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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: 'Roswell-- Anatomy of A Myth' - Part 2/6

From: BOB SHELL <76750.2717@CompuServe.COM>
Date: 16 Jun 97 14:03:55 EDT
Fwd Date: Mon, 16 Jun 1997 14:44:00 -0400
Subject: Re: 'Roswell-- Anatomy of A Myth' - Part 2/6

>From: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>Subject: UFO UpDate: 'Roswell-- Anatomy of A Myth' - Part 2/6
>Mime-Version: 1.0
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I am reserving comment on most of Kent Jeffrey's lengthy article, but can not resist commenting on the following.

>UFO Crashes

>Even before the advent of recent negative developments in the Roswell case, I have always felt that a UFO would never crash. >However, because of the impressive witness testimony about which >I was told, I suspended judgment and allowed for the possibility >that Roswell might be an exception -- some kind of >one-in-a-quintillion fluke. That was, in retrospect, a mistake.

>The problem with the concept of a UFO crashing is that as >technology advances, so does reliability. Be it with cars, >.airplanes, televisions, or wristwatches, the reliability of >today's technology far exceeds that of the technology of just a >few decades ago. For example, because of the high reliability of >their engines, long-range, twin-engine commercial jetliners are >now authorized to fly nonstop across the North Atlantic. A few >decades ago, that would have been unthinkable. (The positive >correlation between advancing technology and reliability applies >to "proven" technology, not experimental state-of-the art machines >still in the developmental phase, such as experimental aircraft >or space vehicles.)

>With today's industry-average engine-failure rate of less than >one failure per 100,000 flight hours, the chances of both engines >of a two-engine jetliner failing during a given hour of flight >are less than one out of 10 billion. Figuring 50,000 >aircraft-ocean crossings per year, and factoring in such >variables as average time over the water and average distance >from land, the odds are less than fifty-fifty of a double-engine >failure and consequent ditching in the North Atlantic of even one >such aircraft over the next 10,000 years.

>This incredible degree of reliability is found with a technology >that would be primitive compared with a UFO. Even with today's >relatively "primitive" technology, our commercial aircraft have >very efficient collision avoidance systems, as well as excellent >radar systems for avoiding thunderstorms and their associated >hail and lightning (phenomena, incidentally, that are surely not >unique to this planet).

>If we assume that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft and that
>some of the many reported UFO sightings are genuine UFOs, we are
>dealing with machines apparently capable of high-speed
>right-angle turns, incredible accelerations and speeds, and
>wingless flight -- not to mention of traveling light-years
>through the void of empty space in, presumably, a relatively
>short period of time. Such capability would require a technology
>totally beyond our present understanding of physics -- a
>technology the sophistication of which we cannot even begin to
>imagine.

>Because of the positive correlation between technology and
>reliability, such incredibly advanced technology would most
>certainly mean a correspondingly high degree of reliability.
>Common sense dictates that the chances of such machines crashing,
>breaking down, or colliding would be all but zero. It certainly
>would be many orders of magnitude less than the already
>infinitesimally small chance of one of today's twin-engine
>jetliners having a double-engine failure.>

First, I for one am not assuming that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft. I see no firm evidence for this, nor any strong evidence of technology much advanced above ours.

The rest of this argument is misuse of statistics. I recommend that Kent, and anyone else interested, do some reading on how statistics work. The probability against an airliner simply blowing up shortly after takeoff may have been zillions to one, but that does not matter one whit to all the people who died instead of going to Paris.

Kent should heed the popular wisdom: "Sh*t happens!". Indeed it does. Even the most perfect system can have a catastrophic failure.

>Common sense dictates that the chances of such machines crashing,
>breaking down, or colliding would be all but zero.

This is nonsense. Even if the probability is billions to one against an event happening, it still can, and very often does. We hear of events all the time which happened, and the news media delight in spouting how improbable they were.

Time to talk to a statistician, Kent.

Bob

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