the scientists into the region because they thought the god Agdi had devastated the area

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00:06:04,240 --> 00:06:09,040

because of the wickedness that was going on and he had destroyed the trees, killed the animals.

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00:06:09,040 --> 00:06:12,800

Kulik eventually convinced locals to direct him to the blast location.

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00:06:13,200 --> 00:06:17,920

Believing a meteorite had caused the massive explosion, Kulik assumed he would find a crater

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00:06:17,920 --> 00:06:23,760

at the point of the meteorite's impact. To his surprise, there was none.

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00:06:24,320 --> 00:06:29,840

He looked for meteorite samples on the ground because often when an object hits the earth,

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00:06:29,840 --> 00:06:34,800

it throws up debris and the debris is recoverable around the edges of the crater.

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00:06:34,800 --> 00:06:36,400

But of course he didn't find that either.

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00:06:37,120 --> 00:06:41,120

What Kulik discovered has stirred UFO debate for decades.

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00:06:41,520 --> 00:06:47,040

At the blast's epicenter was a frozen swamp with an untouched clump of fully grown trees in the

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00:06:47,040 --> 00:06:53,760

middle. Circled around the grove, 10 million dead trees lay in a symmetrical ring, seemingly

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00:06:53,760 --> 00:07:00,800

mowed down by a cosmic scythe. So here we have an enormous blast site with no crater, no fragments

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00:07:00,800 --> 00:07:06,880

or meteorites around the rim of the crater and this radio pattern of burnt trees knocked

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00:07:07,200 --> 00:07:12,160

down for some 20 miles in all directions. In the years that followed, others traveled to

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00:07:12,160 --> 00:07:18,080

Tunguska to study the unusual occurrence. There might have been fruits obtained by

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00:07:18,080 --> 00:07:25,120

labors of another expedition sent by the head of the Soviet secret police in the late 1940s.

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00:07:25,120 --> 00:07:32,080

But all we know is that such expedition existed. We do not know what has happened to the items

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00:07:32,640 --> 00:07:38,720

and information it collected. Further baffling ufologists were reports of radiation damage in

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00:07:38,720 --> 00:07:45,360

the Tunguska blast region. There were also some reports of mutations taking place in plant life

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00:07:45,360 --> 00:07:54,480

and even some humans apparently suffered some gene damage. In 1947, Russian Army Colonel Alexander

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00:07:54,480 --> 00:08:00,080

Kazensev developed a remarkable theory based on information about the devastating consequences

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00:08:00,240 --> 00:08:07,280

of America's atomic bomb attacks on Japan. He was listening to the report about the nuclear

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00:08:07,280 --> 00:08:13,280

bombardment. The announcer gave a very long and very detailed description of how and in

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00:08:13,280 --> 00:08:19,280

which direction trees, houses had fallen and so on, how everything was hit. He realized

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00:08:19,280 --> 00:08:24,320

that what had happened in Hiroshima exactly the same happened at Tunguska only nearly

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00:08:24,720 --> 00:08:30,960

half a century ago. Kazensev hypothesized that the nuclear-like devastation seen at Tunguska must

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00:08:30,960 --> 00:08:39,760

have been caused by the crash of a nuclear-powered alien spacecraft. But the scientific community

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00:08:39,760 --> 00:08:45,600

rebuffs the UFO theory. Scientists claim the Tunguska explosion was caused by a rare but

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00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:56,000

explainable natural event. They believe an asteroid dropped to just three miles above the earth's surface and then exploded.

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00:08:59,280 --> 00:09:07,280

As the object came in it was being decelerated and squeezed by atmospheric forces. It blew up with a force of a hydrogen bomb.

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00:09:07,280 --> 00:09:12,960

The shock wave smashed down the forest knocking trees away from the blast.

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00:09:13,600 --> 00:09:21,600

And resulting in a pattern away from ground zero. But how would an asteroid explosion explain the reports of radiation

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00:09:21,600 --> 00:09:27,600

damage in the Tunguska area? Scientists say it can be attributed to the sheer magnitude of the explosion.

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00:09:27,600 --> 00:09:33,600

As we mentioned before that the blast itself was a thousand times greater than the Hiroshima blast at the end of World War II.

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00:09:33,600 --> 00:09:41,600

The blast would have generated a series of very high-speed, very high-speed, very high-speed.

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00:09:41,840 --> 00:09:49,840

A series of very high-speed charged particles would have been the cause of some of the mutations in the gene structures of plants and animals.

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00:09:49,840 --> 00:09:55,840

But to this day scientific explanations do not satisfy many ufologists.

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00:09:57,840 --> 00:10:05,840

I have been several times to the place where the Tunguska body fell. I intentionally call it body, not meteorite.

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00:10:06,080 --> 00:10:12,080

In the catastrophe of an asteroid, of a comet or of any other natural body cannot lead to such consequences.

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00:10:12,080 --> 00:10:16,080

A number of expeditions found things that they couldn't explain.

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00:10:16,080 --> 00:10:20,080

There are some people who were saying that the evidence suggested this was some kind of alien spaceship.

