



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC 20330-1000



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

JUN 2 1994

SAF/AA  
1720 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1720

Dr. Athelstan F. Spilhaus  
Box 1063  
Middleburg, VA 22117

Dear Dr. Spilhaus

As you may know, the General Accounting Office (GAO) has instituted an audit that will review the Department of Defense's policies and procedures relating to acquiring, classifying, retaining and disposing of official government records dealing with weather balloon, aircraft and similar crash incidents. Among other things, the audit seeks to fully explain the claims that the US Government recovered an alien spacecraft near Roswell, NM, in July 1947 and since that time, has covered up that fact. In an effort to assist the GAO, the Air Force initiated a detailed independent review of our records pertaining to this claim. Your name has surfaced in regard to our historical inquiries.

The bearer of this letter, Colonel Jeffrey C. Butler, Assistant for Special Plans, Programs and Operations is heading this review on my behalf. Colonel Butler has a TOP SECRET security clearance and is authorized access to all Air Force special access programs. If you have information that you feel may be classified, you may share it with Colonel Butler for this official Air Force purpose, without violating any security agreement you previously made. Clearance information or questions should be addressed to Colonel Richard L. Weaver, Director for Security and Special Program Oversight, at (703)693-2013.

I request your full cooperation to help the Air Force officially resolve this controversial matter. I thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely

WILLIAM A. DAVIDSON  
Administrative Assistant and  
Senior Security Official

1A-14



STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Date: 3 Jun 94

Place: Middleburg, VA

*CSF* I Athelstan F Spilhaus, hereby state that Jeffrey Butler, was identified as a Colonel, USAF and Jim McAndrew, was identified as a Lieutenant, USAF on this date at my home and do hereby, voluntarily and of my own free will, make the following statement. This is done without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. *CSF*

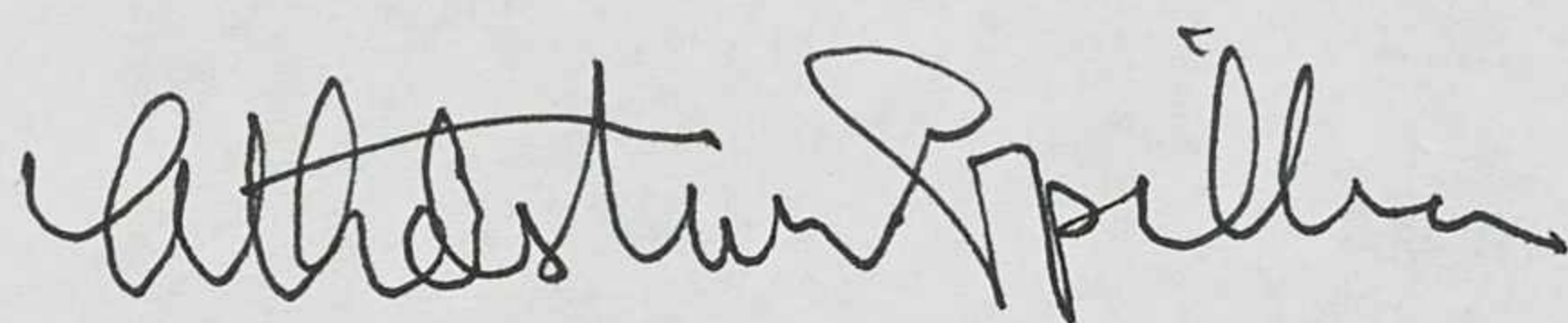
*CSF* I was the Director of the NYU Balloon Project and also involved with many other sensitive activities. Until these discussions, I had no indication of what the "Roswell incident" was. I was involved in numerous unusual activities such as reconstruction of captured German rockets, development of drone planes and the like--such as long range balloons. The Army Air Force had seen what the Japanese had done with long range balloons; although not effective as weapons, they did initiate the long-range balloon research which led to use of balloons for the detection and collection of debris from atomic explosion. Although I was involved in sensitive classified programs, I completed secrecy agreements for various projects, and I understand that this activity (Mogul, etc. is now declassified) and I did enforce "need to know". In part, I left NYU because the administration wanted to know too much about the various projects I was involved in (the Bikini test). At one time I was sent by the US government to assist the South Africa meteorological efforts and I worked numerous other special missions. Even though the war was over the Cold War had just started and certain things were sensitive. I recall that it was Col Duffy who brought me from the Reserves to active duty. It was during this period that I did become involved in a "UFO case". Some bush pilot had found some pock marks in dry snow in Alaska in 1950. So we flew up and saw peculiar round holes in the snow. We landed and took dog sleds to the site and found craters with a hole in the center. We cored one out of the snow and found a center of frozen conical ice. I began to think of something I had seen in the desert where glass had been formed similarly after a lightening strike (the "fumoroles"). I took one back to the university in dry ice and wrote a classified report. We even simulated a small lightning strike over dry snow (just from the snow blowing over the surface) and came up with conical ice formations. This was the Stony River Incident and it wasn't a UFO. On the December 1947 balloon project reports the "service flights" probably refer to the then Top Security project AFOAT 1 (related to MOGUL) which was to produce a report to the President when the Russians exploded an atomic device and were ready to produce a droppable atomic bomb. We coordinated all the listening posts to determine what stage the Russians were at. Concerning the Watson Laboratory gear, I don't remember the specifics of what that gear was. I recommend you check with Charlie Moore for those details. Many of the projects I just new about in general--these were sensitive times--it was sometimes better not to know too much--I knew about the collection of debris with special planes daily from Eilson AFB to the North Pole and back, PTARMIGAN flights, that lasted through the 50's. Concerning the Japanese balloons, I don't recall any specifics. Nor do I recall whether we had REWARD tags on all the balloons. I went many times to Alomogordo AAF and White Sands--not necessarily for balloon flights. I worked on naval activity such as the thermal affects on SONAR. Concerning actual balloon construction, Winzen of St Paul Minnesota, in association with General Mills, did most of the balloons. General Mills also did some balloon projects. Winzen made the first polyethelene (non-stretchable balloons). Flight #5, I really did not get into the details of the individual flights or experiments. The polyethelene material was very durable--it was designed not to burst--you could push a sharp thing through it but it would be difficult to tear *CSF*

