

On the basis of present knowledge the least likely explanation of UFOs is the hypothesis of extraterrestrial visitations by intelligent beings."

I am not about to engage in a fencing match with you, but I would like to remind you (apropos of your most bizarre statement, "Thus the hypothesis that they are intelligently controlled interplanetary spacecraft is a valid one and must remain so until proved wrong...") that one examines evidence to test the validity of a hypothesis, not to prove it right or wrong. Science simply does not operate that way.

I do not know if most encyclopedias, as you claim, provide "inadequate" coverage of UFOs. "Inadequate" from whose point of view? It was my judgement, and that of the editors and outside consultants of the Book of Knowledge that my article was and still is adequate, since it is entirely consistent with the best scientific evaluations available to date.

I would like to clear the air about a few points you raise:

First, my original manuscript, before being edited, began as follows: "Since 1947 the United States Air Force has received thousands of reports of flying saucers." That sentence was changed to read: "The first report of flying saucers was received in 1947." Although I suspect that I could show convincingly that reports of "objects from other worlds" have been made by Pytheas, Marco Polo, and many others, the 1947 date is perfectly acceptable as a beginning date for the flying saucer craze (touched off, as you yourself point out by the Mount Rainier sighting by Arnold).

Second, I refer you to the National Academy of Sciences statement as an answer to your claim that the "Air Force did not prove that UFOs were not spaceships from other worlds." Again, the task the Condon group set itself was to analyze UFO reports and try its best to find out what UFO sighters were seeing; it was not, as you incorrectly surmise, to prove that UFOs do not exist.

Third, I am unable to follow your reasoning in the second paragraph of page 2 of your letter. Furthermore, you attribute to me statements that I did not make in my article. I did not say anything about structural aspects of UFOs. As is clearly stated, patterns in UFO reports is what I am talking about.

If I have a bias in the matter of UFOs, Mr. Bray, it probably lies on the positive side, but not in any way whatever is it based on any "sightings" made since 1947 or 1497. If you would care to find out more about it, I refer you to my book Man's Reach for the Stars (Doubleday).

Yours sincerely,

Roy A. Gallant