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00:10:20,080 --> 00:10:28,080

That was the kind of magical explanation you use when you don't have enough surreal science to understand the physics and the astronomy involved.

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00:10:28,320 --> 00:10:36,320

Throughout the rest of the 20th century, magical explanations of unidentified flying objects over Russian skies would continue.

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00:10:36,320 --> 00:10:42,320

And in one instance would help expose a top-secret Soviet military project.

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00:10:50,320 --> 00:10:56,320

It was 1948. World War II was over, but the Cold War was just beginning.

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00:10:56,560 --> 00:11:06,560

Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had initiated the Berlin blockade and directed his scientists to develop a nuclear weapon to rival that of the United States.

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00:11:06,560 --> 00:11:12,560

It was during this period that some claimed Stalin grew concerned about UFOs.

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00:11:12,560 --> 00:11:19,560

It has said his interest stemmed from reports of a 1947 UFO incident in Roswell, New Mexico.

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00:11:19,800 --> 00:11:25,800

In 1947, it would have been a hotbed of Soviet espionage because we had all kinds of stuff there.

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00:11:25,800 --> 00:11:29,800

The 509th bomber wing, the only atomic bomber wing group.

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00:11:29,800 --> 00:11:39,800

Proportedly, Stalin ordered Sergei Karolov, the founder of the Russian space program, to analyze information about the supposed Roswell crash and report his findings.

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00:11:39,800 --> 00:11:42,800

Mr. Karolov came up with an answer.

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00:11:43,040 --> 00:11:49,040

Yes, UFOs exist. No, they present no immediate threat.

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00:11:49,040 --> 00:11:57,040

And after evaluating the information, all that the Russians had acquired on Roswell and on UFOs, Karolov concluded,

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00:11:57,040 --> 00:12:01,040

UFOs are real, they appear to be intelligently controlled.

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00:12:01,040 --> 00:12:07,040

That's what he told Stalin, and Stalin in turn said, that's what my other people have concluded as well.

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00:12:07,280 --> 00:12:17,280

While concrete proof of the conversation does not exist, several Soviet scientific agencies did begin investigating UFOs in the ensuing years.

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00:12:17,280 --> 00:12:24,280

Stalin, after getting this information about Roswell and UFOs in general, did the same thing basically that the American government had been doing.

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00:12:24,280 --> 00:12:28,280

He condemns UFOs in public and then conducts secret tests behind the scenes.

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00:12:28,280 --> 00:12:36,280

He had all sorts of high level scientists who would research the problem for him and then report to military officials all behind the scenes.

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00:12:36,520 --> 00:12:42,520

Also hidden from public view were UFO reports culled from Soviet Air Force pilots.

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00:12:42,520 --> 00:12:50,520

Between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, pilots reported approximately 15,000 UFO sightings.

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00:12:50,520 --> 00:12:58,520

It is very difficult to find a pilot who has been flying for many years and has never seen a UFO.

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00:12:58,520 --> 00:13:01,520

Most of these sightings can be easily explained.

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00:13:01,520 --> 00:13:08,520

In an era of super-powered distrust, flights of American spy planes and spy balloons were common over Soviet skies.

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00:13:08,520 --> 00:13:17,520

But investigative journalist George Knapp, who has viewed portions of the Soviet UFO files, found some of the pilot sightings perplexing.

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00:13:17,520 --> 00:13:22,520

There were 40 instances where Russian war planes were sent after UFOs.

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00:13:22,520 --> 00:13:27,520

This is not temperature inversion, this is not a weather balloon, this is not swamp gas, these are craft.

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00:13:27,520 --> 00:13:32,520

Floating around in the airspace of Russia and they sent war planes to go chase them.

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00:13:32,520 --> 00:13:40,520

While pilots continued to report strange objects in the sky, none could offer tangible evidence to support their claims.

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00:13:40,520 --> 00:13:47,520

But in 1968, over the skies of Riga Latvia, an alleged UFO sighting was caught on film.

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00:13:48,520 --> 00:13:58,520

As a Soviet propaganda film crew documented a test flight of a fighter interceptor jet, the pilot noticed an unusual object high in the sky.

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00:14:03,520 --> 00:14:10,520

And suddenly the pilot shouted, look, film it! We looked and saw a triangle at a tremendous height.

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00:14:11,520 --> 00:14:20,520

Fighter planes scrambled to investigate, but the object quickly disappeared behind a cloud and was never seen again.

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00:14:20,520 --> 00:14:26,520

It was later estimated that the craft was hovering approximately 7 miles above the ground.

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00:14:28,520 --> 00:14:33,520

The film was sent to the Kremlin where it remained locked from public view for years.

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00:14:34,520 --> 00:14:42,520

They really took it seriously. I say seriously, because the film was taken away. It was declared completely secret.

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00:14:42,520 --> 00:14:55,520

Outsiders have only recently seen the confiscated film. While some maintain the film is conclusive evidence of a UFO, skeptics argue the vehicle was most likely a French made high altitude research balloon.