*Athelstan Spilhaus*

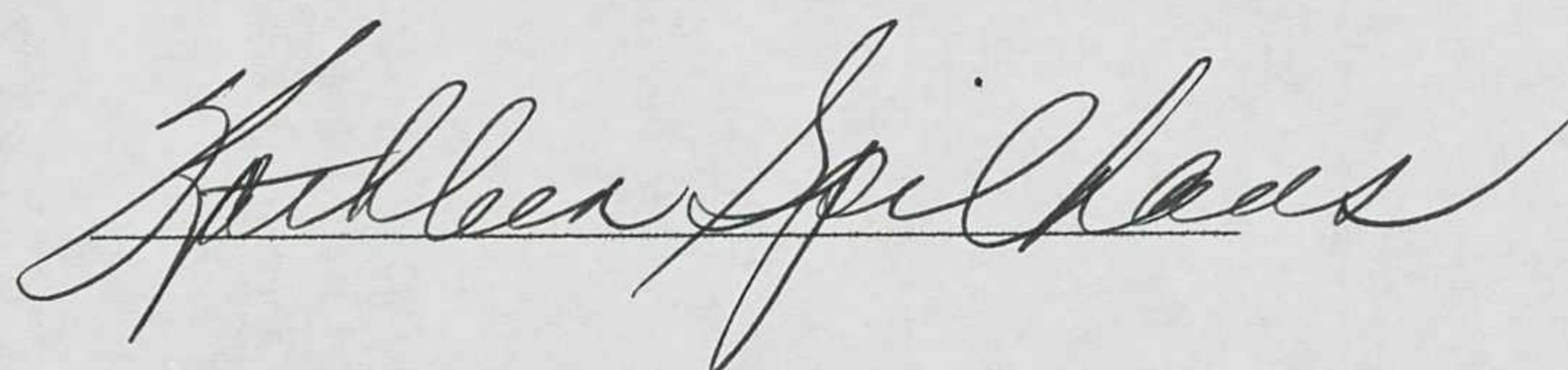


it with your hands. There was also debris collection on sticky paper. Most of the balloon projects were not concerned with weather--that's why there weren't radiosondes on all the balloons. The "cosmic ray train" was probably just a cosmic ray experiment on one of our balloons. The balloons were made of sections and had tape reinforcements but I <sup>don't</sup> recall any specifics on the tape material. Mylar was not called that originally--it may have originated as polyethelene. All the polyethelene we use was of a translucent material. Neoprene was used during the war; generally for meteorological and artillery firing balloons. The artillery radar tracked the balloons with corner reflectors--this gave the winds aloft to assist the gunners. The radar reflectors were sheets of reflective material and they changed over time but I don't recall the details of the changes. On reviewing Charlie Moore's letter, the acoustic detection relates with the atomic debris collection. The reflectors were for tracking and was made up of a metalized paper or fabric. Charlie explains the flowers--I'd heard about the flowers before, don't remember where--we used whatever we had in the experimental realm. The targets were throw-aways--we didn't put a tag on them, maybe a radiosonde, but not a target. Such a train would make gouges (shallow) as it was dragging the ground. We