

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Presented by

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INTRODUCTION

An examination of Project Blue Book's history and obtainable benefits both from a public and scientific standpoint has been made. This briefing will cover the findings and recommend a re-orientation of the project.

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PROBLEM

Public opinion surveys indicate that over fifty million Americans believe in the existence of UFOs today.

For the past twenty years over 11,000 UFO sightings have been reported and examined by FTD. Yet, no positive evidence has been found that UFOs pose any threat to the security of this country. In addition, the evidence examined denies the existence of flying saucers from outer space, or any similar phenomenon popularly associated with UFOs.

Since FTD is an intelligence organization, the fifty million people who believe in UFOs also believe FTD and the Air Force are withholding information from them. This has simply resulted in a greater demand for information (which does not, in fact exist) and this in turn has further discredited FTD and the Air Force. If fifty million Americans believe in UFOs, it is to the interest of the Air Force to capitalize on this belief.

HISTORY

Unidentified flying objects do not constitute a new phenomena. UFOs have been reported by historians since 593 B.C. At this time, Ezekial recorded a whirlwind to the north which appeared as a firey sphere. In 1254 at Saint Abans Abby, when the moon was eight days old, there appeared in the sky a ship elegantly shaped, well equipped, and of marvelous color. In 1520 there appeared in France a round shaped object with rotating lights and two firey suns. In 1874, over Texas, a farmer reported seeing a dark flying object in the shape of a disc cruising in the sky at a wonderful speed. Many, many more observations have been recorded by historians throughout ancient and modern history.

The modern era of UFOs had its beginning on 24 June 1947. I say the modern era, because, national news coverage on UFOs up to this period was virtually non-existent. Mr. Kenneth Arnold's observation and subsequent news reporting of his UFO sighting, swayed the public into believing that our planet had been visited by unknown vehicles from outer space. The Arnold sighting and subsequent publicity on flying saucers started an avalanche of reports. The Air Force began receiving reports from people of all walks of life.

During the period, June through December 1947, there was no specific organization responsible for investigating and evaluating UFO reports. At this time everyone had an expert opinion. Even within the military structure, there were those who expressed their own feelings and beliefs as to what UFOs actually represented.

The wide news coverage of public reports of "flying discs or saucers" created sufficient concern at high military echelons to authorize the Air Material Command to conduct a preliminary investigation into these reports. Early belief was that the objects reported were of aircraft more advanced than those possessed by the U. S. Armed Forces.

A letter, 23 September 1947 from Lt General Twining of AMC to the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, expressed the opinion that there was sufficient substance in the reports to warrant a detailed study.

On 30 December 1947, a letter from the Chief of Staff directed AMC to establish a project whose purpose was to collect, collate, evaluate, and disseminate all information concerning UFO sightings and phenomena in the atmosphere to those interested agencies. The project was assigned the code name "Sign." The responsibility for "Project Sign" was delegated to the Air Technical Intelligence Center which was then part of the AMC.

In February 1949, "Project Sign," completed its evaluations of the 243 UFO reports which had been submitted to the project. The report concluded that: "No definite and conclusive evidence is yet available that would prove or disprove the existence of these UFOs as real aircraft or unknown and unconventional configuration."

"Project Sign" was changed to "Project Grudge" on 16 December 1948 at the request of the Director of Research and Development. Project Grudge completed their evaluations of 244 reports in August 1949. The conclusions of the Grudge reports were as follows:

"Evaluations of reports of UFOs to date demonstrate that these flying objects constitute no threat to the security of the United States. They also concluded that reports of UFOs were the result of misinterpretations of conventional objects, a mild form of mass hysteria of war nerves, and individuals who fabricate such reports to perpetrate a hoax or to seek publicity."

Project Grudge also recommended that the investigation and study of reports of UFOs be reduced in scope, as had the Project Sign Report.

The UFO project continued on a reduced scale and in December 1951 the Air Force entered into a contract with a private industrial organization for another detailed study of the UFO cases on file.

The report which was completed 17 March 1954 is commonly referred to as Special Report #14. Reports one through thirteen were progress reports dealing with administration. Special Report #14 reduced and evaluate all UFO data held in Air Force files. Basically, the same conclusions were reached that had been noted in both the preceeding Sign and Grudge Reports.

It was during the early 1950's that the national interest in reported sightings increased tremendously. With the increased volume of reports, a Scientific Advisory Panel on UFOs was established in late 1952. At a meeting held during 14 - 18 January 1953, all available data was examined. Conclusions and recommendations of this panel were published in a report, and made public. The panel concluded that UFOs did not threaten the national security of the United States and recommended that the aura of mystery attached to the project be removed.

In March 1952 Project Grudge became known as Project Blue Book. From this time to the present, the project concerned itself with investigation of sightings, evaluation of the data, and release of information to proper news media through the Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Information (SAFOICC).

A memorandum dated 28 September 1965 from Major General LeBailly requested that a working scientific panel composed of

both physical and social scientists be organized to review Project Blue Book. The product of this request was the Special Report of the USAF Scientific Advisory Board Ad Hoc Committee. Their primary conclusion was that the present program could be strengthened by providing the opportunity for an in-depth scientific study of selected UFO sightings.

