the national archives

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UNCLASSIFIED

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MOD Form 329D
(Revised 8/00)
PPQ = 100

Date opened (Date of first enclosure)
8th March 2005

Registered file number
D/DAS/10/2/8/13

Part No.
C

1. Attention is drawn to the notes on the inside flap.
2. Enter notes of related files on page 2 of this jacket

DIVISION/ESTABLISHMENT/UNIT/BRANCH

MOD

[FULL ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER]

SUBJECT Information Management
Defence Information Management
– The Freedom of Information Act 2000
– Requests for Information.

[BLOCK CAPITALS]

RECORD OF KEYWORDS:

Referred to	Date	Min/ Encl	Referred to	Date	Min/ Encl	Referred to	Date	Min/ Encl	Referred to	Date	Min/ Encl

(10/3/05)
(2013)

FOR DRO USE ONLY

1st Review date

2nd Review date

PA ACTION

(MOD Form 262F must be completed at the time of file closure)

RCU001341288 TNT

Produced by MOD
DSDA (PC) Ky. Tel: 0117 9376256

UNCLASSIFIED

Registered File Disposal Form

MOD Form 262F
(Revised 9/01)

FILE TITLE: (Main Heading - Secondary Heading - Tertiary Heading etc):
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - DEFENCE INFORMATION MGT. THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION. 2000.

Reference: (Prefix and Number): D/DAS/10/2/8/13.

Part: C.

PROTECTIVE MARKING (including caveats & descriptors): U.

Date of last enclosure: 10 MARCH 2005.

Date closed: 25 JULY 2007.

PART 1. DISPOSAL SCHEDULE RECOMMENDATION
(To be completed when the file is closed)

	✔
Destroy after _____ years	
Forward to INFO(EXP)-R after _____ years	
No recommendation	

FOR DEFENCE INFO(EXP)-R USE ONLY

RETAIN

Date of 1st review	Date of 2nd review	Forward Destruction Date

Reviewer's Signature: _____

Reviewer's Signature: _____

PART 2. BRANCH REVIEW
(To be fully completed at time of file closure)
(Delete as appropriate)

a. Of no further administrative value and not worthy of permanent preservation. DESTROY IMMEDIATELY (Remember that TOP SECRET and Codeword material cannot be destroyed locally and must be forwarded to INFO(EXP)-R. ✔

b. (i) To be retained until the end of the year _____ for the following reason(s):

	✔		✔	
LEGAL		DEFENCE POLICY + OPERATIONS		
CONTRACTUAL		ORIGINAL COMMITTEE PAPERS		
FINANCE/AUDIT		MAJOR EQUIPMENT PROJECT		[_____]
DIRECTORATE POLICY		OTHER (Specify)		

PPQ = 100

(Continued overleaf)

(ii) Key enclosures which support the recommendation are:

(iii) At the end of the specified retention period the file is to be:

PERMANENT RETENTION

✔

Destroyed ☐

Considered by DR for permanent preservation ☐

c. Of no further administrative value but worthy of consideration by INFO(EXP)-R for permanent preservation. ✔ ☐

PART 3. BRANCH R[illegible]ent)

Signature: Section 40 [redacted]

Name: Section 40 [redacted]

(Block Capitals)

Grade/Rank: GRADE 7. Date: 25/07/07.

Branch Title and Full Address:

MOD,
MAIN BUILDING,
WHITEHALL,
LONDON.

Tel No:

PART 4 DESTRUCTION CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the specified file has been destroyed.

Signature: _____

Name: _____
(Block Capitals)

Grade/Rank: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by (TOP SECRET* and SECRET only)

Signature: _____

Name: _____
(Block Capitals)

Grade/Rank: _____ Date: _____

*(FOR DR USE ONLY)

Produced by MOD, DSDA(PC) KY Tel. 0117 9376256

Astron, J0217876, 11/04

ENCLOSURE TRANSFERRED TO FILE D/DAS/10/2/8/16 PART A

From: Section 40
Directorate of Air Staff – Freedom of Information 1

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
5th Floor, Zone H, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000
(Fax) Section 40

ENCLOSURE 15 NUMBER

Section 40

Alvechurch
Worcestershire
Section 40

Your Reference:

Our Reference:
01-03-2005-135811-007
Date:
16 March 2005

Dear Section 40

I am writing concerning your request for information about an incident of metal debris being discovered on Farmer's land at Llanilar near Aberystwyth on 9 January 1983. Your request has been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

I have made a search through all the UFO related files we have for the year 1983 and have found no documents relating to this alleged incident.

Sorry I could not have been more help.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

01-03-2005-135811-007
Expiry 31 March 05

Section 40
[redacted]
Alvechurch
Worcestershire

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm in the process of writing a book about the UFO-Phenomena, and wonder if you have any knowledge of an incident that took place on or about the 9.1.83. when a large amount of metal debris was discovered on farmers land at Llanigar nr Aberystwyth. Wales; which was received by the RAF who told the Media, they would be examining the fragments to put them together in the hope of providing a clue as to where it came from and what it is"
Is it possible to know the results of the RAF Enquiry - into the incident, or is it classified, under the Official Secrets Act.

Yours faithfully

Section 40
[redacted]
Retired Police Officer

1983
D/DS8/10/209 Pt D
D/DS8/10/209 Pt E
D/DS8/10/209/1 Pt A

Section 40
[redacted]
to send me the files.

ENCLOSURE 14 NUMBER

AUTHORISATION FOR THE PARTIAL RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Applicant: Section 40 [redacted]

Case Number:17-02-2005-092810-001 Expiry:16 March 2005

The Applicant has made the following request for information:

The Ministry of Defence received a report of a UFO sighting in the Greenside area of Newcastle upon Tyne. This was in August 2004. I would like any information you have about this, specifically contact details for the person who reported this so I can get in touch with them.

Case for release / withholding of information

We have already released a list of UFO sightings in 2004 in response to an RFI from The Independent and this is probably where the applicant has heard about this report.

This UFO report was passed to us by Northumbria Police and very few details were provided (The report is attached for your information). Attached is a draft e-mail informing Section 40 [redacted] of the details we hold.

The applicant also requested contact details for the person who made the report, but these have been withheld in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Authorisation

I hereby give authorisation for the release / withholding of the aforementioned information to the Applicant.

Grade/Rank: ..B2..... Name:..... Section 40 [redacted] .....

Authorisation Reference Number: DAS-FOI 20/05.....

Date:.....14/3/05.....

Dear Section 40

I am writing concerning your request for information about a UFO sighting in the Greenside area of Newcastle upon Tyne in August 2004. Your request has been passed to this department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence about UFOs.

I can confirm that the MOD received a letter dated 10 August 2004 from Whickham Police Station informing us that a man from Greenside had contacted Nothumbria Police to report "alien sightings above his address" on the 7 August 2004. Apart from the man's name and address no other details were given. I am sorry that I am unable to provide you with the contact details of the man who made this report because personal data is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998.

If this information does not address your requirements or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of this request, then you should contact the undersigned in the first instance. Should you remain dissatisfied, then you may apply for an internal review by contacting the Director of Information Exploitation, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB.

If you are still unhappy following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Section 40
Ministry of Defence
Directorate of Air Staff - Freedom of Information
5th Floor, Zone H, Section 40
Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2HB

e-mail:das-ufo-office@mod.uk

15th March 2005

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

23 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 17-02-2005-092810-001

Days Left: 16

Received: 16 Feb 05
Expiry Date: [redacted] 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
- Internal Transfer

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 16 February 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 [redacted]
Other:
First Name:
*Surname: Section 40
Organisation:
Applicant Type: Not Specified
Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1: Section 40 [redacted]
Address Line2:
Address Line3:
Town/City: Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode: Section 40 [redacted]
Country: United Kingdom
Email:
Telephone: Section 40 [redacted]
Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

23 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 17-02-2005-092810-001

Days Left: 16

Received: 16 Feb 05
Expiry Date: 16 Mar 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
Internal Transfer

View
Audit Trail
Comments Log
Saved Search Result
Contact Details
Documents

Actions
Assign Within My Group
Change Alert Settings
Edit Request Details
Upload Document
Close Case
Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

On the Ministry of Defence received a report of a UFO sighting in the Greenside area of Newcastle upon Tyne. This was in August 2004. I would like any more information you have about this, specifically contact details for the person who reported this so I can get in touch with them.

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

To be held by help desk until centrally allocated

Clear | ◂Back | Next▸ | Cancel

NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

Gateshead Area Command
Whickham Police Station
Front Street
Whickham
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE16 4HE

Tel: Section 40
Fax:

Our Ref: C3/Section 40SS Log 171 07/08/04

10 August 2004

The Ministry of Defence
Room 673
Metropole Building
Northumberland Avenue
London
WC2N 5BL

Dear Sir/Madam,

Section 40 has contacted Northumbria Police and reported alien sightings above his address at Section 40 This has been reported to Northumbria Police, our log reference 171 07/08/04 refers.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

Section 40
'A' Rota
Whickham Police Station

Taken from
D/DAS/64/2
Part Q Enc 7.

From: Section 40 Directorate of Air Staff (Secretariat)1, 5-H Section 40
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,
Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB.

Telephone (Direct dial) Section 40
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000
(Fax) Section 40

ENCLOSURE NUMBER 13

Section 40
Milton Keynes
Bucks
Section 40

Our Reference

D/DAS/01-03-2005-113505-008

Date 14 March 2005

Dear Section 40

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST: USAF C-130 HERCULES 63-7789 23 MAY 1969

A search of the MoD's records has failed to reveal any surviving documentation into the crash of a USAF C-130 aircraft off the coast of Brighton on 23 May 1969.

As the aircraft was from the USAF and the crash was some time ago, may I suggest that you contact the United States National Archive to see if they have any record, although I am unable to advise what their policy is on requests for information from overseas. Their address is :

United States National Archive
8601 Adelphi Rd
College Park
Maryland
MD20740-6001
U.S.A.

If this information does not address your requirements or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of this request, then you should contact the undersigned in the first instance. Should you remain dissatisfied, then you may apply for an internal review by contacting the Director of Information Exploitation, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB.

If you are still unhappy following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

I am sorry that I have been unable to provide the information you requested.

Section 40

Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40 [redacted]
Sent: 11 March 2005 16:45
To: Section 40 [redacted]
Subject: RE: REQUEST FOR SEARCH

Section 40 [redacted]

Just wanted to update you. Unfortunately this has come back as a nil return. Have you contacted RAF Innsworth regarding this matter?

Kind regards

Section 40 [redacted]

CUSTOMER SERVICES ADVISOR
TNT ARCHIVE SERVICES

Section 40 [redacted]

The information contained in this e-mail message and any attachment is for intended recipients only. It may contain confidential, privileged or copyright material.
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Registered Office: PO Box 99, Railway Street, Ramsbottom, Lancashire, BL0 9BF.

Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40 [redacted]
Sent: 09 March 2005 15:43
To: AHB(RAF)&PCB(AIR)-Hd of AHB(RAF)
Subject: FOI REQUEST - AIR CRASH 1969

I have just received a FOI request for the accident report into a USAF C-130 Hercules (63-7789) off the coast of Brighton on 23 May 1969.

The DAS Board of Inquiry Advisors at Bentley Priory have nothing dating back that far. Is there any chance that you might have?

Section 40
DAS Sec 1
Section 40 [redacted]

www.national_archives.gov.uk

Board Proof

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

09 March 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 01-03-2005-113505-008

Days Left: 15

Received: 01 Mar 05
Expiry Date: [redacted] 05
Status: Open

All sources

Workflow Options
- AIT Main

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 01 March 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 [redacted]
Other:
First Name:
*Surname: Section 40
Organisation:
Applicant Type: Not Specified
Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1: Section 40 [redacted]
Address Line2:
Address Line3: Milton Keynes
Town/City: Bucks
Postcode: Section 40 [redacted]
Country: United Kingdom
Email:
Telephone:
Fax:

Clear | ‹Back | Next› | Cancel

Section 40 [redacted]

GxAITESTPTCD/

09 March 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 01-03-2005-113505-008

Days Left: 15

Received: 01 Mar 05
Expiry Date: 31 Mar 05
Status: Open

All sources

Workflow Options
- AIT Main

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

The accident report into the crash of USAF C-130 Hercules 63-7789 off the coast of Brighton on 23rd May 1969.
full email: Section 40 [redacted]

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

email held with info access helpdesk

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

ENCLOSURE TRANSFERRED TO FILE D/DAS/10/2/8/16 PART A

ENCLOSURE TRANSFERRED TO FILE D/DAS/10/2/8/16 PART A

ENCLOSURE TRANSFERRED TO FILE D/DAS/10/2/8/16 PART A

From: Section 40
Directorate of Air Staff - Freedom of Information
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
5th Floor, Zone H, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000
(Fax) Section 40
e-mail das-ufo-office@mod.uk

ENCLOSURE NUMBER 10

Section 40
Stoneleigh
Surrey
Section 40

Your Reference
Our Reference
08-02-2005-134919-023
Date
11th March 2005

Dear Section 40

I am writing in response to your further request for information about UFOs. I note from your message to our Info-Access Office that you were unable to locate an e-mail address on my previous letter. As in my previous letter, my e-mail address is at the head of this letter under my postal address.

I will answer your requests in the same order as your message.

1. The Ministry of Defence no longer holds any papers from the Flying Saucer Working Party which was set up in 1950. All of the surviving documents are now at The National Archives (TNA). Please see paragraph 4 of my previous letter for their address and website details. The final report of the Flying Saucer Working Party is also available on the MOD Freedom of Information Publication Scheme (www.foi.mod.uk) as advised in my previous letter, but for ease of reference I enclose a copy for your information.

2. The oldest surviving records of UFO sighting reports made to the Ministry of Defence are held at The National Archives. A search of The National Archives online catalogue has revealed records entitled "Unidentified Flying Objects" covering the period 1 January 1951 – 31 December 1951 (TNA reference DEFE44/119) and another entitled " Unidentified Flying Object Sightings – Reports by members of the public" covering the period 1961-1963 (TNA reference AIR 2/16918). The most recent UFO sighting report was received on 2 March 2005 for a sighting on 20 February 2005 and I attach a copy. Personal data about the person who made this report has been removed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. As explained in my previous letter, the MOD does not investigate these reports or attempt to identify the precise nature of each report we receive. In this case, we consider that this report provides no evidence of a threat to UK airspace.

3. Officials produce briefs for Ministers every time they are asked a question in The House of Lords or The House of Commons and there have been a number about UFOs over the years. Government departments do not retain records indefinitely and those that are considered to no longer be of historic or administrative value, are routinely destroyed. The MOD holds one file regarding parliamentary correspondence in 1977-1978 and then there are no surviving records until 1994. Records since 1994 have been retained, but to produce copies of all these records would exceed the £600 limit set for compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and as provided by Section 12 of the Act, the Ministry of Defence is not obliged to comply with your request. If however, you could be more specific about the information you are seeking, within in

the period for which we hold records, we may be able to assist you. You may also like to view the UK Parliament Website at www.parliament.uk which contains information about parliamentary business. In addition, you requested papers on The House of Lords Debate held in 1979. Please find enclosed a copy of the Debate as it appeared in Hansard, together with copies of the surviving background papers. Personal data has been removed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Original security and confidence marks have also been removed as they are now irrelevant.

4. I have located only one occasion when a Minister has been briefed on the MOD's interest in UFOs since 1997. There are no indications within our files that this action was taken specifically because the Minister was new to Defence, although Peter Kilfoyle MP replaced The Rt Hon John Spellar MP in 1999 and it is possible that this was the reason for such action. I enclose a copy of this brief for your information. Personal data has been removed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

5. The MOD has not corresponded with Mr Coates about his book.

6. Please find attached a copy of the known surviving papers held by the MOD regarding the Grenada delegation to the United Nations proposal to establish a working group to evaluate UFO reports in 1978. Again personal data and security / confidence markings have been removed.

7. We know of no surviving information concerning the appointment of Mr Carruthers or Air Commodore Davis to S4(Air). Letters to individuals about their postings are personal and not held on Departmental UFO files. This branch is the successor to S4(Air) and branch posts have evolved since S4(Air) became DS8 around 1978. We hold no details of the original job descriptions of these posts.

8. We are not aware of any information about UFOs generated by the Scientific and Technical Intelligence Staff in 1967 which has been retained in the MOD. Any surviving information from this period will now be held at The National Archives.

9. The MOD does not hold any files specifically about UFO sightings at RAF Lakenheath. The only file the MOD holds about a sighting at RAF Bentwaters refers to the well known Rendlesham Forest incident in 1980. All of this information has been released into the MOD Freedom of Information Publication Scheme (www.foi.mod.uk). A search under 'Rendlesham Forest' will take you straight to them.

10. Records have not been compiled of UFO related files destroyed between 1956 and 1967. Files would have been destroyed as part of the MOD's normal destruction policy, generally 5 years after the last action was taken. We believe the 1967 decision to recommend the preservation of UFO reports for The National Archives was taken in S4(Air) because of the public interest in the subject at the time. We know of no formal agreement with The National Archives either in 1967 or since which guarantees the preservation of any particular class of information, which is at the discretion of The National Archives. Any surviving records generated in 1967 are now at open for viewing at The National Archives.

11. The MOD no longer holds any UFO records for 1972. Surviving records of this period are held at The National Archives and a search of their catalogue has revealed a file entitled "UFOs: Man Alive Programme BBC2 1971-72". The National Archives reference is AIR2/19119.

I hope this is useful. If this information does not address your requirements or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of this request, then you should contact this department in the first instance. Should you remain dissatisfied, then you may apply for an internal review by

contacting the Director of Information Exploitation, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB.

If you are still unhappy following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40 [redacted]

AUTHORISATION FOR THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Applicant: Section 40 [redacted]

Case Number: 08-02-2005-134919-023 Expiry:4 March 2005

The Applicant has made the following request for information:

This is a follow up request to Section 40 previous request which was quiet vague about the information he was seeking. Section 40 now asks for the following information.

1. All of the papers produced by the Flying Saucer Working Party on UFOs, set up in August 1950, including any civil servant or ministerial memos on the establishment of the committee.

2. The first ever and most recent UFO sighting report lodged in the MOD files, with the conclusions of the assessment.

3. Any briefing produced for Ministers answering written or oral questions on UFO / Flying Saucers in The House of Lords, including the debate held in 1979, and in replies to Earl of Clancarty.

4. Any briefing for incoming Defence Ministers in the present Government since 1997 on answering PQs on UFOs/ Flying Saucers.

5. Any correspondence between the MOD and Tim Coates, the author of 'UFOs in the House of Lords' published by TSO in April 2000, in connection with his book.

6. All correspondence and internal memos associated with the UK's UN mission decision not to support the Grenada delegation to the UN proposal to establish a working group on UFOs to the 33rd Session of the UN General Assembly in September 1978.

7. The appointment letters of James Carruthers and Air Commodore Anthony Davis DSO DFM respectively to S4(Air), the Air Staff Secretariat, with the job description to which each worked.

8. The letter by Archibald Potts, as the Director of Scientific and Technical Intelligence and head of the MOD's Defence Intelligence Staff, in 1967 to the British Embassy in Washington DC in respect of a meeting held in London with an American researcher, Robert Low, on UFOs.

9. Any file on UFO sightings at RAF Lakenheath-Bentwaters.

10. A list of the titles and dates of any UFO related files destroyed by the MOD, or its predecessor ministries, since 1956 and the note by the head of S4(Air) dated December 1967 connected with such file destruction.

11. Any briefing produced for – before or after – the BBC TV programme 'Man Alive' on UFOs as broadcast in February 1972.

Case for release of information

1. All the surviving papers on the Flying Saucer Working Party are now in The National Archives (TNA). The final report of the Working Party is also in the Publication Scheme (PS). I have printed a copy for Section 40 for ease of reference.

2. The oldest surviving UFO sighting report is in TNA. There is no reason not to release a copy of the most recent report. A copy is attached for Section 40 Personal data has been removed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA98).

3. To produce copies of any briefing produced for Ministers answering PQs would exceed the £600 limit. The applicant has been advised of what records we hold and asked to clarify what information he is seeking. Copies of the surviving papers on the House of Lords debate on UFOs in 1979 have already been released to Section 40 as part of a Code of Practice request, so there is no reason not to release these documents to Section 40 Copies are attached. Personal data has been removed in accordance with DPA98. As the original security and privacy markings are not now relevant they have also been removed.

4. I have only been able to locate one document that might be relevant to this request and a copy is attached for Section 40 There is no indication on our file as to why USofS was briefed at this time, but Peter Kilfoyle MP replaced John Spellar in 1999 and that may have been the reason. All of the information contained within this document (including the paragraph about Section 40 is already in the public domain, so the only redaction required is personal data at the end of the brief.

5. Tim Coates' website contains details of the book mentioned by Section 40 (see attached). Mr Coates has not corresponded with us or AHB(PCB)Air about his book. Mr Coates is not a civil servant or member of the Armed Forces (as far as we are aware) so he would not need to clear his book with the MOD. The book appears to be a transcript of the House of Lords debate which appeared in Hansard.

6. Copies of these papers have already been released to Section 40 in response to a Code of Practice request, so there is no reason not to release them to Section 40 Copies are attached. Personal data has been removed in accordance with DPA98. Original security and privacy markings have also been removed.

7. S4(Air) became DS8 around 1978. It is possible that Section 40 has seen Mr Carruthers and Air Commodore Davis names in files open at TNA. We hold no records about their appointments or job descriptions.

8. Any records generated by the Scientific and Technical Intelligence Staff in 1967 about UFOs will now be at TNA.

9. We do not hold any files specifically about UFO sightings at RAF Lakenheath. The only one about sightings at RAF Bentwaters, is the Rendlesham Forest file and this is already in the PS.

10. There are no records or UFO related files destroyed between 1956 and 1967. If there is any surviving records about the decision in 1967 to retain or destroy records this will now be at TNA.

11. Surviving records for 1972 are at TNA. A search of TNA catalogue has shown a relevant file. The applicant has been advised.

I attach a draft letter and the all the relevant documents for your authorisation.

Authorisation

I hereby give authorisation for the release of the aforementioned information to the Applicant.

Grade/Rank: ..... Name:... Section 40 .....

Authorisation Reference Number: DAS-FOI 17/05.....

Date:.....

08-02-2005-134919-023
Expiry: 4 March 2005

Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40 [redacted] on behalf of Info-Access-Office
Sent: 04 February 2005 12:06
To: Section 40 [redacted]
Subject: FW: FOI INFORMATION REQUEST 03-02-2005-144105-023

Categories: Section 40 [redacted] to discuss before logging, Other

Internet-authorised:
FOI INFOR... Section 40 [redacted]

You will remember that I called you yesterday regarding Section 40 [redacted] He wanted to know where his response was. My email reply is attached. Here os his response to me. We are leaving it to you to decide whether this is a new request, a point of clarification or a complaint. Is this something you could discuss with him? It has not been logged on the Toolkit.

Happy to discuss this further.

Regards

Section 40 [redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Section 40 [redacted] [mailto Section 40 [redacted]
Sent: 04 February 2005 11:10
To: Info-Access-Office
Subject: FOI INFORMATION REQUEST 03-02-2005-144105-023

Dear Section 40 [redacted]

I am responding to your e-mail dated 3 February, in connection with my FOI request on UFOs.
I did indeed receive my "response" yesterday in the form of a page and a half long letter signed by a Section 40 [redacted]
I would like my request to be answered with copies of primary documents, not summaries or extracts prepared by officials.
This e-mail constitutes my response to the questions she raised in her letter. As she gives no e-mail address, could you forward this to her for processing?

I would like posted to me in paper form as part of my refined information request:

1. All of the papers produced by the Working Pary on UFOs, set up in August 1950, including any civil servant or ministerial memos on the establishment of the committee.
2. The first ever, and most recent UFO sighting report lodged in MOD files, withthe conclusions of the assessment.
3 Any briefing produced for ministers answering written or oral questions on UFOs/Flying Saucers in The House of Lords, including a debate held in 1979, and in replies to the Earl of Clancarty.
4.Any briefing for incoming Defence ministers in the present Government since 1997 on answering PQs on UFOs/Flying saucers.
5. Any correspondence between the MOD and Tim Coates, the author of 'UFOs in the House of Lords' published by TSO in April 2000, in connection with his book.
6.All correspondence and internal memos associated with the UK 's UN mission decision not to support the Grenada delegation to the UN proposal to establish a working group on UFOs to the 33rd Session of the UN General Assembly in September 1978.
7 ~~6~~. The appointment letter of James Carruthers and Air Commodore Anthony Davis, DSO DFM respectively to S4 (Air), the Air Staff Secretariat, with the job description to which each worked. (became DS8 1978/79
8 ~~7~~. The letter by Archibald Potts, as the Director of Scientific and Technical Intelligence and head of MOD's Defence Intelligence Staff, in 1967 to the British Embassy in Washington DC .in respect of a meeting held in London

with an American researcher, Robert Low, on UFOs.
9 8. Any File on UFO sightings at RAF Lakenheath-Bentwaters.
10 9. [redacted] list of the titles and dates of any UFO-related files destroyed by the MOD, or its predecessor ministeries, since 1956. And the note by the head of S4 (Air) dated December 1967 connected with such file destruction.
11 ~~10.~~ Any briefing produced for - before or after - the BBC TV programme 'Man Alive' on UFOs as broadcast in February1972. —TNA AIR 2/19119 – UFOS: Man Alive Programme BBC2 1971-72

I hope you can respond ASAP, certainly in less than 21 days.

sincerely

Section 40 [redacted]

Stoneleigh
Surrey
Section 40 [redacted]

Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40 [redacted] on behalf of Info-Access-Office
Sent: 03 February 2005 15:19
To: Section 40 [redacted]
Subject: Internet-authorised: FOI INFORMATION REQUEST 03-02-2005-144105-023

Categories: Enquiry about expired case

Section 40 [redacted]

Further to your email below, I have checked the status of your request and have been informed by the Directorate of Air Staff that a response has indeed been dispatched to you within the 20 working days. It has been sent out as a letter, as you requested that you receive your information in hard copy format. Therefore the letter should be with you in the next day or so. If however, you prefer that we email the response, please let us know and we will be happy to do so.

Kind Regards

Section 40 [redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: feedback@www.mod.uk [mailto:feedback@www.mod.uk]
Sent: 03 February 2005 11:40
To: Info-Access-Office
Subject: FOI INFORMATION REQUEST 03-02-2005-144105-023

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, February 3, 2005 at 11:39:55

FirstName: Section 40 [redacted]

LastName: [redacted]

occupation: enter your occupation

Company: your company/organisation

Address1: Section 40 [redacted]

City: Stoneleigh

State: Surrey

Zip: Section 40 [redacted]

Country: United Kingdom

e-mail: Section 40 [redacted]

telephone: enter your telephone number

preferred format: hardcopy

infosubject: I made an application to you for MOD files on UFOs. I gather from press reports that several newspapers have had their UFOs application replied to, yet tehy must haveapplied on the same date as me. I have heard nothing yet, but the 20 day limit has expired. Can you let me know why I have not yet had my reply? And can you do so ASAP.
with thanks
Section 40 [redacted]

Financial Times, February 3, 2005
MoD's alien files are out of this world

By JEAN EAGLESHAM and CATHY NEWMAN

Th[redacted]-Files have been opened: in a victory for ufo-logists everywhere, the man from the ministry not only admits he has an open mind about the existence of extra-terrestrial lifeforms but also keeps a careful tally of UFO sightings.

Following a request under the Freedom of Information Act by the Financial Times, the Ministry of Defence has revealed it remains "totally open-minded" about the possibility that life exists beyond Earth.

The MoD has released a detailed log of reported unidentified flying object sightings. "Strange lights were seen in the sky" in Whitstable, Kent, just over two weeks ago - the same night a member of the public reported a "flying saucer" over Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and a "sighting" at Chatteris, Cambridgeshire.

More exotic alien encoun-ters were recorded last year. "A square red object, pinkish at the front" was spotted in Strathclyde, Ayr, on January 2; a "chewy mint shaped" object was seen in the night sky above Nelson, Lancashire, in May; and a "large black object" was identified in Rhyl, Clwyd, in February.

A diligent ufologist from Surrey gave a detailed eye-witness account in May, noting that "grooves and windows could be seen and no room for humans to fit within it". The same month "a bright, pulsing, spider- looking object" appeared at King's Lynn, Norfolk, and the MoD was even contacted by someone from Sri Lanka in March puzzled by an orange "ring doughnut".

A letter from the MoD's directorate of air staff explains that it examines all UFO sightings it receives "solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance". It adds: "Only a handful of reports in recent years have warranted further investigation and none revealed any evidence of a threat."

But, in an aside that will hearten conspiracy theorists, the letter stresses that the MoD "remains totally open-minded" as to "the question of the existence or otherwise of extra-terrestrial lifeforms".

This approach may explain why the MoD has not always confined its work on extraterrestrials to recording sightings. In 1950, a working party set up by the MoD "to investigate the flying saucer phenomenon" reported to the joint technical intelligence committee.

The MoD letter does not detail verbatim the spy chiefs' reaction to this report on alien life forms. But they presumably decided the spooks would be better employed in the cold war - the letter states that the intelligence committee decided the working party should be dissolved.

The government also refused to back a 1978 attempt by the Grenadian delegation to the United Nations to establish an international working group to evaluate UFO reports, the letter states. "The British delegation did not think that such an agency was appropriate to the function of the UN." The MoD admitted the documents are a fraction of the thousands of records of alleged alien visits.

The truth is out there: declassified reports of UFO sightings reveal 88 sightings last year By Robert Verkaik, Legal Affairs Correspondent
03 February 2005

Details of Britain's most recent UFO sightings are revealed in previously secret documents disclosed to The Independent .

The files, released under the Freedom of Information Act, show that, last year, the Ministry of Defence's UFO unit received 88 reports from military staff and members of the public worried about unexplained objects in our skies.

The classified files help to complete a picture of the scale of UFO sightings first revealed by this paper last month. These updated "X-files" show the most recent observations were made on 15 January this year following two separate reports from Chatteris, Cambridgeshire, and Whitstable, Kent. The reports refer to "strange lights seen in the sky".

Other sightings give more detail. A report from Devizes in Wiltshire on 24 September last year records an object that: "Looked liked a big ball of fire coming down from

the sky with a tail and sparks coming off the end of it." Another, from Somerset the week before, states: "The object looked like a great bright light and was really in[redacted]se, like a ball of fire coming down from the sky, rapidly moving towards the ground."

Although such reports might be discounted as meteor showers or other astronomical phenomena, other sightings are not so easy to dismiss. A report from Surrey on 20 May last year describes a UFO as having "grooves and windows" but no room for humans. Even the MoD inspector notes that the "witness had seen the object so clearly".

Many of the other sightings refer to UFO's changing colour, speed and shape. The most common colours are yellow, orange or black.

A report from Goole, East Yorkshire, recorded in April last year, noted: "The object looked like a boomerang and was stationary over a power station. An aircraft was circling the object."

In the same month, a UFO observer from Seaforth, Merseyside, noted: "I saw a UFO with a cluster of four bright lights in a ring shape on it. Three beams of white light shone upwards and disappeared."

These latest files to be declassified by the MoD are not as complete as reports from mid-1976 and 1977 released last month. Hundreds of documents previously kept secret by the Ministry of Defence's special UFO department, known as S4F, detail many reports of a possible visit by extraterrestrial life-forms. One is made by an RAF pilot and two NCOs at RAF Boulmer, Northumberland.

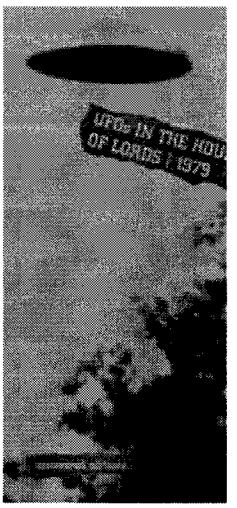
In July 1977 Flt-Lt A M Wood reported "bright objects hanging over the sea''. The MoD document adds that the RAF officer said the closest object was "luminous, round and four to five times larger than a Whirlwind helicopter". The UFOs were reported to be three miles out to sea at a height of about 5,000ft.

The officer, whose report is supported by Cpl Torrington and Sgt Graham, said: "The objects separated. Then one went west of the other, as it manoeuvred it changed shape to become body-shaped with projections like arms and legs." The report describes Flt-Lt Wood as "reliable and sober".

That account was deemed so sensitive to the national interest that the MoD had delayed its release for an extra three years. But under the Freedom of Information Act, which came into force on 1 January, the file has been declassified

submit: Send Form

UFOs in the House of Lords, 1979



Buy o

Pub Date 2000
Price 6.99 UK, $10.95 US
ISBN 0-11-702413-9
Format Paperback, 185 x 112 mm, 7¼ x 4½ inches

The winter of 1978/79 in Britain was a time of strikes and unrest. It became known as the "winter of discontent". Yet it seems that the House of Lords had other more important things to discuss.

The book is the transcript of a debate in the House of Lords which took place in February 1979. Their Lordships debated the need for an international initiative in response to the problem of Unidentified Flying Objects. There were several notable speeches from noble lords and distinguished prelates.

"Is it not time that Her Majesty's Government informed our people of what they know about UFOs? The UFOs have been coming in increasing numbers for 30 years since the war, and I think it is time our people were told the truth. We have not been invaded from outer space. Most incidents have not been hostile. Indeed it is us, the earthlings, who have fired on them. ... Whatever the truth is, I am sure that an informed public is a prepared one. Another thing: it is on record that both sighting and landing reports are increasing all the time. Just suppose the 'ufonauts' decided to make mass landings tomorrow in this country – there could well be panic here, because our people have not been prepared."

back

No. 5.
Background.
Not sent to [redacted] Section 40

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

DIRECTORATE OF

SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE

AND

JOINT TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

D.S.I./J.T.I.C. REPORT No. 7

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UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Report by the "Flying Saucer" Working Party

Introduction: Historical

1. Unidentified flying objects were first reported after the war from Sweden in the summer of 1946, and for some months there was a considerable number of alleged sightings, mostly in Sweden, but a few also in Norway, Finland and Germany. The descriptions given were usually of some sort of wingless missile travelling at very high speed, cigar-shaped or circular, sometimes emitting bright lights, and occasionally sound. The reports attracted considerable attention in the press, where the objects became known as "ghost rockets" or "spook bombs." The reports died away after the summer of 1946, and very few have appeared since the end of that year.

2. The first report of a "flying saucer" came from the United States in June 1947; the name arose because the observer (Mr. K. Arnold, of Boise, Idaho) described what he had seen as a "saucer-like disc." The report received much publicity, and was quickly followed by a great many more. Since then reports of sightings have been made at intervals in large numbers, mostly from the United States, but some from other parts of the world, including Great Britain, where there was a notable outbreak during the summer and autumn of 1950. The objects reported have become popularly known by the generic title "flying saucers," but the descriptions given have included not only flying disc-like objects of the original "saucer" type, but also wingless torpedo or cigar-shaped bodies, spherical or balloon-shaped objects, and luminous phenomena of various types.

3. The reported observations have been almost exclusively visual; reports of any associated sound have been rare. In no case has any tangible, material, or objective evidence, been submitted. It is therefore extremely difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at anything like scientific proof of the nature of the phenomena.