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00:14:56,520 --> 00:15:06,520

As secrecy enveloped all government discussions of UFO issues, an underground army of Soviet ufologists began to form in the USSR.

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00:15:06,520 --> 00:15:09,520

They kept their studies concealed.

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00:15:09,520 --> 00:15:16,520

Russians who study UFOs in this period report that they had a very serious feeling of threat from the Soviet government.

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00:15:16,520 --> 00:15:20,520

That they were doing something which the Soviet government disapproved of.

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00:15:21,520 --> 00:15:27,520

The leader of civilian UFO research was Felix Ziegel, the man considered the father of Soviet ufology.

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00:15:27,520 --> 00:15:36,520

Felix Ziegel was a Soviet scientist. He was a doctor of mathematics and astronomy at the Moscow Aviation Institute.

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00:15:36,520 --> 00:15:45,520

He made it his job to find out why are the strange objects in disguise of his country.

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00:15:46,520 --> 00:15:57,520

Ziegel challenged the Soviet system by conducting paranormal lectures, organizing independent UFO investigations and urging Soviet citizens to report any and all sightings.

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00:15:57,520 --> 00:16:00,520

His efforts were not without risk.

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00:16:02,520 --> 00:16:07,520

We cannot say of course that people would be put in jail for it, but still Ziegel suffered.

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00:16:07,520 --> 00:16:15,520

He was harassed both in his place of work at the Institute of Aviation and he was harassed by the state government authorities.

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00:16:16,520 --> 00:16:23,520

Ziegel and his investigators spread information about UFO sightings through an underground press network.

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00:16:23,520 --> 00:16:30,520

Samizdat, private publications used to disseminate information were strictly forbidden by the Kremlin.

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00:16:31,520 --> 00:16:40,520

In his time brochures were printed in a Samizdat way. There were collections of observations and letters typed in 5-10 copies.

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00:16:40,520 --> 00:16:43,520

All materials were typed with the use of carbon paper.

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00:16:50,520 --> 00:16:57,520

Samizdat papers were distributed by trustworthy messengers who secretly carried the copies from one person to the next.

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00:17:01,520 --> 00:17:11,520

UFO information circulated in this covert manner until 1967 when suddenly it seemed as if ufologists were given a reprieve from government censure.

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00:17:13,520 --> 00:17:18,520

Today it appears this respite was a smoke screen, part of an intricate government deception.

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00:17:19,520 --> 00:17:29,520

The complex ruse began in 1967 when citizens reported multiple sightings of crescent shaped UFOs over the skies of the Ukraine and the lower Volga Valley.

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00:17:30,520 --> 00:17:42,520

It was also seen as far south as the Caucasus Mountains, where many astronomers in observatories in the Caucasus Mountains would see these objects flying horizontally from west to east, crescent shaped heading toward the east.

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00:17:43,520 --> 00:17:49,520

For reasons unknown at the time, the government allowed press coverage and independent study of the sightings.

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00:17:49,520 --> 00:17:58,520

Felix Ziegel was granted permission to form a government sanctioned investigative committee made up of over 200 scientific and military experts.

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00:17:59,520 --> 00:18:05,520

In October 1967 they convened at the Central House of Aviation and Cosmonautics in Moscow.

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00:18:06,520 --> 00:18:09,520

Their goal determined the cause of the mass sightings.

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00:18:10,520 --> 00:18:17,520

On television and in newspapers Ziegel's committee appealed to Soviet citizens to report information on UFOs.

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00:18:18,520 --> 00:18:23,520

For the first time in Soviet history UFOs seemed to be an open topic.

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00:18:23,520 --> 00:18:28,520

It was like a breath of fresh air.

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00:18:29,520 --> 00:18:42,520

Freedom of discussion about a forbidden subject was permitted to the Soviet citizens and this was

something unheard of and alas it did not last long.

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00:18:43,520 --> 00:18:49,520

Within a few months of Ziegel's televised appeal, the steel jaws of Soviet censorship clamped down.

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00:18:49,520 --> 00:18:58,520

Reporting of UFOs was once again off limits. The subject was dropped from the controlled media and Ziegel's committee was ordered to disband.

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00:18:58,520 --> 00:19:06,520

The committee was to encourage people to report. As soon as the reports began to gather somebody in Moscow quashed the activity,

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00:19:06,520 --> 00:19:11,520

canceled the committee, canceled publication of further works and put a lid on it.

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00:19:11,520 --> 00:19:15,520

Cries of a Kremlin whitewash were immediately sounded.

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00:19:15,520 --> 00:19:19,520

Why the cover-up takes place, I don't know. Is there a cover-up? There's no question about it.

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00:19:19,520 --> 00:19:25,520

But what they were covering up is the question. UFO buffs believe they were covering up alien visitations.

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00:19:25,520 --> 00:19:34,520

I think the evidence is clear they were covering up discussions, descriptions of their own secret military aircraft and missile activities and satellite activities.

