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Press Report From Seattle UFO Conference

From: Stig Agermose <Stig.Agermose@online.pol.dk>
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Stig

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'We know they exist,' says alien researcher at conference

by Hugo Kugiya
Seattle Times staff reporter

The windows of the Flag Pavilion were covered with black cardboard, not out of fear of searchlights from black helicopters, or the peering eyes of agents in black suits and sunglasses.

The hangar-like room at Seattle Center was darkened in order to show slides and short films to about 150 people gathered to discuss extraterrestrial life. Not the possibility of it, but the reality of it.

"We know about misidentification and hoaxes," said Terry Tibando, member of the Center for the Study of Extraterrestrial Intelligence (CSETI), a network of believers, which sponsored yesterday's all-day workshop. "We've considered all the contrary arguments. We don't question the possibility. We know they exist."

The ideas put forth yesterday at the workshop - abductions, alien craft shot down by the military, alien technology stolen by the government, the desire of giant corporations to instill fear of an alien invasion - if remotely true would be the biggest news story of the millennium. Such assertions are confined mostly to late-night talk radio and plots of movies and television shows.

Given the weight of the message, much of what was heard yesterday in the Flag Pavilion sounded surprisingly down to earth. It resembled, in many ways, a religious revival.

Joy Gilbert, from Eugene, spoke yesterday of once visiting her grown daughter in Sisters, Ore., and being taken aboard an alien craft by doe-eyed escorts, who examined her in the glow of a brilliant blue light.

She spoke with passion of communicating with a kind, loving alien being, whom she realized had appeared in her dreams all her life and who remains an invisible presence.

Tibando believes that in his lifetime, aliens will show themselves to humans and will live among us. He says they have not yet shown themselves because "we're not mature enough to deal with them in a mature manner."

"They see us as a maturing, interesting species," Tibando said. "But we've reacted to them with aggression. We scramble jets to shoot them down. So what they're doing now is quarantining us. It sounds like 'The X-Files' but it's not; it goes way beyond that."

As with gods, whom worshipers do not see but believe in nonetheless, some faith is required here.

The aliens, Tibando said, have left us a trail of bread crumbs: geometric shapes burned into wheat fields, numerous sightings of spacecraft, individual encounters like Gilbert's.

The goal of Tibando and others associated with CSETI is full disclosure. Highly placed officials in the military and in industry know about our relationship with aliens, Tibando said.

Last June an international panel of reputable scientists concluded enough unexplained, physical evidence accompanying UFO sightings exists to warrant further investigation.

The study, led by Stanford University physicist Peter Sturrock, cited evidence such as burns to witnesses of UFO sightings, radar detections of unexplained objects, strange lights appearing repeatedly in the skies in certain areas, aberrations in the operation of automobiles, and radiation and other damage found in vegetation.

A 50-page report was compiled by the panel, composed of scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornell and Princeton universities, the universities of Arizona and Virginia, and institutions in France and Germany, among others. But the greater scientific community still is reluctant to dignify such ideas with a response, for fear of blurring the line between legitimate scientific research and the beliefs of a fringe group.

Only time will tell whether the fringe was, all along, the only people smart enough to foretell one of the greatest events of mankind.

"We need Congress to demand an investigation," said Deborah Foch, with CSETI. "Otherwise, most of us will not know."

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