Review of previous evidence

4. A systematic and extensive investigation of all the reported incidents in the United States was carried out between 1948 and 1950 by the U.S.A.F., in conjunction with the Rand Corporation, Dr. Hynek, a well-known astronomer from Ohio State University, and other specialist consultants.

we have been enabled to study two reports (Project "Sign" and Project "Grudge") covering the investigation of incidents up to the beginning of 1949.

Deletion [RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)]

5. On the Scandinavian sightings in 1946, Project "Grudge" reports as follows:—

> "The Swedish Defence Staff conducted a comprehensive study of the early incidents. Several thousand reports were thoroughly investigated and plotted, with resultant conclusions that all evidence obtained of sightings was explicable in terms of astronomical phenomena."

6. Dealing with reports from the United States, Project "Grudge" quotes the opinion of the Rand Corporation after an examination of 172 incidents: "to date, we have found nothing which would seriously controvert simple rational explanations of the various phenomena in terms of balloons, conventional aircraft, planets, meteors, bits of paper, optical illusions, practical jokers, psychopathological reports, and the like."

Dr. Hynek investigated 228 incidents and concluded that approximately 33 per cent. were astronomical with varying degrees of probability; 37 per cent. were not astronomical but suggestive of other explanations, such as birds, rockets, balloons, ordinary aircraft, &c.; the remaining 30 per cent. either lacked sufficient evidence or the evidence offered suggested no explanation, though some of these might conceivably be astronomical.

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DISCREET

Summing up their own conclusions and those of their consultants, the authors of the "Grudge" report finally concluded that, of the 228 incidents considered, thirty must be disregarded for lack of workable evidence, while 164 can be satisfactorily explained. For the balance of thirty-four, containing some evidence, there is no apparent ready explanation, if the evidence is accepted as accurate and reliable. When psychological and physiological factors are taken into consideration, the opinion is expressed that all these incidents can also be rationally explained.

7. All the more spectacular incidents, of which much has been made recently in the British press and publications, have been fully explained. Two examples may be quoted.

The incident at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in January 1948, which caused the death of Lieutenant Mantell, U.S.A.F., is fully analysed, and all the evidence collated in the "Grudge" report. The conclusion is reached that without any doubt whatever Lieutenant Mantell met his death while pursuing the planet Venus, which was of unusual brightness on the night in question.

We have been informed, in conversation with a member of the United States investigating team, that the even more sensational report of the discovery of a crashed "flying saucer," full of the remains of very small beings, was ultimately admitted by its author to have been a complete fabrication.

8. The "Grudge" report includes a "frequency distribution" curve of the reports of incidents received between May 1947 and December 1948. This shows a marked tendency towards peaks in the few weeks immediately following an incident which received wide publicity, and is of interest in indicating the extent to which sightings may be psychological in origin.

9. The final conclusion reached by the Americans is that all reports of unidentified flying objects may be categorical as either—

(1) misinterpretation of various conventional objects (*e.g.*, aircraft, balloons, meteors or meteorites, stars, fireballs);
(2) a form of mass hysteria; or
(3) deliberate hoaxes.

Investigation of incidents in the United Kingdom

10. During the summer and autumn of 1950 the British press gave considerable publicity to reports of alleged sightings of luminous bodies travelling at high speed, usually after dark, but occasionally in daylight. The Air Ministry also received a number of letters from members of the public with similar reports. One of these, from a locomotive fireman at Derby, who was clearly a careful and accurate observer, gave an excellent description of what was undoubtedly a meteorite. We have not attempted any systematic investigation of all the evidence presented, but can find no reason for supposing that any of the phenomena reported cannot be similarly explained; in certain cases, when observations were reported at approximately the same time from widely separated localities, this was undoubtedly the explanation.

11. Three incidents were reported officially by experienced officers from R.A.F. Stations. These have been investigated in as much detail as is possible with reports of visual observations.

12. On 1st June, 1950, the pilot of a Meteor reported on landing at Tangmere that at 1430, while flying at 20,000 feet on an easterly course over the Portsmouth area, he had sighted an object travelling at very high speed on a reciprocal course, 1,000–2,000 feet above him and roughly 1,200 yards to starboard. He described the object as circular, and of bright metallic appearance. He could not give any real estimate of its speed, but thought it might be about 800 knots. He had observed it for about 15 seconds, during which period he had looked away to port and back, having no difficulty in picking up the object again.

Tangmere made enquiries of the radar station at Wartling, and were informed that, at about the same time as the pilot's report, the Duty Controller and three radar operators had observed an unusual response on the P.P.I., which appeared to be due to a target moving at 1,300–1,650 knots, first approaching and then receding from the station. The Controller stated that the response "looked to be very thick, leaving more afterglow than a usual response behind." The operator, observing on a separate display, said that it was "slim, short and weaker than

aircraft," and that a series of " shadows " appeared in the space between successive points.

As the receding course of the radar target could have tallied with the course of the object reported by the Meteor pilot, all the people concerned were interviewed by a member of Research Branch, Fighter Command, from whose report the above data have been taken. It was established that there was in fact a discrepancy of ten minutes between the times of the two reports, which were estimated as individually accurate to ± 1 minute. It must therefore be concluded that there was no connection between the unusual P.P.I. response and the pilot's visual observation.

We believe that the radar response can be very simply explained as due to interference from another transmitter, a phenomenon which has been frequently observed, and which is described in detail in Appendix A. It is impossible to be entirely definite about the pilot's report. Assuming that he was not merely the victim of an optical illusion, the most probable explanation, which is borne out by his description of the object as " circular," implying a spherical body, is that he saw a meteorological balloon and greatly over-estimated its speed. We can find no reason whatever for adopting any less simple hypothesis.

13. The remaining two incidents were reported from the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, and the officers concerned were interviewed by members of this Working Party.

F/Lt. Hubbard, an experienced pilot, said that at 1127 on 14th August, 1950, he and two other officers on the airfield heard a subdued humming noise, like a model Diesel motor, which caused them to search the sky overhead. The weather was fine and visibility good. The other two officers saw nothing, but F/Lt. Hubbard, who alone was wearing sun-glasses, states that he saw, almost directly overhead at first sighting, an object which he describes as a flat disc, light pearl grey in colour, about 50 feet in diameter at an estimated height of 5,000 feet. He stated that he kept it under observation for 30 seconds, during which period it travelled, at a speed estimated at 800–1,000 m.p.h., on a heading of 100°, executing a series of S-turns, oscillating so that light reflection came from different segments as it moved.

We have no reason to doubt that F/Lt. Hubbard honestly described his own impression of what he saw, but we find it impossible to believe that a most unconventional aircraft, of exceptional speed, could have travelled at no great altitude, in the middle of a fine summer morning, over a populous and air-minded district like Farnborough, without attracting the attention of more than one observer. We conclude, either that F/Lt. Hubbard was the victim of an optical illusion, or that he observed some quite normal type of aircraft and deceived himself about its shape and speed.

14. F/Lt. Hubbard was also concerned in the other incident, when, at 1609 on 5th September, 1950, he was standing on the watch-tower with five other officers, looking south in anticipation of the display by the Hawker 1081. The sky was about 3/8 obscured, with a strato-cumulous cloud base at 4,000 feet. At about the same moment they all saw, at an estimated range of 10–15 miles, an object which they described as being a flat disc, light pearl grey in colour, and " about the size of a shirt button." They all observed it to follow a rectangular flight path, consisting in succession of a " falling leaf," horizontal flight " very fast," an upward " falling leaf," another horizontal stretch, and so on; finally it dived to the horizon at great speed. The pattern was estimated to be executed somewhere over the Guildford–Farnham area.

F/Lt. Hubbard was satisfied that the objects he saw on the two occasions were identical; the other observers agreed that the second object fitted the description they had been given of the first.

We have no doubt that all these officers did in fact see a flying object of some sort. We cannot, however regard the evidence of identification of this object, which was only seen at very long range, with the earlier one as of any value whatever. Further, we again find it impossible to believe that an unconventional aircraft, manœuvring for some time over a populous area, could have failed to attract the attention of other observers. We conclude that the officers in fact saw some quite normal aircraft, manœuvring at extreme visual range, and were led by the previous report to believe it to be something abnormal—an interesting example of one report inducing another. We are reinforced in this belief by an experience of one of our number (Wing Commander Formby, R.A.F.) which is recounted in Appendix B and illustrates the ease with which mistaken identifications may be made, even by experienced observers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

15. When the only material available is a mass of purely subjective evidence, it is impossible to give anything like scientific proof that the phenomena observed are, or are not, caused by something entirely novel, such as an aircraft of extra-terrestrial origin, developed by beings unknown to us on lines more advanced than anything we have thought of. We are, however, satisfied that the bulk of the observations reported do not need such an explanation, and can be accounted for much more simply. There is a very old scientific principle, usually attributed to William of Occam, which states that the most probable hypothesis is the simplest necessary to explain the observations.

We believe that this principle should be applied to the present case, and accordingly conclude that all the observations reported were due to one or other of the following causes: —

(1) Astronomical or meteorological phenomena of known types.
(2) Mistaken identification of conventional aircraft, balloons, birds, or other normal or natural objects.
(3) Optical illusions and psychological delusions.
(4) Deliberate hoaxes.

We consider that no progress will be made by attempting further investigation of unco-ordinated and subjective evidence, and that positive results could only be obtained by organising throughout the country, or the world, continuous observation of the skies by a co-ordinated network of visual observers, equipped with photographic apparatus, and supplemented by a network of radar stations and sound locators. We should regard this, on the evidence so far available, as a singularly profitless enterprise. We accordingly recommend very strongly that no further investigation of reported mysterious aerial phenomena be undertaken, unless and until some material evidence becomes available.

Metropole Buildings, W.C. 2.

APPENDIX A

A Note on an unusual Radar response by Mr. G. E. G. Graham, D.S.I. 1

With reference to the unusual response observed at Wartling on 1st June, 1950, it is suggested that the signal observed was received directly from another radar transmitter, possibly ship-borne, in the Portsmouth–Isle of Wight area. This will be termed the "Western" transmitter.

Assuming the modulation pulses of the "Western" transmitter to be isochronous with those of the Wartling set, and that the pulse of the former was occurring anything up to, say, 1·2 milliseconds minus the transmission time later than that of the latter, the received signal would be visible on the P.P.I. display. Moreover, unless the "Western" transmitter were very far away it is probable that the received signal would be of large amplitude and would therefore, as stated in the report, "appear very thick leaving more afterglow than a usual response behind."

It is reasonable to suppose that the repetition rates mentioned above would not remain identical for more than a few seconds. A relatively small drift in the repetition rates will produce a considerable change in the time interval between the transmitter pulse and the firing instant of the receiver time base. This would result in a large displacement of the received signal along the scan, which would be interpreted as a high speed movement of the "target" in the radial direction. It will be appreciated that if at the instant of first sighting the repetition rate of the "Western" transmitter were above but slowly approaching that of the Wartling set, the "target" would appear to close range rapidly; as the repetition rates became equal the "target" would appear stationary, and as the "Western" repetition rate fell below that of the Wartling set, the "target" would appear to open range rapidly. It may further be noted that one would expect reflections from objects (hills, &c.) relatively close to the "Western" transmitter to be of sufficient amplitude to be displayed also on the P.P.I., which would give the impression of "shadows" between successive points as described in the report.

APPENDIX B

AN OBSERVATION OF A "FLYING SAUCER" BY WING COMMANDER FORMBY, R.A.F.

While on the rifle range at Tipner, Portsmouth, an object having the appearance of a "Flying Saucer" was observed in the distance. Visibility was good, there being a cloudless sky and bright sunshine. The object was located and held by telescope (× 20 magnification), and gave appearance of being a circular shining disc moving on a regular flight path. It was only after observation had been kept for several minutes, and the altitude of the object changed so that it did not reflect the sunlight to the observer's eye, that it was identified as being a perfectly normal aircraft.

REPORT OF AN UNEXPLAINED AERIAL SIGHTING

1.	**Date and time of sighting.** (Duration of sighting.)	20 February 2005 No time given.
2.	**Description of object.** (No of objects, size, shape, colour, brightness, noise.)	Just said saw a flying object.
3.	**Exact position of observer. Geographical location.** (Indoors/outdoors, stationary/moving.)	Not given.
4.	**How object was observed.** (Naked eye, binoculars, other optical device, camera or camcorder.)	With the naked eye.
5.	**Direction in which object was first seen.** (A landmark may be more helpful than a roughly estimated bearing.)	Was seen over East Coker, Somerset.
6.	**Approximate distance.**	Not given.
7.	**Movements and speed.** (side to side, up or down, constant, moving fast, slow)	Not given.
8.	**Weather conditions during observation.** (cloudy, haze, mist, clear)	Not given.

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

9.	**To whom reported.** (Police, military, press etc)	Das answerphone.
10.	**Name, address and telephone no of informant.**	[redacted] Section 40 Yeovil Somerset [redacted]
11.	**Other witnesses.**	Not given.
12.	**Remarks.**	Said that she saw the UFO report in the Western Gazette and thought that she should report to us what she had seen.
13.	**Date and time of receipt.**	2 March 2005 11.45L

Lord HACKING: I say nothing, but beg leave to withdraw.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

[*Amendment No. 27 not moved.*]

7.3 p.m.

Lord HACKING moved Amendment No. 28:

After Clause 5, insert the following new clause:
Amendment of principal Act relating to appointment of new arbitrators

(" . At the end of section 23 of the principal Act there shall be added the following:

"Where an Arbitrator or Umpire has been removed under subsection 23(1) above, any party to the reference may serve on the other parties to the reference, a written notice to appoint, or, as the case may be, to concur in appointing, an Arbitrator or Umpire in place of the Arbitrator or Umpire so removed, and if the appointment is not made within seven clear days after the service of the notice, the High Court or a Judge thereof may, on application by the party who gave the notice, appoint an Arbitrator or Umpire who shall have the like powers to act within the reference and make an award as had the Arbitrator or Umpire who has been removed.").

The noble Lord said: Before I withdraw this Amendment, may I mention that I drafted this Amendment within the ambit of the new clause that I am proposing to replace Section 23. It is more appropriate to have the appointment of another arbitrator under terms (which other terms come from other clauses of this Bill) than to use the terms used in Section 25 of the Arbitration Act 1950. I beg to move.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: The Amendment allowing the court to replace an arbitrator removed for misconduct is, I am advised, unnecessary. Section 25 of the 1950 Act deals with the matter and gives the court adequate powers to replace a removed arbitrator. I do not know whether that covers the point that the noble Lord has made or not; but if he is still reverting to the use of the concept of misconduct in this connection, then, as I have said, I am willing to look at that again in other connections.

Lord HACKING: I will leave the matter there. I have already mentioned to the noble and learned Lord that I believe these words are better than those in Section 25. That is the reason why I drafted them. I beg leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lord HACKING moved Amendment No. 29:

After Clause 5, insert the following new clause:
Amendment of s. 1(4) of Arbitration Act 1975

(" . In subsection 1(4) Arbitration Act 1975 after "is a party" there shall be added the words "to the proceedings".").

The noble Lord said: I shall briefly address the Committee on Amendments 29 and 30. The noble and learned Lord has already replied to my Amendment No. 17 which is related to these Amendments and he has left me in a position of suspension. I do not know the noble and learned Lord's mind, but I am happy to remain in suspension until the Report stage or until such time as he is able to take me out of it. I beg to move.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: I hope that the noble Lord will not suffer unduly in a state that I prefer to call suspended animation rather than suspension.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

[*Amendment 30 not moved.*]

Remaining clauses agreed to.

House resumed: Bill reported with an Amendment.

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

7.7 p.m.

The Earl of CLANCARTY rose to call attention to the increasing number of sightings and landings on a world-wide scale of unidentified flying objects (UFOs), and to the need for an intra-governmental study of UFOs; and to move for Papers. The noble Earl said: It is with much pleasure that I introduce this debate this evening about unidentified flying objects—known more briefly as UFOs and sometimes as flying saucers. I understand that this is the first time the subject of UFOs has been debated in your Lordships' House, so that this is indeed a unique occasion. Before proceeding further I think I should declare an interest, in that I have written a number of books about UFOs. I am grateful to those noble Lords who are going to follow me in this debate and I am sure that it will be a most stimulating discussion.

Before speaking about the need for an intra-governmental study of UFOs, which is the basis of my Motion being debated today, I think it advisable to give your Lordships some background to this fascinating subject of UFOs. I shall briefly cover a little history, the classes of witnesses, the characteristics of UFOs and some important sightings, and then I shall deal with the vital subject of the attitude of governments to these important phenomena.

Although UFOs have come to the fore since the end of the last World War, there are reports of them all through history. Among the papers of the late Professor Alberto Tulli, former director of the Egyptian Museum at the Vatican, was found one of the earliest known records of a fleet of flying saucers. It was written on papryus long ago in ancient Egypt—actually, it was at the time of Thutmose III, circa 1504 to 1450 BC, who, with his army witnessed the sighting of what we today would call UFOs.

Now, I am not going to bore your Lordships with accounts of UFOs in every century because I want to get on to the very interesting things happening today. In modern times things began to happen during World War II when both allied and German pilots saw strange circular lights around their planes. We called them Foo fighters. Both Allied and German pilots thought that they were secret weapons of the other side. After the war, on 24th June 1947, an American called Kenneth Arnold, piloting his own plane, was on a mercy mission trying to find another aircraft that had crashed somewhere in the Cascade Mountains in the State of Washington. Suddenly, he spotted nine gleaming objects, crescent shaped, flying in a zigzag fashion between his plane and the mountains. He managed to calculate their speed because he was able to get a fix—I think that is the technical term—between two mountain peaks, Rainier and Baker. It appeared that the objects were travelling at some 1,400 miles per hour—a very fast speed in 1947.

Some time after landing, Arnold, in answer to a question from the Press, described the motion of the flying objects as being like saucers skimming over water. Next day the Press headlined them as " flying saucers ". Since Arnold's sighting in 1947, millions of people all over the world have seen the UFOs. This brings me to the class of witnesses that see UFOs. It is true that occasionally one gets the odd crank or hoaxer; but the majority of witnesses are sincere people. Then again many witnesses are pilots, police officers, coastguards, radar operators—in short, trained observers. Many astronauts have seen UFOs. Many people ask me: " Why is it that astronomers do not see them? " The answer is that they do. In a letter published in the *Daily Telegraph* on 4th January last year, I listed eight well-known astronomers who had seen UFOs, including Dr. Clyde Tombaugh, discoverer of the planet Pluto.

Now a few words, my Lords, about the UFOs themselves. Actually, the name " flying saucer " given by the Press in 1947 was a misnomer as they come in all sorts of shapes and sizes: cigar, oval, disc, sphere, doughnut, crescent and tadpole shaped. You name it, my Lords, the list is endless. I should like to say a few words about their characteristics. UFOs often have very bright lights and sometimes when in flight change colours all the way through the colour spectrum. Sometimes the light from a UFO is so intense that its shape is obscured from view. This light energy is so powerful that witnesses have been burned on the face and hands if in too close a proximity to a UFO.

Another characteristic of the UFOs is electrical interference with various machines. UFOs have been notorious for stopping cars at short range. The driver will hear his engine splutter and it stops running. Besides cars, many other machines have been affected, including aircraft, motor cycles, buses, lorries and tractors. UFOs are said to be the cause of some of the power blackouts in the USA, Mexico and other countries. Indeed, UFOs have been seen flying along power lines in the USA just before black-outs. Furthermore, I have a picture on the wall of my study at home of a UFO doing just that!

Now, I will mention one or two of the more impressive sightings since the war. On the 29th June, 1954, a BOAC Boeing stratocruiser " Centaurus " had taken off from New York for London. Dinner had been served. The time was just after sunset when the skipper, Captain James

Howard, first sighted the UFOs. Some of the passengers by then were asleep. There was one big object with six smaller ones. Captain Howard pointed them out to his co-pilot, First Officer Lee Boyd, who flew with the famous Pathfinder force in World War II. The objects were five miles from the " Centaurus ". They stayed parallel with the aircraft for 80 miles. From time to time the big object appeared to change shape. The radio officer checked with Goose Bay, Labrador, to see if any other aircraft were in the area and was told, No. Goose Bay sent a fighter up to investigate. All the crew saw the objects. Just before the fighter arrived, the objects began to disappear, and it seemed that the smaller ones went inside the large one. Altogether, a crew of eight and 14 of the 51 passengers saw the UFOs.

In November 1975, at Strategic Air Command Bases in Michigan, Montana, North Dakota and Maine, a number of UFOs were sighted over a 13 day period. Several were hovering near nuclear weapons storage areas. When interceptor planes were sent up to investigate, the UFOs dimmed their lights and became invisible. One of the most amazing UFO incidents ever occurred in Septembr, 1976. A report of this event written by Geoffrey Levy appeared in the *Daily Express* on 27th February, last year. I shall try and give you his account in my own words. A very large glowing object was seen over Teheran, Iran. Hundreds of witnesses telephoned the authorities. At 1.30 a.m. the Iranian Air Force scrambled a Phantom jet to investigate the UFO which was some 70 miles away. As the jet reached about half the distance to the UFO, all of the Iranian plane's communications and instrument systems malfunctioned. The pilot had no alternative but to return to base.

A second Phantom jet took off flying faster than the speed of sound. The UFO began to move at a very fast speed indeed, and soon outpaced the jet. Then, an extraordinary thing happened. Suddenly a second smaller UFO came out of the big one, and headed straight for the jet. The jet pilot tried to release an AIM-9 air-to-air missile at the glowing object. No success at all. The weapons control panel was not working and all electronic systems were out of action. There was only one thing for the pilot to do, and that was to make his escape. He put his plane in to a dive. Then something extraordinary happened. The second UFO turned around and went back inside the " mother ship ". The jet pilot's instruments started working again. So once more he tried to pursue the UFO, but it moved away too rapidly, and so the Phantom jet returned to base.

There are literally vast numbers of these astounding reports. Indeed, my Lords, this worldwide UFO invasion of every country's air space is of growing importance and therefore I suggest that Parliament keeps a continuous watch on the situation. I have thought of one way of doing this. In the same way that there is a House of Lords Defence Study Group ably chaired by the noble Lord, Lord Shinwell, perhaps we could have a House of Lords UFO Study Group to meet periodically. If any of your Lordships are interested, please let me know!

I should like to touch on the attitudes of Governments towards this subject and to stress the need for an intra-governmental study, which is the object of my Motion. I am only going to talk about four Governments, your Lordships will probably be pleased to know. First, let us take a look at the United States. I think that one of the reasons for " playing down " UFOs some years ago in the United States was the fear of panic among the public. This was partly based on an actual panic that did occur in 1938 due to a very realistic broadcast by Orson Welles of H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*. Thousands of people left their homes.

However, after the war, the United States Air Force investigated pilots' reports without any debunking. Then the Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA, stepped in. The CIA controls the intelligence departments of the United States military services. They ordered the United States Air Force to clamp down on UFO reports. That was, I believe in 1953 and it has been going on ever since. Pilots who reported seeing UFOs were ridiculed, and after a time other pilots did not report them for fear of damaging their reputation. We had high hopes during President Carter's election campaign that there was a strong possibility of a breakthrough to the truth about UFOs. He disclosed during his campaign that he had seen a UFO a few years previously in Georgia, and he added that if he got into

[The Earl of Clancarty.]

the White House he would release to the public all the UFO information in the Pentagon. Unfortunately, that election pledge has not been fulfilled.

What has been happening in the Soviet Union? Probably the leading ufologist in that country is Doctor Felix Zigel, Professor of Higher Mathematics and Astronomy at the Moscow Aeronautical Institute. For a long time he had been trying to form a big UFO research group on a worldwide scale. Many UFOs have been seen over the Soviet Union. In July, August, September and October 1967, for instance, giant space ships were seen over various parts of the USSR by astronomers and other witnesses. On 10th November of that year, it was announced that there was to be a full investigation of UFOs. This was announced on Russian television. The operation was to be headed by Major General Anatoly Stolyerov, with Doctor Zigel as Number Two. Thousands of UFO cases were to be analysed by scientists and Soviet Air Force officers. However, the Russian Academy for Sciences came down hard on the new UFO group and on 27th February, 1968, *Pravda* published the official attitude of the authorities, and the cover-up was on.

There is, however, one country which can be relied upon to take a line independent from others over many matters, and UFOs proved to be no exception. In February, 1974, the then French Minister of Defence, M. Robert Galley, was interviewed entirely about UFOs on France-Inter radio station. The interviewer was Jean Claude-Bourret. At the time there was tremendous publicity in France, but for some reason our newspapers did not even mention the broadcast. M. Galley stated that the UFOs were real but admitted that it was not known where they came from. He said that since 1954, there had been a unit in the French Ministry of Defence collecting UFO reports. Some of this material was sent to the National Centre for Space Studies in Toulouse, the French equivalent of the American NASA. In this Centre there was also a unit—a scientific one—studying both UFO sighting and landing reports.

A little over a year ago, I received some information that this particular unit was under government sponsorships and so I put down a Question for Written Answer. The noble Lord, Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge, kindly confirmed to me in his reply that the GEPAN unit—those are the initials of the group—had been set up under the French Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Artisans at the centre in Toulouse. M. Galley also added that the gendarmerie were playing a very important part in UFO investigations, questioning witnesses and examining burnt circular marks on the ground where UFOs had landed, or were alleged to have landed. So the French have been taking it all seriously and keeping their own people informed. Nobody panicked and people did not rush like lemmings into the sea.

Is it not time that Her Majesty's Government informed our people of what they know about UFOs? The UFOs have been coming in increasing numbers for 30 years since the war, and I think it is time our people were told the truth. We have not been invaded from outer space. Most incidents have not been hostile. Indeed it is us, the earthlings, who have fired on them. There may have been a few allegedly hostile incidents, but I maintain that if there is a disturbing element in a phenomenon which is pretty friendly on the whole, we should be told the truth. Whatever the truth is, I am sure that an informed public is a prepared one. Another thing: it is on record that both sighting and landing reports are increasing all the time. Just suppose the ufonauts decided to make mass landings tomorrow in this country—there could well be panic here, because our people have not been prepared.

The noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, is to reply for Her Majesty's Government at the end of this debate. I should like to ask the noble Lord whether he will contact his right honourable friend the Minister of Defence about the possibility of giving a broadcast interview about UFOs, as his counterpart across the Channel did in 1974. That would go a long way to discredit the view held by a lot of people in this country that there is a cover-up here and that in some way we are playing along with the United States over this. I should also like to see an intra-governmental study of the UFOs. All Governments should get together and pool their knowledge about UFOs, and the results should be passed on to the

public. Finally, I should like to thank your Lordships for your kind attention, and I beg to move for Papers.

7.29 p.m.

Lord TREFGARNE: My Lords, I am bound to say that I face making this speech with some trepidation. I had wondered whether we could justify the holding of what is in effect a full debate on this matter; but having seen the audience we have tonight, and indeed having heard the speech of the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, I can see that that sort of thought would not go down too well. I may well be shouted down before I finish anyway, but let us see if we can avoid that right at the start.

The noble Earl asked us in his Motion to support a proposal particularly for an intra-governmental study—I suppose he means, as indeed he has described, between Governments. No doubt he would wish to see the co-operation of the United States. But I should not want to support that kind of proposal. I do not think the time has yet come when we can view this matter with sufficient certainty to justify the expenditure of public money on it.

I certainly agree that the numerous voluntary bodies, including those with which the noble Earl is associated, ought to be encouraged, and indeed I should not be opposed to informal links between those bodies—or, at least the responsible ones—and others, such as the Ministry of Defence. But I am ashamed to say, in the midst of all this faith, that I am not myself a believer in UFOs described, as I believe they are, as objects or vehicles from another planet or from another universe.

I have some 2,500 hours as a pilot. I have flown across the atlantic a few times as a pilot. But, unlike with the aircraft reported by the noble Earl, I have never seen one. I presume—indeed, I believe—that a good many of the sightings can be explained by logical scientific theory and I am, so far at least, convinced that those that cannot so far be so explained could be, if our knowledge were more advanced or if we had more information about the sightings in question. It is these unexplained sightings upon which ufologists rely so heavily in asking us to accept their theories. But I believe, as I say, that these unexplained sightings could be—and, indeed, would be—explained, if we had more knowledge about them; for example, better photographs. How many clear photographs of UFOs have your Lordships seen? All I have seen are hazy, fudgy photographs which could, or could not, be genuine.

Ufologists often rely upon radar information for evidence in their case, but I must tell your Lordships that radar plays more tricks even than the camera, and I do not believe that radar information, in this context, is valid. For example, the recent sightings in New Zealand, which were widely reported just before Christmas, including some rather strange-looking photographs which appeared on television, were also said to have been confirmed by radar information which was available to the aircraft in question. But I know from my own experience that radar is frequently used, and, indeed, is so designed, for detecting anomalies in atmospheric conditions and in weather patterns, and I am not persuaded that radar is a valid supporting argument in this case.

Since time immemorial, man has ascribed those phenomena that he could not explain to some supernatural or extra-terrestrial agents. Eventually, as scientific wisdom has advanced, these phenomena are understood more fully, until now, today, no one takes witchcraft seriously and there are no fairies at the bottom of my garden. It is not so long ago that magnetism, as it occurs naturally in the form of lodestone, was thought to be the work of the Devil, as indeed were some of the hot springs found in Iceland, Australia and elsewhere.

An eclipse of the sun or the moon, now fully understood, was once thought to be an expression of the Almighty's displeasure. Perhaps this derives from the description in the Gospels of the events following the Crucifixion. I recall the 44th and 45th verses of the 23rd chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and I shall read it if I may:

> " And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
>
> And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst ".

St. Matthew described it rather well also:

> " And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent ".

[Lord Trefgarne.]

No one would now seriously doubt that those happenings were, in fact, an eclipse of the sun and an earthquake respectively. I would not deny that there may have been divine intervention in respect of the timing of those events, but certainly I would say that they were caused by terrestrial forces which we now fully understand.

Without wishing to pre-empt anything that the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Norwich may say, perhaps I may pose the question as to whether the existence of another race or races outside our universe is compatible with our Christian principles. I speak only as a simple member of the Christian faith, but I think I believe that He loves us and us alone. I am not aware that there is any suggestion in the words of Christ or in the words of the Almighty, as recorded that we must share his goodness with people from another universe. There is no suggestion that there is, indeed, any other such people. I acknowledge, however, that, for example, the works of Darwin were once thought incompatible with the Christian faith, and so perhaps my view of the credibility of these things, from a Christian point of view, is open to correction. Perhaps the right reverend Prelate will be able to help us when he comes to speak.

I emphasise that I do not for a moment doubt the sincerity and conviction of those who believe in these objects, who believe that they are visitors from another universe or, at least, some supernatural force beyond our reason. I simply do not happen to agree with them. I certainly do not agree with the learned professor, speaking on the radio the other morning, who said: "Anyone who believes in UFOs is a loony". But as for the suggestion that an international study group should be set up, I do not think that I could countenance that as a serious proposal at this time. I emphasise, however, that I would be happy to encourage informal links between, for example, the RAF and the very worthy groups who believe differently from the way I do.

Before I sit down, I should just like to say how much I am looking forward to the maiden speech of my noble friend Lord Oxfuird, who is to speak later in the debate. His name has, of course, appeared on the Order Paper before today, and I hope that it appears on the list of speakers a good many times in the future. The noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, has done us a service by bringing this matter forward, but I would counsel caution and care.

7.38 p.m.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: My Lords, as the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, has said, the majority of noble Lords in this Chamber will be greatly indebted to the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for raising this fascinating and controversial subject this evening. Before I begin, perhaps I should say that I have an interest in it, because I am a director of a company which is to make an identified flying object—a thermo skyship, which is saucer shaped. I shall not get that muddled up. But in spite of sceptics, such as the noble Lord, Lord Wigg, the other day in a newspaper, and Sir Bernard Lovell from Jodrell Bank, who says that UFOs do not exist, we must agree that they do, because otherwise there would be no unidentified flying objects. Furthermore, we should not have throughout the world radio telescopes listening to try to pick up signals from intelligences in outer space.

As the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, said, UFOs are not products of the 20th century imagination. They have been observed here for years—by the North American Indians, by the monks of Byland Abbey in 1290, who were terrified by the appearance of a huge silver disc. Right through history up to today, millions of people have seen UFOs, and I will go so far as to say that I am the first to admit that the very large majority of them can be explained as natural or man-made phenomena—meteorites, satellite débris, weather balloons, military flares, *et cetera.* But there are still many which are completely unexplained.

It has been reported that the United States and the USSR signed a pact in 1971 to swop UFO information, but the pact stated that they were to keep the rest of the world in the dark. I believe that the pact was signed so that neither super-Power would make mistakes about UFOs being atomic missiles. I am also led to understand that quite recently the three United States balloonists who crossed the Atlantic were followed for up to 12

hours by UFOs but were ordered by United States Government agents not to discuss them.

We know that war in space, once a figment of the imagination and a subject much beloved by science fiction writers, is very nearly a fact now. Both super-Powers have, or will have, killer satellites and laser beams operating in space. May I ask the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, whether he agrees that this may perhaps be one of the reasons for the reticence of the United States over being more forthcoming about their UFO information?

In 1977, Sir Eric Gairy, the Prime Minister of Grenada, backed by President Carter, wanted the United Nations to declare 1978 as the Year of the UFO. They both failed. However, the proposition was finally tabled for 29th September 1978. This proposition was postponed through October, November and December. It was finally threatened by the veto of the United States and Russia. Hopefully, however, it will now be considered in June of this year. I believe that at last there has been a unanimous vote that the proposition will not be rejected.

As the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, said, I agree entirely that we do not understand many of these unidentified flying objects because of our lack of knowledge. UFOs defy worldly logic. Even if one accepts that there may be life elsewhere in our galaxy, or even in other galaxies, the human mind cannot begin to comprehend UFO characteristics: their propulsion, their sudden appearance, their disapperance, their great speeds, their silence, their manoeuvres, their apparent anti-gravity, their changing shapes. They defy our present knowledge and laws of matter. Of course, this naturally upsets our earthly scientists because it is outside their earthly terms of reference and knowledge, but to try to present UFOs in a more mundane light let us briefly examine the last 30 years.

In 1947, the United States Air Force started an official project called " SIGN ". By 1949, 243 reports of UFOs had been submitted, but no conclusive evidence came to the public's knowledge from this project. Project Blue Book was then born, and its findings produced the same conclusions. So it appears that the United States Air Force concern was threefold: first, to see whether UFOs were a threat to the security of the United States; secondly, to see whether UFOs could contribute technical and scientific knowledge; and, thirdly, to explain to the general American public what was going on in their air space. However, as UFOs appeared to offer no threat to security, Project Blue Book became just a public relations exercise to not inform the public, despite numerous unidentified radar trackings and close approaches made by UFOs to both civil and military aircraft. The military staff in America said that, as there was no threat or danger, they were not interested in pursuing the subject any further. So Project Blue Book was abandoned.