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00:19:35,520 --> 00:19:50,520

Scientist and NASA consultant James Ober came to this conclusion in 1977 after studying Soviet space vehicle launch patterns and comparing them to the dates of the 1967 sightings.

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00:19:51,520 --> 00:20:04,520

He deduced that the crescent-shaped objects witnessed in the sky were not alien in nature, but could be attributed to secret tests of a new Soviet missile warhead.

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00:20:09,520 --> 00:20:16,520

People in the area saw the rockets, especially at night, saw the streamers, the contrails in the sky, even heard the rockets.

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00:20:17,520 --> 00:20:24,520

They were told by the government that there was nothing there, that it was not anything ours. It became a UFO phenomenon.

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00:20:26,520 --> 00:20:34,520

Later dubbed by the Pentagon as a fractional orbital bombardment system, the Soviets had good reason to keep the tests secret.

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00:20:34,520 --> 00:20:43,520

It was designed to sneak under our radar as a first-strike weapon. It was one of these scary things that you only build it if you mean to make a sneak attack.

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00:20:44,520 --> 00:20:54,520

It was also illegal to have such a weapon because in 1967 the U.S. and Russia and other countries signed a treaty forbidding the placing of nuclear weapons into orbit.

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00:20:55,520 --> 00:21:04,520

But why, after crushing public dissemination of UFO information for years, did the government briefly loosen its restrictions in 1967?

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00:21:05,520 --> 00:21:13,520

It appears now to have been a deliberate ploy to fool its citizens and the international community about the true nature of the sightings.

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00:21:13,520 --> 00:21:20,520

The Soviet government did not want the public to understand what was going on. They didn't want the Americans to know, for example, what was going on.

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00:21:20,520 --> 00:21:30,520

It was a useful camouflage. It diverted people's attention. Because it was a UFO, western journalists would laugh rather than investigate it.

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00:21:30,520 --> 00:21:35,520

The cover-up by the Soviet government is in letting people think they're flying saucers.

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00:21:37,520 --> 00:21:44,520

The strategy backfired when the extensive UFO data collected by Felix Siegel's committee was published in magazines.

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00:21:45,520 --> 00:21:54,520

The Soviet government realized what these reports really were, their military secrets. Not described accurately, but accurately enough to be of use to the CIA if they ever caught on.

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00:21:54,520 --> 00:22:02,520

The government said, oh my gosh, and other things in Russian, and said no more UFO reports get published in the Soviet Union.

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00:22:03,520 --> 00:22:18,520

For ten years, public discussion of UFOs was effectively brought to a halt. But that would change in 1977 with the appearance of a strange-looking object over Soviet skies, witnessed by thousands of astonished citizens.

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00:22:19,520 --> 00:22:30,520

September 20, 1977. As dawn approached in the small Russian port city of Petrozovsk, a spectacular aerial display lit up the skies.

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00:22:30,520 --> 00:22:35,520

The incident would become one of the most studied UFO sightings in Soviet history.

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00:22:36,520 --> 00:22:43,520

The phenomenon of Petrozovsky is one of the greatest abnormal phenomena on the territory of our country.

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00:22:44,520 --> 00:22:52,520

At approximately four o'clock in the morning, civilians and military personnel reported seeing huge star-like apparitions shooting in the sky.

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00:22:53,520 --> 00:22:58,520

As it flew up in the sky, it appeared to come over the city and then head off, head off toward the horizon.

199

00:22:59,520 --> 00:23:09,520

People who were out in the streets of the town saw this blazing jellyfish, a trimming tentacles down from the saucer-shaped to bright corn.

200

00:23:10,520 --> 00:23:19,520

The impressive display lasted approximately ten minutes. Witnesses claimed that a host of strange occurrences on the ground accompanied the sighting.

201

00:23:20,520 --> 00:23:28,520

They report all sorts of phenomena. They smelled ozone, computers were crashing, drivers lost control of their vehicles and went to dishes.

202

00:23:29,520 --> 00:23:36,520

Perhaps the phenomenon most difficult to explain was the appearance of finely glazed holes in glass windows and rocks around the city.

203

00:23:37,520 --> 00:23:47,520

There is no explanation for this fact, but the connection is direct by the time parameters. There had been no holes before the event and then they appeared.

204

00:23:48,520 --> 00:23:54,520

Witnessed by thousands, the aerial display above Petrozovsky was impossible to refute.

205

00:23:55,520 --> 00:24:02,520

While the sighting remained a mystery to Soviet citizens, NASA consultant James Oberg quickly discovered its origins.

206

00:24:02,520 --> 00:24:10,520

Because of my connection with the space program and my knowledge of satellites and rockets, I was able to find out within a matter of hours.

207

00:24:12,520 --> 00:24:19,520

There was a rocket launching that morning from a secret space center north of Moscow at precise at the time people were seeing this UFO.

208

00:24:21,520 --> 00:24:26,520

The jellyfish-like display was triggered by the launch of the Cosmos 955 spy satellite.

