

Introduction

Are governments of the world withholding dramatic evidence--or even proof--that UFOs exist as a serious reality? This question has been asked repeatedly since "flying saucers" made headline news throughout the world in 1947. The official denials have given rise to the suspicion that we are being told less than the truth, and that a wide-scale cover-up is in operation.

In October 1981, in response to an inquiry about the involvement of the intelligence community in the study of UFOs, I received the following reply from that well-known authority on the British security and secret services, Chapman Pincher:

There is no way I can help you with UFOs because I am convinced that they are entirely mythical. I can assure you that the "world's secret services" are not wasting the smallest resource on keeping tabs on them. For many years I have had access to the highest levels of Defense Intelligence both in Britain and the US. There is not the slightest evidence there to support the existence of UFOs other than those explicable by normal means--meteorites, satellites, aircraft, etc. . . .

Much as I respect Mr. Chapman Pincher, he has clearly been misinformed in this case, since documentary evidence made available in the US under, for example, provisions of the Freedom of Information Act--much of which is presented in this book--proves conclusively that UFOs have continued to be the subject of intensive secret research by intelligence agencies in the US since World War II.

Few governments deny the existence of unidentified flying objects per se. Lord Strabolgi, representing Her Majesty's Government in the historic House of Lords debate on the subject in January 1979, acknowledged this point: "There are undoubtedly many strange phenomena in the skies, and it can be readily accepted that most UFO reports are made by calm and responsible people. However, there are generally straightforward explanations to account for the phenomena."

Lord Strabolgi then went on to enumerate the many "straightforward explanations" that account for the majority of reports. Few would disagree with him on this point. UFO researchers concur that seventy to ninety percent of all sightings can be attributed to misidentifications, hallucinations, delusions and hoaxes. On the question of unexplainable sightings, which form the crux of the matter, Lord Strabolgi argued that in such cases "the description is too vague or the evidence too remote, coupled perhaps with a coincidence of different phenomena and with exceptional conditions." In some cases few would disagree, yet Lord Strabolgi conveniently overlooked the fact that hundreds, and possibly thousands, of sightings have been made by highly qualified observers whose descriptions are anything but vague, and the evidence compelling. As to the suggestion of a cover-up, His Lordship was adamant:

It has been suggested that our Government are involved in an alleged conspiracy of silence. I can assure your Lordships that the Government are not engaged in any such conspiracy . . . There is nothing to have a conspiracy of silence about. . . . There is no cover-up and no security ban. . . . There is nothing to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that such phenomena are alien spacecraft.

A bona fide UFO, however, does not necessarily imply an extraterrestrial spacecraft. A wide range of hypotheses has been proposed to account for the unexplainable reports, of which the extraterrestrial hypothesis is but one. So the question should really be: Are there any unexplainable reports which represent something beyond our present knowledge, and are governments concealing what they have learned? And if the answer is positive, what exactly has been learned and why is there need for concealment? This book attempts to answer these and other questions relating to the ubiquitous UFO phenomenon--a phenomenon that has caused grave concern at high levels of many of the world's governments, despite their statements to the contrary.