

seems to me to deserve closer and more expert attention in Whitehall than we are led to believe it gets at present. There is evidence that at least three other governments take the phenomenon seriously. A mass of documents released in the US under the American Freedom of Information Act shows a close and continuing interest by governmental agencies. The French agency GEPAN (Groupe d'Etudes des Phénomènes Aérospatiaux Non-identifiés) which was set up by the then French Minister of Defence in 1977 under CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales) remains in existence despite the heavy retrenchment in French government expenditure and continues to collect and analyse UFO reports country-wide. And there is a degree of recent evidence in the Soviet Press that the Russians take a close interest in the phenomenon through the Moscow Aviation Institute and (possibly) the National Academy of Sciences. Is it really the case that the British MOD takes no systematic interest (as distinct from dealing ad hoc with what are felt to be tiresome enquiries from the public) ? If there really is no systematic study of the phenomenon, viz. something in the nature of a small expert committee in Whitehall or the placing of responsibility on a designated and expert directorate in the MOD, should there not be ? Is there no liason with French and US agencies ?

I hope that you will feel able to comment on the three questions at the end of the preceding paragraph. I ask them, not in any spirit of contention, but because I believe that we cannot afford to ignore a persistent phenomenon which other countries appear to take seriously. It seems to me to deserve systematic study within a Defence context, even if only to dismiss it in the end as trivial. I think you will know that there are others, whose judgement is to be respected and whose experience qualifies them, who take a similar view, Lord Hill-Norton among them.

To return to the particular case of RAF Woodbridge, you may already be aware that television documentaries of the occurrence have been made by two foreign companies. The programme made by Cable News Network is now likely to be shown in this country before long. I have not yet seen the documentary in full, myself, but I understand from the organisation that they claim to have established a number of facts which are very much at odds with the view that Col. Halt and other USAF personnel merely misperceived some phenomenon with a wholly conventional explanation (the Orfordness lighthouse, a satellite re-entry, a bright meteor). The following are among the more important points which Cable appear to be claiming.

1. Col. Halt adheres to the report of 13th January 1981, of which the MOD has a copy. He also confirms the authenticity of a tape-recording made by himself on site on the night of 29th December 1980 which tallies with paragraph 3 of his report (and in some respects goes beyond it).
2. Other witnesses to the events of 27th and 29th December 1980 reported by Halt have made sworn depositions.
3. Although not reported by Halt, there was an unusual occurrence near RAF Woodbridge on the night of 26th December 1980. An unidentified object in an area of Rendlesham Forest sufficiently worried USAF personnel to cause them to seek help from the Suffolk police. Police officers at Woodbridge (the village) have confirmed that they responded to this call, albeit without establishing unambiguous evidence at the site of the 'sighting' claimed by the USAF contingent which had been sent to investigate it.
4. There is evidence that RAF Watton (and perhaps other radar installations) had radar traces on at least one of the three nights in question of an unidentified aerial object in the area of RAF Woodbridge/Rendlesham Forest.
5. There is evidence that a 16mm cine-film was made at the site by USAF personnel on 29th December 1980 and was referred for study by the USAF headquarters in Germany.