This may be good enough to fob off the American public, but it is not good enough to fob off the British public. Too many people—ordinary people as well as famous people—have seen UFOs. Ten Governments now openly admit that UFOs exist and are real: France, Norway, Sweden, Brazil, the Argentine, Venezuela, Mexico, the Philippines, Peru and Grenada. Other Governments know that UFOs exist but do not admit it publicly. President Carter has personally seen a UFO.

Let me give a small sample of prominent, scientific and sane people who have seen UFOs or believe, through evidence, that they exist: Commander Robert McLaughlin, United States Navy missile expert; John McCormack, Speaker, United States House of Representatives; the late Air Chief Marshall Lord Dowding; the late President Truman; Dr. Stanton Friedman, United States Nuclear Physicist; Ed Mitchell, Apollo astronaut; Gordon Cooper, Apollo astronaut; Dr. Allen Hynek, Professor of Astronomy, North West University; Walter Cronkite, United States newscaster; Neil Armstrong, first man on the moon; and, lastly, Dr. Felix Zigel, Professor of Higher Mathematics and Astronomy, Moscow Aeronautical Institute. Can any of your Lordships sincerely believe that these aforementioned people all suffer either from hallucinations or believe in fairy stories?

Despite the United States and the USSR embargo on UFO information, funnily enough the Russians appear more inclined to think that UFOs have extra-terrestrial origins. Further, some

[The Earl of Kimberley.]

Russian scientists see a connection between UFOs and paranormal phenomena. In fact, there is an ever-growing belief that space travel has a connection with telepathy and telekinesis, because cosmonauts in orbit have discovered through scientific tests that they have an increased level of telephathic communication. If we assume that extra-terrestrial intelligences who travel to earth are more advanced than we are—and in that respect I think that they must be—then UFOs could be telekinetic phenomena: in other words, controlled by thought pulses.

Since thought is not subject to the physical limitations of matter, then velocities in excess of the speed of light would be possible. It is interesting to me that in 1968 I was speaking to Sir Frank Whittle, the inventor of the jet engine and an eminent scientist, about interstellar space travel. It was just before the Americans had landed on the moon. Sir Frank said that he thought that it would be perfectly feasible one day to go to the stars, as he did not believe in Einstein's theory of relativity. A remark like this, coming from an ordinary man like myself, would probably, quite rightly, be laughed at. But one can certainly not laugh when a remark like that is made by such an eminent person as Sir Frank Whittle.

What is interesting is that two years later, in 1970, Dr. Fomin, a Russian doctor of telekinesis and automation, argued that, to traverse interstellar space, we would have to grapple with physical laws different from those we know at present and which so far are only theory. However, these principles have been established in mathematical formulae. Therefore, Einstein's concept of time and space possibly may not apply.

In 1976, President Carter, in a pre-election pledge stated:

"If I become President, I'll make every piece of information this country has about UFO sitings available to the public and the scientists. I am convinced that UFOs exist. I have seen them".

This statement was a breakthrough against the United States cover-up as it admitted that not all UFO information is, or has been, available to the American public. For instance, do your Lordships' know that three former United States Presidents before their election proclaimed their belief in UFOs? They were President Eisenhower, President Lyndon Johnson and President Ford, who I agree was appointed. During their presidencies they became completely silent and did not fulfil their promises. Why? I strongly suspect that Her Majesty's Government know why, and if they do know, why then, they should inform your Lordships.

I believe that there is much material evidence on UFOs in the national archives in the United States of America which has never been made known to the public, and even President Carter is finding it difficult to carry out his pre-election pledge. I am led to believe that he has tried unsuccessfully with NASA to do UFO research. The answer he has been given is "No, due to expense". That research which NASA has been required to do would cost a few million dollars, but a few million dollars is only the cost of two astronauts' suits. Therefore it appears obvious that for some reason there is a cover-up in the United States.

We in the United Kingdom are in a strange position because we have had thousands of sightings, yet I am led to understand that the Ministry of Defence have only two clerks working on UFO sightings. Further, they claim that they are not spending any money on UFO research. They appear reluctant to investigate publicly connected phenomena such as alleged messages from outer space. They say that this is the responsibility of the BBC and the Post Office. Can the Minister say whether the BBC and the Post Office know that they have this responsibility?

Further, when the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, replies to the debate will he confirm that Her Majesty's Government might be sympathetic and give support to the efforts of President Carter, Dr. Kurt Waldheim and Sir Eric Gairy to get the United Nations to debate the resolution

"to discover the origin, nature and intent of UFOs".

The noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, said that we should set up a parliamentary UFO group to meet a few times a year. I would concur with him. Further, I think the general public should be encouraged to come forward with evidence. Many do not, for fear of being ridiculed. Let them be open; let them be honest; let them badger their Member of Parliament and the Government to be open

with them and to cease what I am convinced is a cover-up here. The people of Britain have a right to know all that the Governments, not only of this country but others throughout the world, know about UFOs.

Before I sit down I ask the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, whether he will tell your Lordships why the Ministry of Defence has not informed the public of 18 contacts from 23rd May 1977 up to 22nd February 1978, numbered K 5634 to K 5651 inclusive. Further, what do the classification numbers 5, 3, 20, 16, 6, 8 and 23 mean for these 18 contacts? Moreover, does the noble Lord realise that 13 out of these 18 contacts were seen during the hours of daylight? There need be no fear that the people of this country may panic, since if UFOs are extra-terrestrial their intelligence and knowledge is far ahead of our primitive understanding. My Lords, I heartily support the Motion moved by the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for an intra-governmental body to research UFOs. Let Her Majesty's Government give an example to the rest of the world by being the leader in this investigation.

7.55 p.m.

The Viscount of OXFUIRD: My Lords, first I should like to thank the noble Earl, Lord Clancerty, for initiating this extremely interesting debate. Of course it is really much above my head, but I have enjoyed it already and I hope I shall enjoy it for the rest of the evening. To me, the first question really is, where have these UFOs come from? There could be a great many answers to that, but in the first place we can look at our own planet and there is no doubt that there is very little chance of their having come from anything in our own solar system. In fact I think I should quote a few words from Professor Kopal's recent book on the solar system which finishes up, after lamenting the fact of what they found out about Mars, by saying:

> "The hope of finding life on Mars has evaporated, together with the canals, into the thin Martian air. It is now almost certain that as living beings we are alone in the solar system".

I think that is a very good example of the fact that we cannot look to the solar system to discover where these things come from, if they come from anywhere.

The next possibility which has been paraded is that they might come from the sister sun in our own galazy. Of course that is quite possible if you believe in the now accepted—or shall we say more popular—theory of the "big bang" for the start of the universe. Undoubtedly, our sun and its solar system must have been shared with many others at that moment when we suddenly appeared. They even give dates for it now; they talk about 5,000 million years ago, which fits in with our own geological background.

There are many stars which have a solar system which might well be in the same position; they might have one planet, as we have, as good as ours and with the same amount of knowledge. On the other hand, we must accept the fact, as the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, was saying, that it would have to be something which we have not been able to attain on this earth and something that we do not understand on this earth, because if one wanted to get, say, from A Centauri, which is our nearest star, to here, it would take half a lifetime. Even travelling faster than anything we have ever produced in the way of space ships in this world of ours, the distance is 250,000 times the distance that we are from our sun, which is 93 million miles. It is a distance which would certainly take half a lifetime, even at 100,000 miles an hour. So I do not think it would be reasonable to look at another solar system, say A Centauri, which is very near, being only roughly 4¼ light years from us, which is not very much in space. There is of course the possibility that the UFOs may come from some secret effort on this earth. This I very much doubt because one could not keep a thing like that secret for 20 or 30 years. I very much doubt the possibility of its being on this earth.

So we get an entirely different picture. We have progressed in the last 30 years both in cosmology and in many other sciences, more than we have ever done before, certainly in my lifetime. I think the feeling really is that we are now on the edge of something in the universe which we do not understand yet. However, if we are going to understand the UFO question, we have got to move to the extent of understanding something beyond cosmology today. From our point of view, what we are looking at is the tip of the iceberg. We know perfectly well that we get information, we put it into computers and come out at the other

[Viscount Oxfuird.]

end with a new model. Then in five or 10 years the model is thrown away and we are back with the one answer which applies, unfortunately, to so much of science today; we just do not know. But one hopes that it will be possible.

If the suggestion of the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, backed by the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, is adopted—that is, that we should have a worldwide organisation—to look into this matter and to go further than we have ever done, why should we not be the leaders of it? It would twist science back into a new field. Is it possible that there is not merely another solar system in our galaxy, but that somewhere in one of the many galaxies in the expanding universe there are other places where these things could come from with their amazingly vast scientific knowledge? I personally see no valid reason why we must accept that at this time, but we should start working for it. If we had a worldwide organisation to try to control that, perhaps we should be able to solve many of the problems which face us today in the universe; and nothing could be better. Then we might possibly find the answer to our UFOs.

8.2 p.m.

Lord DAVIES of LEEK: My Lords, as the lone figure on this side of the House who has dared to come in on this debate, may I say that it has been a pleasure to listen to the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, who has just spoken and, who has, in his own inimitable way, as a result of his military and other experience over the years, brought a certain depth and profundity to the request for some investigation into the phenomenon with which mankind is presented today. Consequently, with all sincerity I can say that I hope this House will have the pleasure of listening to the noble Viscount on many occasions adding his voice to our deliberations, and I thank him for what he has said.

Now I want to attack the problem in my own way. First, I want to ask what are we talking about. Secondly, after expressing my gratitude for the maiden Speech, I would also express thanks to the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, who initiated this debate to call attention to the increasing number of sightings and landings on a worldwide scale of unidentified flying objects. There is no argument about that. Do not let the noble Earl be a little bit sad because of dandy intellectualism that may approach this debate. The world oozes with intellectuality and at the present moment it is completely lacking in wisdom. Let us remember what I have said many times here, and it was my old mother who taught me this; she made me go to Sunday school and quote the text. She would say in Welsh: "Always remember, my boy, Solomon did not ask for cleverness, he asked for wisdom". There is a vast difference between the dandy intellectualism of some of the reporters on newspapers' approach to this problem and the wise approach that we have just heard in this maiden speech. Let us anchor that down. What else does the noble Earl ask for. He says on a worldwide scale and that there is need for intergovernmental study. I will add to it from the other side of the House that the expense would be so small that we should not neglect this.

Anybody who knows something about laser beams—and I saw in a laboratory in Switzerland for the first time the effect of a laser beam—knows it would be quite possible to throw on to that table now an identified or unidentified object that would look palpable, like Macbeth's dagger. Your Lordships remember the famous dagger scene:

> "Is this a dagger I see before me
> The handle toward my hand? . . .
> In form as palpable
> As this which now I draw".

We could with a laser beam throw a dagger that would look as palpable on to that table. There may be an understanding of the power of the laser and its effect existing in some kind of technology that is beyond the dimension in which we can work. We have been looking in mathematics for the fifth and even the sixth dimension.

I had better pick up my notes, lest we be here a long time. Noble Lords need not worry; so much has been quoted that it saves me a lot of quotation. I want to ask the 64,000 dollar question. Do noble Lords believe in angels? The answer from some will be, Yes, and yet they have never seen one. We are asking you to believe in the phenomena of flying saucers, seen by now by, I should think,

probably millions, at any rate hundreds of thousands, without exaggeration. If we are studying hagiography—and I had better be careful—which is the history of the saints, if I came off my Welsh mountains and came down as a little boy of 12 and said I had seen the Virgin Mary springing out of a rock, some devout religious people would believe me; but if I said I had seen a flying saucer they would not believe me. What is the difference? It is a question that has to be asked; it is a philosophical question that has to be asked, when intellectuality, in its pompous way in its Sunday newspaper articles, is dealing in print with mysteries that Shakespeare described—to misquote him: "There is more in heaven and earth than is thought of in man's philosophy".

So this deserves not being pushed aside. Mark you, my Lords, I was told today outside those doors that an ambassador of 8 ft. 6 ins. with green feet and webbed feet as well had asked whether he could park his flying saucer in our car park, according to some of the telephones that have been ringing here today, because some people have treated the whole matter as a joke. I would, therefore, suggest to them that they read H. G. Wells' *Final Essay*. They can read it in half an hour. It is slim, it is cogent, it is succinct. He says the human mind is at the end of its tether.

There is a queerness in the cosmology of the world in which we are now living. Was Wells right? We certainly see mankind acting queer when petrol is short. He is snarling and worse than any being from outer space. The anthropological arrogance of 20th century man in his tinpot motor-cars riding through the streets of the lovely spaceship we call the world is hartbreaking. He has learnt nothing from his two wars; and if we had another, God help mankind, in view of the way that he has shown his greed, selfishness and tendency to panic as never before since the days of the Crusades. The greatest delusion in the history of man was the delusion of the Crusades. But men went on them after the days of Peter the Hermit with a fiery and fierce belief in what they were doing.

The noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, is an expert who has been written about. In fact, he dropped everything else to write about this matter. His seven books have been translated into many languages and I congratulate him. He has done a job of work and I hope that the debate initiated by the noble Earl will receive some attention. People tend to scoff, but it is only a few days ago that we were sitting at the piano, playing and knocking out—not with the brilliance of a top pianist—"We three kings of Orient are". What did they follow? They followed a star. What was that star? We have had an intellectual analysis of why after the Crucifixion darkness spread over the earth. The noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne—who has piloted from one side of the ocean to the other—made intellectual assumptions about earthquakes and eclipses. We are not completely sure how to explain eclipses or earthquakes, but we have a kind of Kepler mathematics that times things rather nicely. It is not quite enough to explain the earthquakes. It does not mean that the mystery of the UFOs is something that can be brushed aside, and it is an anthropological arrogance to so say.

Good heavens, I have been speaking for nine minutes! My Lords, do not worry, I shall be about another five. The House has heard a number of laudable people quoted. Ordinary little people have sometimes been laughed at, especially those concerned in the famous sighting at Pascagoula in Mississippi when one little fellow fainted when he saw a chap with one leg jumping towards him with a wizened and wrinkled face, with pointed ears, crab claws for hands, slits for eyes and holes beneath his nostrils—they would not be nostrils without holes, at least I should hope so! We shall not develop fantastic descriptions like that. We shall not go into those realms. But we must say that there are many people who have said that they have experienced these phenomena.

I agree that the New Zealand incident has reawakened man's interest and as the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, said, they were not clear pictures. However, I attended a scientific lecture in this noble building not so long ago, given by someone who believed faithfully in the Loch Ness monster. He showed us masses of films. He was a scientist and he swore that the Loch Ness monster existed. There is just as much case for the existence of flying saucers. We know that they exist. All we are saying is that they are

[Lord Davies of Leek.]

unidentified. They may be terrestrial or celestial. We are asking Governments to find an answer and that is all that this debate is about. There is no magic, we have nothing up our sleeves, but let the world know what is going on.

This renewed interest poses many problems and there are many research organisations which are looking into the matter and which know that they exist, but I shall not bore the House by going into them now. Let us ask a couple of questions. How can a flying saucer fly faster than sound and not create a supersonic boom? What is it? Secondly, have we the right to assume that we alone are in the universe? This anthropomorphic view of God that some people have built up does not build for the spirit and does not, I think, build for true holiness. It does not build up for real Christian spirit if it is followed too fully. Therefore, I should say that we have no right to assume that we are the only intelligent beings in the universe. Is the earth the only planet populated by intelligent technological life? I do not know and I do not suppose that we shall be able to find an answer yet. If in a year of Queen Elizabeth I had said to someone in London that I could show him a picture of Philip of Spain in Madrid on a piece of glass in his room, I would probably have been burnt at the stake as a wizard, or as a witch if I were a woman. However, we can do that today. We have broken through. We have the miracle on earth of television, even from the moon.

Are there flying saucers? Can these objects be explained? There are two basic facts. First, the scientific examination of the probability. That is due to mankind and Governments should look into it. The second aspect is to fathom the possibilities of the existence of this phenomena. Astronomers are now increasing their search for extra-territorial radio signals, but so far—despite what the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, has said—none has really or truly been discovered. The billions of stars in the galaxy make the problem at present too much for us.

Then there is the question of speed. In a light year a ray of light travels 6 trillion miles, but we do not want to go into that. The question of relativity is interesting. I am not qualified to argue about it: I never reached that standard of mathematics. However, I know that Einstein believed that electro magnetic waves have no mass and are therefore not affected by his theory. However, he said that as an object—if it has mass—approaches the speed of light, its mass becomes infinite. That might explain the black holes about which we talk. We are talking of mysteries that we never knew anything about.

For a couple of generations now thousands of magazines and so on have reported these sightings. We want to know whether these objects that are unidentified deserve real research in depth. Whether or not it is true, only our prejudices can decide, and it becomes more difficult to listen to such weird experiences from apparently honest, sane and unself-seeking men who place their findings before papers and Governments. Are we right to call these men liars, hallucinators or sensationalists? If one human being out of the tens of thousands who allege to have seen these phenomena is telling the truth, then there is a dire need for us to look into the matter. Those who believe in psychic phenomena or spiritualism and those who believe in the synchronicity of ghosts—as they try to explain them—should not scoff at the possibility of these unidentified objects. We know that poltergeists exist; we know about their activities. Therefore, do not be so ready to scoff at UFOs when, in another moment if I catch you talking, you will agree with me that poltergeists exist. This is a serious Debate. It deserves study and understanding.

8.30 p.m.

The Lord Bishop of NORWICH: My Lords, I count it a privilege to follow the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, and to link myself with the words of the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, in congratulating the noble Viscount on his maiden speech. At the beginning of his speech I jotted down that I should like to thank him for his "down-to-earth remarks", but when he got right out to A Centauri I realised that that phrase was of no use anyway. However, we congratulate him and look forward to hearing his voice again and often.

I am glad to be able to follow—without of course the Welsh fire or fervour—what

the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek said. I have a little Irish blood in my veins and that is why I understand everything he says. I am sure that the request by the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty:

"To call attention to the increasing number of sightings and landings on a world-wide scale of unidentified flying objects"

is a proper one. I am most glad that we have brought this whole issue out into the open and have been given the unhurried opportunity of talking about it tonight.

It is right that we should give a cool and scientific look at all unidentified flying objects, not only because of natural curiosity, not even only—as I think the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, suggested—because of national security but also for reasons of scientific research. There was a time when leaders in the Church were not always so enthusiastic about pushing out the frontiers of knowledge as I believe we are today. I very much hope that such a search will continue. Whether or not it should be an intra-governmental study I am not sure. We shall listen with interest to what the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, says to us on that. But that it should be studied, and seriously studied, I believe to be true.

The interesting thing is that when a suggested UFO is seen in one part of the world it seems to spark off many sightings in other parts. The fact of the New Zealand sightings a short time ago seems to have produced many sightings in Norfolk; and our *Eastern Daily Press*—which is a magnificent daily paper, accurate fair and always helpful to the Church—has told us all about this recently. When I was talking on television at lunchtime today in Norwich my immediate reaction was to ring up the commanding officer of one of our stations—and for the sake of national security I shall not name the actual establishment lest other ears in other spaces should be listening to me—to ask whether (and I am quite serious about this), when sightings were suggested in Norfolk last week, one of our particularly important RAF stations had anything to say about them.

I think that we should be quite cool, firm and scientific and try to extend our knowledge in this area. But, with the wealth of scientific, aeronautical and erudite knowledge in your Lordships' House, what is a bishop doing moving among the various parts of this chequered chessboard? I felt that I wanted to share anxieties on a rather narrow level with your Lordships. First, I believe that UFOs and the mystery surrounding them today are helping to build up a climate of credulity and, in certain cases, even of superstition, with the danger of a sort of ersatz spirituality almost reacting against the impersonality of modern civilisation, but not wholly involved in the total Christian commitment, which is a balanced commitment. Last summer at our Lambeth Conference the phrase was used:

"The Church gathers for worship; the Church scatters for mission".

These are the two sides of activity: the Church of God meets to worship God but the Church of Christ scatters to spread the good news of the Gospel. My concern here is that the mystery surrounding UFOs today—and I think it is helped by the variety of films and programmes on the subject—is in danger of producing a 20th century superstition in our modern and scientific days which is not unlike the superstition of past years. That is my first anxiety.

The second is that UFOs and their study seem, from my limited research in this area, to link with a certain religious subculture which seems to do three things. It offers a substitute for true, catholic religion. I use "catholic" with a small 'c'; I mean the Christian faith in its widest, but received, sense. Secondly, I think it draws serious, sincere and often very charming people—and young people too—into a sub-Christian, and I am afraid sometimes a non-Christian cult, often controlled by a dominant leader, and reproduces something of the gnostic—I suppose one wants to help people by saying "g-nostic"—heresies of the tight-knit, esoteric groups of the first, second and third centuries. In fact, I believe that Archbishop William Temple was right when he said the Church of Christ was the only society founded for its non-members to take what it knew of God and of Christ into the world that others might know too.

I see a certain danger of the linking of religion with the UFO situation at that level. Some Christian researchers suggest that those who become deeply involved in the religious aspects of the UFO situation come under a psychic domination

[The Lord Bishop of Norwich.]

which can cause serious distress to them and to their personal life. That is my anxiety. I may be wrong, but I put it forward with some care, having thought about it and studied it a good deal. Therefore, my third anxiety—and I am sorry to be negative but it is important to share both the light and the dark sides—is the danger of the religious aspect of the UFO situation leading to the obscuring of basic Christian truths. When all is said and done, Christ himself is the agent of God in the creation of the world. I quote from *Colossians*:

"Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation: for in Christ all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible—whether thrones or dominions, or principalities or authorities . . . All things were created through Him and for Him".

This fascinating chapter in *Colossians*, which is perhaps one of the highest levels of Christological teaching, speaks of Christ being before all things: "by him all things consist", as the Authorised Version put it. All things hold together; He is the great unifying, holding-together principle of God's universe.

I say this in this debate recognising the danger of, as it were, preaching a sermon. However, I do not think that is true in this case because the very subject we are debating is helping to widen our horizons—and the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, stressed this point of looking far out in his maiden speech. I believe that Christ has not only a terrestial, not only a cosmic significance but literally a galactic significance. I believe that He is God's vice-regent concerning His great creative world. It is good that our minds and eyes should be stretched further out because I do not believe that at any point of the universe we get beyond the hand of God. Therefore, it helps us to understand the majesty of the Godhead when we begin to stretch our minds to reach out to the far corners of creation.

Lord TREFGARNE: My Lords, will the right reverend Prelate allow me to intervene? Is he actually offering ecclesiastical authority for the existence of another race of people in another universe? Is he saying that the existence of UFOs, together with their inhabitants such as are so often described to us, is compatible with Christian faith?

The Lord BISHOP of NORWICH: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Tregfarne, for his interjection because it shows that he must have been listening carefully, because the next thing on my notes is, "Say something about Lord Trefgarne's remarks". However, there are about 20 seconds to go before I get to the noble Lord. Perhaps in the meantime he can have a glass of water from Lord Davies of Leek, or something, but I am almost with the noble Lord. I am glad for that interjection because I obviously was not getting right what I was trying to say. I believe that all the far corners of the creative world, right out further than we can ever see or even know by radio, are within the plan of the Creator. I believe they are within the majestic purposes of God. I believe that Christ, as Creator under the Godhead, is concerned with it all.

Now may I come to the noble Lord's particular question a few mintues ago. His question went something like this: "Do we believe in the existence of another race? Is it possible that there is another race further affeld?" I must say that I do not know. I believe there is a place for reverent Christian agnosticism concerning what is not revealed to us in scripture and by our Lord. Having said that, I believe that God may have other plans for other worlds, but I believe that God's plan for this world is Jesus. That at least is how I view the question. The emphasis in scripture is most interesting on the fact that there never seems a point beyond the revelation of scripture where there is not God.

I quote, if I may follow Lord Trefgarne once more before finishing what I had to say, from the most majectic opening letter to the Hebrews.

"In these last days, God has spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. He reflects the glory of God. He bears the stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power".

My point is that the danger of getting the UFO thing linked with the religious thing is that it obscures the fact that Christ is the image of the invisible God, and that all God's purposes and plans for humanity are in and through his Son, our Lord.

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think that Christians make a proud and exclusive claim when they claim the words of our Lord,

"All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth".

But this is part of the belief of a Christian which he has to put humbly and lovingly, and in the light of seeking to serve people. In the incarnation of our Blessed Lord he clearly revealed to us the mind of the Godhead, and we should be careful in our study of the UFOs in a religious context because I believe that the Gospel of Christ, and his death upon the Cross for the salvation of sinners, can never be by-passed by other forms of religious expression which may be esoteric, may be unusual, and may appear to come to us in unusual ways. For that reason therefore I am happy that we should make a cool, clear, careful study of the whole UFO situation, but let it not be at the price of the obscuring of the fullness of the Christian faith and its power to transform lives.

Viscount BARRINGTON: My Lords, before the right reverend Prelate sits down, may I ask one question? Although I agreed with much of what he said, I did not entirely understand, when he was telling us that one should not study UFOs in a religious context, whether that meant that one should not study music, art or other things that we all have, good, bad and indifferent, in a religious context. If it means that we must not worship them, then I would be entirely in agreement, as a professing Christian. We must not worship art, architecture, or music. But when he tells us not to study them in a religious context, I am not clear whether I will be doing so or not.

The Lord Bishop of NORWICH: My Lords, will the House give me permission to seek to answer that in a sentence? Just as it is important that the boys and girls in our schools today should know some basic facts about the great world religions, I still believe that it is essential that in a so-called and named Christian country our boys and girls should have the opportunity of knowing the great facts of the Christian faith. I am simply suggesting that, if, in fact, people seeking for religious experience bypass the revelation of God in Christ and revealed in scripture, then they may get into difficulties which will hurt and harm them. It is simply the obscuring of the Gospel that is my concern.

8.36 p.m.

Lord GLADWYN: My Lords, I must begin with an apology. Before I knew that the debate was to start so late I entered into an obligation for this evening from which I find it difficult to escape. Therefore, I may be unable to stay the course. One happy thing about UFOs is that they have nothing whatever to do with Party politics! Another is that they take one's mind off the absolutely frightful everyday events. Besides that, no theory as regards them can possibly be laughed out of court, nor need angels in respect of them fear to tread! I am sure that the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, would agree.

Though many alleged sightings are of identifiable objects of terrestrial origin, such as disintegrating satellites, balloons or meteors, or even some sort of reflection, others are of things which, on the face of it, cannot be accounted for in this way. The evidence of this is obviously too circumstantial to be disregarded. The evidence produced by the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, and my noble friend Lord Kimberley, is obviously too circumstantial. You cannot disregard that. These things almost certainly do exist. It is difficult to say that they do not exist. Therefore, unlike the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, I do not contest their existence.

Some objects may be of terrestrial origin, but equally some may not. Whatever their origin, it has certainly not as yet been proved that they contain, or are controlled by, sentient beings of any sort. Still less has it been demonstrated that such sentient beings come from another planet, of which we are told there are many millions in the universe and no doubt many thousands on which conditions may well be similar to those on earth. It is conceivable, therefore, that UFOs come from another world; but that, to say the least, is not certain or, let us say, is not yet certain. Let us therefore for a moment examine the terrestrial and the non-terrestrial hypotheses.

If these objects are terrestrial, they come somewhere from our world, then they may conceivably be attributable to

[Lord Gladwyn.]

some condition of the atmosphere, or upper atmosphere, unknown to us, producing electrical or similar phenomena which no doubt interfere with compasses, and for some reason dart about the sky, sometimes even coming to earth. The difficulty about such an explanation is that they never seem to come into actual contact with aircraft, or any other airborne objects. Even if collisions have sometimes been suspected, they have not been proved to have occurred. Nor, apparently, do they ever crash into anything important on the ground. When they are alleged to have been seen on the ground it is always, incidentally, away from houses. I suppose it is conceivable that they may be capable of passing right through physical objects, their mindless trajectory being therefore harmless, and dictated by some unknown physical cause, and their apparent presence on the ground being due to some local conditions on the surface. All I say is that this is a conceivable hypothesis. In any case, the fact that their occasional presence is so far inexplicable does not in itself invalidate the terrestrial hypothesis. There are, as the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, said, more things in Heaven than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

One terrestrial possibility at least can be discarded, that which attributes them to some Soviet activity in Central Asia, in some way hearalding World War III. This hypothesis was current, as I remember well, in America at the time of the Korean war, when I was in New York. Indeed, it was responsible for, as far as I know, the only known joke ever perpetrated by a Soviet functionary, namely Mr. Gromyko, who when asked what he thought about flying saucers said. " Some people say these objects are due to the excessive consumption in the United States of Scotch whisky. I say that is not so. They are due to the activities of a Soviet athlete, a discus thrower, in Eastern Siberia, practising for the Olympic Games and quite unconscious of his strength."

If these objects are not terrestrial, then admittedly, always supposing they exist and are not mere illusions, they must be of some non-terrestrial origin. We can, I think, discard the possibility that they come from any of the other planets, as was said by the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, whose maiden speech we so much appreciated; I hope we shall hear from him again shortly. Venus is too hot, Mars is a lifeless wilderness, and conditions on the others are extremely unlikely to be compatible with any form of life.

Thus, from whence do they come? They can only come from a planet in some other starry system, of which the nearest, as the noble Viscount said, is the star Proxima Centauri, which is 4½ light years away. Always supposing, therefore, that UFOs are manned by sentient beings who travel at the speed of light—and if you travel at 186,000 miles a second, how do you slow down on approaching the earth? (how wonderful to imagine!)—these creatures must have been cooped up in their small machines for no less than 4·5 terrestrial years before appearing in our atmosphere. One can perhaps imagine that they may somehow have been able to escape from time and consequently not need any sustenance or sleep, but it is difficult, even on that hypothesis, to believe their machines are somehow time-exempt and can consequently contain enough propellant to keep them steady on their millennary way.

If a UFO was launched near Proxima Centauri and proceeded at the rate at which astronauts go to the moon, it would take, I am reliably informed, not 100,000 years but more like 900,000 years before it reached the earth. In which case, it is indisputable that any non-terrestrial UFO now sighted over New Zealand or anywhere else must have started on its journey something like a million years ago. In other words, since after all the human race lives within time, it must have left long before any kind of recognisable human society existed here below.

It is, however, also indisputable that UFOs have been observed for many hundreds of years in Europe, China and elsewhere. There are records of mediaeval monks seeing cigar-like objects in the heavens; and indeed it is quite possible that such sightings have been observed during the last few thousand years. There may be more sightings now simply because we have better facilities for observing them. If so, what conclusion must we draw as regards the whole non-terrestrial hypothesis? It is simply that

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these sentient and obviously highly intelligent beings from another planet, if such they be, at the end of an interminable journey, are content simply to hover about our atmosphere and not attempt a landing, or at least a landing of which we have any uncontrovertible evidence.

What could be the point of such strange proceedings? These sentient and obviously intelligent beings must have picked up enough information to conclude that a serious landing was feasible or, if not feasible, then to abandon the whole idea. Perhaps they may even in some mysterious way have been able to master our language and penetrate our thoughts. I think it was my noble friend Lord Kimberley who said that conceivably they were under some sort of thought control from a planet in the neighbourhood of Proxima Centauri. If that is so and it is simply a question of thought control, then it comes down apparently to a sort of cosmic joke being played by these sentient beings from 4½ light years away on the unfortunate inhabitants of this globe; they are a sort of hallucination in that they induce us by thought control to believe in them. It is a conceivable theory but I do not think it is a tenable one.

There are, it is true, those who believe that major landings from outer space have taken place in the past resulting in the inauguration of a new era, beings who then apparently withdrew after leaving behind some kind of representative, presumably to see how it would all work out; that is, the new civilisation which they had brought down to this world. In Colombia and Peru there are, I understand, strange markings on the ground thought to have been utilized by some sort of space ships, together with traditions of an other-wordly father of the race, notably of the Inca race, who came down from the sky. In fact, such traditions are fairly widespread in the world, although of course there is no proof that such father figures ever really descended from the sky.

The nearest one in time to our own era —I quote this only to draw attention to the lengths to which this kind of belief can go —is the theory, quite popular I believe in Russia, that Christ was a cosmonaut, the star of Bethlehem being a large UFO from which, to the amazement of the shepherds, emerged "the Heavenly Host" who left the babe in the manger, to the great benefit of all mankind, and then departed whence they came. You can believe such heretical imaginings if you will, and perhaps if you believe in the divine origin of Christ and his teachings it would not matter very much if you held that, in my view, rather nonsensical belief. And you can certainly believe, if you want, that UFOs contain people from another world which is watching us and whose intentions are benevolent and perhaps designed to save our distracted planet from the horrors of another war by somehow disposing of the wicked and thus inaugurating a new era. Believe that if you like.

I am afraid, however, that all such imaginings are due chiefly to the discontent with the present human condition and to an unconscious desire to escape from the horrors or potential horrors of our earthly life. When we believed that if we were good we would, when we died, go to Heaven, there was no inclination to go to some new world near Andromeda; and whether another world other than Heaven itself was watching us did not worry us overmuch. Presumably, it was the angels.

The more over-populated our planet becomes, the greater the violence and the more appalling the wars, the more, unconsciously perhaps, we want to leave it if we can or trust in other worldly intervention; and the more intense therefore the longing, the greater the temptation to believe that there actually is somewhere else to which we can physically go or to which we can somehow make an appeal. It was a great disappointment when the moon was discovered to be a mass of grey plasticine, that Mars was even more unpleasant than the middle of the Sahara and that Venus was the nearest thing to Hell.

What is the moral? I agree with the right reverend Prelate, who said so eloquently—we are indebted to him for his intervention—that perhaps the moral is that we had better not put our trust in saucers for salvation but, rather, concentrate on how best to conduct ourselves here below so as to live in charity with our neighbours and eventually die in peace. If the UFOs contain sentient beings, we can only leave it to such being to get in touch with us when, and if, they will. Up to now, if they exist, they have

[Lord Gladwyn.]

done no harm of any kind. Apparently they have done no harm for the last two or three thousand years. So there seems to be no great need to set up intra-governmental machinery to investigate the whole phenomena. The mystery may suitably remain a mystery, and so far as I can see nobody will be in any way the worse off if it does.

8.50 p.m.

Lord KINGS NORTON: My Lords, I should like to add my thanks to those which the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, has already received for opening the debate in such an extremely interesting way. I found my imagination boggling a little at some of the things he told us. Nevertheless, I feel that it is of immense value that this matter has been brought out into the open by the debate in the House, and I hope that as a result of it there will be some progress in the understanding of what is an extremely serious matter. I feel that we must be careful about our terminology in discussing the UFO problem, and I believe that I shall make clear in the course of my remarks what I mean by that. For example, in the past few days, since it was known to my friends that I was to take part in the debate, I have had over and over again the question: Do you believe in UFOs? I must say that I think that is rather a silly question, because if I saw something in the sky which neither I, nor whoever happened to be with me, could identify—I have not, but let us suppose that I did—then I should have seen an unidentified flying object, a UFO. I do not have to believe in it. I should believe merely that I had seen it—something that I could not explain; and I believe that many people are in that position.