In July 1966, the Commander of FTD initiated a QRC request through Project White Stork to provide an in-depth evaluation of some fifty UFO cases for the purpose of identifying procedural changes that should be made in Blue Book methodology. In addition, it was decided with sponsor approval, that the investigating group include an assessment of the entire UFO situation. Results of the evaluation of selected cases did not reveal any evidence of extraterrestrial vehicles nor anything that might be considered beyond the range of present day scientific knowledge. The most probable explanation for the unidentified cases would have to be cast in terms of man made objects, natural phenomena, or psychological causes. Of their recommendations they stressed the fact that immediate steps should be taken to educate the public to the sensational but insidious exploitation of UFO reports, by releasing official books, reports, and news items. Also, the extent of public concern and opinion regarding UFOs

for use in determining long range requirements should be determined. If results should indicate that public concern has been overestimated, then consideration should be given to dropping all official (government) interest in UFOs.

The history of Project Blue Book alone has shown that the UFO phenomena is mainly that of a public relations problem. The fringe of believers in extraterrestrial visitation continues to grow. UFO hobby clubs are a constant critic of Air Force policies -- the majority of these clubs profess to be studying the phenomena scientifically.

However, it should be recognized that the public could be expected to accuse the Air Force of withholding information on UFOs since their investigation has been assigned to Air Force Technical Intelligence.

U. S. SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

Many leading astronomers have expressed their ideas on the possibilities of extraterrestrial life. There is evidence that the bulk of the stars in the sky have planetary systems. Recent research concerning the origin of life on earth suggests that the physical and chemical processes leading to the origin of life occur rapidly in the early history of the majority of planets. The selective value of intelligence and technical civilization is obvious, and it seems likely that a large number of planets within our Milky Way galaxy, perhaps as many as a million, are inhabited by technical civilizations in advance of our own. Interstellar space flight is far beyond our present technical capabilities, but there seems to be no fundamental physical objections to it, and it would be very rash indeed for anyone to preclude, from our present vantage point, the possibility of its development by other civilizations.

Dr. Carl Sagan, of Harvard University, for one, has often expressed his views that the earth is not the only inhabited planet. His work has produced the logic that if a million advanced technical civilizations in our galaxy launched an interstellar spacecraft per year, and even if all stars in the galaxy can be explored with equal

facility, then our solar system should, on the average, be visited only once every hundred thousand years.

If even a small fraction of the UFOs are interstellar spacecraft, this would imply an overriding significance to our small planet. If our views on the frequency of intelligence in the galaxy are correct, there is no reason for the earth to be singled out for interstellar visits.

Dr. Charles Smiley, of Brown University, has recently undertaken an interesting attempt to answer the question as to the possibility of UFOs being from Mars or Venus. A logical approach to this problem would be to consider favorable launch windows. It is well known the importance of selecting a favorable launch time so that a vehicle will travel along a minimum energy orbit, arriving at the path of Mars (or Venus) just as that planet comes to the same point, and for each of these launching times there would be a corresponding arrival time at intervals of about 584 days for Venus and about 780 days for Mars.

Dr. Smiley found that there was no evidence to indicate that Martians and Venusians have been arriving in large numbers, if at all. When one examines the direction from which the UFOs arrived, we find not a single case of the UFO coming from the proper direction to indicate that it had originated on Mars or Venus.

Dr. Menzel, of Harvard College Observatory, and author of several books, has stated that of the many astronomical observatories in the United States and abroad, none have ever photographed an object that remotely resembled a spaceship. Since 1957, hundreds of members of Moon Watch teams throughout the world have watched the skies, but no Moon Watch team has yet reported the presence of a spaceship. An important point is that the Space Detection and Tracking System would certainly detect an interloper from beyond our planet that would join the parade of some thousand objects now in orbit. To date, SPADATS has never given any indication that they believe an extraterrestrial vehicle has ever orbited earth. Project Ozma, an early U.S. attempt to establish contact with extraterrestrial life, was unsuccessful. No "intelligent" radio signals were noted, during its one year operational program.

Dr. Menzel stands behind his belief that human beings now are on the threshold of space. Visits to and from other worlds may occur in the future, bringing new facts and new interpretations of reality that we cannot now imagine. No evidence yet found indicates that such visits have begun. No fact so far determined suggests that a single UFO has originated outside our own planet.

The leading Soviet astronomers have voiced similar opinions regarding extraterrestrial life. It is believe that approximately

one thousand light years is the maximum distance at which interstellar communications have any meaning at all, and from both U. S. and USSR work in the area, the existence of only one similar civilization at most can be expected.

One major factor agreed by both is the high improbability of our planet being visited by extraterrestrial life from another solar system. Even the nearest stars that resemble our own sun in age and type are about ten to eleven years distant. Such a round trip from a distant neighboring solar system would encompass over twenty years, traveling at speeds approaching the speed of light. Astronomers of both countries postulate that a high probability for extraterrestrial life exists. To date, though, there has been no confirmation of the theory.

