

DEC 13 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Unidentified Flying Objects

REFERENCE: (a) Request of the Director of 10 December 1952
(b) Memo from AD/CI to Director dated 10 December 1952

1. Pursuant to the request of the Director, the following amplification of Reference (b) and review of the current situation is submitted. A preliminary review of the USAF investigation of this subject has been completed. With respect to the recent incidents enumerated in Reference (b), additional information has been obtained which is appended as Tab A.

2. A trip to Air Technical Intelligence Center was made on Friday, 12 December by AD/CI, Dr. H. P. Robertson (consultant), and Mr. F. C. Durant (Operations Staff/CI). During this visit the O/CI group was briefed on the current status of the investigation, and copies of selected case studies and progress reports were obtained. This material has been subsequently studied in detail.

3. There still exists no reasonable evidence that the objects sighted are of foreign origin. While there is no indication that these objects represent a direct threat to the national defense, there are certain potential dangers which are related to these sightings. As a result of the trip and these conclusions, O/CI is proceeding with plans to convene a group (probably not more than three), of top level consultants in the fields of physics (radar and upper atmosphere), astrophysics and astronomy, to review the evidence and recommend with respect to:

- a. Methodology of investigation of unidentified flying objects.
- b. Instrumentation to obtain data in future sightings.
- c. Methods of rapid identification of unidentified flying objects.
- d. Desirability for convening of a larger panel.

We are deferring for the present the convening of a large panel of diverse scientific interests for a detailed review of the substantive aspects of the problem because of insufficient and incomplete data.

Approved for Release

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Enclosure - Tab A

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(18 Dec 52)

(Signed H. L. CLARK)
H. MARSHALL CHAINWELL
Assistant Director
Scientific Intelligence

TAB A.

1. Motion Pictures, Tremonton, Utah

This case involves the sighting and photographing (Kodachrome film) of ten bright lights moving across the sky on 2 July 1952 in rough formation. Source is a Chief Photographer's Mate, USN, with 17 years photographic experience. The local time was 1110; weather conditions bright, clear, no clouds. Objects appeared to be "rilling about" while traveling in a westerly direction across the sky. Source was driving along the road when the sighting occurred. He stopped the car and photographed the event with his personal camera. Toward the end of the sighting, one object separated from the rest and reversed course across the sky.

Status: ATIC Photographic Laboratory examination of the film resulted in following conclusions:

- a. 10 objects, all alike in movement and size.
- b. Decidedly improbable that they are birds or balloons.
- c. Exact nature cannot be determined, because they are visible only as small spots of light. It can be deduced, however, that they are either non-spherical in shape and similar to bright metal in reflectance or else variably self-luminous. Objects which follow similar courses show similar brightness fluctuations which could be caused by their taking similar flight attitudes.
- d. Apparently a coordination of movement to some extent among these objects. They seem to move in formations which are probably 3-dimensional in arrangement.
- e. The movements suggest flight paths consisting of skew curves in space.
- f. The single object which reversed course remained reasonably uniform in brightness. It followed a nearly straight line path with reasonable uniformity of motion at an angular velocity of about 2.1"/sec. (This is equivalent to the following speeds: 37 mph 8500 yards; 75 mph 8 1000 yards; 375 mph 85000 yards; 750 mph 810,000 yards; etc.).
- g. It would probably be extremely difficult to imitate this photography for fraudulent purposes.

This film is currently under examination by the U. S. Navy Photo Interpretation Laboratory, Anacostia. Estimated completion date: 15 January 1953.

2. Bright light sighted from Presque Isle and Limestone Air Force Bases, Maine

This sighting occurred the night of 10-11 October 1952 from 2330 to 0300 local time, by observers at the weather stations at these Air Force Bases. The description of the light was "circular orange object with four green lights nearby." Theodolite sightings of elevation and azimuth were obtained. Weather was clear.

Status: A comparison of observed azimuths and elevations of the supposed object with the calculated position and relative motion of the planet Jupiter leave little doubt that the observed object was actually Jupiter.

3. Reported sightings of a strange object in Florida

This sighting was reported by a Boy Scoutmaster to have occurred at 2150 local time on 19 August 1952 near West Palm Beach, Florida. According to the story given, the source was driving along deserted road in his car, together with four Boy Scouts. Sighting a strange light, source stopped the car, cautioned the boys to wait, and entered the palmetto undergrowth alone. When he did not return in a few minutes, and witnessing some strange lights in the vicinity of the scoutmaster, the boys went for help, returning with a deputy sheriff. The scoutmaster appeared, badly frightened, slightly burned on the forearms. His story was that he had seen a large circular object about eight feet over his head which had released a "fire ball" which descended on him. He stated that he had thrown himself upon the ground and "blacked out." There were various other contradictions to the story. His car was burned slightly and samples of grass taken from the immediate vicinity of the "sighting" differed strangely in appearance from samples 75 yards away.

Status: The background of the source indicates an unwary personal reputation and criminal record, resulting in the belief that the report may have been an elaborate hoax. However, the unusual condition of the grass samples is currently unexplained. This fact, together with other aspects of the case, leave final determination in doubt at this time.

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
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CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND

OPERATING UNDER CONTRACT
WITH THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

12 December 1952

TELEPHONE
OLIVER 4200

Dr. H. F. Robertson
Cosmos Club
2121 Massachusetts Ave., N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear H. F.:

Here is that article you mentioned from the New Yorker, which I found most interesting and informative. I have listed below a few items which seemed to me to need further discussion:

Patrol Cameras

Fred Whipple at Harvard has had considerable experience in developing and using small, equatorially mounted cameras. These are exposed for several hours through a rotating sector, and show a meteor trail as a series of dots on a background of stars, thus providing the meteor's angular velocity. In many cases two such cameras are used, separated by several miles, so that the space track of the meteor can be derived.

