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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Philosophy of Science and UFOs

From: "Steven J. Powell" <sjpowell@access.digex.net>  
Date: Sun, 05 Jan 1997 13:58:43 -0500  
Fwd Date: Mon, 06 Jan 1997 06:00:48 -0500  
Subject: Re: Philosophy of Science and UFOs

> From: "Jerry Cohen" <rjcohen@li.net>  
> Subject: UFO UpDate: Re: Philosophy of Science and UFOs

> JC: Sorry for this interjection again, but: A problem existing in  
> ufology today is that skeptics, because they have not researched deep  
> enough, often quote statistics that skew historical fact. Example, the  
> following quote:

> >..... There are tens and tens of  
> >thousands of UFO sightings reported over the last 50 or so years and  
> >that is our raw uninvestigated data population. That is also the  
> >most useless number in all of ufology. Of the uninvestigated total  
> >we know that easily from 80% (being very generous) to 95% are IFOS  
> >(and some, a small percentage) are hoaxes. We know statistically  
> >that 80% to 95% will be retired as IFOS.....

> REBUTTAL:

> JC: In the past, most of the statistics used to retire UFOs as IFOS  
> were provided by the Air Force.

We also have APRO and NICAP data from the same time period. We also have other data sources since then.

> Anyone can easily go to the library and check out many of the sources  
> listed below for yourselves. It is basic straightforward history.

If you prefer 70% to 95%, instead of my saying "80% to 95%," that's fine with me, I don't think the difference is significant with respect to the three points I was trying to make:

- 1) Most UFO sightings turn out to be readily explainable. We shouldn't be surprised by that since most sightings originate from untrained and unequipped casual observers.
- 2) The raw sighting count or the raw sighting report count is an utterly useless and meaningless number.
- 3) After extensive research and investigation, some (small) percentage, with a high point around 15% to 30% <grin> to a low of around 5%, of UFO sightings remain beyond current explanation. Some older UFO sightings (Catalina film and at least one other) did yield a common Earthly explanation upon the use of modern technology, and its likely a few more will follow in time. However, this remaining core dataset should be the primary focus of ufology.

There's at least one good (or sensible to some <grin>) reason why the really good UFO stuff didn't go to Bluebook. Bluebook was a PIO quasi-investigative operation and if they had to explain a particular