It has been said more than once this evening that this is no new phenomenon. I think that the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, dated it back to about 1300 BC. Whether my researches have taken me further back, I am not quite sure. However, I am sure that your Lordships will be as familiar as I am with the 10th Chapter of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. He certainly saw something very unfamilar in the firmament, and it certainly could be called a UFO. It was very different from the modern ones. It appears to have been coal-fired, to have been stabilised by gyroscopes, and crewed by cherubim; and it was a model which has not, so far as I know, been developed. There have been a good many sightings probably before Ezekiel, and certainly there have been many thousands since, and I fear that there has grown up a belief in many minds that if an object in the skies is unidentifiable, it must be from outer space; and this is quite unwarranted.

I think that it is worthwhile once again to consider the possibilities. I know that this has been done once or twice this evening, but it is part of my argument. I should say that there are possibly two kinds of objects to be seen in the skies: those of terrestrial origin, and those of extra-terrestrial origin. Typical of the first kind are man-made flying machines, satellites and rockets, and the like. Identifiable objects of the second kind are meteorites and phenomena such as the Northern Lights.

I am sure that many—and perhaps most—of the sightings recorded and reported are terrestrial in origin: aeroplanes with navigation lights glowing at night; satellite launching rockets burning up on re-entry; remotely piloted vehicles, now beginning to be called RPVs; up on trial flights; weather balloons; trick reflections of light. In the extra-terrestrial class I am afraid that I cannot think of anything other than meteorites, Northern Lights and ball lightning, but there are probably other well known physical phenomena within the knowledge of astronomers and meteorologists.

I feel, however, that some of the reports we have had—and we can for the time being leave out Ezekiel—are not readily explained in terms of any of the possibilities which I have mentioned. The New Zealand phenomena are worth much more investigation than they have yet had, but so far, in so far as I have been able to understand what has been reported, they do not appear to be explicable in terms of any of the suggestions which I have so far made. That seems to go for the quite extraordinary widespread sightings recently in Italy, where hundreds of people as reasonble as you and I, my Lords, seem to have seen quite inexplicable things in the sky. It would be worthwhile trying to explain them, and if there are people who know what they are, they ought to tell us. The high probability in my mind is that

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they are terrestrial in origin, and the only extra-terrestrial possibilities do not seem to be feasible because of the very eccentric paths which the objects, or lights, which were seen seem to have taken. But if they are terrestrial phenomena, we ought to be able to identify them.

I believe that any dispassionate investigation, such as I understand the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, would wish to have, could not ignore the possibility of the phenomena having their origins outside the earth and perhaps outside the solar system. Just as meteorites are chance material projectiles originating in the solar system, may there not be random matter of a different character—perhaps a luminous but insubstantial character—that in certain circumstances becomes visible and attracted to our area? I certainly should be readier to accept some explanation in terms of what I might call the atsronomical phenomena than ships from outer space. It would, I suppose, be foolish to deny that possibility, but as an explanation of phenomena—and I think that the noble Lord, Lord Gladwyn, exposed this—it is surely a very long shot indeed.

If we are to conduct any dispassionate inquiry—and I think that we should—we must listen to the proponents of what one might call the *Star Trek* view. It can be argued, not unreasonably, that we in our humble way are probing nearby solar space with our Venus and Jupiter and other vehicular probes. We have ventured on to the Moon. Is it not presumptuous, the argument goes, to suppose that elsewhere in space creatures more advanced than us are probing into our space, probing with means now occasionally visible to us, using their own RPVs, controlled from stations light years away, rather on the lines which the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, mentioned? It is a possibility which we must be prepared to consider. It is a possibility, though not many of us, I feel, would call it a probability.

But if we do have a study of UFOs, as the noble Earl desires, we could not exclude the possibility of extra-terrestrial intelligences from our consideration. This quotation has been given twice this evening, as well as a dozen times outside this House in this connection, but,

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio",

Hamlet said,

"than are dreamt of in your philosophy".

And Heaven, my Lords, has always offered us more possibilities than earth. Although I remain sceptical of intelligent invasion from outer space, I recall the dictum of the late Mr. Sherlock Holmes when he was investigating the curious matter of the Sign of Four:

"When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth".

The desirability of getting rational and acceptable explanations for the odd phenomena which are being reported—even if, like some other para-normal phenomena, they are subjective—in my opinion is not, or should not be, merely to satisfy our curiosity. Here I am coming from rather a different angle to something which was discussed in greater depth by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Norwich.

There is a social danger, in my view, in leaving people in ignorance of the origins of these phenomena. I have recently learned from a number of sources that there have grown up, in North America particularly, many groups and cults whose attitudes are based on beliefs that UFOs are influential outer-spatial manifestations interested in this earth. In some cases these groups are looking to outer space for Man's salvation. If this is right, it is rather disturbing.

I find, too, that in this country there are groups interested, other than purely scientifically, in the UFO phenomena. I had a letter—and I think that other noble Lords may have had the same letter—earlier this week from an ecumenical Christian group which believes, among other things, that UFOs menace the spiritual health of the nation; that they are anti-Christian and that information exists about them which is being withheld. It seems to me that this association of UFOs with mysticism and religion makes explanation of the true origins of the phenomena a matter of great importance and of some urgency. The sooner that each reported sighting or landing is satisfactorily explained, the better. It is no good just laughing them off or trying to laugh them off; we must seek the truth and tell it.

My Lords, I remain sceptical, perhaps more sceptical than anyone who has

[Lord Kings Norton.]

spoken this evening except the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne. I remain sceptical of the more bizarre extra-terrestrial explanations. I remain more than sceptical, indeed, incredulous, of what the noble Earl in his Motion called "landings"; but I support him wholeheartedly in his wish for a serious inquiry. I hope that the Government will take steps to put such an inquiry in hand. Finally, I come back to the matter of terminology. In his Motion, the noble Earl called for "an intra-governmental study". The noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, and, I think, the noble Lord, Lord Gladwyn, took this to be an inter-governmental study. But "intra" means "within". I was puzzled by the use of the prefix, but that is what it means and presumably what the noble Earl meant. But why a study within the Government? I would support the idea of a Government-supported open investigation by a carefully chosen group of scientists and technologists with some funds at their disposal; but a study within Government would seem to smack of a secret probe, which would be no good at all.

I have no objection to a House of Lords study group, but they could scarcely perform in the way that a public organisation supported, say, by the learned societies and the engineering institutions could perform. It is something of that kind that I should like to see brought into being under Government or with Government support: a group of dispassionate people with the power, the money and staff on a modest scale to investigate. Perhaps in his reply later this evening the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, will comment on the suggestion.

9.4 p.m.

Lord RANKEILLOUR: My Lords, first, I must thank the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for this debate, the subject of which has long needed an airing; and, although the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, is not in his seat, nevertheless I congratulate him on his speech. The UFO saga is deep and complex and there are no known experts to keep us up to date with everything to do with it including its mechanics. However, scientists throughout the world have been drawn into an ever-increasing discussion as to what UFOs are and where they come from, so far with little enough results except to wonder why the bounds of natural physics seem to be broken on all sides. Most Western Governments say that UFOs do not exist, but I think that the French Minister of Defence, M. Robert Galley, in February, 1974, said that they do; that his Government takes them seriously and that they have been studied secretly by a special department for over 20 years. Indeed, France leads the world in UFO research. It has followed up sightings with police teams, scientists and scholars and, since 1950, the *Deuxième Bureau* of the Army.

Oddly, in that same year, a remarkable report came from Farmington, New Mexico, on 18th March, when the inhabitants of that town were treated to a display of flying saucers that literally filled the sky above them. Every important American newspaper told the story. With few exceptions, the entire township of 5,000 people, including the mayor, newspapermen and members of the Highway Patrol, breathlessly watched an air show to end them all, a fantastic air circus. Countless saucers performed aerial acrobatics at speeds of 1,000 m.p.h. showing incredible handling, acute control in split-second timing by their ability to avoid collisions.

My Lords, that was hardly a weather ballon convention.

Is it not curious that we of the 20th century, with a vast knowledge of science behind us, should be blind to further wonders in the skies above? Men throughout the world have been branded as mad or mistaken when they have reported having seen strange sights in the heavens. Many men have seen these sights and have not been mistaken. Who are we to doubt their word? Who are Governments that dare to ridicule the honest? Not long ago the Loch Ness monster was regarded as a fable, but now our leading naturalist says that it (or they, possibly) probably exists. Why, then, should unidentified flying objects be any harder to believe, especially as they have been seen far more frequently? My Lords, of course they exist. Only a few weeks ago a Palermo policeman photographed one, and four Italian Navy officers aboard a light patrol boat in the Adriatic, in the early hours of the morning, saw a 300-yard long fiery craft rising from the sea and disappearing into the sky. Odd, strange, frightening, but apparently quite true. Indeed, why

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should these men of law enforcement and defence lie? Of course, they did not lie. Why should they; especially as in this case their sighting was backed up by men from a nearby radar station who saw it, too.

Each year there are many sightings of UFOs throughout the world. Some of them are very close at hand, while others are not, but always the effect upon those who see them is one of concern; and yet this very point is ignored and ridiculed by most Governments right around the globe. In the United Kingdom's case, those who report seeing UFOs are taken to be misinformed, misguided and rather below par in intelligence. If this is so, why has some of my information on this subject been given to me by the Ministry of Technology? Why should this Ministry waste its time gathering false information? Of course, it is not false information: it is data reported by civil and Air Force pilots, policemen, sailors and members of the general public who have all had personal experience which has intrigued and/or frightened them.

My Lords, what are UFOs? I do not know; and nor, seemingly, do some Governments: but these machines do exist in one form or another, abstract or solid, and they do travel at stunning speeds which seem to defy proved natural physics. Let the United Kingdom be told by Her Majesty's Government the real details on UFOs so far as they know them, for by continued silence the position only becomes worse. Only a few weeks ago a UFO was seen near Kingussie, in the Highlands, and a few acres of Ashdown Forest were burned by another one. Is it safe to go on ignoring these appearances? Who is to know where they come from? But come they have. If we accept, then, that UFOs exist, we must next wonder how they operate. Their motive power would be of huge help to our transport and industrial life, for they apparently fly without wings at varying speeds from dead-slow to incredible ones, and even hover silently. This kind of information is above price, and therefore we as a country should make every effort to collect every scrap of information that we can. I therefore ask this Government to make the study of UFOs respectable by setting up a bureau that can be approached by all and sundry without any red tape or opposition, in an attempt to clear the air. Every sighting and landing must be thoroughly investigated by the bureau, in co-operation with the police, the Royal Air Force, the radar people and the British-based UFO investigators.

The noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, who is to wind up this debate, is no doubt sympathetic to the reasons for these speeches, for it has become patently obvious to a great many people that this subject has got to the point when Governmental explanations must be forthcoming. A greater measure of open government is long overdue, and bringing the UFO saga into the realm of respectability would be one way of achieving this, in part. I suspect that the British Government do have a Department studying UFO sightings, for why else should they bother to go to such trouble to publicly debunk reported ones if they are of no interest to them? Quite apart from the fact that the Government have not admitted to the existence of UFOs, these machines are potentially dangerous. They give off blinding light, crippling rays and sometimes beams that immobilise humans; they start forest fires, eradicate crops and cause great distress to animals. If the British population was aware of this, they could sometimes take precautions. UFOs have been with us for many generations, so is it not about time that we officially recognised their existence and treated reports as less of a hot potato than hitherto?

Before the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, takes me to task once again on the subject of sonic booms, I have one suggested answer to the question why these high-speed UFOs do not produce sonic booms. It is thought that these craft can produce a near vacuum envelope around themselves, which in turn would allow them virtually unlimited speed because they would thus be free of nearly all normal resistance, as they would be flying within it. Not being a scientist, I cannot enlarge upon this explanation, but I hope it is of some assistance to the noble Earl.

9.14 p.m.

Lord GAINFORD: My Lords, first may I add my congratulations to my noble friend Lord Oxfuird for his brilliant maiden speech. I hope that we are going to hear him many times again because it is quite obvious from what we have heard from him this evening that he is going to

[Lord Gainford.]

receive every possible encouragement to take part in many debates in the future. My main contribution to this debate is to assure the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, of any support that I can give. If we are going to have a study group in your Lordships' House I shall be glad to be a volunteer to take part whenever I have the opportunity. I also thank him and others for initiating this debate, and for the pleasure of having such a refreshing subject to discuss in the midst of the present period of crices and strikes.

I am the 10th person to speak in this debate. I have noticed that so far none of your Lordships have actually reported a sighting, so here goes! I am going to stick my neck out, open my big mouth and trust I am not going to put my foot in it! I saw a UFO a little while ago. It was on 31st December about 8 p.m. All right, my Lords, have a good laugh, it was Hogmanay! Up in Argyll it was a New Year's Eve party and somebody said there was something funny flying across the sky. Fifteen of us came out to have a look, including some children. They had been drinking soft drinks anyway! The object was like a bright white ball with a touch of red followed by a white cone. In fact the whole object had the appearance of a small comet. It was heading eastwards and seemed rather low in the sky, passing over the hills between Loch Sweyne and Loch Fyne. The position from which we viewed it was outside the village of Tayvallich in Argyllshire on the West coast of Scotland about the same latitude as Glasgow.

As the ball disappeared into the distance it seemed to divide into two parts. It may have been a comet or a meteorite, but I should like to know what it really was. It would have been very beneficial if there had been some sort of centre to which I could write or telephone to report such an incident. No doubt setting up such an organisation would be an invitation to pranks, but for starting such a centre I suggest that volunteers could readily be found from the ranks of the former Civil Defence Service and/or the Royal Observer Corps. The Royal Observer Corps still exists but it has literally, if not metaphorically, gone underground where it is preparing to report and advise on nuclear fallout in the case of war. But there are many who used to serve it and who have not yet disappeared from the scene who could make valuable use of their past experience in establishing centres in various districts throughout the country—and I do not suggest that we start opening up the old observer posts in the countryside—to receive and analyse any reported sightings from the public. Such people with a sense of responsibility could, with a little experience, sift the genuine reports from the false.

Suggesting that such an organisation be set up, particularly at times like these, can naturally give rise to a protest about the waste of public money; but volunteers who might be willing to work for a few hours are quite prepared to do it for very small remuneration, if any at all. I have mentioned the Civil Defence Service, and I did not know whether or not I should declare an interest, but I was a member of it during the 'sixties and I was one of many who were bitterly disappointed when it had to go into abeyance. I recall particularly the comradeship and the sense that we were doing a useful job for the community.

If I had the time and opportunity, I should enjoy volunteering for working in a UFO information centre, if that might be a suggested name for the organisation that would be required. I shall be interested to hear the summings up in this debate. I can give no explanation why there should be these phenomena concentrated within particularly the past 32 years as was confirmed by the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, and these flying saucers in the year 1947 when the phrase was coined; but I would just accentuate what has been said before and add that if they are man-made or some astronomical feature, and provided there is no risk of any security breach, then the public have a right to know about them.

9.20 p.m.

The Earl of HALSBURY: My Lords, in common with everyone else who has spoken, I should like to thank the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for giving us an opportunity to have, as it were, a scamper over the course and exchange views on this very interesting and controversial topic. At the same time, I should like to congratulate the noble Viscount on his maiden speech, which was obviously a very well thought out and well assemble

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set of considerations, which augurs well for his future in your Lordships' House, where I know he is already welcome.

At the risk of capping the stories of the noble Lord, Lord Gainford, I should like to tell your Lordships about some of the sightings I have seen. I will order them in terms of my *curriculum vitae*, beginning at the age of six, when I saw an angel. I do not know whether it was the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, who mentioned angels, or whether it was the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, or the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley; but it is perfectly true that there was my guardian angel sitting on the edge of my bed. Naturally, with the imagination of a child, I clothed this presence in human form with a large pair of feathery wings. This presence proceeded to rebuke me for initiating a practice which it said would get me into trouble if I persisted in it. Having remembered the rebuke all my life and acted upon it, I am not prepared to deny the reality of the presence that was there with me. This should be a sufficient answer to the noble Earl—I see I have put him to flight—who thinks that if scientists come across something they cannot explain they are afflicted with a kind of vertigo. On the contrary, we welcome something we cannot explain because it is a new phenomenon which, as it were, stretches our capacities and brings out something in us.

The next item came along in year two of World War I. I was about eight years old, and the next thing that I sighted were Zeppelins. I used to go out after dark into the garden of the house where we lived and come back reporting the number of Zeppelins I had seen. What I had seen, in my interpretation of it, a Zeppelin—it was a large illuminated cigar-shaped object. In fact what I was looking at was the lenticular shape that the perspective of a searchlight thrown on to a cloud-base makes, and I was interpreting it as a Zeppelin and I was telling my parents how many Zeppelins I had seen.

The next one is sundogs and this fits very closely with what the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, was saying about Macbeth's dagger and the laser holeographic reconstruction of things which really are not there. What sort of an interpretation would somebody who had never read about these or read about them put upon sundogs? Most people have not seen them or read about them. I was fortunate enough to have read about them and to have known the explanation before I saw the first.

When you look at a cloud with drops of water, you are looking at a diffuse reflection of the sun but if instead of there being drops of water in the cloud there are drops of ice, and if they were formed under meteorological conditions where all the facets of the crystals happen to be parallel as they fall through a rising stream so that they are remaining roughly stationary, the effect is of a rather dilute mirror, if one can so describe it. If the sun is up there, you see it actually reflected in this imaginary mirror down through the cloud, and one does not expect to see the sun looking down in this direction. Still less does one expect to perceive it travelling along beside one. Furthermore, one is not accustomed to focusing one's eyes on infinity in that particular direction. The only times it would be appropriate to do so would be if you were standing on top of a skyscraper where the vanishing point would be down here instead of over there, and it makes you rather dizzy.

Seeing a sky dog is a rather uncanny sort of phenomenon. You cannot focus on it properly; it does not seem to be anywhere in particular. It is flying along beside you—and what sort of terms would a person, who had never seen it before or read about it, report it in? I think that they would be rather bewildered. They might report it just as a child would report the vision of an angel as having human form and feathery wings. So it might easily be reported as anything that they had read about.

I now come to the green flash. I was about 20 and a student, and there was a controversy in the pages of *The Times* and in the correspondence columns of *Nature* about the green flash. What is it? Under certain rather rare atmospheric conditions, the last glim of the setting sun suddenly flashes brilliant emerald green. When I was a student 50 years ago, this phenomenon was not really established. It was possible to have a controversy as to whether there was such a phenomenon. People wrote to *The Times* saying that they had seen it. I remember one man who said that he

[The Earl of Halsbury.]

had seen it when sitting by the shore off Bombay. It was eventually photographed during the International Geophysical Year, the IGY, some years ago.

However, before that I saw it myself in rather odd circumstances, after having read about it. I was bird watching in the far North-West of Scotland, by a sea loch called Loch Glencoul, near a little village called Drumbeg, where there is a cliff path. On that cliff path, there is a bench for the convenience of people who want to sit down and admire the view. Another traveller, a visitor to the district, was sitting upon the bench when I sat down and, by a chance coincidence, we were both using the same type of Hensholt binoculars and we got talking about our binoculars. There was a spectacular sunset, and when the sun was very low and it was safe to look at it through binoculars, I said to my fellow traveller, "Let us see if we can watch the green flash". So we trained our binoculars and this very rare meteorological phenomenon actually happened when I had just said to a fellow bird watcher, "Let us have a look to see if it happens". What would that person have made of it if I had not been there, just by chance, to tell him what the green flash was about?

Lastly, I come to ball lightning. I have never seen ball lightning, but the description one reads of it is so coherent, so similar in all cases, that one must accept it as a phenomenon which occurs regularly in nature, though we cannot reproduce it in nature and attempts to reproduce it in the laboratory are, to my mind, unconvincing. There is no theory of it. It appears to take the form of a football-shaped mass of glowing gas which hops around or, if it has a chance, gets on to a conductor such as the rail in the gallery here and migrates along the conductor until it finally disappears with a bang. It has never been satisfactorily photographed, to my knowledge. If it has been, then the photograph must be a fairly recent one, and, as I say, it has not been reproduced. But this, again, should assure the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, that, faced with an unknown phenomenon which I cannot explain, I do not get vertigo. I should be delighted to go ball lightning watching, as I go bird watching.

Lord DAVIES of LEEK: My Lords, may I ask the noble Earl one question? Has he ever seen a mirage? That is easily explicable, and one can also see it easily.

The Earl of HALSBURY: Yes, my Lords, and one can reproduce a mirage in the laboratory. You have a long tray of sand with bunsen burners underneath it, and you look at it from one end. It is quite a reproducible kind of phenomen. Science deals with material objects—things such as atoms and molecules; material processes—things such as the emission and absoption of radiation; and material forces—things such as the force fields which couple the objects to the processes. But if things are not material, then science has nothing to say. If you want to know what is the consciousness of a mind, I do not think science can either answer the question, on the one hand, or say whether it is a proper question, on the other hand. Therefore, from the scientific point of view, I can deal only with the assumption that these are material objects, and, if they are material objects, then, if they travel at the kind of speeds that are alleged, why do they not make supersonic bangs when travelling above Mach 1? The noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, made this point, and the noble Lord, Lord Rankeillour, also made it. I should like to go into the point in a little more depth.

We customarily express the speeds of fast moving objects in terms of Mach numbers. Mach 1 is the speed of sound appropriate to temperature and pressure where the sound is being propagated. In terms of miles per hour, it is not a constant figure, but the advantage of using it as a parameter is that no matter what the temperature and pressure may be, Mach 1 is the speed at which the kinetic energy of a moving object—that is, the power to pack punch—is equal to its thermal energy. This is an unstable condition. The least disturbance to these unstable conditions entails the converison of kinetic energy into thermal energy with a bang, and this is what is called the shock wave. If one takes a cross section through a shock wave, there is a rise in pressure, temperature and entropy. There is complete discontinuity. That must happen when a material object is moving at Mach 1 or above through any medium.

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The answer to the question put by the noble Lord, Lord Rankeillour—I have not had very long to think it out because he sprung it on me as a bit of a surprise—is this. If you were to create a vacuum, what would happen to the air you had displaced? Would you pull it in in front and push it out behind? If that is your means of travelling through the medium, you are merely moving some air backwards at the speed of sound, and it would create a supersonic bang just the same. Customarily, very often we hear two bangs because there is a bow wave and a stern wave from the moving object. Sometimes the bang degenerates into a rumble, just as a thunderclap degenerates into a rumble. Any noble Lords who have been uncomfortably close to a lightening bolt are aware that it makes a very pronounced bang as the spark flies through the air.

If these are material objects and if they are moving at the speeds alleged, I cannot see them doing other than making a bang, so either they are not material objects or they are not moving at the speeds alleged, in which case the speeds are some kind of optical illusion. This throws doubt upon the rest of the reports that we received upon them.

In this week's *New Scientist*, published today, there is a report from New Zealand, and I should like to read to your Lordships a passage from it:

"Classic conditions for false reflections of radar beams"—

this tunes in very much with what the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, said—

"existed in the atmosphere over New Zealand on the nights that the UFOs were spotted at the end of December, Christchurch meteorologist, Dr. Neil Cherry, has reported. UFOs were both spotted on radar and seen by an airline pilot, and a brilliant light was subsequently filmed by an airborne TV crew".

There is nothing in that report to suggest whether the optical sightings and the radar sightings came from the same point, or on the same alignment, or at the same time. We shall have to wait until the details become available.

I was much impressed by everything that the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Norwich had to say on this matter and by some of the things which the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, had to say, too. I do not think that anybody who reads the C. S. Lewis trilogy of space fiction, *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*, will ever have his faith disturbed by doing so. C. S. Lewis, who was a profoundly Christian apologist, wrote the most marvellous space fiction of a complex universe, in which some of the created species were tempted and fallen, like ourselves; others were tempted and unfallen; and others were untempted. And they all had to live together in the same universe. I have always regarded the deeps of space and the immense time that it would take to travel from one inhabited world to another as being a kind of divine quarantine to prevent created beings from interfering with one another's cultures until they are civilised enough and mature enough to reach the point when they no longer want to do so. Too much of our science fiction is taken up with the supposition that vastly superior beings to ourselves are motivated by the same rather unworthy commercial motives as ours, and that they want to steal our coal mines or our water or set up imperialisms.

The little piece of fiction that I have always enjoyed most concerned a flying saucer which was hovering slowly in a circle round Central Park in New York and all the security forces turned out in order to do something about it. As it went round, it became more and more clear that it was going round in a spiral and not a circle and as the spiral grew smaller so the flying saucer grew smaller until it was very little more than the size of a waistcoat button going round the head of a maiden in New York Central Park. All the security forces converged on her because it was clear from the expression on her face that she was receiving a message, at which she smiled. Finally, the waistcoat button fell on to the path and was picked up and proved to be a waistcoat button and the security forces converged upon the maiden and bullied her into telling them—and she did not want to—what the flying saucer had told her. She said "I don't want to, because it will spoil it all." They said "Never mind, it may be very important for the security of the United States". She said "Well, all it said was 'Don't be unhappy; you are not the only lonely object in the universe'." I think that is a much more comforting thought with which to approach the subject of flying saucers than to suppose that they are engaged in some kind of imperialism.

[The Earl of Halsbury.]

Personally I have always believed, with the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, in the Lochness monster. He is not the only person to believe in it. He was anticipated by Keats and I am quite sure that, when the poet wrote the line,

" Thou still unravished bride of quietness ",

he must have had the monster in mind. Of course he did not go into it in great detail; he did not tell us whether the monster was viviparous or oviparous. It may, of course, lay eggs, but if unravished, then infertile, and that is perhaps why there is only one of it. I have always thought that just as mother, when baking bread, leaves a little of the dough over in order that the children may make funny little men with raisins for tummy buttons and put them into ovens and bake them alongside the bread or the cake for the day, so possibly on the day of creation a little of the Divine creative power was left in reserve for the lesser cherubim and seraphim to use and they were allowed to make funny little objects like the Abominable Snowman and the Lochness monster, and therefore by the grace of God since this is an orderly universe and a home is provided for everything, so the snows of Tibet were created for the benefit of the Yeti and Lochness was created for the monster.

Lord HEWLETT: My Lords, I join other noble Lords in congratulating the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, upon his maiden speech but I run the terrible risk of being accused by the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, of being an anthropological arrogant specimen. I am not quite sure what that means, and I am not quite sure that he knows what it means.

Lord DAVIES of LEEK: Oh!

Lord HEWLETT: All right, I am prepared to stand by it. I am only sorry to appear to be a veritable Daniel in a lions' den of UFO believers and to spoil the fun, and I have no doubt that today's flights of—dare I say it?—fancy will command far more attention than our debate yesterday upon British industry, which scarcely made today's Press at all. More's the pity. Of course, there is a danger in terminology and in gross assumptions. Many noble Lords have spoken as though UFOs were actually something, but of course we are precisely saying that if they are unidentified flying objects, we do not know what they are. So I quite agree, let us dismiss the concept of flying saucer equals UFO to start with. Let us try to take a slightly more scientific approach.

I would not dream of speaking in this debate had I not asked my very good friend and neighbour in the Cheshire village of Swettenham, Sir Bernard Lovell, Fellow of the Royal Society and Nuffield Professor of Radio Astronomy, to be good enough to brief me at Manchester University Department of Radio Astronomy at Jodrell Bank, of which he is the Director. I went there two days ago and what I am about to say to your Lordships is based entirely upon that round table meeting with Sir Bernard and the members of his senior staff at Jodrell Bank. Of all the thousands of reports of sightings that have been made, whenever it has been possible to make an investigation they have been found to be natural phenomena, or in some instances, I regret to say, pure myth. Over the United Kingdom, Jodrell Bank's radio telescope, the first and still one of the most powerful in the world, has observed thousands of possible subjects for identification as UFOs, but not a single one has proved other than natural phenomena. I would ask the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, to take the point on board. If UFOs, as he suggested, defy human knowledge, how do we really know by what possible means or possible background they even exist at all?

Let us get matters into perspective, my Lords, I beg you. At least 10,000 pieces of broken up rockets of American and Russian origin are known to exist in space and maybe there are many thousands more, and occasionally they do plough back into the atmosphere and burn up. Those must account, I think your Lordships would agree, for at least some of the so-called sightings of UFOs. Nature does provide fireballs, yes, meteorites, which bombard the earth at a rate of half a ton a day. Just take a tiny country like Holland. One hundred rocks the size of your fist come through the atmosphere and hit that country in one year. Consider Holland in relation to the size of the whole of the world's surface and you must surely realise that we are under constant bombardment, not with UFOs but with meteorites. A detailed study

on the Canadian prairies has displayed how great is this bombardment which I have just described over a wide area. Even more staggering is the fact that it is estimated that 8,000 million pieces of stone and metal come to earth annually, many of these burning up on arrival and these give cause for these reports of unidentified flying objects.

What is noticeable is the close correlation between the position of the planet Venus and the reports of UFOs, for when Venus is low and bright in the sky and when it is shining through thick mist or thin cloud it does much more resemble something other than our next door planet of the solar system. Why, indeed, we are told even the great President Carter has spotted one, but it is a pity we did not read the rest of the subsequent report. It was later discovered that that was Venus precisely in those conditions I have described. If the great President of the United States can be wrong, it is just possible the few noble Lords remaining in this House tonight might be, too. Let us face it, we all would love to escape from the miseries and frustrations of our world, and particularly in these recent past days. by all means go and see " Star Wars " or " Jaws " or any other myth, but do not confuse that with very serious scientific study. That is carrying romance a little too far. We must make sure we do not make your Lordships' House a laughing stock by doing so.

One of the most advanced experimental stations at Jodrell Bank—just take these statistics on board please, my Lords—has been on watch 24 hours a day for 30 years. Do you not think it reasonable for me to suggest that if there were UFOs at least one claim would have been made, but every single thing that has been seen and observed by radio astronomy has been identified as natural phenomena and as occurring from the universe itself as we know it—I do not say from the solar system; I say from our universe. If there were something in it—and the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, is so right—of course the scientists would have been delighted to come forward with an announcement to that effect. After all, it was Jodrell Bank that managed to locate the Sputnik when the Russians, who so cleverly launched it, lost track of it in the atmosphere. So do not think that this is some denigrating comment by the scientific lobby and some nasty, cheap debunking exercise. No, my Lords. We must take a serious scientific view of the actual surveys and of what has been discovered.

Lord DAVIES of LEEK: My Lords, I am delighted to hear what the noble Lord says. However, I beg the noble Lord to remember that there are other scientists who say that of course we know that there are meteorites—there have been for the whole of time—but there are some factors outside that range which justify (and this is all we ask) an attempt at identification. There is no difficulty in identifying meteorites. We are not asking for that: we are asking for the identification of other types of phenomena.

Lord HEWLETT: My Lords, that promptly begs the question. That is precisely what I am saying. The identications that have been made are not necessarily of individual meteorites: they are of endemic portions of rockets and so on. During 30 years study and a constant watch for 24 hours a day there has been not a single sighting of any description which could possibly or remotely be considered worthy of serious study as a UFO. Every single thing has been explicable. With all respect, it is no use noble Lords saying that this is not a convenient answer: we must find some things that are not explicable. I am telling your Lordships and it is perfectly fair. Your Lordships may say " Scientists ". I am quoting one of the leading world, radio astronomers—indeed, probably the leading world radio astronomer. Frankly, scientists can be anything from a B.Sc. London University, passed yesterday. However, I am talking about 30 years experience of radio astronomy and a professorship of the highest standing and order in the whole world. Both the United States and the Soviet Union come to Sir Bernard at Jodrell Bank for assistance.

Lord DAVIES of LEEK: My Lords, nobody is denigrating what the noble Lord is saying, but he is off beat here. All we are saying is that there are some of these phenomena that need investigation—that is all.

Lord HEWLETT: My Lords, perhaps the noble Lord could show me just one

[Lord Hewlett.]

phenomenon which requires——I have given way a good number of times and I should be grateful if the noble Lord would let me finish my sentence. I am saying that Jodrell Bank, which covers the whole of the United Kingdom, has been on watch for 30 years. It is probably the most powerful radio telescope in the world. With great respect, if it has found nothing whatsoever to report in a positive way then, for the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, to throw at me, "some scientists think that . . ." is not good enough.

Lord DAVIES of LEEK: My Lords, we must not take more time.

Lord HEWLETT: No my Lords, we must not, so I fear that the noble Lord must give way to the argument. I shall give way to the noble Earl Lord Kimberley. I knew that I should have a rough time!

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: My Lords, does the noble Lord not think it conceivable that Jodrell Bank says that there are no UFOs because that is what it has been told to say?

Lord HEWLETT: I certainly think it inconceivable—absolutely and completely inconceivable. I have known this scientist personally for more than 30 years. I would not dream of going along for a briefing, so to speak, on the estination that he was to con me or that I was some tool of the CIA to kid your Lordships. Please do not let us carry this fantasy too far. I shall deal with one or two other aspects of the noble Earl's speech and then he shall see some correlation to the whole of my argument.

Let us turn to the defence interests of the Pentagon and other Western defence establishments. When they have been challenged they have refused to say that UFOs do not exist. Nor have they said that UFOs do exist. They are not committed. We are all men of the world and frankly there are advantages in making an international over-estimate of the possible potential strength of one's potential enemy and his ability to combat one in sectors in which one cannot adequately reply. I think that it would be most unwise of any defence establishment to make a categorical denial of UFOs, and equally foolish of me to do so. I am not trying to prove the existence of nothing or that something does not exist. I am saying that in the scientific evidence so far—and I can deal only in detail with the United Kingdom—there is no evidence whatever from the greatest radio telescope of a single UFO. I think that the attitudes of defence establishments worldwide, even including the Soviet Union, are probably wise: they must display the antithesis of over-confidence and complacency, lest there should perchance be some new arm of warfare that they have not adequately explored or even entered. Particularly did this attitude apply in the first decade after the Second World War when, frankly, the start of the "cold war" and the intense fear of the Soviet Union's possible aggression against the West when we were the sole possessors of atomic weapons, must have provoked such a degree of intense interest in the possibility of a new arm of warfare.

I am sorry that the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Norwich is not here, but I am glad that the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, is on the Opposition Front Bench. I quote from Sir Bernard:

> "Whether we are the only people in the universe is entirely another matter. That is a subject of very serious importance and is being investigated".

But there is no direct connection between the possibility of other persons occupying other bodies, either within or outside our own solar system. However, one thing is quite clear: there is an infinitesimal chance that there exists other people who could be within our time-frame—and I refer of course to the statements made by the noble Lord, Lord Gladwyn, and the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury—who would be able to spend perhaps ten or hundreds of light years getting here and who would have survived that length of time in those atrocious conditions and entered our earth atmosphere assuming that they are some sort of humanity and have some form of flying saucer, or whatever our friends proclaim it is. How could they possibly meet us in those circumstances? Let us take the million-to-one possibility that they could. Do your Lordships mean to tell me that they could get so close to us as to be sighted, but be incapable of any form of communication or identification whatever? No, I am sorry.

I have listened most carefully to everything that has been said. The noble

Earls, Lord Clancarty and Lord Kimberley, have claimed sightings from times before Christ, through the Middle Ages up to the present day. Those noble Earls know full well that the amount of scientific knowledge in the Middle Ages, and particularly before the times of Christ, simply did not allow a tenable theory that they had that degree of knowledge to be able to understand any of the phenomena that we know today. Indeed, in the last 30 years there has been a dramatic change in the sum total of knowledge in this field. No doubt that is why Jodrell Bank can proclaim that they have had no evidence of sightings of any description which are not perfectly explicable as natural phenomena within our own universe.