As I recall, meteor patrol cameras have been used in the vicinity of Boston and southern New Mexico only. All the photographs are preserved, and I am sure there have been no unidentified objects of any type to date. A possible modification of this technique which would provide more complete coverage is to use the Greenstein-Henry wide-angle camera, which photographs 160° of the sky at once. Such a camera is in use at the Yerkes Observatory and is reported most recently in a paper by Sharpless and Geterbrook in the Astrophysical Journal, 1951. The major difficulty of operation would be changing the film, which might be made automatic.

Another use of cameras could be on selected ground radar scopes. Possibly such a camera should be kept in stand-by status and triggered by the operator when unidentified objects are on the screen.

The issue of light, hand-held cameras to aircraft pilots is another fair possibility noted in the New Yorker article.

Study of Communications Systems

One of our CMC projects is undertaking such a study, and has collected a large amount of literature. The British Army Operational Research Group has made several studies of air raid reporting systems as used in exercises, which show the distortion and "noise" introduced in any reporting system. There is a possibility of obtaining comparable

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Dr. Robertson

12 December 1952

data on false alarms to fire departments and "flaps" in several military situations (such as North Africa in 1942). I have been intrigued with the electronic analogue of a communications system with feedback. The circumstances leading to instability of such a system might be measured if a simple theory can be postulated; e.g., if something analogous to impedance of the circuit determines instability.

Mass Psychology

It is clear that a simple statement has not and will not convince the public. A psychologist may have some theoretical framework in which past "flaps" of this kind can be analyzed and the results extended to the present difficulty.

General Requirement

It seems to me that the major difficulty at present is the lack of a well-defined attitude among responsible officials: either there is or there is not convincing evidence of significant phenomena. To resolve this question it must be decided in advance what level of completeness is necessary in explaining reports, and what indications of hostile intent are necessary to make reported objects of importance. It might help to point out the differences between open-mindedness and indecision, and to suggest some level of credulity below which reports will not even be considered.

Dr. Aden B. Meinel who is an assistant professor of astrophysics at the Yerkes Observatory, who has been concerned with the photography of aurora and who has designed complex wide-angle cameras for the Air Force under a subcontract with Boston University, might be helpful in discussion of cameras noted above and of auroral phenomena. However, the Air Force authorities here have no record of his clearance. If you are interested in him, we could ask him by telephone what his clearance is and with what organization.

Yours sincerely,

Thornton

Thornton Page

DEC 10 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
 THROUGH: Deputy Director (Intelligence)
 SUBJECT: Unidentified Flying Objects
 REFERENCE: Request of the Director of 10 December 1952

1. The following is a summary of the current situation with respect to the investigation of unidentified flying objects. Recent incidents include:

a. Movies of ten (10) unidentified flying objects (unexplained on the basis of natural phenomena or known types of aircraft), near Tremonton, Utah, on 2 July 1952.

b. A very brilliant unidentified light over the coast of Maine for about four hours on the night of 10-11 October at a height computed to be two or three times that which can be sustained by any known device.

c. Alleged contact with a device on the ground in Florida late this summer which left some presently unexplained after-effects.

d. Numerous other sightings of lights or objects which either in configuration or performance do not resemble any known aerial vehicle or explainable natural phenomena.

2. In furtherance of the IAC action on 6 December, O/SI has been working with Dr. H. P. Robertson, consultant (former Director of Research, WSEC), toward establishing a panel of top scientists and engineers in the fields of astrophysics, nuclear energy, electronics, etc., to review this situation. Wholehearted cooperation has been assured by DI/USAF and ATIC, and a visit by AD/SI, Dr. Robertson, and Mr. Durant of SI to ATIC is planned for Friday. It is hoped to organize the panel and undertake substantive scientific review of this subject within the next two to three weeks.

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OSI:RLC/ntw (10Dec52)

WALTER J. WATSON
 Assistant Director
 Scientific Intelligence

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9 December 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Unidentified Flying Objects

1. At 1015 hours today I talked by telephone with Captain Edward J. Ruppelt (Chief, Aerial Phenomena Branch, Analysis Division, AFIO). The purpose of the call was to determine if Captain Ruppelt would be in Washington during the next few days so that he might meet with Dr. Robertson. Also, if there had been any developments in the Limestone-Presque Isle case.

2. Captain Ruppelt stated that he had put in a request to come to Washington last week but that he had been "running into a snag" in getting away and he intimated that his intention to specifically visit CIA may have been the difficulty. By oblique references it was determined that Colonel Donald L. Bower (Chief, Analysis Division) was blocking his trip. Note: If this is true, it is difficult to understand since Colonel Bower, in discussions with E. Tamm and myself on 25 November, indicated complete willingness for cooperation. Ruppelt stated that he would try again and hoped to be in Washington next week. I gave no indication of the agreements reached on this subject in the IAC meeting on 4 December.

3. Regarding the Limestone-Presque Isle case, Captain Ruppelt reported that the observation is suspected of being the planet Saturn. A sighting of Saturn with the same theodolite will be made within the next few days. An examination of this data with possible theodolite reading errors should indicate whether the sighting could conceivably have been of this planet. I find it difficult to believe that the moons of Saturn could be seen visibly.

4. Captain Ruppelt stated that he had a package of analyses and reports which he desired to have C/SI study and was planning to hand-carry to Washington. I mentioned that someone from C/SI might be making a trip to AFIO within the next week or so. Ruppelt stated that he would be pleased to

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hear from me at any time. His office telephone number is Dayton,
Ohio, Kenmore 7111, Extension 65365 and his home telephone number
is Walnut 7113.

[Signature]
F. C. DURANT

OSI/FCDurant:ba

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