



**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**

Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB

Telephone Section 40 (Direct Dialling)  
(Switchboard)

Section 40

Your reference

Our reference D/Sec(AS)/12/30 ✓

Date 9 August 1985

Dear

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Thank you for your letter of 3 June 1985. I am sorry that I have been unable to reply before now. You may find it useful if I explain that the sole interest of the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence in reported sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) is to establish whether they have any bearing on the defence of the country.

There is no organisation in the Ministry of Defence appointed solely for the purpose of studying reports of such objects, and no staff are employed on the subject full time. The reports we receive are referred to the staff in the Department who are responsible for the air defence of the United Kingdom, and they examine the reports as part of their normal duties.

Since our interest in UFOs is limited to possible defence implications we have not carried out a study into the scientific significance of these phenomena. Unless there are defence implications we do not attempt to identify sightings and we cannot inform observers of the probable identity of the object seen. The Department could not justify the expenditure of public funds on investigations which go beyond the pure defence interests.

We have to recognise that there are many strange things to be seen in the sky, but we believe there are adequate explanations for them. They may be satellite debris re-entering the earth atmosphere, ball lightning, unusual cloud formations, meteorological balloons, aircraft lights, aircraft at unusual angles or many other things.

Whilst I appreciate your concern about the possibility of an aircraft colliding with a UFO, I can assure you that RAF pilots and crews are well aware of the dangers of collision with any identified object including such things as hang-gliders and even birds. Procedures are therefore designed to protect aircraft, as far as possible, from this kind of risk. I am sure similar standards are applied by the CAA in respect of civil aircraft.

*Yours sincerely*

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