I am sorry, the existence of UFOs is even more fanciful than Gilbert and Sullivan's Iolanthe—charming indeed, but I am afraid a joke upon your Lordships' House. I am afraid that some of my noble friends join the flat-earthers, who will make the best playmates for this particular lobby. We have a duty to the country to explode the myth. Tonight we have been carried away in realms of fascination and delight, but they have precious little to do with the facts. I suggest that the myth must be exploded. We must return to work in this dreary old world and the difficulties we are in. But I beg your Lordships, and in particular the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, for heavens' sake, no more Government Departments of inquiries. That alone we should be spared as the result of this excellent debate.

9.55 p.m.

The Earl of CORK and ORRERY: My Lords, I hope that the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, will not be cast down by the speech to which he has just listened. I myself must confess that I know remarkably little about unidentified flying objects. I know a few things about them. I know quite a bit, and I have learned more since the beginning of this debate, about attitudes towards them. They are almost as interesting in some ways. There is one type of attitude towards them that I view with respect, and that is the attitude represented by people who call themselves, or perhaps to be fair are called by others, "ufologists". I do not know whether the noble Earl will accept that word. I rather hope he would not.

I admit the charm, the satisfaction, and the neatness of UFO as—this is the word the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Leek, is so good at—an acronym, coming from "unidentified flying object". But it unfortunately leads to a word which to disrespectful persons, and there are some about, might be suspected as originating somewhere between illiteracy and the purely silly: rather as though a keen student of the affairs of the United Nations should describe himself as a "Unologist", and his interest "Unology". That would have been severely distressing to my late lamented friend Lord Conesford, and indeed to me.

If there is an agency set up for collecting and correlation of information, as I hope there will be, I suppose it could be called "Ufo info", which would have a certain elfin charm. But I am admittedly being absurd, and being so on purpose. I am doing it for defensive reasons, and I hope that the noble Earl will not think that I am being offensive. I am not. I hope that somebody will think of a better word. There is in fact a Greek word "*téras*", meaning a portent in the sense of a marvel or wonder, which would generate quite nicely a teratologist, or teratology. In fact I am not sure that teratology is not in the dictionary as the study of monsters. It is not a word that is widely used. It is not on everyone's lips very often, and it would not really matter if it were taken over to refer to portents. There is a precedent for this kind of thing, in television. As noble Lords will know, television originally meant, before it meant what it means now in the familiar sense as we understand it, clairvoyance, and nobody finds any confusion now. Whatever it may be known as, let us proceed and not waste time.

I must make a remark—nobody has done so so far, I suspect rather to his surprise—about the speech of my noble friend Lord Trefgarne. If he had been speaking as a private Back-Bencher I would probably have not said anything, but he was speaking from the Dispatch Box. Therefore, he presumably represents the views of the Party to which I belong. It is a view I wish to disown entirely, because if a Party of any magnitude cannot produce better views than that on a serious subject, I confess I am ashamed

[The Earl of Cork and Orrery.]

of it. If this represents all that the Conservative Party can produce in the way of thinking on what is undoubtedly a serious subject, whatever your opinion about it may be, then this is deplorable.

If the noble Lord really thinks that there is no serious interest or belief taken nowadays in witchcraft, perhaps he does not read the right newspapers, but I can assure him that this is far from true. He is not a believer in unidentified flying objects. "I am no believer in UFOs", he said. I do not know how you can not believe in UFOs. You can take it for granted, if your mind takes a leap ahead, that by an unidentified flying object something is intended that is supposed to have originated in outer space, and you can say you do not believe in that. But I do not know what it implies to say that you do not believe in an unidentified flying object. You do not believe in the object? You do not believe in its flying? You do not believe it is unidentified? There are things that are unidentified. Perhaps we are not trying. I do not think it is reasonable to say that they do not exist. Nobody, except my noble friend Lord Hewlett, has seriously contended that they do not exist. The question is, what are they?

Lord TREFGARNE: I am pleased my noble friend has allowed me to intervene, my Lords, because he has been very caustic about what I had to say. I do not deny the existence of unidentified flying objects. I simply say that most of them are identifiable, that some are not objects at all but simply a trick of the light or a meteorological phenonemon—I think that is so in many cases—and that I agree one cannot deny the existence of unidentified flying objects. It is simply a question of how we identify them.

The Earl of CORK and ORRERY: My Lords, I take my noble friend's point. I am anxious not to misquote him, but he also said that ufologists—it is difficult not to use that word—referred to unexplained sightings which would be explained if only we had better evidence; that was the gist of one part of my noble friend's argument. In other words, if we had better evidence we should be able to explain those sightings. That is the sole point on which the noble Earl initiated this debate. That is what he is asking for: he wishes evidence to be collected, collated, examined, evaluated and reported on as to what these things are, and it is notable that he himself did not say what he thought they were. Other noble Lords have spoken as though he had said they were fairies or I do not know what, when in fact he said no such thing. I believe he is a leading authority on these matters—certainly he has studied them more closely than anyone else of whom I have heard—and he must have exercised very great restraint in this matter, and he is to be congratulated on that as well as on initiating the whole debate.

I once had an ancestor—I still have him in a sense, in that he is still my ancestor although he is dead—called Robert Boyle who founded a society called the Royal Society. I feel that if he returned to the rooms of that enormously prestigious society now and found that the present Royal Society contained Fellows of such erudition and charm as the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, he would feel entirely at home; a man of the most agreeable and totally non-sceptical nature, even if he did write a book called *The Sceptical Chemist*.

The noble Earl has done a service by displaying before our very eyes the scientist-philosopher who knows precisely the limits of science and makes no effort to go beyond them. Nor does he point the finger of scorn at anyone else. He must know, as others know, that it is impossible to prove anything by negative evidence. If you wish to prove that something is not so you can do it only in logic—by proving the existence of something that is so that makes that first premise impossible. Thus, you cannot prove that any particular type of flying object does not exist, and with respect to my noble friend, the fact that the Jodrell Bank telescope has not seen something not only does not prove, but is not even particularly good evidence, that it was not there. I am prepared to accept, if told, that the Jodrell Bank telescope has been operating on a frequency suited to the observation of UFOs of one kind or another for the last 30 years, but, until I am told that, I shall be sceptical in that matter.

Lord HEWLETT: Let me be quite clear about this, my Lords. I did not say other than that Jodrell Bank had made

many thousands of sightings but had been able adequately to explain them away as natural phenomena from our own universe.

The Earl of CORK and ORRERY: I thought that I had my noble friend right, my Lords; in other words, the telescope has not seen anything that was inexplicable. But I do not think that that is really an argument that something does not exist. The question is: what kind of thing can it be? I hope that my noble friend does not think that I am going on about him—I no longer am. How is it possible to maintain more than a certain degree of doubt in 1979?

I remember, as may some other noble Lords, one or two of whom may be present in the Chamber, my predecessor who sat in this House. He was born in the year 1886. When he was born there were no motor-bicycles or gramophones, fountain pens, safety razors or electric trains. Messrs. Daimler and Benz in Germany were just putting the first petrol-driven car on to the road, and Einstein, I think, was eight years old. My noble and gallant kinsman, when he finally left the active list of the Navy at a very advanced age, had lived into the age of the nuclear submarine, having begun his first sea-going voyage under sail. That was the band of progress represented technologically in the lifetime of one serving naval officer. What would he have said had he been told that in my lieftime—and I am not even all that near the end of it, either—I should see men on the moon; or computer technology carried to the pitch that it has reached; or that there would be such an outbreak of wisdom following Einstein and men like Schrodinger, Heisenberg and others; or the astonishing ascent of knowledge into the atomic world?

This has all happened in the lifetime of many of us, and yet we sit here, some of us, and say that marvels which have been postulated by some, and which indeed are less in magnitude than most of those would have been to my uncle, are impossible. We are not all saying that—perhaps nobody is saying that—but the argument is quite untenable. I have no wish to express any view on what a UFO may be. What I wish to say is that there is no knowing what it is not. It may be a product of some kind of sign language, as the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, mentioned. It may be mechanical. It may be purely terrestrial. I doubt if it is angels. But I believe that, for the clearing up of mystery, for the removal of doubt, for even the eliminating of some of the dangers which may exist and to which the right reverend Prelate referred, some kind of an open inquiry ought to be set up. I am rather inclined to agree with the noble Lord—I think that it was the noble Lord, Lord Kings Norton—who said that probably it should not be an intra-governmental inquiry. I think it should be someting rather more open than that, but it ought to take place. If a group is set up within this House, as suggested by the noble Earl himself, that would be excellent. I should myelf be entirely in favour of it. In any case, let us get this matter cleared up and into the open, and by all means let us take it seriously, because this is a serious subject. Far too many people are taking it seriously for it not to be a serious subject.

Finally, I wish to voice my most sincere congratulations to my noble friend who made his maiden speech this afternoon. It is very impertinent of me to congratulte him upon it, but I should like to say how much I enjoyed it. I have not yet said anything complimentary about the noble Earl who initiated the debate. I have left this to the end on purpose because I think it may not be entirely realised what a service he has done. This is the first such debate that has occurred in any society such as this particular one; and this society, by which I mean this noble House of Parliament, is probably the only legislative assembly in the world in which it could happen. I hope that it will have repercussions which will spread far beyond this Chamber. What the outcome will be I do not know, but, in initiating the ripples which I hope will spread all over the surface of the mill-pond, the noble Earl has done a most valuable service.

10.10 p.m.

Lord STRABOLGI: My Lords, I should like to join with the noble Earl, Lord Cork and Orrery, in saying how grateful we are to the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for initiating this debate on UFOs. Of course, the subject has been of considerable interest in this country, and I hope our discussions, which, as the noble Earl rightly said, have been the first that we have had in your Lordships'

[Lord Strabolgi.]

House, will help to increase public understanding. But before I reply in detail to the debate—and I think it has been a most interesting one—I should like to join with my noble friend Lord Davies of Leek in congratulating the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, on his maiden speech. We were very glad to hear from him, if I may say so, and I hope we shall hear from him again on many other occasions. I shall be referring to some of the detail of his speech later, but at this stage I should like to offer him my warmest congratulations.

There are undoubtedly many strange phenomena in the skies, and it can be readily accepted that most UFO reports are made by calm and responsible people. However, there are generally straightforward explanations to account for the phenomena, as I think was said by the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, speaking for the Opposition—and I must say that I welcomed his constructive speech. There is nothing to convince the Government that there has ever been a single visit by an alien space craft, let alone the numbers of visits which the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, claims are increasing all the time. As has been said today, we live in a huge universe. I find as awe-inspiring as Pascal did the contemplation of infinite space. There are some 100,000 million stars in our galaxy alone, which it would take 100,000 years to cross at the speed of light. Beyond our own galaxy, the distances become even more daunting. The light year, as your Lordships know, is about 6 million million miles. The Andromeda galaxy is over 2 million light years away, and that is in our own local group of galaxies! There are, of course, other groups as well.

The evidence suggests that there is no intelligent life on the other planets of our own solar system, as the noble Viscount said. There are, of course, different views about whether there might be life elsewhere in the universe, but certainly there is no serious positive evidence to show that there is. If there were an advanced civilisation elsewhere in the universe, as my noble friend Lord Davies of Leek supposed, with the technology to traverse these colossal distances, there are many questions to be answered. What is the point of this alleged huge number of visits to our planet, over three decades or more, to no apparent purpose? There seem to be internal inconsistencies in the idea. To put it simply, if these alleged aliens prefer to keep out of the way, the number of reported sightings would surely be only a tiny portion of the actual UFO movements, which would run into many millions. If they do not prefer to pass unnoticed, we could surely expect unmistakeable appearances.

Why have they never tried to communicate with us? Why has there been no evidence on radio of attempts at communication? And would not such a large number of movements be picked up by our defence radar system? Why has not a single artefact been found? Assuming that each visit does not represent a journey from a distant star, where are these alien space craft supposed to be hiding? Now that the idea of such bases on the moon or on another planet in our solar system is barely tenable, ufologists have had to claim that the aliens are based in the depths of the sea or in a great hole in the earth, or even that they come from invisible universes and other space-time continua. Anyone who accepts the hypothesis of large numbers of alien visitations seems forced towards explanations that are ever more fantastic, and incapable of either proof or disproof.

As I have said, there really are many remarkable things to see in the sky; and most UFO reports relate to actual phenomena reported by sensible people. But, my Lords, let us consider the phenomena themselves—and the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, mentioned some of these. Huge quantities of space debris enter our atmosphere, and are often seen as meteors, and fireballs; bright planets and even the moon or stars have been reported as UFOs, in unusual atmospheric conditions, as the noble Lord, Lord Hewlett, said; there are tricks of light on cloud, and particular cloud structures; there is Aurora Borealis, St. Elmo's Fire and ball lightning which was referred to by the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, which has been known to drift along telephone or power lines. There are some 5,000 man-made objects in orbit, satellites and debris, some of which can be seen by the naked eye, some through binoculars. About 600 such man-made objects re-enter the atmosphere every year, as the noble Lord, Lord Hewlett, reminded us. The quantity is far less than natural space

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Last April the Ministry of Defence received reports of a large piece of debris re-entering across the South of England. Most reports were factual, but one spoke of an

". . . oval thing with a white cockpit which hovered for a while then shot off at great speed ".

My Lords, we cannot prove that this was not a UFO, but it occurred at the same time and place as known re-entry of debris.

Many reports relate to aircraft seen in unusual conditions at unusual angles. One recent UFO was confidently reported on local radio. Again, my Lords, we cannot prove that it was not a UFO, but we do know that an RAF Vulcan bomber on a low-flying mission passed the same spot at the same time and on the same course as the reported UFO. Aircraft lights have led to UFO reports; as have distant aircraft with landing lights on—I have seen them myself—flares from aircraft, short condensation trails lit by the sun after dusk and light reflected from aircraft. Other phenomena include meteorological balloons. The Meteorological Office alone releases 50 such balloons every day, which expand to 40 ft. in diameter and rise to 100,000 ft. and can be lit by the sun after dark. Many other organisations, such as universities, use balloons, some much larger. Meteorological searchlights shine on clouds: the beam itself cannot be seen; only a point of light in the sky. There are hot air balloons and kites; even birds have been reported as UFOs; lights on distant towers; car headlights on distant hills; dust devils; and airborne debris carried by the wind.

All these phenomena can be misinterpreted by the most sensible observers, particularly when seen unexpectedly and briefly and in unusual atmospheric conditions. This is what opponents of the natural explanations forget. With distortions of light, and mirages, the most commonplace things can be so changed as to be barely recognisable. For instance, I am told that the US Air Force attributed the 1947 sighting by Arnold described by the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, to a mirage effect.

Phenomena seen through glass are suspect. There are phenomena generated within the eyeball and there are optical illusions to which the noble Earl Lord Halsbury referred. One scientist, whose task includes watching satellites, describes how, when observing stars near moving clouds, he finds it difficult to escape the illusion that the stars are flying past stationary clouds. The noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, referred to the green flash. I used to see it myself in Alexandria when on leave. It was one of our evening pastimes to sit on the promenade and watch it go down over the sea.

My Lords, in 1968, the United States Air Force commissioned the University of Colorado to carry out an independent study into UFO phenomena. Their report, which was published in 1969, was very substantial and detailed and it covered some 50 examples of such phenomena, but added that it was impossible and potentially misleading to try to tabulate all of the possible causes of UFO perception: there are simply too many. The report's main conclusion was, and I quote:

" Nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge ".

The findings of this report were endorsed by a panel of the National Academy of Sciences.

There really are tens of thousands of strange things to be seen. It is the custom to call such phenomena " UFOs ", and to transpose this easily into " alien space craft ". Often the appearance is too fleeting and the description too imprecise for a particular cause to be attributed. What we can say is that there is a great variety of plain explanations. There is no need, I suggest, for the far-fetched hypothesis of alien space craft.

To genuine sightings we must, however, add hallucinations: the excited tales of the gullible; and the embellishments of the born romantic. There are also indications that ufologists accept reports of UFOs somewhat uncritically. The noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, referred to a papyrus found among the papers of a Professor Tulli recording flying saucers during the reign of Thutmose III. The Colarado Report, which I mentioned earlier, inquired into this story. The alleged papyrus could not be traced, but internal evidence in the translation suggested a fake; inquiries with the Vatican Museum

[Lord Strabolgi.]

also suggested that Tulli, an amateur Egyptologist, had been taken in by a fake.

There is a category of UFO cases which are difficult to explain because the description is too vague or the evidence too remote, coupled perhaps with a coincidence of different phenomena and with exceptional conditions. If one accepts that there are natual explanations that could account for most sightings, it is an enormous and irrational jump to claim that the residue of difficult cases constitute alien space craft when there is no positive evidence that they do constitute alien space craft.

I should mention the famous UFO reported over the United Kingdom in December 1978, on New Year's Eve in fact. This was the one probably seen by the noble Lord, Lord Gainford, to which he referred. The phenomenon was probably the re-entry of a launcher associated with the Russian space satellite COSMOS 1068, launched on 26th December. Of over 100 reports reaching the Ministry of Defence, nearly all were factual and consistent with the re-entry of satellite debris.

The recent sightings in New Zealand referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Kings Norton, attracted worldwide publicity, and we understand that the New Zealand Government may make an announcement when the facts have been assembled and appraised. Preliminary advice from our High Commission in New Zealand shows confident expectation that the sightings will prove to be due to natural phenomena, as I think the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, and the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, implied.

My Lords, the noble Earl who initiated this debate referred to the attitude of other Governments to UFOs. It is not for me to speak in this House for other Governments. I have however already made mention of the United States study in 1968 and I understand that nothing has happened since that time to cause the United States authorities to change their views or to warrant further official investigations of UFOs.

The noble Earl also referred to an interview which the then French Minister of Defence, M. Robert Galley gave in 1974 on the subject of UFOs. The noble Earl suggested that M. Galley had said that UFOs were real but that he, the Minister, did not know where they came from. I have read the transcript of M. Galley's broadcast and I also took the trouble to check it in the original French. The essence of what the Minister said was that the phenomena were genuine and were reported by responsible people, but that there were aspects that were difficult to explain. Nowhere did the Minister say that UFOs were real in the sense that they represent alien spacecraft, as suggested by the noble Lord, Lord Rankeillour.

The noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, also said that these had been seen by astronauts. These reports by astronauts were examined in the Colorado Study. The atronauts were required, of course, to report anything unusual perceived on their missions; and indeed many strange phenomena were noted. All the phenomena except three were explained. There was nothing at all to suggest that the unexplained sightings were alien spacecraft, and the limited visibility from the small and smeared windows of a spacecraft did not make visual observation easy.

It has been suggested in this debate that our Government are involved in an alleged conspiracy of silence. I can assure your Lordships that the Government are not engaged in any such conspiracy. In view of what the noble Lord, Lord Gainford, said, I must emphasise that the Ministry of Defence examines any UFO reports received to establish whether they reveal anything of defence interest, but nothing in the reports examined has ever given cause to believe that they represent alien spacecraft. There is nothing to have a conspiracy of silence about. What is more, a visitor from outer space would be one of the great events in history. It would certainly be an event of stupendous importance, but I hesitate to say the greatest event of all in the presence of my old friend the right reverend prelate the Bishop of Norwich, whose moving speech we listened to with much interest.

As the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, said, scientists are rightly inquisitive people. If there was anything in the stories of UFOs, we would expect the scientific community as a whole to be devoting much offort to studying or to making contact with the supposed aliens;

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but the idea of a conspiracy of silence by this and other Governments belongs, I suggest, to the world of James Bond.

Then the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, implied that there was some kind of cover-up. There is no cover-up and no security ban. It is true that when people ask to see the Ministry of Defence UFO files they are told that the papers must remain confidential, but there is a very mundane reason for that. The files contain voluminous correspondence from people, and we cannot divulge the identity of the correspondents. It follows that the files must remain closed under the rules laid down in the Public Record Acts, passed by Parliament, which at present preclude disclosure until 30 years have elapsed since the date of the particular correspondence. The earliest reports the Ministry of Defence hold are dated 1962.

The noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, mentioned the possibility of an intra-governmental study of UFOs. At the United Nations recently, representatives of Grenada made statements about UFOs and proposals for a study. A compromise decision was taken, wherein the General Assembly invited "interested member states" to co-ordinate research "on a national level" and to inform the Secretary-General of their findings. The Secretary-General was requested to transmit the Grenadan statements and other relevant reports to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. This is not an inter-governmental study, in the sense that the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, is seeking, but he may be content that Grenada, and perhaps some other countries, may be reporting in an international forum.

Lord KINGS NORTON: My Lords, the word was "intra", not "inter".

Lord STRABOLGI: My Lords, I take note of what the noble Lord said. Then it has been suggested, too, in this debate that Her Majesty's Government should set up a study group. I am glad to say that the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, and the noble Lord, Lord Gladwyn, both speaking from the Front Benches for the Opposition Parties, did not support this proposal, and certainly Her Majesty's Government do not consider that there is any justification for the expenditure of public money on such a study.

I repeat that I am grateful to the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for raising the subject of UFOs, and I am particularly grateful to him for informing me in advance of the points which he proposed to make to your Lordships. However, from all I have said, I am sure that your Lordships will agree that there is no reason for my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Defence to make a broadcast interview about UFOs, as the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, suggested. As for telling the public the truth about UFOs, the truth is simple. There really are many strange phenomena in the sky, and these are invariably reported by rational people. But there is a wide range of natural explanations to account for such phenomena. There is nothing to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that such phenomena are alien space craft.

Viscount BARRINGTON: My Lords, may I ask a question? I did rise to ask it when the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, rose. I was going to ask it of the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, but I think it would be more courteous to ask it of the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi. The subject of this debate is "objects", and in the expert speech—with almost all of which I agreed—of the noble Earl, Lord Halsbury, he mentioned that scientists, as scientists, are dealing only with material objects. I have to be careful here, as a non-scientist who minds his p's and q's, and who hardly knows a quasar from a pulsar, but is a black hole a material object?

Lord STRABOLGI: My Lords, I should not at all like to follow the noble Viscount down that avenue. I do not think that even scientists or astronomers know what black holes are. I may say that, in a way, I think it is a pity that the noble Viscount did not take part in the debate.

10.34 p.m.

The Earl of CLANCARTY: My Lords, I should like to thank the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, for his assurances and for the information which he has given us. I am sorry that we are not to be able to listen to, or see, his right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Defence, giving a television interview about UFOs. There are just one or two very small points, before I end this debate. We

[The Earl of Clancarty.]

have talked about the umpteen light years that some of these planets and stars are away from us. But we are looking at it from our own standpoint, because we started to fly only in 1903, when the Wright brothers took off. Now we have got Concorde, so we consider ourselves to be rather good. But we say that we cannot go right out into space because of all this distance in light years. Let us suppose, however, as has been suggested, that there are billions of planets with civilisations thousands of years old. Is it not possible that they could come here, after all that time, almost instantaneously? It is just a thought.

A propos of that, I should like to bring to the attention of your Lordships a famous scientist and astronomer, our own Sir Fred Hoyle. Some years ago he wrote a book called *Of Men and Galacies*. He wrote a passage in that book which I was allowed to quote in one of mine. It read:

" You are all familiar with an ordinary telephone directory. If you want to speak to someone, you look up his number and you dial the appropriate code. My speculation "—

this is Sir Fred Hoyle speaking—

" is that a similar situation exists and has existed for billions of years in the galaxy. My speculation is that an interchange of messages is going on on a vast scale all the time and that we are as unaware of it as a pygmy in the African forests is unaware of the radio messages that flash at the speed of light round the earth. My guess is that there might be a million or more subscribers to the galactic directory. Our problem is to get our name into that directory ".

I think that noble Lords will agree that there is a man of vision. Nothing is impossible in this world or in this universe. It is just that the seemingly impossible takes a little time to come about.

My Lords, we have had an interesting discussion this evening. I should like to thank the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Norwich and all noble Lords who have taken part in this debate for their wonderful contributions. I should also like to congratulate the noble Viscount, Lord Oxfuird, upon his splendid maiden speech. May I also thank all other noble Lords for their rapt and riveted attention. I beg leave to withdraw the Motion for Papers.

Motion for Papers, by leave, withdrawn.

WRITTEN ANSWERS

" BRITISH NATIONALITY LAW: DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE CHANGES "

Lord AVEBURY asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will publish the comments which the Home Office has so far received on the Green Paper *British Nationality Law: Discussion of Possible Changes* (Cmnd. 6795) which appeared in April 1977 and which invited comments from the public and from interested bodies " as part of the process of open government ".

The MINISTER of STATE, HOME OFFICE (Lord Boston of Faversham): So far nearly 250 persons or organisations have sent in comments on the Green Paper. Understandably there is a good deal of repetition and Her Majesty's Government do not intend to publish all of this material verbatim. It is open to any of the authors of papers to publish them and some have done so at least in substance. Her Majesty's Government will have in mind the possibility of publishing in due course a summary of all comments received.

DISABLED PERSONS: EMPLOYMENT QUOTA DEFICIENCY

Lord VAIZEY asked Her Majesty's Government:

What is the number and percentage of firms failing to employ their quota of disabled persons for each year since 1960.

Lord WALLACE of COSLANY: I am advised by the Manpower Services Commission that the required information is as follows:—

Year	Number of firms with a quota obligations not complying with 3 per cent. quota at annual review	Figure in previous column as % of firms subject to quota
1960 ...	24,974	38·2
1961 ...	25,340	38·6
*1962 ...	15,389	42·1
*1963 ...	14,899	42·1
1964 ...	29,271	45·2
1965 ...	31,038	46·8
1966 ...	31,661	48·3
1967 ...	34,176	52·3
1968 ...	34,319	53·7
1969 ...	35,102	55·5
1970 ...	36,396	57·3
1971 ...	36,382	58·2
1972 ...	34,794	57·8
1973 ...	33,779	58·4
1974 ...	33,106	60·0
1975 ...	32,340	60·9
1976 ...	31,065	61·3
1977 ...	31,763	62·9
1978 ...	30,446	63·2

*In 1962 and 1963 a survey was made in respect of all firms with more than 500 staff but only a selection of firms with less than 500 staff (but which nevertheless had a quota obligations). The figures for the years 1962 and 1963 are therefore percentages based on the number of firms reviewed in those years and not on all firms subject to quota.

DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL: UN RESOLUTIONS

Lord KENNET asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will publish in convenient form the initiatives taken by Her Majesty's Government, whether unilaterally or in association with others, and the votes they cast, on disarmament and arms control resolutions at last autumn's General Assembly.

Lord GORONWY-ROBERTS: The Government's initiatives on resolutions on arms control and disarmament will be described in detail in the Report on the 33rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, to be published as a White Paper. A separate record will shortly be made available to non-governmental organisations with a special interest in disarmament and will be placed in the Library of the House.

House adjourned at twenty-two minutes before eleven o'clock.

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Reference.....USofS(RAF)/4/21/1.....

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Head of S4(Air)

Copy to:

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UFOs

Thank you for informing US of S(RAF) of your decision with Colonel Innocenti (an appropriate name for an Air Attache concerned about UFOs?). Minister was pleased to see the MOD pathfinding for others in this particular Starwar.

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26 Jan 79

PS/USofS(RAF)

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See E56.

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LORDS DEBATE ON UFOs - SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Attached is a note on the alleged electrical effects of UFOs, as requested by Lord Strabolgi; I have added some additional material mainly in response to points raised in Lord Clancarty's speech.

2. Ball lightning, referred to in the Annex, should not be confused with fireballs. Fireball (or bolide) is a term used (at least by the Americans) for meteors with a luminosity equalling or greater than the brightest planets; about 1500 with a luminosity greater than the moon enter the atmosphere each year. The appearance of fireballs differs considerably from the traditional "shooting star": vivid colours and colour changes are common; they may break up, with fragments circling or flying "in formation"; the trajectory may appear horizontal; and their brightness causes people to underestimate the distance greatly.

3. I am not clear what Lord Strabolgi wants about the "inter-Governmental conspiracy", as I thought this was fully covered in the drafts. However, we now have a further (albeit brief) report from Paris about the special UFO group, and have had more time to read Lord Clancarty's speech. Para 18 of the draft speech might be expanded. You might also send Lord Strabolgi the attached files on PQs by Lord Clancarty: which include the transcript of M Galley's 1974 broadcast.

4. I must stress that the Americans are the only country known to have conducted a fully study of UFOs. The French, as far as we know, have not. Lord Clancarty claims that:

a. Mr Galley said that UFOs were real but he did not know where they came from. This is nonsense. M Galley was somewhat vague (apparently there was a big UFO "flap" at the time) but in essence said that we should keep an open mind, that the phenomena were genuine and were reported by sensible people, and that there were aspects to the phenomena difficult to explain; but he seems to have been at pains to avoid suggesting that the phenomena were due to alien space craft.

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b. That UFO reports were sent to a Centre in Toulouse where they were studied. This is true. DNS gave the reply in December 1977 (see attached extract from Hansard). The latest signal from Paris indicates that the group has two full time people and can call on the help of others; the group was set up in May 1977, but it has published nothing. A supplementary phone call from Paris, based on conversations with CNES, indicated that the group had no plans to publish anything and was not sure where it was going and would like a copy of the Hansard account of the debate.

c. That M Galley said that gendarmes play an important part in investigations, including examining burnt marks where UFOs had landed. M Galley said that the gendarmes make many serious reports (which in sum were "actually quite disturbing"), and that a few of them reported "changes in the ground".

5. I suggest para 18 be amended to read as follows:

"The Noble Earl claims that M Galley, in a 1974 broadcast said that UFOs were real but he did not know where they came from. I have read the transcript of M Galley's speech, and nowhere did he say that "UFOs were real" in the sense that they represent alien space craft. The essence of what he said was that the phenomena were genuine and were reported by responsible people, and that there were aspects to the phenomena difficult to explain. It is apparently correct that a small group was set up in France in May 1977 to look at reports of UFOs, but we are advised that the group has not published anything".

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16 January 1979

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ANNEX

SUPPLEMENTARY DEFENSIVE MATERIAL

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1. Electrical effects. Lord Clancarty said that UFOs cause electrical interference and have been responsible for power failures. The Colorado Study enquired into this subject. They found no evidence that any power failure in the US had been related to a UFO report. Electrical effects are another matter. Several of the phenomena which generate UFO reports produce electrical fields, for example dust devils, fire balls, ball lightning. Ball lightning is a strange phenomenon, in which a glowing or burning ball may drift near the ground or even high in the air. Ball lightning has been known to drift along telephone or power lines; so too has St Elmo's Fire; it may be one of these phenomena that Lord Clancarty's photograph portrays.

2. Variety of shapes, sizes and colours of UFOs. It is not surprising that Lord Clancarty has commented on the great variety of shapes, sizes and colours of UFOs: the phenomena being reported are legion and unrelated.

3. Many astronauts have seen UFOs. The Colorado Study examined the reports made by astronauts. The astronauts were of course required to report everything unusual perceived on their missions, and many strange phenomena were noted. All of the phenomena except three were explained. There was nothing at all to suggest that the unexplained sightings were alien space craft, and the limited visibility from the small and smeared windows of the space craft did not make visual observation easy.

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4. Does not the radar evidence confirm that the New Zealand sightings relate to extra-terrestial vehicles?

No. It is by no means sure that the visual and radar reports actually relate to the same phenomena. Besides, radar is at least as fallible as the human eye. For example, some of the transmitted radiation may go out in unusual directions and be reflected back; there is a variety of false echoes; and local conditions may affect radar.

5. The Arnold Sighting. I am told that the US Air Force attributed the 1947 sighting by Arnold to a mirage effect.

6. Could Lord Strabolgi explain the cases of ~~the~~ UFO quoted by Lord Clancarty?

It is unwise to try to assess such reports without access to the primary information. One would have to see the statements of the different witnesses, and to know such things as precise course of the observers, the bearings of the observations, and the atmospheric and other conditions. There is always a risk that such stories will have been embellished with each successive telling. /I note that, for the Teheran incident, Lord Clancarty has quoted as his primary source an article in the Daily Express last February, when that newspaper was drumming up interest in UFOs in connection with the premiere of the film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind"/.

[redacted]

countries. She has extended and expanded in the best possible way our whole approach to aid, and I should like it made absolutely clear that that is what we meant.

I should like to give the noble Lord another quotation from his article. He said that in this particular project the Government's case was based on "less elevated political motives". In answer to this I should like to give one quotation from a recent article of my right honourable friend. It is this:

". . . we all need to take into account human rights, whether it be Cambodia or Uganda, Indonesia, Chile, or Bolivia, Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union".

I am most grateful for the support I have received tonight from my two noble friends—indeed a powerful and impressive combination, and from the noble Lord, Lord Avebury, in another powerful contribution. I think now that on the question of aid for Bolivia we must look to the future. We shall not go back on our decision about the tin mining project. As I have said, our offer of assistance has been welcomed, and our commitment to help when we can find the right projects is a firm one. The Government's reasons for deciding against the mining projects are good ones. They are perfectly well understood by the Bolivian Government, and we look forward to mutually satisfactory relations over new projects.

WRITTEN ANSWERS

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

The Earl of CLANCARTY asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they are aware that in France, since 1st September 1977, a section for the study of unidentified flying objects has been set up in the National Centre for Space Studies in Toulouse, under the direction of Monsieur Claude Poher, a distinguished scientist, and that this body is sponsored upon the French Ministry of Industry and Research; and whether there is a similar scientific organisation under Government sponsorship in the United Kingdom to study unidentified flying objects, working closely with the French one.

The MINISTER of STATE, DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION and SCIENCE (Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge): Her Majesty's Government understand that a study group called the Groupe d'Etudes sur les Phenomenes Aerospatiales Non-Identifies (GEPAN) has been set up under the French Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Artisans at the National Centre for Space Studies in Toulouse. The group has no formal links with the United Kingdom, and we have no similar scientific group to study unidentified objects or phenomena.

LEGAL AID REFUSALS

Lord CHITNIS asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will list in the *Official Report* the number of applications for legal aid which have been refused for each year since 1970 and whether they will classify this information according to the following categories:

(*a*) where the Supplementary Benefits Commission have determined the applicant's disposable income at an amount greater than the limit;

(*b*) where the Supplementary Benefits Commission have determined the applicant's disposable capital at an amount greater than the limit;

(*c*) where the proceedings to which the application related are not proceedings for which legal aid may be given;

(*d*) where the applicant has not shown that he has reasonable grounds for taking, defending, or being a party to the proceedings;

(*e*) where it appears unreasonable that the applicant should receive legal aid in the particular circumstances of the case.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: The available information is set out below in two tables. No information is available about category (*c*) and combined figures only are available for categories (*a*) and (*b*). In England and Wales combined figures only are available for categories (*d*) and (*e*).

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55

CC
22 Jan

CE 2

Reference DUS(Air)/68/990

[redacted]

Copies: DI 55
Op (GE) 26 (RAF).

[redacted]

Hd/S4(Air)

UFO DEBATE

Ref: PQ 8530/B dated 19 January 1979.