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00:24:27,520 --> 00:24:34,520

As the rocket engine contrails were backlit by the rising morning sun, it produced the tentacle effect observed by witnesses.

210

00:24:35,520 --> 00:24:46,520

So this, what they call basically the smoking gun of Soviet ufology, they call it a medusa or jellyfish UFO because it was streamers of light coming down from the streamers and the rocket engines of the rocket as it turned out.

211

00:24:47,520 --> 00:24:53,520

As with previous mass sightings, the government had ample reason to keep the truth hidden from Soviet citizens.

212

00:24:54,520 --> 00:25:04,520

The satellite was launched from a secret military space center called Plesetsk, one of several undisclosed missile bases scattered throughout the Soviet Union.

213

00:25:07,520 --> 00:25:15,520

Most ufologists accept the satellite launch as the cause of the aerial display, but many argue it does not fully clarify the mystery.

214

00:25:17,520 --> 00:25:21,520

How shall we explain the appearance of some beams that burnt the glass?

215

00:25:23,520 --> 00:25:35,520

When the pieces of the glass were analyzed at the Institute of Metrology in Moscow, they concluded that these holes resulted from badly glazed window glass, that is, a purely technical defect took place.

216

00:25:37,520 --> 00:25:45,520

I do not believe that the launch of a secret military satellite would explain the holes that were made in the glass.

217

00:25:46,520 --> 00:25:53,520

My personal opinion, no, this was not man-made technology that's responsible for such effects.

218

00:25:54,520 --> 00:26:00,520

There were some reports of holes being drilled into glass window panes and in paving stones. I saw those reports, I can't explain it.

219

00:26:01,520 --> 00:26:11,520

All these sorts of additional phenomena, these additional reports are typical of what happens when people see a very sudden shocking sight in the sky and look around them for corroborative evidence.

220

00:26:12,520 --> 00:26:15,520

Most of the time it's irrelevant, independent and sometimes even imaginary.

221

00:26:16,520 --> 00:26:25,520

While the mysterious holes might never be fully explained, the Petrozovsk incident had much deeper consequences inside the walls of the Kremlin.

222

00:26:26,520 --> 00:26:35,520

The upshot of this incident was the decision of the Soviet government to create a secret program to study your force.

223

00:26:36,520 --> 00:26:45,520

In the weeks following the Petrozovsk sighting, the Soviet Academy of Sciences received inquiries from several European nations concerned about the nature of the event.

224

00:26:46,520 --> 00:26:54,520

In response, the Academy of Sciences requested permission from the Kremlin to initiate a top secret investigation of anomalous occurrences.

225

00:26:55,520 --> 00:27:06,520

Although aware the majority of these events were not paranormal in nature, the scientists admitted in their request that they could not provide a scientific basis for all UFO sightings.

226

00:27:08,520 --> 00:27:18,520

The Academy of Sciences can neither ignore or explain the paranormal phenomena similar to that observed in September 1977 in Petrozovsk.

227

00:27:19,520 --> 00:27:28,520

The program was organized to show that we did not know the answers to these questions and would be studying it on the scientific level.

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00:27:29,520 --> 00:27:37,520

That was the way the official scientific program for studying abnormal phenomena and extraterrestrial flying objects started its work in the Soviet Union.

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00:27:38,520 --> 00:27:44,520

In 1978, the investigation that later became known as Institute 22 was formally started.

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00:27:45,520 --> 00:27:50,520

The study lasted 13 years and was completely concealed from public view.

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00:27:51,520 --> 00:27:57,520

But why did the Soviet government spend time and money to investigate a phenomenon it already knew the origins of?

232

00:27:58,520 --> 00:28:05,520

There's really no surprise that the Soviet military, even if they understood the nature of most of these reports, would still investigate them.

233

00:28:06,520 --> 00:28:10,520

The Soviets traditionally spied on themselves as severely as they spied on the West.

234

00:28:11,520 --> 00:28:16,520

If they already knew that these are missile tests, why do they have to have a nationwide study behind the scenes?

235

00:28:17,520 --> 00:28:23,520

I mean, it's not like the results of the study were ever going to be published anywhere. It was a secret. So it makes no sense.

236

00:28:24,520 --> 00:28:31,520

While the rationale for the beginnings of the study is still debated, there is no doubt the scope of the investigation was far reaching.

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00:28:32,520 --> 00:28:39,520

The Institute 22 inquiry was conducted jointly between the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Defense.

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00:28:40,520 --> 00:28:47,520

It was very useful for the Academy of Sciences to collaborate and to carry out studies together with the Ministry of Defense,

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00:28:48,520 --> 00:28:54,520

because naturally it was much easier for the Ministry of Defense to get the information we had no access to.

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00:28:55,520 --> 00:29:03,520

The armed forces were ordered to study what, if any, influence possible UFOs might have on the proper functioning of technical military equipment.

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00:29:04,520 --> 00:29:13,520

In addition, hundreds of thousands of sailors, soldiers and pilots were recruited to watch for and report on UFOs.

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00:29:14,520 --> 00:29:17,520

No one was told why the reports were being taken.

