

The army arrived on July 7, collected up the debris and issued a press release stating one of the many saucers sighted recently had crashed and been recovered. But a few hours later the army changed its story, claimed the wreckage was a weather balloon radar reflector, and according to Mr. Friedman and the leaked documents the cover-up began.

Mr. Friedman and his associates have spent countless hours interviewing 92 persons connected with the crash, including people who handled the debris and described it as like tinfoil that could not be torn and other artifacts of incredible strength and lightness covered with some kind of writing, and they believe there truly was a crash.

"A covert analytical effort organized by Gen. (Nathan) Twining (Air Force Chief of Staff) and Dr. Bush acting on the direct orders of the President, resulted in a preliminary consensus (19 September, 1947) that the disc was most likely a short range reconnaissance craft," the leaked presidential briefing document says in part.

"A similar analysis of the four dead occupants...resulted in the tentative conclusion of this group (30 November, 1947) that although these creatures are human-like in appearance, the biological and evolutionary processes responsible for their development has apparently been quite different from those observed or postulated in homo-sapiens," continues the report.

The briefing officer named on the document is Admiral Roscoe H. Hilenkoetter, former and first chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, who is also referred to as MJ-1.

Among those listed as members of Majestic 12 (MJ-12), all of whom are dead, are Dr. Vannevar Bush who headed the Office of Scientific Research and Development during the Second World War and oversaw the development of the atom bomb, Defense Secretary James Forrestal and Dr. Donald H. Menzel, a Harvard University astronomer with a history of connections to American intelligence agencies.

Decipher Expert

The case of Dr. Menzel is particularly interesting as he is the author of three books debunking UFOs. Mr. Friedman said when he first saw Dr. Menzel's name he was sure there was a mistake in the document but extensive research into Menzel's background showed he was an expert on cryptology (code-breaking) during the Second World War and had extensive intelligence connections and the highest security clearance.

He would have been the perfect choice to try and decipher the symbols on the wreckage, said Mr. Friedman. And the books he wrote later were one of the best examples of disinformation on UFOs available, he added.

Particularly tantalizing in the presidential briefing papers are references to a series of attached documents detailing the results of examinations of the alien bodies and the wreckage but which are not included in the information leaked to the UFO investigators.

"Needless to say I'd give my left arm for those documents," said Mr. Friedman.

Signed By Truman

Two other documents seem to independently confirm the existence of Majestic 12. One is a memo dated Sept. 24, 1947 (two months after the alleged crash) and signed by President Harry S. Truman (included in the film to the UFO investigators) to Defense Secretary Forrestal which states "As per our recent agreement on this matter, you are hereby authorized to proceed with all due speed and caution upon your undertaking. Hereafter this matter shall be referred to only as Operation Majestic Twelve."

Another document was discovered in the National Archives in Washington by Mr. Moore and Mr. Shadara dated July 14, 1954 from Robert Cutler, special assistant to President Eisenhower, to General Twining which states "The president has decided that the MJ-12 SSP briefing should take place during the already scheduled White House meeting of July 16, rather than following it as previously intended."

The memo is a carbon and is not signed by Cutler.

Both seems to independently confirm the existence of the Majestic 12 group.

Disbelievers

But there are disbelievers. In Wednesday edition of *The Daily Gleaner* newspaper a Reuters report out of Washington quotes Phillip Klass, a former senior avionics editor of *Aviation Week and Space Technology* and a member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), as saying the presidential elect briefing papers and other documents are forgeries and "clumsy counterfeits."

Mr. Klass states the July 14, 1954 memo is fake because Cutler was not in Washington when the report was supposed to have been written but rather was on an 11-day trip to Europe.

He also says the document is suspicious because it is headed "Top Secret Restricted Security Information" - a designation that did not come into use until the administration of President Richard Nixon.

The Truman document does not follow the format the president used in letters to his cabinet secretaries and was created by photocopying a forgery over an authentic Truman letter, he said.

Paper Phoney

And the briefing paper of Eisenhower is a phoney because when the crash is alleged to have occurred, Eisenhower was army chief of staff and would have known about such a remarkable event, says Mr. Klass.

In addition, a letter from the National Archives dated July 22, 1987, a copy of which was provided by Mr. Friedman, states among the problems connected with the memo are: the document not having the correct filing number for the box in which it is alleged to have been found, no other documents in the folder where the memo was found deal with MJ-12, the document does not have official government letterhead or water mark.

the term "Top Secret Restricted Information" is a marking that did not come into use at the National Security Council until the Nixon Administration and the July 16, 1954 appointment book for the president contains no entry about an MJ-12 briefing.

Wednesday night Mr. Friedman prepared a five-page document refuting Mr. Klass's comments and has been invited to appear on the Cable News Network program called *Crossfire* to debate with Mr. Klass Saturday.

Irrational Attempts

"I am dismayed but not surprised by these irrational attempts to discredit some of the most important documents ever released," said Mr. Friedman.

The point about Cutler is absurd, says Mr. Friedman.

"Cutler was gone. He had two full-time heavy duty assistants. He instructed them to keep material moving out of his in-basket. A trivial matter such as the slight change in a classified briefing would certainly have been handled by them in a response to any request from the White House to do so."

On the question of the Truman note Mr. Friedman says he has seen the photograph of the original document and there is no evidence of forgery or superimposition.

"The third document which Klass attempts to explain away is the entire briefing paper," he says. "It would certainly not have been the case that even if Eisenhower had been informed of the crash, that he would have known all the details."

Roswell Incident

Mr. Friedman goes on to say it is interesting to note that CSICOP makes no mention of the detailed research that has gone into the Roswell Incident such as the interviews with 92 people involved.

Why would such an incident have been kept secret in the first place and then for all these years?

"Clearly there was no way to learn all the technological secrets of a very advanced vehicle and strange beings in just a few years," said Mr. Friedman.

"Clearly there were national security implications with regard to possibility of duplicating the technology of the Soviets duplicating the technology of learning that the investigation of the aliens was not necessarily to the benefit of mankind, if that was the case, to a great concern expressed in the memo with public panic as a result of any disclosures that might be made," he said.

Mr. Friedman did not attempt to dodge direct questions about a hoax.

If it is a hoax "somebody had to do a lot of homework that no one else has done," he replied.

Researched Archives

Has not Mr. Friedman spent years doing exactly such research in archives and libraries across the United States and does he not earn a fee as a UFO lecturer on the college circuit and thus stands to gain if the subject remains a hot public topic?

"There is no question that no one is better qualified to pull a hoax than me," he answers plainly. "But there is also no one better qualified to evaluate these documents."