In addition to the thanks of Lord Strabolgi, DUS(Air) has asked me to write and express his appreciation of a difficult job well done.

[redacted]

19 January 1979

PS/DUS(Air)

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

22 Jan

57

PQ 8530/B

Copy to:
PS/US of S(RAF)
PS/CS(RAF)
DUS(Air)
DI 55 [redacted]
Ops(GE)2b(RAF)

Head of S4(Air)

UFO DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 18TH JANUARY 1979

Lord Strabolgi has asked me to write and thank you for all the trouble which you took to prepare the speech for him to make on UFOs on behalf of the Government at last night's debate.

2. Lord Strabolgi was particularly grateful for your attendance and that of [redacted] and [redacted] in the Box throughout the debate. Lord Strabolgi told me after the debate that he thought it had gone very well and that he had covered in sufficient detail most of the points raised by various Peers during the course of the debate. He does not propose to initiate any letters to Peers concerned on any points which he may not have dealt with in detail. It may, however, be that they will write to him. If so I will, of course, take your advice.

3. I am returning to you with this minute various papers which you gave to me for my use during the debate.

[redacted]

19th January 1979

APS/SECRETARY OF STATE

[redacted]

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50

PQ 8530B

Copy to:
PS/US of S (RAF)
PS/CS(RAF)
PS/DUS(Air)
ACS(G)(RAF)
DI 55 [redacted]
Ops (GE) 2b (RAF)
Head of DS 8
DPR (RAF)

Head of S4 (Air)

LORDS DEBATE ON UFOs : 18th JANUARY 1979 47

Thank you for your minutes D/S4(Air)/8/3 of 15th and 16th January forwarding a revised draft of the speech for Lord Strabolgi and additional background information respectively.

2. I have discussed the revised speech with Lord Strabolgi and have made further - largely editorial - amendments. // I attach a copy of a letter which I handed to Lord Strabolgi last night together with a fresh copy of the speech itself. Lord Strabolgi will be reading the speech again today and will let me know as soon as possible whether he wishes to have the briefing meeting which you and [redacted] have pencilled in for 1130 tomorrow.

3. You might like to know that the debate is causing a fair amount of interest in the House of Lords. In addition to the Earl of Clancarty others taking part will include (in the following order) Lord Trefgarne, the Earl of Kimberley, Viscount St Davids, Lords Rankeillour, Kings-Norton, Gladwyn and Hewlett, the Bishop of Norwich, Earl Halsbury and Viscount Oxfuird (who will be making his maiden speech).

4. We will not know for certain when the UFO debate will start. It depends, of course, on how long the earlier business takes, but it is unlikely to start before 1800. We will keep in touch with the House of Lords throughout the course of tomorrow afternoon and early evening and we will let you know as soon as we are needed. The debate is likely to last for between two and three hours.

115

/5. ....

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

5. In view of the likely Press interest in this subject I am copying this minute and the draft speech to DPR(RAF) with the request that he pass his copy to the Duty Press Officer. I would be grateful if you would consider whether the DPO needs any additional information; and, if so, if you would provide it direct.

[redacted]

17th January 1979

APS/SECRETARY OF STATE

[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

49

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone Section 40 [redacted]

PQ 8530B

16th January 1979

Dear Lord Shackleton,

Following the meeting which you held with Mr Stevens and myself on Friday 12th January the draft speech for you to make in response to the Earl of Clancarty's Unstarred Question on Thursday 18th January has been amended. I attach a folder containing the revised version which follows the line which you agreed.

I also attach a more detailed background note, and, as you requested, the transcript of the BBC television programme on UFOs in which the Earl of Clancarty appeared and in which a Mrs [redacted] was interviewed and alleged that she had been told by telephone to say nothing about her alleged sighting of a UFO. I do not suggest, unless you particularly wish to do so, that you read the transcript; but the parts in which you expressed an interest are on pages 23 and 24 (Mrs [redacted] and pages 26 - 29 (Lord Clancarty).

When we spoke on the telephone yesterday you stressed the need for your speech to touch on Lord Clancarty's reference to Monsieur Galley's attitude to UFOs. This is covered briefly in the paragraph at the bottom of page 10. I attach, as you requested, a copy of the actual transcript of the interview with M. Galley.

The Box party for Thursday's debate will be Mr [redacted] Mr [redacted] Miss [redacted] and myself.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Private Secretary

House of Lords

UFOs

I am grateful to the Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty for initiating this debate on UFOs. The subject has been of considerable interest in this country, and I hope our discussion will help to increase public understanding.

My Lords, there are undoubtedly many strange phenomena in the skies, and it can be readily accepted that most UFO reports are made by calm and responsible people. However, there are generally straightforward explanations to account for the phenomena. There is nothing to convince the Government that there has ever been a single visit by an alien space craft, let alone the millions of visits suggested by the Noble Earl.

My Lords, we live in a huge universe. At speeds currently possible it would take at least three years to reach Pluto at the edge of our solar system. Even if we could one day achieve velocities approaching the speed of light it would take over four years to reach the nearest star. There are 100,000 million stars in our galaxy alone, which it would take 100,000 years to cross at the speed of

/ light ...

light. Beyond our own galaxy the distances become even more daunting: the Andromeda galaxy is over 2 million light years away, and that is in our own local group of galaxies.

The evidence suggests that there is no intelligent life on the other planets of our own solar system. There are different views about whether there might be life elsewhere in the universe, but certainly there is no serious positive evidence to show that there is.

If there were an advanced civilisation elsewhere in the universe, with the technology to traverse these colossal distances, there are many questions to be answered. What is the point of this alleged huge number of visits to our planet over three decades or more, to no apparent purpose? There seem to be internal inconsistencies in the idea. To put it simply: if these alleged aliens prefer to keep out of the way, the number of reported "sightings" would surely only be a tiny portion of the actual UFO movements, which would run into many millions. If they do not prefer to pass unnoticed, we could surely expect unmistakable appearances. Now, my Lords, why have they never tried to communicate with

/ us? ...

us? Why has there been no evidence on radio? And no correlative evidence on radar for such a huge number of movements? Why has not a single artefact been found? Why is there not a single convincing photograph, particularly for the many alleged landings?

Assuming that each visit does NOT represent a journey from a distant star, where are these "alien space craft" supposed to be hiding? Now that the idea of such bases on the moon or on another planet in our solar system is barely tenable, ufologists have had to claim that the "aliens" are based in the depths of the sea, or in a great hole in the earth, or even that they come from invisible universes and other space-time continua. Anyone who accepts the hypothesis of large numbers of alien visitations seems forced towards explanations that are ever more fantastic, and incapable of either proof or disproof.

My Lords, as I have said, there really are many remarkable things to see; and most UFO reports relate to actual phenomena reported by calm and responsible people. But, my Lords, let us consider the phenomena themselves:

/ huge ....

a. huge quantities of space debris enter our atmosphere, as meteors, meteorites, fireballs;

b. bright planets and even the moon or stars have been reported as UFOs, in unusual atmospheric conditions;

c. there are tricks of light on cloud, and particular cloud structures;

d. there is St Elmo's Fire, ball lighting, and Aurora Borealis;

e. there are some 5,000 man-made objects in orbit; satellites and debris, some of which can be seen by the naked eye, some through binoculars. About 600 such man-made objects re-enter the atmosphere every year; the quantity is far less than natural space debris, but, my Lords, the phenomena can be astonishing. Last April the Ministry of Defence received reports of a large piece of debris re-entering across the South of England: most reports were factual, but one spoke of an "oval thing with a white cockpit which hovered for a while then shot

/ off ...

off at great speed". My Lords, we cannot prove that this was not a UFO, but it occurred at the same time and place as known re-entry of debris;

f. many reports relate to aircraft seen in unusual conditions at unusual angles. One recent "UFO" was confidently reported on local radio. Again, my Lords, we cannot prove that it was not a "UFO", but we do know that an RAF Vulcan bomber on a low flying mission passed the same spot at the same time and on the same course as the reported UFO;

g. aircraft lights have led to UFO reports; and distant aircraft with landing lights on; flares from aircraft, short condensation trails lit by the sun after dusk, light reflected from aircraft;

h. other phenomena include meteorological balloons. The Meteorological Office alone releases 50 such balloons every day, which expand to 40 feet in diameter and rise to 100,000 feet and can be lit by the sun after dark. Many other organisations

/ use ...

use balloons, some much larger;

i. meteorological searchlights shine on clouds: the beam itself cannot be seen; only a point of light in the sky;

j. there are hot air balloons and kites; even birds have been reported as UFOs; lights on distant towers; car headlights on distant hills; dust devils; and airborne debris carried by the wind;

k. there are some very effective aerial hoaxes which have been perpetrated by children - which I will not describe for fear of precipitating a new rash of UFOs.

My Lords, all these phenomena can be misinterpreted by the most sensible observers, particularly when seen unexpectedly and briefly and in unusual atmospheric conditions. This is what opponents of the natural explanations forget. With distortions of light, and mirages, the most commonplace things can be so changed as to be barely recognisable. Phenomena seen through glass are suspect.

/ There ...

There are phenomena generated within the eyeball. And there are optical illusions: one scientist whose task includes watching satellites describes how, when observing stars near moving clouds, he finds it difficult to escape the illusion that the stars are flying past stationary clouds.

A very substantial American study by the University of Colorado in 1968 reported some 50 examples of such phenomena, but added that it was "impossible and potentially misleading to try to tabulate all of the possible causes of UFO perception: there are simply too many."

My Lords, there really are tens of thousands of strange things to be seen. It is the custom to call such phenomena "UFOs", and to transpose this easily into "alien space craft". Often the appearance is too fleeting and the description too imprecise for a particular cause to be attributed. What we can say is that there is a great variety of plain explanations. There is no need for the far-fetched hypothesis of alien space craft.

/ To ...

To these genuine sightings we must add hallucinations; the excited tales of the gullible; and the embellishments of the born story-teller. There are even, I fear, occasional downright lies.

There are also indications that ufologists accept reports of UFOs uncritically. The Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty referred to a papyrus found among the papers of a Professor Tulli recording flying saucers during the reign of Thutmose III. The Colorado Report, which I mentioned earlier, enquired into the Noble Earl's account of this story. The alleged papyrus could not be traced, but internal evidence in the translation suggested a fake; enquiries with the Vatican Museum also suggested that Tulli, an amateur Egyptologist, had been taken in by a fake.

There is a category of UFO cases difficult to explain, because the description is too vague or the evidence too remote, coupled perhaps with a coincidence of different phenomena and with exceptional conditions. If one accepts that there are natural explanations that

/ could ...

could account for most sightings, it is an enormous and irrational jump to claim that the residue of difficult cases constitute alien space craft - when there is no positive evidence that they do constitute alien space craft.

My Lords, I should mention the famous "UFO" reported over the United Kingdom on the night of 31st December 1978. The phenomenon was probably the re-entry of a launcher associated with the Russian space satellite COSMOS 1068 launched on 26th December. Of over 100 reports reaching the Ministry of Defence, nearly all were factual and consistent with the re-entry of satellite debris.

The recent sightings in New Zealand attracted worldwide publicity, and we understand that the New Zealand Government may make an announcement when the facts have been assembled and appraised. Preliminary advice from our High Commission in New Zealand shows confident expectation that the sightings will prove to be due to natural phenomena.

/ My Lords, ...

My Lords, it is not for me to speak in this House for other Governments. I would, however, say to your Lordships that in 1968 the United States' Air Force commissioned the University of Colorado to carry out an independent study into the UFO phenomena. The very substantial and detailed report was published in 1969. Its main conclusion was, and I quote, "nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge". The findings were endorsed by a Panel of the National Academy of Sciences. I understand that nothing has happened since 1969 to cause the US authorities to change their views or to warrant further official investigation of UFOs. It may be, as the Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty has said, that President Carter once reported a "sighting": but My Lords, as I have stressed there is a world of difference between reports of phenomena and the existence of alien space craft.

My Lords, the Noble Earl, in his introductory speech, suggested that the French Minister of Defence in 1974 said that UFOs were real but that he did not know ...

/ where ...

where they came from. I have read the transcript of Monsieur Galley's broadcast. My Lords, the essence of what Monsieur Galley said was that the phenomena were genuine and were reported by responsible people; and that there were aspects which were difficult to explain. Nowhere did he say that "UFOs were real" in the sense that they represent alien space craft.

My Lords, it has been suggested that our own Government is involved in an alleged conspiracy of silence I can assure your Lordships that the Government is not engaged in any such conspiracy. The Ministry of Defence examines any UFO reports received to establish whether they reveal anything of defence interest, but nothing in the reports examined has ever given cause to believe that they represent alien space craft. My Lords, there is nothing to have a conspiracy of silence about. What is more, a visitor from Outer Space would be one of the great events in history. My Lords, scientists are an inquisitive lot. If there was anything in the stories of UFOs we would expect many serious scientists to be devoting much effort to studying or making contact with these supposed aliens, but the scientific community seems

/ as ...

as unimpressed as the Government. The idea of a conspiracy of silence belongs to the world of James Bond.

My Lords, at the United Nations recently members of the Special Political Committee, following speeches about UFOs by the representatives of Grenada, agreed on a consensus resolution that provides, at Grenadan expense, for a study group to monitor information on UFOs supplied by any interested United Nations' member state and for the group to present its findings to the Outer Space Committee some time in 1979. The Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty may, therefore, be satisfied that Grenada and such other countries who choose will be making a report to an international forum. However, Her Majesty's Government has no plans either to provide information about UFOs or to involve itself in any other way with the study group.

I repeat that I am grateful to the Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty for raising the subject; and I am particularly grateful to him for informing me in advance of the points which he proposed to make to your Lordships.

/ However ...

However, from all I have said, I hope that your Lordships will agree that there is no reason for my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Defence to make a broadcast interview about UFOs. As for telling the public the truth about UFOs, the truth, my Lords, is simple. There really are many strange phenomena in the sky, and these are invariably reported by calm and sensible people. But there is a wide range of perfectly sensible explanations to account for such phenomena. My Lords, there is nothing to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that such phenomena are in any way connected with the idea of alien space craft.

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LOOSE MINUTE

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D/S4(Air)/8/3

APS/SofS

Copies to: PS/USofS(RAF)
PS/CS(RAF)
PS/DUS(Air)
ACS(G)(RAF)
DI 55 - [redacted]
Ops(GE)2b(RAF)
Hd of DS8

LORDS DEBATE ON UFOs

Attached is a revised draft of the closing address, based on our further discussions with Lord Strabolgi.

2. We are still awaiting advice from Paris about the French UFO group.

[redacted]

15 January 1979

MB 8245 [redacted]

Section 40

[redacted]

5/1.

[redacted]

Revised Draft
15 January 79

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

UFOs - DRAFT CLOSING ADDRESS

I am grateful to the Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty for initiating this debate on UFOs. The subject has been of considerable interest in this country, and I hope our discussion will help to increase public understanding.

2. There are undoubtedly many strange phenomena in the skies, and it can be readily accepted that most UFO reports are made by calm and responsible people. However, there are straightforward explanations to account for the phenomena. There is nothing to convince the Government that there has ever been a single visit by an alien space craft, let alone the millions of visits suggested by the Noble Earl.

3. My Lords, we live in a huge universe. At the speeds currently achievable it would take at least 3 years to reach Pluto at the edge of our solar system. Even if we could one day achieve velocities approaching the speed of light it would take over four years to reach the nearest star. There are 100,000 million stars in our galaxy alone, which it would take 100,000 years to cross at the speed of light. Beyond our own galaxy the distances become even more daunting: the Andromeda galaxy is over 2 million light years away, and that is in our own local group of galaxies.

4. The evidence suggests that there is no intelligent life on the other planets of our own solar system. There are different views about whether there might be life elsewhere in the universe, but certainly there is no serious positive evidence to show that there is.

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5. If there were an advanced civilisation elsewhere in the universe, with the technology to traverse the colossal distances, there are many questions to be answered. What is the point of this alleged huge number of visits to our planet over three decades or more, to no apparent purpose? There seem to be internal inconsistencies in the idea. To put it simply: if these aliens prefer to keep out of the way, the number of "sightings" must be a tiny portion of the actual UFO movements, which must run into many millions: if they do not, we would expect unmistakable appearances. Now, why have they never tried to communicate with us? Why has there been no evidence on radio? And no correlative evidence on radar for such a huge number of movements? Why has not a single artefact been found? Why is there not a single convincing photograph, particularly for the many alleged landings?

6. Assuming that each visit does NOT represent a journey from a distant star, where are these "alien space craft" supposed to be hiding? With the moon and planets barely tenable, ufologists have had to claim that the "aliens" are based in the depths of the sea, or in a great hole in the earth, or even that they come from invisible universes and other space-time continua. Anyone who accepts the hypothesis of large numbers of alien visitations seems forced towards explanations that are ever more fantastic, and incapable of either proof or disproof.

7. Let us consider the phenomena themselves. There really are many remarkable things to see: and most UFO reports relate to actual phenomena reported by calm and responsible people:

[redacted]

[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

a. Huge quantities of space debris enter our atmosphere, as meteors, meteorites, fire-balls.

b. Bright planets and even the moon or stars have been reported as UFOs, in unusual atmospheric conditions.

c. There are tricks of light on cloud, and particular cloud structures.

d. There is St Elmo's Fire, ball lighting, Aurora Borealis.

e. There are some 5000 man-made objects in orbit, satellites and debris, some of which can be seen by the naked eye, some through binoculars. About 600 re-enter the atmosphere every year: the quantity is far less than natural space debris, but the phenomena can be astonishing. Last April MOD received reports of a large piece of debris re-entering across the South of England: most reports were factual, but one spoke of an "oval thing with a white cockpit which hovered for a while then shot off at great speed". We cannot prove it wasn't a UFO, but it occurred at the same time and place as known re-entry of debris.

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[redacted]

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f. Many reports relate to aircraft seen in unusual conditions at unusual angles. One recent "UFO" was confidently reported on local radio: we cannot prove that it was not a "UFO", but we do know that an RAF Vulcan Bomber on a low flying mission passed the same spot at the same time and on the same course as the reported UFO.

g. Aircraft lights have led to UFO reports: and distant aircraft with landing lights on; flares from aircraft, short condensation trails lit by the sun after dusk, light reflected from aircraft.

h. Meteorological balloons. The Met Office alone releases 50 every day, which expand to 40 foot diameter and rise to 100,000 feet and can be lit by the sun after dark. Many other organisations use balloons, some much larger.

i. Meteorological searchlights shine on clouds: you cannot see the beam, only a point of light in the sky.

j. There are hot air balloons; kites; even birds have been reported as UFOs; lights on distant towers; car headlights on distant hills; dust devils; airborne debris carried by the wind.

k. There are some very effective aerial hoaxes which have been perpetrated by children - which I will not describe for fear of precipitating a new rash of UFOs.

[redacted]

[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

8. All these phenomena can be misinterpreted by the most sensible observers, particularly when seen unexpectedly and briefly and in unusual atmospheric conditions. This is what opponents of the natural explanations forget. With distortions of light, and mirages, the most commonplace things can be so changed as to be barely recognisable. Phenomena seen through glass are suspect. There are phenomena generated within the eyeball. And there are optical illusions: one scientist whose task includes watching satellites describes how, when observing stars near moving clouds, he finds it difficult to escape the illusion that the stars are flying past stationary clouds.

9. A very substantial American study by the University of Colorado in 1968 reported some 50 examples of such phenomena, but added that it was "impossible and potentially misleading to try to tabulate all of the possible causes of UFO perception: there are simply too many".

10. There really are tens of thousands of strange things to be seen. It is the custom to call such phenomena "UFOs", and to transpose this easily into "alien space craft". Often the appearance is too fleeting and the description too imprecise for a particular cause to be attributed. What we can say is that there is a great variety of plain explanations. There is no need for the far-fetched hypothesis of alien space craft.

11. To these genuine sightings we must add hallucinations: and the excited tales of the gullible: the embellishments of the born story-teller. There are even, I fear, occasional downright lies.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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12. There are also indications that ufologists accept reports of UFOs uncritically. The Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty referred to a papyrus found among the papers of a Professor Tulli recording flying saucers during the reign of Thutmose III. The Colorado Report, which I mentioned earlier, enquired into the Noble Earl's account of this story. The alleged papyrus could not be traced, but internal evidence in the translation suggested a fake; enquiries with the Vatican Museum also suggested that Tulli, an amateur Egyptologist, had been taken in by a fake.

13. There is a category of UFO cases difficult to explain, because the description is too vague or the evidence too remote, coupled perhaps with a coincidence of different phenomena and with exceptional conditions. If one accepts that there are natural explanations that could account for most sightings, it is an enormous and irrational jump to claim that the residue of difficult cases constitute alien space craft - when there is no positive evidence that they do constitute alien space craft.

14. My Lords, I should mention the famous "UFO" reported over the United Kingdom on the night of 31st December 1978. The phenomenon was probably the re-entry of a launcher associated with the Russian space satellite COSMOS 1068 launched on 26 December. Of over 100 reports reaching MOD, nearly all were factual and consistent with re-entry of satellite debris.

[redacted]

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REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

15. The recent sightings in New Zealand attracted world-wide publicity, and we understand that the New Zealand Government may make an announcement when the facts have been assembled and appraised. Preliminary advice from our High Commission in New Zealand shows confident expectation that the sightings will prove to be due to natural phenomena.

16. The idea of the Governmental conspiracy of silence is remarkable. Ufologists know that if there had been UFO activity on anything like the scale suggested it would have come to the direct attention of Governments.

17. The Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty has misconstrued the United States position. In 1968 the US Air Force commissioned the University of Colorado to carry out an independent study into the UFO phenomena. The very substantial and detailed report was published in 1969. Its main conclusion was (I quote): "nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge". The findings were endorsed by a Panel of the National Academy of Sciences. I understand that nothing has happened since 1969 to cause the US authorities to change their views or to warrant further official investigation of UFOs. It may be, as the Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty has said, that President Carter once reported a "sighting": as I have stressed there is a world of difference between reports of phenomena and the existence of alien space craft.

[redacted]

[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

[redacted]

18. My Lords, the Noble Earl, in his introductory speech, suggested that the French Minister of Defence in 1974 admitted to the existence of UFOs in a broadcast interview. The essence of what M Galley said was that there are things about UFO reports which were not understood and had not been explained.

19. Many ufologists seem convinced that our own Government is involved in this alleged conspiracy of silence. I can only assure your Lordships that the Government is not engaged in any such conspiracy. The Ministry of Defence examines any UFO reports received merely to establish whether they reveal anything of defence interest, but nothing in the reports examined has ever given cause to believe that they represent alien space craft. My Lords, there is nothing to have a conspiracy of silence about. What is more, a visitor from Outer Space would be one of the great events in history. Scientists are an inquisitive lot. If there was anything in the stories of UFOs we would expect many serious scientists to be devoting much effort to studying or making contact with these supposed aliens. The scientific community seems as unimpressed as the Government. The idea of a conspiracy of silence belongs to the world of James Bond.

20. My Lords, at the United Nations recently members of the Special Political Committee, following speeches about UFOs by the representatives of Grenada, agreed on a concensus resolution that provides, at Grenadan expense, for a study group to monitor information on UFOs supplied by any interested United Nations member state and for the group to present its findings to the Outer Space Committee sometime in 1979. Lord Clancarty may therefore be satisfied that Grenada and such other countries who choose will be making a report to an international forum. However,

[redacted]

[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

the UK has no plans either to provide information about UFOs or to involve itself in any other way with the study group.

21. I repeat that I am grateful to the Noble Earl, the Earl of Clancarty for raising the subject and for informing me in advance of the points which he proposed to make to your Lordships. However, from all I have said, I hope that Your Lordships will agree that there is no reason for my Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Defence to make a broadcast interview about UFOs. As for telling the public the truth about UFOs, the truth is simple. There really are many strange phenomena in the sky, and these are reported by calm and sensible people. But there is a wide range of perfectly sensible explanations to account for the phenomena, and nothing to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that there has ever been a single visit by an alien space craft.

[redacted]

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M6 Continued

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10. Lord Strabolgi asked for a speech of 15-20 minutes plus defensive material. The draft is just under 3000 words, or 20 minutes; I have incorporated all suitable material in the speech, including responses to the points made by Lord Clancarty.

11. DES have been consulted and are content.

[redacted]

10 January 1979

[redacted]
MB 8245

M7

PS/Secretary of State

Copy to:

PS/CS(RAF)
ACS(G)(RAF)
DI55 - [redacted]
Ops(GE)2b(RAF)
Head of S4(Air)

US of S(RAF) has considered the draft closing address. Whilst he would not disagree with the general line taken, and whilst he accepts the need for an objective approach towards this subject, he feels that the current draft would benefit from being toned down so as not to pour quite so much scorn on 'believers'.

[redacted]

12 January 1979

PAS/USofS(RAF)

Section 40

[redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

LOOSE MINUTE

D/S4(Air)/8/3

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

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APS/SofS

Copies to: PS/USofS(RAF)
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PS/CS(RAF)
ACS(G)(RAF)
DI5c - [redacted]
Ops(GE)2b(RAF)

without attachments

LORDS DEBATE ON UFOs

Lord Strabolgi asked for the transcript of the recent BBC TV programme on UFOs. A copy is attached.

2. I understand that Lord Strabolgi asked because he had heard that Lord Clancarty had, on the programme, claimed that MOD had told a woman to keep quiet about her UFO "close encounter". That is not quite what happened. A Mrs Bowles stated (Footage 4217) that she had been told by telephone to keep quiet. Creighton, the other leading ufologist on the programme, referred to the "Governmental cover-up" (Footage 3198) and later to Governmental pressure on newspapers (Footage 5277). Lord Clancarty refers (Footage 5111) to something quite different - "mysterious men in black" who come out of the hole in the earth to put ufologists to silence (presumably the men in black are related to Mrs Roestenberg's beautiful golden-haired people, Footage 2318, and to Creighton's big-eared three-footers, Footage 3050). When the programme was first put out in 1977 it led to two indignant letters to the Prime Minister about "Governmental cover-up".

3. If Lord Strabolgi wishes to cover this point I suggest the following be inserted in the draft speech para 26 line 9, after the 2nd word:

> "In the recent BBC TV programme on UFOs there were other references to a Governmental cover-up and to pressure on newspapers, and one lady described how she had been told to keep quiet about her "close encounter": I can assure the House that no-one in MOD concerned with UFO reports has ever told anyone to keep quiet about UFOs, /however much they may sometimes have wished to do so/.

4. The rest of the transcript speaks largely for itself, and I will draw attention only to the following:

a. In Footage 236-506 two "UFO investigators" refer authoritively to a huge glowing UFO which they saw sweeping very low over West London on a Saturday evening, but which apparently no-one else in London saw.

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b. The Montana photograph (Footage 645) is notorious and perhaps typical. The photograph merely shows two bright spots in the sky. The USAF assessed that they were caused by light reflected from two Air Force jets known to have landed at a nearby airfield at that time, but to ufologists they will always remain UFOs.

c. Footage 894 refers to an actual film of a large fire-ball meteor, a phenomena that has often given rise to UFO reports: like so many genuine phenomena, this was seen by hundreds of people.

d. Footage 4790-5111 relates to Lord Clancarty's theory of the "hollow earth" within which UFOs are hiding, and to the 300 mile wide hole near the North Pole.

5. I was perhaps remiss in not remarking on the three "impressive" modern sightings quoted in Lord Clancarty's speech. The general style of sightings is familiar: authoritative statements which it is not possible to refute without extensive and prompt on-the-spot investigation. However, the Teheran sighting is worth a mention: Lord Clancarty's source document is a report in the Daily Express of 27 February 1978 - when the Daily Express was drumming up publicity for "Close Encounters of the Third Kind". This suggests that Lord Clancarty's cases might fall into the same undiscriminated category as others in his speech - the "vanishing Norfolks" and the Tulli papyrus. The Colorado Report commented that many ufologists (encompassing Lord Clancarty) don't bother to verify sources and "orbit around each other in a merry UFO chase of mutual quotation. If any scientist or scholar had behaved similarly, he would long since have been hooted out of his profession".

6. Because UFO photographs may appear impressive, Lord Strabolgi may be interested to see the attached photographs analysed a few days ago by [redacted] of DI 55. Some perfectly sensible people took some night photographs, which on printing showed what appeared to be a UFO. [redacted]'s analysis showed it to be due to a familiar form of false image within the camera system. It is interesting how, a week after the photograph, the man received in conversation what seemed like corroborative evidence that there were UFOs about (but at a different place and time).

7. Lord Strabolgi may be interested to know that the "Christian UFO Research Association" has circulated some papers to members of the House of Lords in preparation for the Debate; and they have also sent us a book. The message seems to be that UFOs are the work of the devil and designed to seduce mankind to a false salvation. You now have that folder back and could forward it to Lord Strabolgi if he wants it, but the papers are not recommended reading.

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12 January 1979

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fcd of S 4 Div.

As we thought Lord Clancarty has now turned his 'no day' motion into a debate to move for papers which will take place on Thursday, January 18.

This will be a short debate, lasting anything from 20 minutes to 4 hours, depending on the number of speakers wishing to take part.

Lord Clancarty will make an opening speech, those members interested will then speak and Lord Strabolgi will reply for us. (Lord Clancarty can come back after our reply but it is not usual and he will normally just give a vote of thanks).

We should be grateful for a draft winding up speech (to last about 10 - 15 minutes at 150 w.p.m), a background note and defensive material.

Would you please return this information to arrive with us, Rm 6332 by ~~Friday 12 January 1979~~ Monday 18 December, Lord Strabolgi likes everything well in advance unfortunately.

6/12/78

[redacted]
Parliamentary Clerk

[redacted]

M6

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PS/SofS(RAF) - through DUS(Air) and PS/USofS(RAF)

Copies to: PS/CS(RAF)
ACS(G)(RAF)
DI55 - [redacted]
Ops(GE)2b(RAF)

Opposite is a draft closing address (Flag A) for the Lords debate on UFOs, and a Background Note (Flag B); due at your office by 12 January 1979.

2. There is a temptation to equivocate about UFOs because of the thought that we might one day make contact with people from distant stars, and anyway the subject may seem ~~important~~ remote. However, there is nothing to indicate that ufology is anything but claptrap and no evidence of 'alien space craft'. The UFO industry has prospered from equivocation and, with 1979 being heralded as 'the year of the UFOs', it is highly desirable for HMG to inject some massive common sense into the business. With the impact of the film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", and the increasing efforts of the UFO industry and increasing publicity given to its exponents, quite sensible people may begin to wonder whether there might not be something in ufology, on the "where there's smoke there's fire" principle. Less sensible people may be increasingly confused and perhaps even worried, to the increasing profit and encouragement of the UFO industry. The subject will not go away: the Department and Ministers are likely to find themselves increasingly involved and under pressure for formal statements; and the popular and UFO press are likely to make all the mileage they can out of the Lords Debate, particularly if there are signs of equivocation or phrases that can easily be misrepresented. It only needs one New Zealand type sighting to involve this and other Departments in a mass of useless work; and such a 'sighting' we are likely to get with the continuous encouragement to report all strange phenomena as UFOs.

3. Accordingly, it is strongly recommended that the Government adopt an unequivocal and uncompromising line.

4. A small difficulty has arisen because the FCO has, for purely tactical reasons unconnected with UFOs, acceded (with other countries) to a request by the Government of Grenada for a UN study group (at Grenadan expense) to monitor information on UFOs. The wording of that part of the draft speech has been based on a contribution by FCO; I am sending a copy of the draft to FCO in case they have any final points on that paragraph.

[redacted]

M6 Continued

5. The general line adopted in the draft speech is that there really are strange phenomena in the sky, but there are rational explanations for them, so there is no need to introduce the highly questionable hypothesis of alien space craft. In other words, Occam's Razor.

6. The broad line was agreed by Lord Strabolgi at his meeting in December. Lord Strabolgi asked for further information about cosmic distances and the difficulties of space travel. I have not included this in the speech, because Lord Clancarty's "sky people" are evidently "paranormal" and can cross the light years in a trice; but some facts are included at the end of the background note.

7. We have just received the draft of Lord Clancarty's speech (Flag C), indicating the points he would like answered. It contains no surprises (except perhaps that he has not touched upon the "paranormal", which seems central to his theories), and the changes entailed in the proposed speech were largely editorial. Lord Strabolgi suggested commenting on detailed cases produced by Lord Clancarty. I repeat the advice I gave in December: it is most unwise to argue such cases, which tend to be remote and elusive but which often cannot be refuted without extensive on-the-spot investigation. Indeed, we should not fight on Lord Clancarty's ground at all. However, I have included in the speech a famous case of the "vanishing Norfolks" quoted in one of Lord Clancarty's books, on which we have advice from the Army Historical Branch; and I have commented on the Professor Tulli papyrus which Lord Clancarty mentions in his speech and which the US "Colorado" Study" of 1968 assessed a fake.

8. I have included comments on the UK "UFO" of 31 December 1978 and the New Zealand sighting. The preliminary report from the High Commission is at Flag D; we may update this before the debate.

9. BDS Washington have confirmed that there is no objection to our quoting the American position as sketched in the speech; the bit about President Carter's UFO sighting is an optional extra but is commonsense. The Defence Attache in Paris is trying to find out more about the French team allegedly studying UFOs.

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10. Lord Strabolgi asked for a speech of 15-20 minutes plus defensive material. The draft is just under 3000 words, or 20 minutes; I have incorporated all suitable material in the speech, including responses to the points made by Lord Clancarty.

11. DES have been consulted and are content.

[redacted]

10 January 1979

Head S4(Air)
MB 8245 [redacted]

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Draft
10 Jan 79

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UFOs - DRAFT CLOSING ADDRESS

There are 2 points of truth upon which the great myth of ufology is built:

FIRST: we live in a huge universe, with 100,000 million stars in our galaxy alone, which it would take 100,000 years to cross even if we could travel at the speed of light. There are many remarkable things yet to be explained.

SECOND: There really are strange phenomena in the skies, reported by calm and responsible people.

2. It is this immensity of the universe which sometimes tempts even the most down-to-earth people to equivocate about UFOs. We can never be sure that we will not, one day, make contact with beings from a distant star.

3. But that is all. So let us have an end to equivocation. Her Majesty's Government has no evidence that a single alien space craft has visited earth, and does not believe there is anything worth investigating in the mass of rubbish produced by the UFO industry. The general theme of the ufologists, that our planet is being continuously overflown by alien space craft, is nonsense.

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4. There have always been strange things to see in the sky. Since World War II we have known the development of powerful rockets, and voyages to the Moon and planets. We have also seen the development of science fiction, where space ships can be switched to 'inter-stellar drive' and cross the 2 million light years to Andromeda Galaxy in a flash. We have also seen the development of the UFO industry, which accepts the devices of science fiction as proven fact and interprets any unusual phenomena as alien space craft. The words 'UFO' and 'alien space craft' have been firmly implanted and readily spring to mind when anything strange is seen.

5. There really are strange things to see. Let me stress that most UFO reports relate to actual phenomena seen by responsible people.

a. Every year huge quantities of space debris enter our atmosphere, as meteors, meteorites, fire-balls.

b. Bright planets and even the moon or stars have been reported as UFOs in unusual atmospheric conditions. There are many recorded cases of Venus being reported as a UFO.

