

MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER(DS) AND LORD HILL-NORTON

UFOs

a. I accept that there are strange phenomena to be seen in the sky, however I believe there to be adequate explanations for them. Experience has shown that most reported sightings can be attributed to things such as aircraft, meteorological balloons or natural phenomena like ball lightning. Of course there are many other equally straightforward explanations. However, there are a small number of cases where a simple explanation cannot be found immediately and on these occasions we are careful to ensure so far as possible that that they are of no Defence significance. Having satisfied ourselves of this, as you know, we do not attempt any further investigations. Clearly some reports remain unexplained but we have found no evidence that these phenomena represent a threat to national security and therefore cannot justify devoting Defence resources to their investigation.

b. All reports received by the MOD are channelled through Sec(AS)2. They are passed to the Air Staff who examine them for Air Defence implications. In some cases, where (on the face of it) there could be a defence interest, enquiries are made of relevant radar establishments etc in order to obtain more information. All reports are also passed to the Defence Intelligence organisation who have a keen interest in any sightings of unusual objects. We have no specialist group in Whitehall or anywhere else involved in UFO's and no civilian advisers other than Sec(AS)2 are involved.