used meteorology as a cover story--it was a natural. It had a purpose beyond the project--we could use the constant level analysis of the constant pressure (isobaric) vs constant altitude to study atmospheric mathematics--therefore using it was natural. Ramey's press conference--the Air Force position makes sense for the mistake that the PIO made in his statements. (All the NYU personnel had left Alamogordo when the "material" was brought in--someone stated that it may have been Col Duffy's and therefore sent it to him at Wright Patterson--not because it was extraterrestrial) It is a logical reason to send it (the debris from the desert) there--not because it was special--Col Duffy was a fine officer and I'm sure he'd recognize it. I was not aware of any association between our balloon projects and the alleged "Roswell incident" until this interview. I am not part of any conspiracy to withhold information from either the US government or American public. There is no classified information that I am withholding related to this inquiry and I have never been threatened by US Government persons concerning not talking about this situation.

SIGNED:

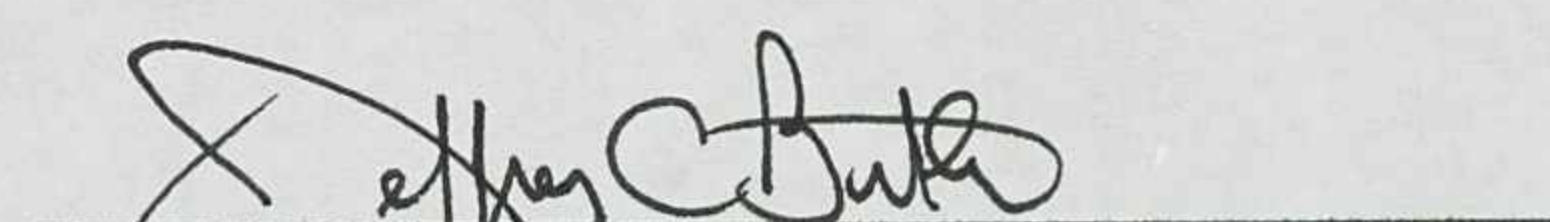


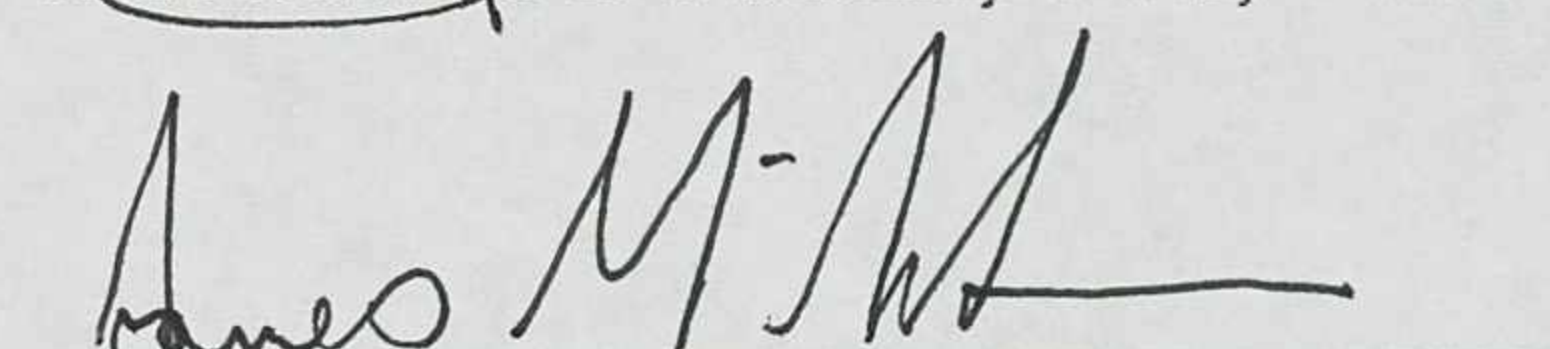
WITNESS(s):



Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized to administer oaths this

3rd day of June 1994 at Middleburg, VA

  
JEFFREY C. BUTLER, COL, USAF

  
JAMES MCANDREW, 1LT, USAF