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c. There are tricks of light on cloud, and particular cloud structures.

d. There is St Elmo's Fire, ball lighting, Aurora Borealis.

e. And man-made satellites: there are some 5000 objects in orbit, satellites and debris, some of which can be seen by the naked eye, some through binoculars. About 600 re-enter the atmosphere every year, almost 2 each day: the quantity is far less than natural space debris, but the phenomena can be astonishing. Last April MOD received reports of a large piece of debris re-entering across the South of England: most reports were factual, but one spoke of an 'oval thing with a white cockpit which hovered for a while then shot off at great speed'. We cannot prove it wasn't a UFO, but it occurred at the same time and place as some known re-entry of debris.

f. Many reports relate to aircraft seen in unusual conditions at unusual angles, at high or low level. One recent 'UFO' was confidently reported on local radio: we cannot prove that it was not a 'UFO', but we do know that an RAF Vulcan Bomber on a low flying mission passed the same spot at the same time and on the same course as the reported UFO.

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g. Aircraft lights have led to UFO reports: and distant aircraft with landing lights on; flares from aircraft, short condensation trails lit by the sun after dusk, light reflected from aircraft.

h. Meteorological balloons. The Met Office alone releases 50 every day, which expand to 40 foot diameter and rise to 100,000 feet and can be lit by the sun after dark. Many other organisations use balloons, some much larger.

i. Meteorological searchlights shine on clouds: you cannot see the beam, only a point of light apparently dancing in the sky.

j. There are hot air balloons: kites; even birds have been reported as UFOs; lights on distant towers; car headlights on distant hills; dust devils; airborne debris carried by the wind.

k. There is a wide variety of hoaxes. There are some very effective aerial hoaxes which have been perpetrated by children - which I will not describe for fear of precipitating a new rash of UFOs.

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6. All these phenomena can be misinterpreted by the most sensible observers, particularly when seen unexpectedly and briefly and in unusual atmospheric conditions. This is what opponents of the natural explanations forget. With distortions of light, and mirages, the most commonplace things can be so changed as to be unrecognisable. Any phenomena seen through glass are suspect. There are phenomena generated within the eyeball. And there are optical illusions: one scientist whose task includes watching satellites describes how, when observing stars near moving clouds, he finds it difficult to escape the illusion that the stars are flying past stationary clouds.

7. A very substantial American study by the University of Colorado in 1968 reported some 50 examples of such phenomena, but added that it was 'impossible and potentially misleading to try to tabulate all of the possible causes of UFO perception: there are simply too many'.

8. It is not surprising that Lord Clancarty should comment on the wide varieties of shapes and sizes and colours manifested by UFOs; the phenomena being observed are legion and unrelated.

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9. There really are tens of thousands of strange things to be seen in the sky every year. It is the custom to call such phenomena 'UFOs', and to transpose this too easily into 'alien space craft'. We cannot prove that all of these phenomena are NOT alien space craft. Often the appearance is too fleeting and the description too imprecise for a particular cause to be attributed. What we can say is that there is a great variety of perfectly sensible explanations.

10. We must apply Occam's Razor. There are sensible explanations that can account for the phenomena. Why seek fantastic explanations in the realm of magic?

11. From these genuine sightings we can move to hallucinations; and the excited tales of the gullible; the embellishments of the born story-teller. There are also, I fear, downright lies. There are also the embellishments of the convinced believer in UFOs, who will add to any piece of space debris a line of windows.

12. But what of these famous arrivals of UFOs, claimed to be fully documented and authenticated by many witnesses. Let me mention one, which Lord Clancarty has described in his book Mysterious Visitors as 'one of the most remarkable and unexplained mysteries of modern times'. He claims that during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, 800 men of the Norfolk Regiment were advancing to the attack; a UFO descended in a cloud and picked up the battalion and it was never heard of again.-

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Anyone aware of the huge casualties at Gallipoli will not be surprised to hear that the true story is tragic rather than comic. A brigade attack was held up by machine-gun and artillery fire, but on the right flank some 260 men of the Norfolks broke through the Turkish lines into a wood. Not one returned. It was only after the war that a Graves Registration Unit found the bodies, in circumstances confirming that they had been killed fighting. A gallant and tragic story; but not a great unexplained UFO mystery.

13. Lord Clancarty quoted a papyrus found among the papers of a Professor Tulli recording flying saucers during the reign of Thutmose III. The Colorado Report, which I mentioned earlier, enquired into Lord Clancarty's account of this story. The original papyrus had - not surprisingly - disappeared, but internal evidence in the translation suggested a fake; Professor Tulli was only an amateur Egyptologist, and enquiries with the Vatican Museum also suggested that Tulli had been taken in by a fake. The Colorado Study, coupling this with another case where Lord Clancarty and other ufologists had been taken in by a 13th Century manuscript faked by schoolboys, commented on the way ufologists argue their so-called 'case histories' from secondary and tertiary sources with no attempt to verify original sources.

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14. The ufologists accumulate these 'UFO sightings', from honest reports and from weirder corners, as if sheer numbers constitute proof. Naturally some people murmur 'where there's smoke there's fire'. All that is happening is that the UFO industry is making a great deal of smoke, to the confusion of common sense and to their own substantial profit.

15. There is a small category remaining, of cases difficult to explain, where the description is too vague or the evidence too remote, coupled also perhaps with a coincidence of unrelated phenomena and with exceptional conditions. If one accepts that there are many natural explanations to account for the great bulk of sightings, it is an enormous and irrational jump to claim that the small residue of difficult cases constitute alien space craft - when there is not a flicker of positive evidence that they do constitute alien space craft.

16. Arguing with ufologists on this count is like trying to prove that damage to garden cabbages is NOT made by pixies. We can point out that the cabbages are crawling with caterpillars. The ufologists will insist that the bites on the cabbages match the pattern of pixies' teeth. They will carry out 'scientific' studies about the nature of pixies, and the incidence of pixies, and speculate where the pixies are hiding.

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They will admit that some of the bites may be made by caterpillars. But they will claim that if they can point to a single bite that cannot actually be proved to have been made by a caterpillar, it is thereby proved conclusively to have been made by a pixie.

17. I should mention the famous 'UFO' reported over the United Kingdom on the night of 31st December. The phenomenon was probably the re-entry of a launcher associated with the Russian space satellite COSMOS 1068 launched on 26 December. Of over 100 reports reaching MOD, nearly all were factual and consistent with re-entry of satellite debris; however, one report described a long train with bright lights down the side. The case shows how, when there really is something big to see, we get many confirmatory reports: this contrasts with the occasional vivid phenomena reported over a city by one individual but which no-one else appears to have seen.

18. The recent sightings in New Zealand attracted world-wide publicity, and we understand that the New Zealand Government may make an announcement when the facts have been assembled and appraised. Preliminary advice from the High Commission shows confident expectation that the sightings will prove to be due to natural phenomena. For the moment I will touch upon only one aspect, the fact that phenomena were perceived both visually and by radar.

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For some reason this has caused people to leap to the conclusion that the phenomena must therefore be alien space craft. To start with, it is far from sure that the visual and radar sightings were of the same thing: there may have been several different phenomena observed. Secondly, whereas some people tend to think of radar as conclusive scientific evidence, it can in some ways be more easily deceived than the human eye. Some of the possibilities being suggested are technical radar problems known as anomalous propagation and clear air turbulence; flocks of birds; dust clouds: refraction; even (strange though it may seem) shipping. A separate source has suggested giant weather balloons. We will probably learn in due course. Perhaps we will even be left with some uncertainties. Any uncertainty, however small, will be pounced on by the ufologists as conclusive proof that the phenomena were alien space craft.

19. Meanwhile the damage to common sense has been done. With the New Zealand sighting and the debris re-entry over Britain, 1979 has been confidently heralded as the Year of the UFO. On so little evidence.

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20. Let us glance at the sort of explanations offered by Lord Clancarty and other ufologists. Lord Clancarty implies there have been vast numbers of sightings. Some ufologists put the figure in millions. Now, there is a strange thing about these huge numbers. To put it in simple terms: either these aliens prefer to keep out of the way, or they don't. If they prefer to keep out of the way, we must assume that the number of 'sightings' is a tiny proportion of the actual UFO 'sorties', which must run into many millions. If they don't one would expect some unmistakable appearances.

21. But look at their strange record:

a. Not a single artefact has been found, no bent pieces, no accidents from perhaps millions of sorties, nothing. The ufologists have an answer: the CIA has hidden all the bits.

b. There is no correlative evidence on our radar for this huge number of movements.

c. There has been no radio contact (far easier than space travel) and no evidence on radio.

d. There have been no convincing photographs.

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e. There has been no approach to Governments, and no direct knowledge of UFOs by Governments. Lord Clancarty and other ufologists have an answer: there is an inter-Governmental conspiracy of silence, initiated by the CIA.

22. There is no internal consistency about the idea of this huge number of sightings. If the UFOs have come from another solar system, why this huge number of visits to our planet, to no apparent purpose? This was once explained by the claim that aliens had advance bases the other side of the moon, or on another planet in our solar system. As that has become untenable ever more fantastic explanations are advanced. In a recent TV broadcast Lord Clancarty claimed that the UFOs are based in a great hole in the earth. Elsewhere he has claimed that they have bases in remote parts of South America, or in the depths of the oceans. He has claimed (I quote): "UFOs are paranormal, that is from invisible universes". They come from "other space-time continua". The explanations get more and more fantastic, and more and more incapable of either proof or disproof.

23. The idea of the Governmental conspiracy of silence is truly remarkable. The ufologists are fully aware that if there had been UFO activity on anything like the scale suggested it must have come to the direct attention of Governments.

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24. Lord Clancarty has totally misrepresented the United States position. In 1968 the US Air Force commissioned the University of Colorado to do a comprehensive study into the UFO phenomena, independently of the Air Force. That study was led by a distinguished scientist, Dr Edward Condon, and its very substantial and detailed report was published in 1969. Its main conclusion was (I quote): "nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge". The findings were endorsed by a Panel of the National Academy of Sciences, which concluded that the least likely explanation of UFOs was the hypothesis of extra-terrestial visitations. I understand that nothing has happened since 1969 to cause the US authorities to change their views or to warrant further official investigation of UFOs. It may be that President Carter once reported a 'sighting': as I have stressed there really are strange things to see, and there is a world of difference between a report of phenomena and the existence of alien space craft.

25. Lord Clancarty suggests that the French Minister of Defence in 1974 admitted to the existence of UFOs in a broadcast interview. In fact the essence of what M Galley said was that there are things about UFO reports which were not understood and had not been explained.

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25. Many ufologists are convinced that our own Ministry of Defence is engaged in a cover-up. Lord Clancarty's own magazine contains an article misrepresenting correspondence with MOD so as to suggest that MOD accepts the existence of UFOs and is investigating them. Another UFO magazine recently fabricated a report supposed to show that MOD had secret agencies engaged in the systematic examination of UFOs. In fact MOD has no specialist staff on UFOs, and examines any UFO reports merely to establish whether they reveal anything of defence interest. Nothing in the reports examined has ever given any cause to believe that they represent alien space craft.

27. A telling argument against ufology is that the scientific community is unmoved. A visitor from Outer Space would be one of the great events in history. Scientists are an inquisitive lot. If there was anything in ufology we would expect many serious scientists to be devoting much effort to studying or making contact with these supposed aliens. The scientific community seems as unimpressed as the Government.

28. At the United Nations recently members of the Special Political Committee, following speeches about UFOs by the representatives of Grenada, agreed on a concensus resolution that provides, at Grenadian expense, for a study group to monitor information on UFOs supplied by any interested United Nations member

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state and for the group to present its findings to the Outer Space Committee sometime in 1979. Lord Clancarty may therefore be satisfied that Grenada and such other countries who choose will be making a report in an inter-Governmental forum. However, the UK has no plans either to provide information about UFOs or to involve itself in any other way with the study group.

29. I certainly do not intend to invite the Secretary of State for Defence to give a broadcast interview about UFOs. As for informing the people of this country about UFOs, it may be that, should people become seriously concerned, we will take steps to publicise the true position. If so, we will say that there really are tens of thousands of strange phenomena to be seen in the sky, and these are often reported by highly responsible people; that there is a very big range of natural explanations for the phenomena; and that there is no evidence whatsoever that a single alien space craft has ever visited earth, or that ufology is anything but nonsense.

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BACKGROUND NOTE

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UFOLOGY

1. There is a big difference between, on the one hand, the vague belief which many sensible people hold, that we might one day make contact with people from a distant star; and on the other, the claims of ufology that our planet has been and is being almost continuously overflown by alien spacecraft. Many ufologists claim that UFOs have been around for thousands of years, and some believe that competing groups are 'working on our minds'. Ufology is a growth industry, with many magazines and clubs, and reporting systems for 'UFO sightings', and text books for the UFO spotter. The basic system of ufology seems to be to record almost any aerial phenomena as a UFO, and to accept almost any strange story from the past or present as evidence of alien presence.

2. There are undoubtedly many strange phenomena to see in the skies, and these are often reported by sensible people. However, there are perfectly sensible explanations for the phenomena, and no evidence that there has ever been a visit from alien space craft. There is nothing to indicate that ufology is anything but claptrap.

3. HMG has no experts on UFOs, as it has no experts on black magic. The examination in this file is built up largely from Lord Clancarty's book 'Mysterious Visitors'; from reports of TV and Press interviews with Lord Clancarty and others; various UFO magazines; the book and film 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind'; the massive American 'Colorado Study' of 1968; the book 'UFOs Explained' by P J Klass (a de-bunker); from MOD's own records of UFO reports and past examinations; and from discussions with the operational and intelligence staff who examine UFO reports reaching MOD. We have consulted DES and FCO; also the staff of CS(RAF).

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4. A distinction should be made between ufology and science fiction. The latter is often a perfectly respectable art form and has attracted some highly intelligent writers: science fiction should on no account be linked to ufology in any de-bunking.

THE EARL OF CLANCARTY

5. Lord Clancarty has written several books on UFOs (as Brinsley Le Poer Trench) and runs a magazine and seems to be regarded as one of the leading ufologists in this country. Evidently he firmly and sincerely believes that aliens have been visiting Earth since the beginning of history, and may have 'seeded' our race. Many events in the Bible are explained in UFO terms. The 'aliens' are watching us, particularly now (his magazine talks of 1000 sighting reports each week), and have often landed, and may soon arrive in force, probably cordially. He is convinced that the American and British Governments, and others, are concealing the truth about UFOs until we have discovered all about them and know how best to present the story.

6. Lord Clancarty has hedged all his bets on space travel by suggesting that the 'sky people' are 'paranormal' and come from another 'space-time continuum'. He will therefore be unmoved by arguments based on cosmic mathematics, because it seems that the sky people can cover huge distances in the twinkling of an eye. He has claimed that the sky people were hiding on the moon or the planets, or in remote corners of South America, or the depths of the sea, or a huge hole in the ground (the last seems to be based on a satellite photographic collage, where the corners of the photographs did not quite meet). He seems to be a singularly undiscriminating ufologist, and almost any report or strange story is likely to be added to his massive files of 'reported sightings'.

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7. His line at the debate is likely to be to quote the vast numbers of 'sightings'; to describe a number of 'fully authenticated cases'; to express his theories about the nature and origins of the 'sky people' (probably bringing in the paranormal aspect); and to press HMG either (1) to come clean and tell the public all they know about UFOs, or (2) to devote resources to an inter-Governmental study.

8. Win or lose, Lord Clancarty stands to make a profit from the debate: which is not to doubt his sincerity.

THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE TO UFOs

9. There has been no British scientific enquiry into UFOs. However, the United States Air Force made a systematic attempt to record and investigate UFO sightings between 1947 and 1969. During this period the USAF received 12,618 reports; of these 701 were not explained.

10. This USAF investigation known as Project Blue Book was followed by a study which was originally suggested by a member of a congressional investigation in the Armed Forces Committee and which was assigned by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research to the University of Colorado. It was led by Dr Edward V Condon, Professor of Physics and formerly Director of the National Bureau of Standards. The main findings of this very substantial and detailed study, published in 1969, were that:-

a. About 90% of all UFO reports prove to be plausibly related to natural phenomena.

b. Nothing had come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that had added to scientific knowledge.

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c. Further extensive study of UFO sightings was not justified in the expectation that science would be advanced thereby.

d. No evidence had come to light in the study to indicate that UFO sightings might represent a defensive hazard.

e. The US Department of Defence should continue to handle UFO reports in its normal surveillance operations without recourse to special units such as Project Blue Book.

11. These findings were endorsed by a Panel of the National Academy of Sciences, which advised that the Condon enquiry had been an adequate scientific study of UFO phenomena and that the methodology and approach were well chosen and in accordance with the accepted standards of scientific investigation. The Panel added: "We are unanaminous in the opinion that this (the Condon Report) has been a very creditable attempt to apply objectively the relevant techniques of science to the solution of the UFO problem. The Report recognises that there remain UFO sightings that are not easily explained. The Report does suggest, however, so many reasonable and possible directions in which an explanation may eventually be found that there seems to be no reason to attribute them to an extra terrestial source without evidence that is much more convincing. The Report also shows how difficult it is to apply scientific methods to the occasional transient sightings with any chance of success. Whilst further study of particular aspects of the topic (eg atmospheric phenomena) may be useful, a study of UFOs in general is not a promising way to expand scientific understanding of the phenomena. On the basis

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of present knowledge the least likely explanation of UFOs is the hypothesis of extra terrestial visitations by intelligent beings".

12. The USAF wound up their Project Blue Book investigation on 17 December 1969 on the strength of the Condon Report, the advice of the National Academy of Sciences, past UFO studies and their own experience of investigating UFO reports over two decades. Their conclusions were that no UFO reported, investigated or evaluated by the Air Force had ever given any indication of a threat to their national security; that there had been no evidence submitted or discovered by the Air Force suggested that technological developments or principles beyond the range of present day scientific knowledge, and that there had been no evidende indicating that sightings categorised as "unidentified" were extra-terrestial vehicles.

13. The Condon Report caused a good deal of controversy. In August 1976, however, the RAF Staff in Washington were informed by the US Department of the Air Force that there was no likelihood of renewed Air Force involvement in this area. The Department pointed to the considerable Air Force Commitment of resources in the past, the extreme pressure on Air Force funds in 1976 and the fact that since 1969 no evidence had been presented to warrant further investigation by the Air Force. The Department of the Air Force added that a number of universities and professional scientific organisations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science had considered UFO phenomena. Private organisations had also shown interest in aerial phenomena. It was considered that such timely review of the situation by private groups insured that sound evidence would not be overlooked by the scientific community.

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ATTITUDE

14. It is always possible that the considerable UFO correspondence addressed to MOD might contain some hint, not of UFOs, but of something with a hostile terrestial origin which could have a bearing on national security. All letters are therefore referred to specialist authorities in MOD for any further investigation thought to be necessary; we do not take the enquiries further than that and we do not enter into detailed correspondence with the public. The standard reply to Members of Parliament and the public is that we have not the resources to conduct a scientific investigation into the nature of UFOs and, although we invariably pass reports of sightings to the staffs responsible for the air defences, we do not pursue enquiries to the point of positive identification. We do not dismiss the possibility that intelligent life could exist in outer space but to date no evidence has emerged to suggest that UFOs have extra terrestial origins or that they represent a threat to national security. In fact, most of the sightings seem to have commonplace origins, such as aircraft or aircraft lights seen from an unusual angle or in unusual meteorological conditions.

15. The trouble is that the dedicated ufologist will not listen and is more concerned with selective evidence to support his own thesis. The more common criticisms are:-

a. MOD will not let the public see its files. There is a 'cover up" for security reasons.

There is no cover up and no security ban. It is true that when people ask to see the MOD UFO files they are told the papers must remain confidential. But there is a mundane reason

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for that. The files contain voluminous correspondence from the general public and we cannot divulge the identity of the correspondents, or the references to classified subjects which some of the files might contain. To remove these details would require extensive editing and we have not the staff to do the job. It follows that the files must remain closed under the rules laid down in the public Records Acts which at present preclude disclosure until 30 years have elapsed since the date of the particular correspondence. The earliest reports MOD hold are dated 1962. All earlier UFO papers were destroyed many years ago.

b. MOD employs a special UFO organisation.

Quite untrue. Nobody is employed full time to monitor UFO sightings. There is no UFO section in MOD. One of the Secretarial branches answers letters from the public about UFOs but it has many other, quite different, responsibilities as well. It does not review or analyse the sightings. It merely sends the letters to the specialised branches who examine them solely to see if they have any bearing on the air defences.

c. Vast numbers of UFO sightings are reported to MOD, many are unexplained.

Detailed statistical records are not kept in MOD because the subject does not merit allocation of resources. However, MOD received 435 reports from the public in 1977, and 864 in 1978. The latter included a flurry of 121 sightings when

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some Russian rocket material re-entered on 31 December 1978. Other main surges of activity were when the BBC broadcast a UFO programme and during the Daily Express campaign for the premiere of "Close Encounters of the Third Kind".

ATTITUDE OF FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO UFOs

16. Apart from American policy we have recent information on only two Governments - those of France and Grenada. The French official procedure is not unlike ours. Reports from the public go in the first place to the Gendarmerie who if necessary interview the observer and take statements. The Gendarmerie send on the reports simultaneously to the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CENS) and to the French Ministry of Defence, who check radars etc to discover any military implications. The reports are then fed into a computer so that they can be "added to the statistics of the problem".

17. The view of the French Ministry of Defence may be summarised as follows:

a. The role of the Air Force consists solely in estimating whether certain information amongst the evidence they receive is likely to affect national defence; this is not in fact so ..... No acts of aggression either against persons or property civilian or military have been detected.

b. The phenomena cannot at present be analysed by means of known measuring instruments ..... Whilst maintaining an open mind we must restrain ourselves from hasty conclusions regarding the nature and origin of the phenomena and accept the fact that this problem like many others remains suspended in space.

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18. During 1978 a small study group was set up under the auspices of the CNES. It is chaired by Monsieur Clade Poher and is called the Groupe d'Etude des Phenomenes Aerospatiaux Non-identifies. The terms of reference for this group are not yet known but the title seems to be self-explanatory. The group has no formal links with the United Kingdom, and the Department of Education and Science advise that there is no similar scientific group in UK to study unidentified objects to phenomena.

19. Lord Clancarty drew attention to this group in a recent Parliamentary Question, when he also referred to a broadcast on France-Inter radio in February 1974 when M. Robert Galley, the then French Minister of Defence was interviewed about UFOs. The interview is reported in a book, "The Crack in the Universe" which contains an accurate translation of the broadcast and introduces the transcript quite fairly as an interview in which the Minister declared "there are phenomena which are unexplained". The blurb on the dust cover, however, has M. Galley freely admitting that UFOs exist and that they are a serious problem. According to the official transcript M. Galley made only two points of substance:-

a. There are things about UFOs which are not understood and have not been explained.

b. "We must adopt an extremely open attitude of mind to this, not put into doubt the sincerity of people reporting UFOs ..... but at the moment it is really far too soon to draw the least conclusion".

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ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA

20. In December 1977 Sir Eric Gairy, Prime Minister of Grenada, tabled a resolution at the United Nations calling on the Special Political Committee to set up a special agency or department to conduct research into unidentified flying objects and related phenomena. The British (and we believe other) representatives were briefed to oppose such an agency on the grounds that it would reduce the credibility of the United Nations. Sir Eric withdrew the proposal and circulated a draft resolution requiring the Secretary General to conduct a wide-ranging investigation into flying saucers, including an analysis of the benefits, problems and dangers stemming from any contact with terrestial life. In December 1978, as a result of persistent pressure by the Grenadans, the Special Political Committee finally agreed on a concensus resolution (albeit a very weak one). The implications are that Grenada may present its views to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space some time in 1979. That Committee is unlikely to do more that listen politely.

DATA

Age of the galaxy	-	about ten thousand million years (10^{10}
Number of stars in the galaxy	-	about one hundred thousand million (10^{1}
Diameter of galaxy	-	about one hundred thousand light years

/Note 1 light years is about 6 million million miles (6×10^{12})

Position of sun	-	about 27000 light years from centre of galaxy
Age of sun	-	about 4½ thousandmillion years (4.5x1(
Currently achievable speeds	-	about 12 miles/sec, to which can be added the earth's orbital speed of 18 miles/sec to give a total of 30 miles/sec.

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Time to journey to Pluto	- Depending on the gravitational assistance, or otherwise, of the major planets of Jupiter and Saturn, 3 to 5 years.
Ultimate speed	- In principle speeds near that of light should be achievable but technology does not yet exist.

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UFO debate on 16th January, 1979.

Lord Strabolgi has asked me to send in a copy of my opening speech and to list any particular ~~XXXXXX~~ questions that I have brought up which could possibly be answered by him at the end of the debate.

I have listed three below, and would refer you to my speech for further details.

(1) Is there a cover-up in this country over UFOs, like the obvious one there has been in the U.S.A., when the CIA stepped in, who have control over all the intelligence departments of the U.S. military forces ?

(2) Will our Minister of Defence consent to give a Tweedsnet interview, preferably on TV, entirely about UFOs, like his counterpart, the then French Minister of Defence did in February, 1974, on France-Inter radio station, when he said that UFOs existed. (For other details see speech).

(3) The French Minister, Monsieur Robert Galley, also stated that that there was a unit in the National Centre for Space Studies in Toulouse (the French equivalent of NASA) under the direction of ~~XXXXXX~~ Monsieur Claude Poher (one of the designers of Concorde) which was scientifically investigating UFOs.

Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge, in answer to a question that I put down for written answer just over a year ago in the House of Lords, confirmed that GEPAN (the initials of the unit) was under French governmental sponsorship, and came under the French Ministry for Industry, Commerce and Artisans. Why cannot we have similar investigation of UFOs here under the sponsorship of a government department ? And for us to be told the results of the investigations.

C (Lord) J

32

UFO Debate in House of Lords.
Thursday, 18th January, 1979.
Opening speech by the Earl
of Clancarty.

My Lords. It is with much pleasure that I am introducing this evening a debate about unidentified flying objects, known more briefly as UFOs, and sometimes as 'flying saucers'.

I understand that this is the first time that the subject of UFOs has been debated in Your Lordships Chamber. So, this is, indeed, a unique occasion.

Before proceeding further I think that I should declare an interest in that I have written a number of books about the UFOs.

I am very grateful to those noble Lords that are going to speak after me in this debate. It will be, I am sure, a most stimulating discussion.

Before speaking about the need for an inter-governmental study of UFOs, which is the basis of my motion to be debated today, I think it advisable to give Your Lordships some background to this fascinating subject of the UFOs.

So, I am going to briefly cover some of the UFO history, the classes of witnesses, the characteristics of UFOs, some important sightings, and then deal with the vital subject of the attitude of governments to this tremendous subject. phenomena.

Although UFOs have come to the fore since the end of the last world war, there are reports of them all through history.

Among the papers of the late Professor Alberto Tulli, former director of the Egyptian Museum at the Vatican, was found one of the earliest known records of a fleet of flying saucers written on papryus long, long ago in ancient Egypt. Actually, in the time of Thutmose III, circa 1504-1450 B.C., who with his army witnessed the sighting of what we today would call UFOs.

Now, I am not going to bore Your Lordships with accounts of UFOs in every century because I want to get on to the very interesting things happening today.

In modern times things began to happen during World War II when both Allied and German pilots saw strange, circular lights around their planes. We called them Foo fighters. Both Allied and German pilots thought that they were secret weapons of the other side.

After the war, on the 24th June, 1947, an American called Kenneth Arnold piloting his own plane was on a mercy mission trying to find another aircraft that had crashed somewhere in the Cascade Mountains in the State of Washington. Suddenly, he spotted nine gleaming objects - crescent shaped - flying in a zigzag fashion between his plane and the mountains.

He managed to calculate their speed because he was able to get a fix - I think that is the technical term - between two mountain peaks, Mts. Rainier and Baker. It appeared that they were doing some 1400 m.p.h, a very fast speed in 1947.

Some time after landing Arnold, in answer to a quest from the press, described the motion of the flying objects as being like saucers skimming over water. Next day, the press headlined them as 'flying saucers'.

Since Arnold's sighting in 1947 millions of people all over the world have seen the UFOs. This brings me to the class of witnesses that see UFOs. It is true that occasionally you get the odd crank or hoaxer, but the majority of witnesses are sincere people. Then again, many witnesses are pilots, police officers, coast guards - in short, trained observers. Many astronauts have seen UFOs.

Many people ask me "Why is it that astronomers don't see them?" The answer, My Lords, is that they do. In a letter published in 'The Daily Telegraph' on the 4th January last year, I listed eight well-known astronomers that had seen UFOs, including Dr. Clyde Tombaugh, discoverer of the planet Pluto.

Now, a few words about the UFOs themselves. Actually the name 'flying saucer' given by the press in 1947 was a misnomer, as they come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Cigar, oval, disc, sphere, doughnut, crescent, tadpole-shaped. You name it. The list is endless.

A few words about their characteristics. UFOs often have very bright lights, and sometimes when in flight, change colours all the way through the colour spectrum. Sometimes the light from a UFO is so intense that it's shape is obscured from view. This light energy is so powerful that witnesses have been burnt on the face and hands if in too close proximity to a UFO.

Another characteristic of the UFOs is electrical interference with various machines. UFOs have been notorious for stopping cars at short range. The driver will hear his engine splutter and stop running. Besides cars, many other machines have been affected, including aircraft, motor cycles, buses, lorries, tractors, and the UFOs are said to be the cause of some of the power black-outs in the USA & Mexico and other countries. Indeed, UFOs have been seen flying along power lines in the USA just before black-outs, and furthermore, I have a picture on the wall of my study at home of a UFO doing just that!

Now, I will mention one or two of the more impressive sightings since the war.

On the 29th June, 1954, a BOAC Boeing stratocruiser "Centaurus" had taken off from New York for London. Dinner had been served. The time was just after sunset when the skipper, Captain James Howard, first sighted the UFOs. Some of the passengers by then were asleep. There was one big object with six smaller ones. Captain Howard pointed them out to his co-pilot, First Officer Lee Boyd who flew with the famous Pathfinder force in World War II. The objects were five miles from the "Centaurus". They stayed parallel with the aircraft for eighty miles. From time to time the big object appeared to change shape. The radio officer checked with those

Bay, Labrador, to see if any other aircraft were in the area and was told no. Goose Bay sent a fighter up to investigate. All the crew saw the objects. Just before the fighter arrived the objects began to disappear, and it seemed that the smaller ones went inside the large one. Altogether a crew of eight and fourteen of the fifty one passengers saw the UFOs.

In November 1975, at Strategic Air Command bases in Michigan, Montana, North Dakota and Maine, a number of UFOs were sighted over a four day period. Several were hovering near nuclear weapons storage areas. When interceptor planes were sent up to investigate, the UFOs dimmed their lights and became invisible.

One of the most amazing UFO incidents ever occurred in September, 1976. A report of this event written by Geoffrey Levy appeared in the 'Daily Express' on 27th February, last year. I will buy and give you the account in my own words.

A very large glowing object was seen over Meheran, Iran. Hundreds of witnesses telephoned the authorities. At 1.30 a.m. the Iranian Air Force scrambled a phantom jet to investigate the UFO which was some 70 miles away. As the jet reached about half the distance to the UFO all of the Iranian plane's communications and instrument systems malfunctioned. The pilot had no alternative but to return to base.

A second phantom jet took off flying faster than the speed of sound. The UFO began to move at a very fast speed indeed, and soon outpaced the jet.

Then, an extraordinary thing happened. Suddenly, a second smaller UFO came out of the big one, and headed straight for the jet.

The jet pilot tried to release an AIM-9 air-to-air missile at the glowing object. No success at all. The weapons control panel was not working and all electronic systems were out of action.

There was only one thing for the pilot to do, and that was to make his escape. He put his plane in a dive. Then the second UFO turned around and went back

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inside the 'Mother Ship'.

The jet pilot's instruments started working again. So once more he tried to pursue the UFO, but it moved away too rapidly, and so the phantom jet returned to base.

There are literally vast numbers of these astounding reports. Indeed, My Lords, this world-wide UFO invasion of every country's air space is of growing importance, and therefore I suggest that Parliament keeps a continuous watch on the situation. I have thought of one way of doing this. In the same way that there is a House of Lords Defence Study Group ably chaired by the noble Lord, Lord Shinwell, perhaps we could have a House of Lords UFO Study Group to meet periodically. [illegible] looking and investigating [illegible] the House.

Now, I would like to touch upon the attitude of governments towards this subject and to stress the need for an intra-governmental study, which is the object of my motion this evening.

I am only going to talk about four governments. First of all let us take a look at the United States. I think that one of the reasons for 'playing down' UFOs some years ago in the United States was fear of panic among the public. This was partly based on an actual panic that did occur back in 1938 due to a very realistic broadcast by Orson Welles of H.G. Wells's' War of the Worlds'. Thousands of people left their homes.

However, for a time after the war The U.S. Air Force investigated pilots' UFO reports without any debunking. Then the Central Intelligence Agency - the CIA - stepped in. The CIA controls the intelligence departments of the United States military services. They ordered the U.S. Air Force to clamp down on all UFO reports. It was in 1952 that this happened, and has been going on ever since. Pilots who reported seeing UFOs were ridiculed, and after a time, other pilots did not report them for fear of their reputations being damaged.

We had high hopes during President Carter's election

campaign that there was a strong possibility of a break-through to the truth about UFOs. He disclosed during his campaign that he had seen a UFO a few years previously in Georgia, and added that if he got in to the White House he would release to the public all the UFO information in the Pentagon. Unfortunately, that election pledge has not yet been fulfilled.

What has been happening in the Soviet Union ? Probably the leading ufologist in that country is Dr. Felix Zigel, Professor of Higher Mathematics and Astronomy at the Moscow Aeronautical Institute. For a long time he had been trying to form a big UFO power group on a world wide scale.

Many UFOs had been seen over the Soviet Union, In July, August, September and October, 1967, giant spaceships were seen over various parts of the U.S.S.R. by astronomers and other witnesses.

On ~~[illegible]~~ the 13th November that year it was announced that there was to be a full investigation of UFOs. This was announced on Russian TV. The operation was to be headed by Major General Anatoly Stolyerov, with Dr. Zigel as Number Two. Thousands of UFO cases were to be analysed by scientists and Soviet Air Force officers.

However, the Russian Academy for Sciences came down hard on the new UFO group, and on the 27th February 1968, Pravda published the official attitude of the authorities, and the cover-up was on.

Now, there is one country which can be relied upon to take an independant line from others over many matte and ~~[illegible]~~ UFOs ~~[illegible]~~ proved to be no exceptio In February, 1974, the then French Minister of Defence, Monsieur Robert Galley, was interviewed on entirely about the UFOs on France-Inter radio station. The interviewer was Jean Claude-Bourret. At the time in France there was tremendous publicity but for some reason our newspapers did not even mention the broadca

Monsieur Galley stated that the UFOs were real, but admitted that it was not known where they came from.

