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STATUS OF PROJECT BLUE BOOK

I. OVERALL STATUS

See Appendix I in detail figures

The period since the last status report of this project was published (Project Blue Book Status Report #7, 31 May 1952) has produced a volume of reports exceeding the total number of reports received in the period 1947 to 31 Dec 51. For the month of Jul 52, the total was over 440 reports. During the period 1 Jun 52 to 31 Oct 52, the period covered by this status report, 886 reports have been received, evaluated, cross-indexed and filed. This total of 886 represents 149 more reports than had been received during the previous five-year period this project has been in existence. It should be noted that these reports are those coming through official channels to ATIC and do not include the approximately 800 letters received from the public during this period.

A noticeable increase in reports started in Jun 52 and reached a peak on 28 Jul 52 when 43 reports were received (see Appendix I). Much of the increased volume of reports can be accredited to the widespread publicity given by Life, Time, Look and many other magazines and newspapers. One noticeable characteristic of the reports is that in general the quality has improved, a factor which resulted from the distribution of Air Force Letter 200-5, Subject: "Reporting of Unidentified Flying Objects", and to widespread briefings given by Project Blue Book briefing teams.

In Jul 52 the workload of project personnel had risen to the point that the number of personnel was increased to a total of four officers, two airmen, and two secretaries. For a period of 45 days, a weather officer was on TDY to the project.

All reports received were screened and evaluated as soon as possible after they were received. A breakdown as to the evaluations of the reports is given below. The categories used in the evaluation of reports are as follows:

A. Unknown

These are reports that contain relatively enough data to evaluate, but cannot be associated with any known phenomenon or object. There is a possibility that some of these reported objects or phenomena in this category could be identified if more background data on balloon tracks, aircraft movements, etc., were available.

B. Insufficient Data

This category represents reports which do not contain enough data to evaluate. A great many of the cases are due to poor reporting on the

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part of the reporting agency. All cases where there is only a single observer, unless his or her reliability is unquestionable, are put in this category.

C. Aircraft

This category of reports varies from those reports of objects that were definitely proven to be aircraft to those that were possibly aircraft. In evaluating reports as aircraft, a great deal of importance is put on any comments by the reporting officer about local air traffic. Another criterion is the elevation of the reported object. It has been found that if an observer sees an aircraft above a 60° angle from the horizon and is in a relatively quiet location, he can hear the sound of the aircraft. Thus all reports of moving lights at night or "shiny" objects in the daytime, moving at moderately fast speeds (i.e., in view for 2-5 minutes), and observed below 60° could be aircraft and are evaluated as aircraft. Conversely, any object that passes directly over, or within 30° of the zenith of an observer, at moderately fast speeds and if no sound is heard, is not likely to be an aircraft.

D. Balloons

Several criteria are used to determine whether a reported object was or possibly was a balloon. Objects that are reported to hover or move very slowly could be balloons. In this type of report, the times are checked. All weather balloons in the United States are launched at 0300Z, 0900Z, 1500Z and 2100Z. If an object is reported near a balloon launch site within an hour after these scheduled launch times, it is classed as a balloon. If the object is moving and a track is reported, the track is checked against winds aloft for that area. If the reported movement is with the wind at any altitude, the object could be a balloon. Many balloons are tracked by radio and radar and in these cases, the actual track of the balloon can be correlated with the data obtained from the observers.

The possibility of observers seeing balloons that have developed slow leaks and have drifted long distances is always present. In cases where the description of the object is identical to that of a balloon and yet no balloons can be positively determined as having been in that area, the report is evaluated as possibly a balloon on the chance that a balloon has become "lost" and has drifted into the area.

E. Astronomical

Reports in this category are those that are proven to be or are similar in all respects to known astronomical bodies such as meteors, fireballs, planets, or stars. The estimated azimuth and elevation of a reported object and the time of the observation can be checked to determine the known location of astronomical bodies. In some cases, this is done by project personnel and in more difficult cases by an astronomer.

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