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00:29:17,520 --> 00:29:26,520

The Ministry of Defense has an enormous observance potential. First, military units are located all over the country.

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00:29:27,520 --> 00:29:37,520

Second, unlike civil organizations, an order from the Ministry of Defense is sufficient for making a potential viewer of each military man, and this was done.

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00:29:38,520 --> 00:29:45,520

Every single unit in the vast Soviet military empire had to comply with this study.

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00:29:46,520 --> 00:29:53,520

That is, any UFO, any anomalous object, any ball of light, any strange thing in the sky whatsoever, had to be fully investigated.

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00:29:54,520 --> 00:29:59,520

Scientists were directed to investigate the physical nature of alleged paranormal phenomena.

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00:30:00,520 --> 00:30:07,520

The data collected by the military and scientists was analyzed in a lab located in a nondescript building in a suburb of Moscow.

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00:30:10,520 --> 00:30:16,520

The personnel of the laboratory were not numerous, not more than 10 people, and this number was never exceeded.

250

00:30:17,520 --> 00:30:26,520

But the specialists from almost all the scientific areas worked there, from a physician to specialists in radio electronics, meteorology and astrogeophysics.

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00:30:26,520 --> 00:30:33,520

Practically all the specialists were represented there. It was done in order to study all possible aspects of UFOs.

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00:30:39,520 --> 00:30:46,520

Six years into the study, Institute 22 would be called on to scrutinize an incident of global consequence.

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00:30:47,520 --> 00:30:52,520

When a suspected UFO incident placed the world on the brink of nuclear war.

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00:30:57,520 --> 00:31:04,520

The early 1980s were a time of tense relations between the Soviet Union and the West.

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00:31:05,520 --> 00:31:11,520

The era of DTOT had ended and the Russian landscape was studded with intercontinental ballistic missile silos.

256

00:31:15,520 --> 00:31:18,520

Each contained nuclear weapons aimed westward.

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00:31:19,520 --> 00:31:24,520

It was at one of these silos that a reported UFO incident caused a nuclear scare.

258

00:31:27,520 --> 00:31:37,520

Today this ICBM silo in the Ukraine is deserted, dismantled in compliance with a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the US and USSR.

259

00:31:38,520 --> 00:31:42,520

But at this silo in 1982 something went terribly wrong.

260

00:31:43,520 --> 00:31:50,520

It started at approximately 6 p.m. when soldiers and villagers in the nearby town of Bielokorovichi witnessed a strange object in the dust sky.

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00:31:51,520 --> 00:31:55,520

A military officer at the time described what he saw.

262

00:31:56,520 --> 00:32:01,520

I was riding a motorcycle not far from here. I saw a large object in the air.

263

00:32:02,520 --> 00:32:04,520

It had a perfect geometric shape.

264

00:32:04,520 --> 00:32:11,520

At the same moment inside the silo an emergency warning light indicated that a nuclear missile had switched to launch mode.

265

00:32:13,520 --> 00:32:20,520

The most telling testimony comes from the communications officer who said that somehow something entered the correct code.

266

00:32:21,520 --> 00:32:23,520

But Moscow had not ordered a missile.

267

00:32:23,520 --> 00:32:31,520

The most telling testimony comes from the communications officer who said that somehow something entered the correct code.

268

00:32:32,520 --> 00:32:37,520

But Moscow had not ordered a launch nor had any personnel in the bunker touch the control panel.

269

00:32:39,520 --> 00:32:44,520

For 15 agonizing seconds technicians frantically scrambled to stop the launch.

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00:32:45,520 --> 00:32:48,520

Then without explanation the launch sequence was aborted.

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00:32:49,520 --> 00:32:56,520

They were ready for launch. The UFO poof goes away. Poof the command control module goes back to normal.

272

00:32:57,520 --> 00:33:01,520

Had a UFO somehow interfered with the launch controls of a nuclear missile?

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00:33:02,520 --> 00:33:10,520

A team of investigators from Institute 22 the secret state sponsored UFO research team was immediately ordered to the missile base.

274

00:33:11,520 --> 00:33:16,520

They established within a very short period literally half a day.

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00:33:16,520 --> 00:33:21,520

That the military training exercise took place at the nearby aerial ground.

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00:33:23,520 --> 00:33:30,520

Investigators learned that the sighting occurred at the same time and in the same area where the military was testing flares.

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00:33:31,520 --> 00:33:35,520

Dropped out of planes the flares provided 5 to 7 minutes of illumination.

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00:33:36,520 --> 00:33:41,520

That explained the strange display in the sky. But why did the nuclear launch sequence activate?

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00:33:41,520 --> 00:33:51,520

The fact that the emergency situation coincided with the effects which took place is certainly a remarkable coincidence.

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00:33:52,520 --> 00:33:54,520

But it is still a coincidence.

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00:33:57,520 --> 00:34:03,520

The ICBM control equipment was systematically taken apart and rebuilt. But no defects were found.