DETERMINATION OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

The only positive proof that extraterrestrial life exists is the establishment of contact with another civilization.

The earliest U.S. attempt to establish such contact was initiated with Project Ozma. The project was established in 1959 and consisted of an 85 foot steerable antenna, which was located at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank, West Virginia. As the first step in a systematic search, the astronomers began to listen for possible radio signals from the neighborhood of certain stars. Tau Ceti and Epsilon Eridani were chosen as the first targets because they lie within the range of our radio telescopes, ten to eleven light years distant, and because they resemble our own sun in age and type and therefore might have planetary systems like our own.

It was calculated that signals from planets near the selected stars should be observable with the 85 foot dish if they were generated by a million watt transmitter operating through a 600 foot antenna. To be detected under these circumstances, the signals would have to be concentrated within a very narrow band of frequencies.

Signals to the target stars were sent in the hydrogen line from the observatory in May - July 1960. But if these signals are

received, analyzed, and re-transmitted the results, if any, will not be known until 1982.

No information about any operational programs can be found in the Soviet literature; however, the Soviets do possess several radio telescopes which could be utilized by the Soviets to search for radio emissions from intelligent civilizations.

Meteorites are the only bodies of extraterrestrial origin that are available for a study in our laboratories. In connection with the problem of extraterrestrial life, a large number of mineralogists, physicists, biologists, etc., everywhere are studying meteorites. The proof of the existence of organic substances in meteorites not of earth origin would support the existence of life outside the earth, no matter what the ultimate origin of meteorites might be. But in this problem as in all other problems concerning extraterrestrial life, there is not a single answer and no existing proof of the existence of life. The problem has recently been reviewed at the Institute of Microbiology, Academy of Sciences, USSR, where many investigations of such nature are being carried out.

U.S. and USSR efforts to establish contact with extraterrestrial life have been about equal in terms of theoretical discussions. The Soviets have quoted the Ozma project in their literature and the project appears to be one of their fundamental information

sources. It is not known whether the Soviets have ever attempted a similar program.

No integrated program in either country is currently underway as far as known from available sources; however, both countries have the necessary equipment for such a program.

Rob Mercer

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The USAF/UFO program has represented a modest but continuous effort since 1947. The program has been well organized although the resources assigned to it have been quite limited. The program has undergone personnel, attitude, and procedural changes and because of problems and pressures has been periodically reviewed by external consultants, scientists, and more recently a congressional committee.

At present, the firm conclusions of Project Blue Book are:

(1) No unidentified flying object reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security;

(2) There has been no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings categorized as unidentified represent technological developments or principles beyond the range of present day scientific knowledge;

(3) There has been no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as unidentified are extraterrestrial vehicles. Scientific panels and committees previously reviewing the UFO situation, have repeatedly reached the same conclusions even though their recommendations have concentrated on the symptoms, not the cause of the UFO problem.

Initial classification of the UFO project and continuous association with the intelligence community has contributed to constant public criticism. The major criticism, that of withholding information, could be expected because of Blue Book's long intelligence association. With continued government involvement, the Air Force must announce and maintain a standard policy of releasing information to the public. The public must be continually informed of all matters regarding the UFO phenomena.

A recent nationwide Gallup survey of the American people on the UFO subject, revealed that more than five million Americans claim to have seen something they believed to be a "flying saucer." Nearly half of the U.S. adult populus believe that these frequently reported flying objects, while not necessarily "saucers," are real -- 29 per cent of the populus believe them to be a product of the imagination.

This represents quite a change in public attitudes toward the creditability of "flying saucers" since a Gallup survey conducted almost twenty years ago revealed that forty per cent of the populus called the saucers either a hoax or the product of the imagination.

What can be the reasons for this public belief? We can attribute this to several things:

(1) There is, of course, the individuals will and want to believe that this planet is being watched

(2) Religious beliefs that others (extraterrestrial) exist are apparent due to the existence of numerous religious cults throughout the country.

(3) Present U.S. space efforts enable many to believe

(4) People are definitely uneducated in the physical environment

(5) The extraordinary publicity since the late forties.

The unfortunate combination of the social climate at the time of the inception of the UFO era and official government recognition were leading factors that contribute to public concern. These factors coupled with national ignorance of the appearance and behaviour of astronomical and atmospheric phenomena provided the populus the opportunity for the release of latent feelings concerning UFOs. These factors reinforced by mass communication media exploitation, has created a situation wherein public interest may be the most important consideration in the entire UFO controversy.

Our American public believes in the existence of UFOs. It is incumbent upon the Air Force to respond, in kind, to this anchored public attitude. We feel we can be responsive through the adoption of the following recommendations:

(1) The Air Force should capitalize on the belief of 50 million Americans in the existence of UFOs.

(2) Announce and maintain a scientific investigation policy to satisfy public interest.

(3) Initiate positive programs oriented at establishing contact with extraterrestrial life.

We must establish a new image for Project Blue Book and we believe this can be done by acceptance of these recommendations.