

Weird and wonderful meet at UFO world congress

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By Michael Shields

ZURICH, Switzerland (Reuter) - The cross emblazoned on Giorgio Bongiovanni's forehead was barely discernible as he stood in the dimly lit hall, his back to a giant screen showing what speakers at the UFO World Congress called a major breakthrough.

``This is a fleet of UFOs,'' the Italian medium declared to a rapt audience, white fingerless gloves covering the stigmata on his hands as he gestured to a string of V-shaped lights he said were photographed near a Russian military facility in the city of Tver.

The unidentified flying objects may well have reached our planet via a ``dimensional gate'' through which spaceships made of plasma materialize, he explained as a panel of other prominent UFOlogists looked on in awestruck silence.

Bongiovanni -- who says God has marked his body to underscore the message that alien races have accepted Jesus Christ's gospel and are coming to Earth to spread the good news -- said he got the photos from Russian military officers.

Their first-ever showing in the West was a highlight of the UFO Congress in Zurich this month, and drew high praise from other experts with no less strange subjects to relate.

``Because of his honesty and pure heart he can open doors that others cannot open,'' intoned Robert O. Dean, a ponytailed former U.S. Army sergeant major who now tracks UFOs for a living. ``I'd like to have him come to Washington and get some honest answers from my own government.''

German UFO researcher Michael Hesemann was impressed that Bongiovanni had persuaded the Russian military to part with photographs that were such a hit at the three-day conference.

``I get the feeling these officers know a lot more. They are tossing a few crumbs to UFOlogists, but they know a lot more,'' Hesemann told 100 or so people taking in the spectacle.

Organizers billed the World Congress as a leading gathering of experts trying to smash through government cover-ups and bring the truth about UFOs to people who have not only the right, but also the need, to know what is really going on.

``These experts are here not just to talk humbug, but to present evidence,'' said conference organizer Acedaih Dafi, her pink jacket setting off her oversized star-shaped earrings and the blue streaks in her otherwise black hair.

But the distinction between humbug and evidence split even the experts, who presented talks on abductions by aliens, passed on messages from survivors of UFO crashes, detailed artificial structures on Mars and pondered the mysteries of the pyramids.

Virgil Armstrong, described as an ex-CIA agent and extraterrestrial scholar, saw great significance in the absence of former U.S. astronaut Gordon Cooper from the conference.

``Since Gordon Cooper is not here it sends us a very clear signal about what is happening right now,'' he said, suggesting Cooper was busy coordinating with President Clinton on how to brace world public opinion for the imminent arrival of UFOs.

``I said three years ago here in Europe that there would be mass landings beginning in 1996 and particularly in 1997. And there will be. And there are,'' he insisted to reporters.

Warming to his subject, Armstrong said authorities had recovered the bodies of five aliens whose spaceship crashed near Sao Paulo recently. Hundreds of UFOs are being spotted every day outside Mexico City, he added, drawn by stockpiles of nuclear arms and atomic reactors.

``The effects of the photon belt have made all of them unstable at this

point in time and the world government is worried sick because they can't do anything about it,' he said.

`If those things go off, it will blow this planet to dust. Since it is beyond our means to control, we are of course going to have divine intervention in the form of UFOs.'

This was a bit much for some of his colleagues, but none wanted to play down the overall importance of their message.

`This is not only the most important issue of our time, it is really the most important issue in the history of the human race,' said Dean, whose soft-spoken manner belies the urgency in his voice when he talks about embracing the other-worldly.

`We are facing the transcendent transformation of the human race. We are making a transition into a new species. We are about to make a major step, for the first time in our history, out into space to take our rightful place in the universe, to find our destiny out there with our family,' he said.

Dean loved the opportunity to spread the word among the believers at the congress, where people hawking esoteric books, lamps made from crystals and New Age music lined the lobby.

`I guess what bothers me is, a lot of these people are eccentric,' he told Reuters with no hint of irony. `But this is real. This is not something off the wall.'

That was the message from Al Bielek, an Atlanta engineer who said he began to realize a decade ago that he had taken part in a previous existence in the Philadelphia Experiment, an attempt to make a U.S. warship invisible to the human eye and to radar.

He and his brother jumped overboard during the experiment in 1943 only to be swept up in hyperspace and deposited 40 years to the day later, without having aged, at Montauk, L.I.

Knowing too much about the crewmen who were physically trapped in the decks when the ship rematerialised, Bielek -- then physicist Ed Cameron -- was ultimately stripped of his identity in 1947 and blasted through time into a new life.

`I was time shifted back into the future. I was age-regressed physically, wiped of all memory and then put in with a new family, the Bieleks, and grew up all over again,' the 69-year-old Bielek explained.

Robert Bauval, a construction engineer who seeks to explain the mysteries of Egypt's pyramids, said people come to such congresses not just to hear about UFOs, but to address a deeper spiritual need that is unfulfilled.

`We are attempting to link up with a much higher consciousness, a universal consciousness,' he said.

`But before we do, we have to learn how to speak with this higher consciousness, and I don't think that technology, no matter how much it would evolve, would show us how to do that.'

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[[Bongiovanni](#)]

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