282

00:34:04,520 --> 00:34:10,520

That's not just an electrical malfunction. Something entered the correct launch codes. That just doesn't happen every day.

283

00:34:11,520 --> 00:34:15,520

We hear from our government UFOs are not a matter of national security.

284

00:34:16,520 --> 00:34:19,520

The Russian government has been telling its people the same thing. They're trying to confuse us.

285

00:34:20,520 --> 00:34:27,520

This incident is clear evidence if ever there was that UFOs do carry national security implications.

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00:34:28,520 --> 00:34:36,520

After examining the ICBM episode the investigative team of Institute 22 continued to scrutinize various sightings around the country.

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00:34:37,520 --> 00:34:42,520

Some who reported UFOs had a much closer view than those on Earth.

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00:34:45,520 --> 00:34:46,520

Cosmonauts.

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00:34:47,520 --> 00:34:51,520

The first man in space, Yuri Gagarin, is quoted in the Thread 3 documents as saying,

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00:34:52,520 --> 00:34:55,520

I can tell you that UFOs are real and if you allow me I'll tell you a lot more.

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00:34:56,520 --> 00:35:03,520

The second man in space, Cosmonaut Titoff said that there were seven UFOs dancing around his space capsule during his brief flight into space.

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00:35:07,520 --> 00:35:15,520

However, even to this day most cosmonauts are reluctant to speak about any unusual phenomenon they witnessed in space.

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00:35:16,520 --> 00:35:23,520

There's a ridicule factor, there's a laughter curtain, there are career consequences from reporting a UFO and taking it seriously.

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00:35:24,520 --> 00:35:31,520

But in this rare interview obtained by the History Channel, two cosmonauts spoke of unusual objects they encountered in space.

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00:35:31,520 --> 00:35:36,520

Many cosmonauts have seen phenomena which are far beyond the experiences of Earth men.

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00:35:37,520 --> 00:35:39,520

For ten years I never spoke of such things.

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00:35:42,520 --> 00:35:54,520

Former Commander Vladimir Kovlyonik of the Salyut 6 space station revealed that on May 5th 1981 he observed an unrecognizable illuminated entity outside the porthole of his craft.

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00:35:55,520 --> 00:36:02,520

The object had an elliptical shape and flew with us. It only flew straight but then a kind of explosion happened.

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00:36:03,520 --> 00:36:06,520

It produced a golden light, very beautiful to watch.

300

00:36:07,520 --> 00:36:13,520

A second explosion followed and two spheres appeared. As we enter the darkness of Earth's shadow I could no longer see them.

301

00:36:13,520 --> 00:36:20,520

On a mere mission in 1991 cosmonaut Musa Manorov managed to videotape an anomalous object during a routine docking procedure.

302

00:36:31,520 --> 00:36:36,520

I was looking out the biggest window. It was directly in front of me.

303

00:36:36,520 --> 00:36:42,520

I am familiar with the construction of all spaceships but this was different.

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00:36:43,520 --> 00:36:49,520

There is ongoing debate about sightings of unidentified objects by cosmonauts and American astronauts alike.

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00:36:53,520 --> 00:36:59,520

Skeptics insist there is enough debris left in orbit to constitute a plethora of unusual sightings.

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00:37:07,520 --> 00:37:15,520

As cosmonauts traveled amidst the stars the 1990s saw major changes take place on Soviet soil.

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00:37:16,520 --> 00:37:27,520

When the walls of communism crumbled American UFO investigator George Knapp ventured to Russia hoping to discover just what secrets the Soviets had been hiding about alien encounters.

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00:37:28,520 --> 00:37:30,520

What he found was startling.

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00:37:31,520 --> 00:37:46,520

Beginning in the mid 1980s the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union conducted several summits aimed at reducing both nuclear arms and tensions between the two superpowers.

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00:37:47,520 --> 00:37:54,520

Shortly after one such meeting President Ronald Reagan revealed he and Mikhail Gorbachev had discussed the topic of alien encounters.

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00:37:54,520 --> 00:38:01,520

I couldn't help but say to him just think how easy his task and mine might be in these meetings that we held.

312

00:38:01,520 --> 00:38:16,520

If suddenly there was a threat to this world from some other species from another planet outside in the universe we'd forget all the little local differences that we have between our countries.

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00:38:16,520 --> 00:38:25,520

Reagan made five different public statements including one to the United Nations that wouldn't it be something if UFOs were suddenly a threat to us and we'd all get together.

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00:38:25,520 --> 00:38:29,520

And so Gorbachev kind of responded, yeah sure would, you know we would get together.

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00:38:29,520 --> 00:38:31,520

Lo and behold we did get together.

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00:38:31,520 --> 00:38:34,520

You know the wall came tumbling down, perestroika, glass nose.

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00:38:35,520 --> 00:38:40,520

With the collapse of the Soviet Union came a new era of openness in Russia.

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00:38:41,520 --> 00:38:53,520

Thousands of miles away in Las Vegas, Nevada investigative journalist George Knapp who had studied many American UFO incidents realized the time was perfect to explore Russian reports.

