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SUMMARY

Reports of unidentified aerial objects (popularly termed "flying saucers" or "flying discs") have been received by the U.S. Air Force since mid-1947 from many and diverse sources. Although there was no evidence that the unexplained reports of unidentified objects constituted a threat to the security of the U.S., the Air Force determined that all reports of unidentified aerial objects should be investigated and evaluated to determine if "flying saucers" represented technological developments not known to this country.

In order to discover any pertinent trend or pattern inherent in the data, and to evaluate or explain any trend or pattern found, appropriate methods of reducing these data from reports of unidentified aerial objects to a form amenable to scientific appraisal were employed. In general, the original data upon which this study was based consisted of impressions and interpretations of apparently unexplainable events, and seldom contained reliable measurements of physical attributes. This subjectivity of the data presented a major limitation to the drawing of significant conclusions, but did not invalidate the application of scientific methods of study.

The reports received by the U.S. Air Force on unidentified aerial objects were reduced to IBM punched-card abstracts of the data by means of logically developed forms and standardized evaluation procedures. Evaluation of sighting reports, a crucial step in the preparation of the data for statistical treatment, consisted of an appraisal of the reports and the subsequent categorization of the object or objects described in each report. A detailed description of this phase of the study stresses the careful attempt to maintain complete objectivity and consistency.

Analysis of the refined and evaluated data derived from the original reports of sightings consisted of (1) a systematic attempt to ferret out any distinguishing characteristics inherent in the data of any of their segments, (2) a concentrated study of any trend or pattern found, and (3) an attempt to determine the probability that any of the UNKNOWNs represent observations of technological developments not known to this country.

The first step in the analysis of the data revealed the existence of certain apparent similarities between cases of objects definitely identified and those not identified. Statistical methods of testing when applied indicated a low probability that these apparent similarities were significant. An attempt to determine the probability that any of the UNKNOWNs represented observations of technological developments not known to this country necessitated a thorough re-examination and re-evaluation of the cases of objects not originally identified; this led to the conclusion that this probability was very small.

The special study which resulted in this report (Analysis of Reports of Unidentified Aerial Objects, 5 May 1955) started in 1953. To provide the study group with a complete set of files, the information cut-off date was established as of the end of 1952. It will accordingly be noted that the statistics contained in all charts and tables in this report are terminated