

UFO experts: Letter proves U.S. studied '47 crash near Roswell

By Marilyn Haddrell
El Paso Times

A declassified letter discovered in the National Archives has given UFO researchers what they say is the first solid evidence that a secret committee investigated the alleged 1947 crash of an unidentified flying object northwest of Roswell.

Researchers also are trying to verify other documents, which are purported to be copies of the committee's briefing papers and which refer to bodies of alien beings recovered near the crash site.

The letter in the archives, dated July 14, 1954, was from Robert Cutler, special assistant to the president, to Gen. Nathan Twining, and referred to an

"MJ-12" briefing. UFO researchers say MJ-12, or Majestic 12, was a committee of high-ranking defense officials and scientists appointed by President Truman to investigate the Roswell UFO incident.

That letter is viewed by some as giving credibility to UFO researchers in England and the United States who recently reported they had acquired top-secret MJ-12 briefing papers. The purported briefing papers contain these passages:

"On July 7, 1947, a secret operation was begun to assure recovery of the wreckage of this object for scientific study. During the course of this operation, aerial reconnaissance discovered that four small human-like beings had apparently

ejected from the craft at some point before it exploded. These had fallen to earth about two miles east of the wreckage site.

"All four were dead and badly decomposed due to action by predators and exposure to the elements during the approximately one week time which had elapsed before their discovery."

Timothy Good, a British UFO researcher, recently told the London Observer that he obtained his document from "a reliable American source who has close connections with the intelligence community."

The so-called briefing paper for President Eisenhower is dated Nov. 18, 1952, and mentions the formation of the MJ-12 Committee.

Those identified as committee members (now all dead) and their positions at the time included CIA Director Adm. Roscoe Hillenkoetter, Defense Secretary James Forrestal, Air Force Gen. Nathan Twining, atom bomb scientist Dr. Vannevar Bush, biophysicist Dr. Detlev Bronk and astronomer Dr. Donald Menzel.

Stanton Friedman, a UFO researcher and nuclear physicist, said someone had mailed the identical information anonymously to one of his associates, Jaimie Shandera. Friedman said the validity of the alleged briefing papers was debated at last weekend's international symposium on UFOs.

But there are doubts even among some veteran UFO researchers about the validity of

those documents.

Larry Fawcett, a police officer in Coventry, Conn., and founder of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, said he believes that a committee did investigate the Roswell UFO incident. But he said the alleged briefing papers have suspicious flaws such as improper markings on "Top Secret" designations.

Fawcett is even suspicious of the Cutler letter found in the National Archives, which he said could have been planted.

But even nationally known UFO skeptic Philip Klass of Washington said he believes the letter is authentic. But he said using that document to try to validate the contents of the so-called Top Secret briefing papers on the MJ-12 Committee is like stacking a real dollar bill

on top of counterfeits.

Friedman said he just had received significant information contained in a June 23 letter from Benedict Zobrist, director of the Harry S. Truman Library.

Zobrist, in the letter, declined any opinions about the validity of the briefing documents. But he did confirm a meeting Truman had with two of the officials alleged to be MJ-12 members — Bush, the atom bomb scientist, and Forrestal, the secretary of defense.

Zobrist said the topic of the meeting is unknown. But the date of the meeting, Sept. 24, 1947, is the same date listed on an attachment to the purported 1952 Eisenhower briefing papers.