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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MAY 20 1958

Dear Mr. Davidson:

This is to acknowledge your letter of 27 April 1958 addressed to this office with copies to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency concerning the releasable Summary and the complete Formal Report of the Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects convened 14-18 January 1953.

The complete Formal Report of the Panel has not been fully declassified for security reasons. The Formal Report is not available to the general public for distribution or reproduction.

The Formal Report does not contain the following specific recommendations mentioned in Captain Ruppelt's book, "The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects".

p. 293 "The panel didn't recommend that the activities of Blue Book be cut back, and they didn't recommend that it be dropped. They recommended that it be expanded.....the expansion they recommended would require a considerable sum of money. The investigative force of Project Blue Book should be quadrupled in size, they wrote,........."

p. 294 "And lastly, they said that the American public should be told every detail of every phase of the UFO investigation--the details of the sightings, the official conclusions, and why the conclusions were made. This would serve a double purpose; it would dispel any of the mystery that security breeds and it would keep the Air Force on the ball--sloppy investigations and analysis would never occur."

However, the minutes of the various meetings which led to the Formal Report of the Panel do include comments and suggestions of individual members of the panel. This is an unofficial classified supplement to the Formal Panel Report setting forth comments and suggestions of the Panel members, which they believed were unappropriate for inclusion in the Formal Report.

These minutes disclose the fact that members of the panel generally concluded that in view of the complete lack of authenticated evidence an educational training program designed to debunk the existence of interplanetary space ships was required. Captain Ruppelt as an interviewee testifying before the panel unofficially proposed, for the purpose of analyzing and evaluating reported sightings, teams which would expand the ATIC effort. Captain Ruppelt was not a member of the Panel.

These minutes also disclose that because of the brevity of some sightings and the inability of witnesses to express themselves clearly (semantics) that conclusive explanations could not be expected for every case reported. Furthermore, it was considered that normally it would be a great waste of effort to try to solve most of the sightings unless such actions would benefit a training and educational program. !! The Panel also endorsed the long accepted method for new scientific knowledge which is for the sighter to prove his point not the explainer. Captain Ruppelt was probably recalling or referring to his conversations with individual members of the panel and to the unofficial supplement when he wrote his book. In any event I can assure you the Formal Report of the Panel does not contain the recommendations as spelled out in your letter of 27 April 1958.

See page 81 — For your information the classified portion of the Formal Report and the unofficial supplement do not deal specifically with UFO's but on other matters of intelligence significance which affect the national security.

In our attempt to put the UFO subject in proper perspective, it appears that the Air Force cannot compete with the science-fiction writers. We believe that we have the investigation of the UFO phenomena in responsible hands and that an adequate, thorough, and honest program is being conducted. Regardless, a small but articulate segment of people are under the mistaken belief that the Air Force has not sought the assistance of outstanding authorities from without the Air Force to assist in our evaluation of UFO sightings, and that we are withholding vital UFO information from the public, thereby preventing proper evaluation. We have, on numerous occasions, publicized our conclusions relative to UFO and explained our evaluation processes. This group, nevertheless, continues to claim that UFO's are objects from outer space and demand Congressional hearings on the subject.

You can readily understand the continued interest of this small segment because the subject is so novel and fascinating that it supports over 43 organizations of one type or another. Most of these organizations publish news letters or magazines and they expect the Air Force to furnish them material for their publications. Needless to say, we do not have the resources alloted to this project to fill the numerous individual requests which these organizations make for copies of our investigative reports and other related matter.

Furthermore, we would be remiss in our duty to the American public if we, by our assistance, encouraged these organizations in their sensational claims and contentions. Consequently, we do not give them individual attention but rather make periodic press releases through established news channels. In so doing, we show partiality to no one person or organization nor do we place ourselves in the position of placing our stamp of approval on, or giving preferential treatment to, any one of them.

This press release approach used by all branches of the Government is considered censorship by some of these organizations and, because we will not favor them with our individual attention, they contend that we are keeping vital information from the public. The Air Force was compelled to generally adopt the press release approach because in the past when we furnished factual information to certain writers of UFO books and articles upon their individual requests our action was interpreted as granting approval and clearance to the books and articles in which the information was used.

If we withhold certain information from the public on UFO's it is not done for the purpose of depriving the public of vital information necessary for proper evaluation nor is it done because there is scientific proof of the existence of space craft from other planets and we do not wish to alarm the American public. It is done in the majority of instances to protect the people involved from the idle curiosity of the sensation seekers. In a few limited instances it is done to keep from compromising our investigative processes and, in a few instances, it is done for legitimate security reasons.

The Air Force has a tremendous task in defending this country against weapon systems which we know actually exist and are in the hands of our potential enemies. To divert more men and money away from this most serious mission into a greatly enlarged program for the investigation of UFO's -- objects about which we have been unable to discover one iota of tangible scientific evidence -- would seriously jeopardize the security of this country against a known proven threat; would be allowing the sensation seekers to dictate our defense policies, and would, in our opinion, lay ourselves open to the charge of gross imprudence.

The Air Force does not deny that unknown objects have been seen by responsible people. It is in the interpretation of these sightings that we are questioned. From our investigation covering the past ten or twelve year period, the Air Force contends that when the evidence of these sightings has been [redacted] through the scientific criteria it has led to the conclusion that the objects were not space craft and they did not constitute a threat to the security of this country. As an act of faith, the UFO's can be considered manned or unmanned craft from outer space, but as a scientific fact there has been no authenticated scientific evidence presented to or discovered by the Air Force to support this conclusion.

This is all the information available on the subject at the present time.

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If you have a future need for Air Force statistics on this subject, the latest Air Force press release will always be available upon request.

Sincerely,

LAWRENCE J. TACKER
Major, USAF
Executive Officer
Public Information Division
Office of Information Services

Mr. Leon Davidson
64 Prospect Street
White Plains, N. Y.

The following is the concluding page of the letter from the former Air Force officer which starts on page B-3.

and which we believed to be fair and honest, and completely misconstrued it.

If I remember correctly, in 1952 Major Dewey Fournet went to great trouble to get permission to give you a briefing and it was, shall we say, rather poorly received.

I trust that this letter answers your questions.

Yours truly

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