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00:38:54,520 --> 00:39:02,520

Three years ago we had succeeded in obtaining several hundred pages of secret Russian UFO documents and photos other Western journalists followed.

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00:39:02,520 --> 00:39:03,520

Today it's a new ball game.

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00:39:03,520 --> 00:39:09,520

The lid has been dropped on government UFO files although there is still plenty of information to be found.

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00:39:10,520 --> 00:39:15,520

It occurred to me now may be the time to go ahead and try to find out what the Russians know about UFOs.

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00:39:15,520 --> 00:39:20,520

It was a tumultuous crazy time but a wonderful time to be there as a journalist.

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00:39:22,520 --> 00:39:30,520

In 1993 Knapp traveled to Russia and was introduced to Boris Sokolov, the coordinator of Institute 22.

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00:39:30,520 --> 00:39:39,520

Like many government funded scientific projects from the era, Institute 22's funding had been cut and the project disbanded.

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00:39:39,520 --> 00:39:48,520

Sokolov provided Knapp with some of the recently declassified UFO files containing information on the cases that were more difficult to explain.

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00:39:48,520 --> 00:39:57,520

He had culled from the thousands of reports some of the most interesting ones and had kept them in these binders and we were able to get them and bring them back.

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00:39:57,520 --> 00:39:59,520

Why would the Russian military study all of this stuff?

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00:39:59,520 --> 00:40:04,520

Colonel Sokolov said it was a very practical reason. They knew that UFOs could do things that their planes couldn't.

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00:40:04,520 --> 00:40:09,520

Figured by studying it they may be able to get an advantage over us in terms of stealth technology.

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00:40:09,520 --> 00:40:14,520

Upon returning to the United States, Knapp made some of the files public.

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00:40:14,520 --> 00:40:19,520

As a result, Colonel Sokolov was ridiculed by some back in his homeland.

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00:40:19,520 --> 00:40:23,520

Officially Russia was a democracy but the communists still had a lot of influence.

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00:40:23,520 --> 00:40:30,520

There were communist newspapers that attacked him broadly as being a sellout to Mother Russia.

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00:40:30,520 --> 00:40:38,520

But the public scorn Sokolov endured was certainly less severe than the consequences he might have been subject to in the old Soviet Union.

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00:40:38,520 --> 00:40:43,520

My friend put it this way. He said if this had happened five years ago we would be in prison.

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00:40:43,520 --> 00:40:48,520

If it had happened ten years ago we'd all be shot for giving up these secrets.

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00:40:48,520 --> 00:40:58,520

But in 2000 the relaxed political climate allowed Sokolov and scientist Yulia Platov to publish a report summarizing the findings of Institute 22.

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00:40:58,520 --> 00:41:07,520

Entitled the History of UFO State Research in the USSR, the report concluded that of the 3,000 UFO sightings investigated,

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00:41:07,520 --> 00:41:16,520

90 to 95% of the incidents could be attributed to man-made phenomenon, mostly missile launches and research balloons.

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00:41:19,520 --> 00:41:23,520

The remaining 5 to 10% could not be easily explained.

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00:41:23,520 --> 00:41:30,520

He was not willing to conclude that any of these things were extraterrestrials or inter-dimensionals or aliens from the future or anything of that sort.

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00:41:30,520 --> 00:41:43,520

The thing is that before the enthusiastic ufologists had affirmed in literature that all we saw was due to contacts with the extraterrestrial civilizations.

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00:41:43,520 --> 00:41:49,520

No, no, no, it turned out that only a very small percentage of events remained unexplained.

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00:41:49,520 --> 00:41:59,520

But in a land that for so long concealed information and suppressed dialogue, many ufologists wondered if the report revealed the entire truth.

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00:41:59,520 --> 00:42:05,520

There is a vast treasure trove of KGB documents on this topic somewhere that no one has ever seen.

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00:42:05,520 --> 00:42:14,520

And I know the KGB did release some documents in the early 90s, but it is presumed by a lot of folks that the best stuff is still hidden in a vault somewhere.

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00:42:16,520 --> 00:42:26,520

What happened to the files? Who keeps them? Until we ourselves go through the files, we cannot say whether what Mr. Platov and Mr. Sokolov say is true.

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00:42:26,520 --> 00:42:34,520

It will probably never be known exactly how many Soviet UFO files remain classified or what they contain.

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00:42:34,520 --> 00:42:40,520

Most in the scientific community doubt any smoking guns exist in the unseen files.

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00:42:44,520 --> 00:42:54,520

People in Russia still have a very powerful sense of gossip and rumors because under Soviet days so many things were illegal to talk about, illegal to know.

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00:42:54,520 --> 00:42:58,520

So they replaced the reality with a very rich mythology.

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00:42:58,520 --> 00:43:04,520

UFOs became part of that mythology in Russia and it's still a very powerful theme over there.

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00:43:06,520 --> 00:43:17,520

But many UFO enthusiasts remain suspicious, believing that the proof of alien encounters exists and is still being hidden.