He said, that there had been a unit in the French Ministry of Defence since 1954 collecting UFO reports. Some of this material was sent on to the National Centre for Space Studies in Toulouse, the French equivalent of NASA the American NASA. In this centre there was also a unit - a scientific one - studying both UFO sighting and landing reports.

A little over a year ago I received some information that this particular unit was under government sponsorship so I put down a question for written answer. The noble Lord, Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge kindly confirmed to me in his reply that the unit GEPAN -those are the initials of the group - had been set up under the French Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Artisanat at the Centre in Toulouse. However, he did point out that we had not a comparable scientific group here under study.

Monsieur Galley also added that the Gendarmerie were playing a very important part in UFO investigation questioning witnesses and examining burnt circular marks on the ground were UFOs had landed.

So the French have been taking it all seriously and keeping their own people informed. Nobody panicked and the people did not rush like lemmings in to the sea.

Is it not time that Her Majesty's Government informed our people what it knows about the UFOs ? The UFOs have been coming in increasing numbers now for 30 years since the war, and I think it is time our people were told the truth.

We have not been invaded from outer space. Most incidents have not been hostile. Indeed it is us - earthlings - that have fired on them. There may have been a few allegedly hostile incidents. But, I maintain that if there is a disturbing element in a phenomenon which is pretty friendly on the whole that we should be told the truth. Whatever the truth is, I am sure that an informed public is a prepared one.

Another thing. It is on record that both sighting and landing reports are increasing all the time. Just suppose the UFOnauts decided to make open landings

tomorrow, then there could well be panic here because our people have not been prepared.

The noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi is replying for Her Majesty's Government at the end of this debate. I should like to ask the noble Lord if he will contact his Right Honourable friend the Minister of Defence with a view to about the possibility of giving a broadcast interview about UFOs, like his counterpart did across the channel in 1974.

This would go a long way to discredit the view held by a lot of people in this country that there is a cover-up here and that in some way we are playing along with the United States over this.

I would also like to see an intra-governmental study of the UFOs. All governments should get together and pool their knowledge about UFOs, and the results should be passed on to the public.

I would like to thank Your Lordships for your kind attention. I beg leave to move for papers.

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FOR CAV

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FOR [redacted] ADI/DI 55 FROM DEFAD. FCO FOR SP DEPT.
RECENT UFO SIGHTINGS IN NZ. YOUR 021400Z JAN.

1. FROM THE OUTSET MOST INFORMED OPINION HAS MAINTAINED THAT THE RADAR AND VISUAL SIGHTINGS WERE CAUSED BY NATURAL PHENOMENA AND NOTHING SO FAR ESTABLISHED SUGGESTS THAT THIS VIEW NEEDS TO BE QUESTIONED. AT PRESENT THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT FELT IT NECESSARY TO MAKE ANY FORMAL STATEMENT BUT WHEN THE FACTS HAVE BEEN ASSEMBLED AND APPRAISED THEY ARE EXPECTED TO DO SO. THERE IS NO DOUBT WITHIN THE NZMOD THAT THIS WILL STATE THAT THE RECENT SIGHTINGS WERE DUE TO NATURAL PHENOMENA. THE RNZAF IS CARRYING OUT AN INFORMAL INQUIRY IN WHICH OFFICIALS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TOGETHER WITH THE PILOTS AND RADAR CONTROLLERS CONCERNED WILL BE INVOLVED IN AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH THE CAUSE OF THE RECENT SIGHTINGS, BUT CORRELATION OF THE VARIOUS REPORTS WILL BE TIME CONSUMING AND EVEN THEN THE FACTS FROM WHICH A DIFINITIVE CONCLUSION COULD BE DRAWN MAY PROVE ELUSIVE.

2. GIVEN THE FOREGOING THE NZMOD WOULD BE CONTENT FOR MINISTERS TO SPEAK AS ABOVE AND DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING PARAS IN THE DEBATE ON 10 JAN. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THEY BE BRIEFED TO ATTRIBUTE ANY VIEWS EXPRESSED TO REPORTING FROM THE HIGH COMMISSION IN WELLINGTON AND NOT BE DRAWN FURTHER IN ADVANCE OF ANY OFFICIAL NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT COMMENT.

3. THE RECENSEUFO SIGHTINGS BEGAN ON THE NIGHT OF THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER AND CONTINUED FOR A PERIOD OF ABOUT TEN DAYS. THE NIGHTS OF GREATEST ACTIVITY WERE THE 21ST AND 27TH, THE LATTER WHEN THE PILOTS WERE INTERVIEWED. ON THE NIGHT OF 21/22 DEC AT 15[illegible] IN THE MORNING A NUMBER OF UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS WERE SEEN BY A CREW OF THE WELLINGTON AIRPORT RADAR SCREEN AT A RANGE OF [illegible] MILES SE OF WELLINGTON AIRPORT IN THE AREA OF THE MOUTH OF THE [illegible] RIVER OFF THE

KAIKOURA COAST OF THE SOUTH ISLAND. SOME OF THESE RADAR SIGHTINGS WERE ESTIMATED TO BE MOVING AT A SPEED OF SOME 120 KNOTS BUT REMAINED IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA. HOWEVER, ONE TARGET WAS TRACKED FROM NEARLY OVERHEAD WELLINGTON AIRPORT TO A POSITION SOME 60 MILES SE WHEN IT TURNED AND WAS THEN TRACKED FOR SOME 80 MILES TO A POSITION SW OF WELLINGTON AIRPORT WHEN IT TURNED ONTO A SOUTHERLY HEADING ABEAM OF A SOUTH-BOUND ARGOSY AIRCRAFT. ON SUBSEQUENT NIGHTS OTHER RADAR SIGHTINGS WERE SEEN IN SIMILAR POSITIONS OFF THE KAIKOURA COAST.

4. ON THE NIGHT OF 30/31 DECEMBER A PHOTOGRAPHER WAS ABOARD THE ARGOSY AIRCRAFT ON THE ROUTINE NEWSPAPER FLIGHT WHICH IS ROUTED FROM WELLINGTON TO CHRISTCHURCH AND THENCE TO BLENHEIM. ON THIS OCCASION RADAR SIGHTINGS WERE OBSERVED DURING THE SOUTHBOUND AND THE RETURN FLIGHT AND THERE WAS APPARENTLY SOME DEGREE OF TRACKING WITH THE ARGOSY. THE TWO PILOTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS ON THE AIRCRAFT HAD SIMULTANEOUS-VISUAL SIGHTINGS AND THE FILM WHICH HAS NOW RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY WAS TAKEN ON THE NORTHBOUND FLIGHT. ALSO THE CAPTAIN OF THE ARGOSY PICKED UP A RADAR TARGET ON HIS WEATHER AVOIDANCE RADAR WHICH WAS APPARENTLY IN THE SANE POSITION AS A TARGET PICKED UP BY THE GROUND RADAR.

5. SUBSEQUENTLY ON THE NIGHT OF 2/3 JANUARY THE RNZAF PATROLLED THE KAIKOURA AREA IN AN ORION AIRCRAFT FOR A PERIOD OF APPROX 6 HOURS. THE AIRCRAFT WAS VECTORED BY BOTH WELGFNGTON AND CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT RADARS TO VARIOUS RADAR CONTACTS. NOTHING WAS SEEN BY THE ORION CREW ALTHOUGH ONE OF THE RADAR CONTACTS TURNED OUT TO BE IN THE PRECISE POSITION OF A FISHING VESSEL. SIX RADAR CONTACTS SEEN ON THE WELLINGTON AIRPORT RADAR ALL TURNED OUT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH CLEAR AIR TURBULENCE.

6. AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF THE INQUIRY IT IS APPARENT THAT MANY RADAR CONTACTS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED ON TWO INDEPENDENT RADARS, ONE AIRBORNE, ONE GROUND, USING DIFFERENT FREQUENCIES AND OF COURSE AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS AND ALTITUDES. HOWEVER, AT PRESENT IT HAS NOT BEEN POSITIVELY CONFIRMED THAT THERE IS PRECISE CORRELATION OF THESE RADAR SIGHTINGS. NOR HAS IT YET BEEN PROVED THAT THE VISUAL SIGHTINGS TIE UP WITH THE RADAR CONTACTS. IN SOME CASES THE BEARINGS APPEAR TO CORRELATE BUT THE CORRELATION OF DISTANCES HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BY INDUCTIVE METHODS. E.G. QUOTE I HAVE A RADAR CONTACT AT 20 MILES ON YOUR STARBOARD. I SEE CONTACT AT 20 MILES UNQUOTE.

7. ON THE TWO PRINCIPAL NIGHTS THERE WAS A SLIGHT INVERSION OVER THE KAIKOURA COAST WHICH COULD HAVE CAUSED REFRACTION. I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN A PRECISE ANSWER ABOUT ANOMOLOUS PROPOGATION CONDITIONS BUT IT IS THOUGHT UNLIKELY THAT THESE EXISTED. CLEAR AIR TURBULENCE, SHIPPING, CLOUDS OF DUST BLOWN DOWN THROUGH THE GORGE OF THE CLARENCE RIVER AND SUBSEQUENTLY SEEN AS RADAR SIGHTINGS AND BIRD MIGRATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE SOURCES OF THE RADAR AND VISUAL REPORTS.

8. IN THE PERIOD OF THESE SIGHTINGS TOO MANY INFORMED PEOPLE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED FOR THIS TO BE A HOAX.

9. THE PRESS REPORTS WHICH INDICATED THAT THE RNZAF HAD SQUADRONS ON STAND BY TO LOOK FOR UFOS WERE ENTIRELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. FOR YOUR OWN BACKGROUND INFORMATION THE RNZAF ORION FLIGHT WAS LARGELY A PR EXERCISE TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT A PROPER RESPONSE WAS FORTHCOMING FOLLOWING THE VAST MEDIA COVERAGE.

10. HOPE THE FOREGOING PROVES USEFUL. WILL UPDATE PRIOR TO 10 JAN IF ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT [illegible]. BEST TO YOU.

CT

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LOOSE MINUTE

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Section 40

D/DD Ops(GE)/10/8/1

[redacted]

Hd of S4(Air)

Copy to:
DI55

UFO'S - DEBATE IN THE LORDS

1. After further consideration of the draft closing address, I would prefer para 21b to be worded:

"b. The air defence radar system has not had occasion to originate unidentified flying object reports."

2. This should pre-empt supplementary questions along the line of that from Sir John Langford-Holton 21 May 71 after being advised by the then S of S that the analysis of UFO reports indicated that 31 were celestrial objects and 97 were aircraft.

[redacted]

10 Jan 79

MB 4258 6351 MB

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Section 40 [redacted]

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PS/USofS(RAF) through DUS(Air) and PS/USofS(RAF)

Copies to: PS/CS(RAF)
ACS(G)(RAF)
DI55 - [redacted]
Ops(GE)2b(RAF)

Placed opposite is a draft closing address for the Lords debate on UFOs, and a Background Note; due at your office by 12 January 1979.

2. There is a temptation to equivocate about UFOs because of the thought that we might one day make contact with people from distant stars. However, there is nothing to indicate that ufology is anything but claptrap and no evidence at all of 'alien space craft'. The UFO industry has prospered from equivocation and, with 1979 being heralded as 'the year of the UFOs', it seems very proper for HMG to inject some massive common sense into the business and come out with an equivocal attack on ufology. With the impact of the film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", and the increasing efforts of the UFO industry and increasing publicity given to its exponents, quite sensible people may begin to wonder whether there might not be something in ufology, on the "where there's smoke there's fire" principle. Less sensible people may be increasingly confused and perhaps even worried, to the increasing profit and encouragement of the UFO industry. The subject will not go away, the Department and probably Ministers are likely to find themselves increasingly involved and under pressure for formal statements; and the popular and UFO press are likely to make all the mileage they can out of the Lords Debate, particularly if there are signs of equivocation or phrases that can easily be misrepresented.

4. Accordingly it is strongly recommended that the Government take an unequivocal and uncompromising line.

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insert because the FCO has

5. A small difficulty has, for purely tactical reasons unconnected with UFOs, acceded (with other countries) to a request by the Government of Grenada for a UN study group (at Grenadan expense) to monitor information on UFOs. The wording of that part of the draft speech has been supplied by FCO.

6. The general line adopted is that there really are strange phenomena in the sky, but there are perfectly rational explanations to account for them, so there is no need to introduce the highly questionable hypothesis of alien space craft. In other words, Occam's Razor.

7. The broad line was put to Lord Strabolgi at our meeting in December and agreed by him. Lord Strabolgi asked for further information about cosmic distances and the difficulties of space travel. I have not included this in the speech, because Lord Clancarty's "sky people" are evidently "paranormal" and can cross the light years in a trice; but some facts are included at the end of the background note.

8. Lord Strabolgi also mentioned the possibility of replying on any detailed cases produced by Lord Clancarty if the latter will give advance notice. I repeat the advice I gave in December: we should not attempt to argue these cases, which tend to be remote and elusive yet often cannot be refuted without very detailed examination; indeed we should not fight the battle on Lord Clancarty's ground at all.

9. DES have been consulted and are content.

10. You will no doubt confirm the time and place of the final briefing, which at present we have down for am Wednesday 17 January.

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3rd Draft
9 Jan 1979

UFOs - DRAFT CLOSING ADDRESS

There are 2 points of truth upon which the great myth of ufology is built.

FIRST: we live in a huge universe, with 100,000 million stars in our galaxy alone, which it would take 100,000 years to cross even if we could travel at the speed of light. There are many remarkable things yet to be explained.

SECOND: There really are strange phenomena in the skies, reported by calm and intelligent people.

2. It is this immensity of the universe which sometimes tempts even the most down-to-earth people to equivocate about UFOs. We can never be sure that we will not, one day, make contact with beings from a distant star.

3. But that is all. So let us have an end to equivocation. Her Majesty's Government has no evidence that life exists outside this planet, or that a single alien space craft has visited earth, and does not believe there is anything worth investigating in the mass of rubbish produced by the UFO industry. The general theme of the ufologists, that our planet is being continuously overflown by alien space craft, is claptrap.

4. On the one hand, there are perfectly simple explanations for the phenomena; on the other, the explanations offered by ufologists are unconvincing and unnecessary. These explanations are unconvincing when they relate to space craft from other stars: they are even more unconvincing when they claim that UFOs come from another space-time continuum, from a hole in the earth, or the depths of the sea, as Lord Clancarty has suggested. The House will forgive me if I do not follow Lord Clancarty into other dimensions and the wild realms of fantasy, but concentrate on the phenomena which have given rise to the UFO myth.

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5. There have always been strange things to see in the sky. Since World War II we have known the development of powerful rockets, and voyages to the Moon and planets. We have also seen the development of science fiction, where space ships can be switched to 'inter-stellar drive' and our hero can cross the 2 million light years to Andromeda Galaxy in a flash. We have also seen the development of ufology and the UFO industry, which accept the delightful fantasies of science fiction as proven fact and interpret almost any phenomena in our skies as alien space craft. The words 'UFO' and 'alien space craft' have been firmly implanted and too readily spring to mind when anything strange is seen in the sky.

6. And there really are strange things to see. Let me stress that a high proportion of so-called UFO reports relate to actual phenomena reported by sensible people.

a. There are many natural phenomena. Every year millions of tons of space debris enter our atmosphere as meteors, meteorites, fire-balls, sometimes with dramatic effect.

b. Bright planets and even the moon or stars have been reported as UFOs in unusual atmospheric conditions. There are many recorded cases of Venus being reported as a UFO, even by experienced pilots in exceptional conditions.

c. There are tricks of light on cloud, and particular structures such as lens-shaped clouds.

d. There is St Elmo's Fire, ball lightning, and Aurora Borealis.

e. And man-made satellites: there are some 5000 listed objects in orbit, satellites and debris, some of which can be seen by the naked eye, some through binoculars.

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About 600 re-enter the atmosphere every year, almost 2 each day: the quantity is far less than natural space debris, but the phenomena are sometimes astonishing. Last April MOD received reports of a large piece of debris re-entering across the South of England: most reports were factual, but one spoke of an 'oval shaped thing with a white cockpit which hovered for a while then shot off at great speed'. We cannot prove it wasn't a UFO, but it occurred at the same time and place as some known re-entry of debris.

f. Many reports relate to aircraft seen in unusual conditions at unusual angles, some very high, some at low level. One recent 'UFO' was confidently reported on local radio: we cannot prove that it was not a 'UFO', but we do know that an RAF Vulcan Bomber on a low flying mission passed the same spot at the same time and on the same course as the reported UFO.

g. Aircraft lights have led to UFO reports: and distant aircraft with landing lights on; aircraft with search-lights, flares from aircraft, high condensation trails lit by the sun after dusk, light reflected from aircraft.

h. Meteorological balloons. The Met Office alone releases 50 every day, which expand to 40 foot diameter and rise to 100,000 feet and can be lit by the sun after dark. Many other organisations use balloons, some much larger.

i. Meteorological searchlights shine on clouds: you cannot see the beam, only a point of light apparently dancing in the sky.

j. There are hot air balloons; kites; even birds have been reported as UFOs; lights on distant towers; car head-lights on distant hills; dust-devils; airborne debris carried by the wind. [redacted]

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k. There is also a wide variety of hoaxes. There are some very effective aerial hoaxes which have been perpetrated by children - which I will not describe for fear of precipitating a new rash of UFO reports.

7. All these are phenomena which can be misinterpreted even by the most sensible observers, particularly when seen unexpectedly and briefly and in unusual atmospheric conditions - with distortions of light, and mirages, the most commonplace phenomena can be so changed that even the expert can be deceived. Any phenomena seen through glass are also suspect. There are even phenomena generated within the eyeball. And there are optical illusions, akin to watching a stationary point of light in a dark room and reporting that it moves. One scientist whose task includes watching satellites describes how, even after years of experience, he finds it difficult to escape the illusion that the stars are flying past stationary clouds.

8. One could go on. A very substantial American study done by the University of Colorado in 1968 reported some 50 examples of such phenomena, but added that it was 'impossible and potentially misleading to try to tabulate all of the possible causes of UFO perception: there are simply too many'.

9. So there really are tens of thousands of strange things to be seen in the sky every year. It is the present custom of our society to transpose such reportings into 'UFOs', and to transpose again into 'alien space craft'. We cannot possibly prove that all of these aerial phenomena are not alien space craft. Often the appearance is too fleeting and the description too imprecise for a particular cause to be attributed. What we can say is that there is a great variety of perfectly sensible explanations for the strange things seen in the sky.

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10. Here we should apply Occam's Razor. There are perfectly sensible explanations that can account for the phenomena. Why seek fantastic new explanations in the realms of magic?

11. From these genuine sightings we can move to hallucinations; and the excited tales of the gullible; the embellishments of the born story-teller. There are also, I fear, downright lies. There are also the embellishments of the convinced believer in UFOs, who will add to any piece of space debris a line of windows and intelligent manoeuvres.

12. But what of these famous arrivals of UFOs, claimed to be fully documented and authenticated by many witnesses. Let me mention one, which Lord Clancarty has described in his book Mysterious Visitors as 'one of the most remarkable and unexplained mysteries of modern times'. He claims that during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, an entire British unit of over 800 men of the Norfolk Regiment was advancing to the attack; a UFO descended in a cloud and picked up the battalion and it was never heard of again. Anyone aware of the huge casualties at Gallipoli will not be surprised to hear that the true story is tragic rather than comic. A brigade attack was held up by heavy machine-gun and artillery fire, except that on the right flank some 260 men of the Norfolks, with fragments of other regiments, broke through the Turkish lines into a wood. Not one returned. It was only after the war that a Graves Registration Unit found the bodies, in circumstances confirming that they had been killed fighting. A gallant and tragic story; but not a great unexplained UFO mystery. The facts are known and recorded. But Lord Clancarty is not interested in facts. He is interested in gathering anything unusual into his massive files of UFO mysteries.

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13. A variation of the 'authenticated case' is when, like many ufologists, Lord Clancarty goes far back into history and even the Bible to borrow authority. Ancient cases have the advantage that, if they cannot be proved UFOs, they cannot now be disproved. The Colorado Report, which I mentioned earlier, did consider one of these great ancient cases quoted by ufologists, including Lord Clancarty - a vivid and detailed description of UFOs at Byland Abbey Yorkshire in 1290, in a manuscript discovered in 1953: the 'ancient manuscript' cited by the ufologists proved to be a hoax perpetrated by schoolboys.

14. Another variation of the 'authenticated case' is when an individual reports having seen a landed UFO, and seen the little green men, or little silver men. You may believe those if you will. Because such silver aliens have actually been seen with two arms and two legs and a head and looking surprisingly like humans in silver suits, ufologists have claimed this as evidence that the aliens use humanoid robots; you may prefer to regard this as evidence of man's infinite capacity for gulling his neighbours.

15. So the ufologists accumulate their 'UFO sightings', from honest reports and from the weirder corners of the mind, as if sheer numbers constitute proof. Naturally some people murmur 'where there's smoke there's fire'. All that is happening is that the UFO industry is making a great deal of smoke, to the confusion of common sense and to their own substantial profit.

16. There is a small category remaining, of cases which are difficult to explain. It is hardly surprising, with the great variety of phenomena, that there should be difficult cases, perhaps

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due to a coincidence of phenomena and/to exceptional conditions. If one accepts that there are so many natural explanations to account for the great bulk of sightings, it is an enormous and irrational jump to claim that the small residue of difficult cases constitute alien space craft - when there is not a flicker of positive evidence that they do constitute alien space craft.

17. Arguing with ufologists on this count is like trying to prove that damage to garden cabbages is NOT made by pixies. We can point out that the cabbages are crawling with caterpillars. The ufologists will insist that the bites on the cabbages match the pattern of pixies' teeth. They will carry out 'scientific' studies about the nature of pixies, and the incidence of pixies, and speculate where the pixies are hiding. They will admit that some of the bites may be made by caterpillars. But they will claim that if they can point to a single bite that cannot actually be proved to have been made by a caterpillar, it is thereby proved conclusively to have been made by a pixie.

18. I should mention the famous 'UFO' reported over the United Kingdom on the night of 31st December. The phenomenon was probably a space rocket launcher associated with the USSR space satellite COSMOS 1068 which was launched on 26 December. Of over 100 reports reaching MOD, nearly all were entirely factual and consistent with re-entry of space debris; however, one report

described a long train with bright lights down the side. What will of course linger in the public mind is not the matter-of-fact explanation about space debris but the vague recollection that a big UFO was seen over England.

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19. /New Zealand sighting - report awaited: Daily Mirror reports NZ authorities are claiming that the sighting was Venus, the camera so out of focus that the image took the shape of the cameras iris, and the blips on radar were quite separate and related to flocks of birds/.

20. Let us glance at the other side of the coin, the sort of explanations offered by Lord Clancarty and other ufologists. Lord Clancarty has been reported as claiming there have been some 80,000 sightings. Other ufologists would put the figure far higher. Now, there is a strange thing about these huge numbers. To put it in simple terms: either these 'sky people' (as Lord Clancarty calls them) prefer to keep out of the way, or they don't. If they prefer to keep out of the way, we must assume that the number of 'sightings' is a tiny proportion of the actual UFO 'sorties', which must run into millions. If they don't one would expect some unmistakable appearances.

21. But look at their strange track record:

a. Not a single artefact has been found - not a single extra-terrestial chap has dropped an extra-terrestial spanner, no bent pieces, no accidents from perhaps millions of sorties, nothing. The ufologists have an answer: the CIA has hidden all the bits.

b. There is no correlative evidence on our radar for this huge number of movements.

c. There has been no radio contact (far easier than space travel) and no evidence on radio.

d. There have been no convincing photographs, in these days when so many people carry cameras.

e. There has been no approach to Governments, and no direct knowledge of UFOs by Governments. Lord

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Clancarty has an answer: there is a great inter-Governmental conspiracy of silence, initiated by the CIA.

22. The idea of the inter-Governmental conspiracy of silence is at once the most astonishing and the most flattering claim of all. On so few things can the Governments of the world agree unaminously, but they have all supposedly agreed to conceal the evidence of UFOs from their people. The ufologists know that if there had been activity on the scale suggested, it must have come to the direct attention of Governments. They are convinced that we and other Governments are concealing the truth. A recent copy of Lord Clancarty's magazine has an article misrepresenting some correspondence with MOD so as to suggest that MOD accepts the existence of UFOs and is investigating them. Another UFO magazine recently fabricated a report supposed to show that MOD had agencies engaged in the systematic examination of UFOs. I will repeat what I said at the beginning. Her Majesty's Government has no evidence that a single alien space craft has visited earth, and does not believe there is anything worth investigating in the rubbish produced by the UFO industry.

23. If raised. Lord Clancarty suggests that the United States Government is a party to the 'cover-up' on UFOs. Our understanding is that the US authorities position is the same as it was in 1969 after the University of Colorado investigated UFOs at the request of the US Air Force. The Colorado Reports main finding was (I quote) 'nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge'. We understand that nothing has happened since 1969 to cause the US authorities to change their views, or to warrant further investigation of UFOs.

It may be true that President Carter once reported a

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'sighting': as I have continually stressed, there really are strange things to see, and there is a world of difference between a report of phenomena and the existence of alien space craft/.

24. /If raised/. Lord Clancarty suggests that the French Minister of Defence in 1974 admitted to the existence of UFOs in a broadcast interview. In fact the essence of what M Galley said was that there are things about UFO reports which were not understood and had not been explained.

25. Returning to the main theme of Lord Clancarty and his fellow ufologists - there is no internal consistency about the idea of this huge number of sightings. If the UFO have come from another solar system, why this huge number of visits to our planet, to no apparent purpose? At best it seems wasteful. This was once explained by the claim that aliens had advance bases the other side of the moon. When that became untenable the bases were assumed to be on another planet in our solar system. As that has become untenable ever more fantastic explanations are advanced. In a recent TV broadcast Lord Clancarty claimed that the UFOs are based in a great hole in the earth. Elsewhere he has claimed that they have bases in remote parts of South America, or in the depths of the oceans.

He has claimed that (I quote): 'UFOs are paranormal, that is from invisible universes'. They come from 'other space-time continua'. The explanations get more and more fantastic, and more and more incapable of either proof or disproof.

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26. A telling argument against ufology is that the scientific community is unmoved. A visitor from outer space - or from another space time continuum or the depths of the sea, or anywhere else they are supposed to be hiding - would be one of the greatest events in history, and the greatest scientific event. Scientists are an inquisitive lot. If there was anything in ufology we would expect many serious and sensible scientists to be devoting much time and effort to studying or making contact with these supposed 'sky people'. The scientific community seems as unimpressed as the Government. If the ufologists claim that the Government has gagged the scientific community, it would be as amazing as the alleged conspiracy of silence between Governments.

27. One could go on indefinitely trying to chase the devious arguments of the ufologists. Yes, there has been an increase in the number of 'sightings' reported to the Government: big upsurges occurred when the BBC put out a programme on UFOs, and when the Daily Express launched a campaign in connection with the film premiere of 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind'. No, the Government is not in the least concerned by the increases.

28. At the United Nations recently members of the Special Political Committee, following speeches about UFOs by the representatives of Grenada, agreed on a concensus resolution that provides at Grenadian expense, for a study group to monitor information on UFOs supplied by any interested United Nations member state and for the group to present its findings to the Outer Space Committee sometime in 1979. Lord Clancarty may therefore be satisfied that Grenada and such other countries who choose will be making a report in an inter-Governmental forum. However, the UK has no plans either to provide information about UFOs or to involve itself in any other way with the study group.

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29. To sum up, there are two elements in ufology: the stream of largely genuine reports of aerial phenomena; and the extra-ordinary concoctions of the ufologists suggesting that this earth has long and constantly been overflown by alien space craft. The ufologists case depends ultimately on belief that there has been a massive inter-governmental cover-up lasting many decades, to which the world scientific community has been a party. Anyone who believes that will believe anything. Nothing said here will deter the UFO industry, or discourage the sensational press from feeding on wild UFO stories. But perhaps what has been said in this House will help confirm sensible people in the belief that the strange things to be seen in the sky have perfectly sensible explanations and that the wild hypotheses of the ufologists are unne cessary.

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BACKGROUND NOTE

UFOLOGY

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1. There is a big difference between, on the one hand, the vague belief which many sensible people hold, that we might one day make contact with people from a distant star; and on the other, the claims of ufology that our planet has been and is being almost continuously overflown by alien spacecraft. Many ufologists claim that UFOs have been around for thousands of years, and some believe that competing groups are 'working on our minds'. Ufology is a growth industry, with many magazines and clubs, and reporting systems for 'UFO sightings', and text books for the UFO spotter. The basic system of ufology seems to be to record almost any aerial phenomena as a UFO, and to accept almost any strange story from the past or present as evidence of alien presence.

2. There are undoubtedly many strange phenomena to see in the skies, and these are often reported by sensible people. However, there are perfectly sensible explanations for the phenomena, and no evidence that there has ever been a visit from alien space craft. There is nothing to indicate that ufology is anything but claptrap.

3. HMG has no experts on UFOs, as it has no experts on black magic. The examinatior in this file is built up largely from Lord Clancarty's book 'Mysterious Visitors'; from reports of TV and Press interviews with Lord Clancarty and others; various UFO magazines; the book and film 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind'; the massive American 'Colorado Study' of 1968; the book 'UFOs Explained' by P J Klass (a de-bunker); from MOD's own records of UFO reports and past examinations; and from discussions with the operational and intelligence staff who examine UFO reports reaching MOD. We have consulted DES and FCO; also the staff of [redacted] CS(RAF).

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4. A distinction should be made between ufology and science fiction. The latter is often a perfectly respectable art form and has attracted some highly intelligent writers: science fiction should on no account be linked to ufology in any de-bunking.

THE EARL OF CLANCARTY

5. Lord Clancarty has written several books on UFOs (as Brinsley Le Poer Trench) and runs a magazine and seems to be regarded as one of the leading ufologists in this country. Evidently he firmly and sincerely believes that aliens have been visiting Earth since the beginning of history, and may have 'seeded' our race. Many events in the Bible are explained in UFO terms. The 'aliens' are watching us, particularly now (his magazine talks of 1000 sighting reports each week), and have often landed, and may soon arrive in force, probably cordially. He is convinced that the American and British Governments, and others, are concealing the truth about UFOs until we have discovered all about them and know how best to present the story.

6. Lord Clancarty has hedged all his bets on space travel by suggesting that the 'sky people' are 'paranormal' and come from another 'space-time continuum'. He will therefore be unmoved by arguments based on cosmic mathematics, because it seems that the sky people can cover huge distances in the twinkling of an eye. He has claimed that the sky people were hiding on the moon or the planets, or in remote corners of South America, or the depths of the sea, or a huge hole in the ground (the last seems to be based on a satellite photographic collage, where the corners of the photographs did not quite meet). He seems to be a singularly undiscriminating ufologist, and almost any report or strange story is likely to be added to his massive files of 'reported sightings'.

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7. His line at the debate is likely to be to quote the vast numbers of 'sightings'; to describe a number of 'fully authenticated cases'; to express his theories about the nature and origins of the 'sky people' (probably bringing in the paranormal aspect); and to press HMG either (1) to come clean and tell the public all they know about UFOs, or (2) to devote resources to an inter-Governmental study.

8. Win or lose, Lord Clancarty stands to make a profit from the debate: which is not to doubt his sincerity.

THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE TO UFOs

9. There has been no British scientific enquiry into UFOs. However, the United States Air Force made a systematic attempt to record and investigate UFO sightings between 1947 and 1969. During this period the USAF received 12,618 reports; of these 701 were not explained.

10. This USAF investigation known as Project Blue Book was followed by a study which was originally suggested a member of a congressional investigation in the Armed Forces Committee and which was assigned by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research to the University of Colorado. It was led by Dr Edward V Condon, Professor of Physics and formerly Director of the National Bureau of Standards. The main findings of this very substantial and detailed study, published in 1969, were that:-

a. About 90% of all UFO reports prove to be plausibly related to natural phenomena.

b. Nothing had come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that had added to scientific knowledge.

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c. Further extensive study of UFO sightings was not justified in the expectation that science would be advanced thereby.

d. No evidence had come to light in the study to indicate that UFO sightings might represent a defensive hazard.

e. The US Department of Defence should continue to handle UFO reports in its normal surveillance operations without recourse to special units such as Project Blue Book.

11. These findings were endorsed by a Panel of the National Academy of Sciences, which advised that the Condon enquiry had been an adequate scientific study of UFO phenomena and that the methodology and approach were well chosen and in accordance with the accepted standards of scientific investigation. The Panel added: "We are unanaminous in the opinion that this (the Condon Report) has been a very creditable attempt to apply objectively the relevant techniques of science to the solution of the UFO problem. The Report recognises that there remain UFO sightings that are not easily explained. The Report does suggest, however, so many reasonable and possible directions in which an explanation may eventually be found that there seems to be no reason to attribute them to an extra terrestial source without evidence that is much more convincing. The Report also shows how difficult it is to apply scientific methods to the occasional transient sightings with any chance of success. Whilst further study of particular aspects of the topic (eg atmospheric phenomena) may be useful, a study of UFOs in general is not a promising way to expand scientific understanding of the phenomena. On the basis

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of present knowledge the least likely explanation of UFOs is the hypothesis of extra terrestial visitations by intelligent beings".

12. The USAF wound up their Project Blue Book investigation on 17 December 1969 on the strength of the Condon Report, the advice of the National Academy of Sciences, past UFO studies and their own experience of investigating UFO reports over two decades. Their conclusions were that no UFO reported, investigated or evaluated by the Air Force had ever given any indication of a threat to their national security; that there had been no evidence submitted or discovered by the Air Force suggested that technological developments or principles beyond the range of present day scientific knowledge, and that there had been no evidende indicating that sightings categorised as "unidentified" were extra-terrestial vehicles.

13. The Condon Report caused a good deal of controversy. In August 1976, however, the RAF Staff in Washington were informed by the US Department of the Air Force that there was no likelihood of renewed Air Force involvement in this area. The Department pointed to the considerable Air Force Commitment of resources in the past, the extreme pressure on Air Force funds in 1976 and the fact that since 1969 no evidence had been presented to warrant further investigation by the Air Force. The Department of the Air Force added that a number of universities and professional scientific organisations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science had considered UFO phenomena. Private organisations had also shown interest in aerial phenomena. It was considered that such timely review of the situation by private groups insured that sound evidence would not be overlooked by the scientific community.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ATTITUDE

14. It is always possible that the considerable UFO correspondence addressed to MOD might contain some hint, not of UFOs, but of something with a hostile terrestial origin which could have a bearing on national security. All letters are therefore referred to specialist authorities in MOD for any further investigation thought to be necessary; we do not take the enquiries further than that and we do not enter into detailed correspondence with the public. The standard reply to Members of Parliament and the public is that we have not the resources to conduct a scientific investigation into the nature of UFOs and, although we invariably pass reports of sightings to the staffs responsible for the air defences, we do not pursue enquiries to the point of positive identification. We do not dismiss the possibility that intelligent life could exist in outer space but to date no evidence has emerged to suggest that UFOs have extra terrestial origins or that they represent a threat to national security. In fact, most of the sightings seem to have commonplace origins, such as aircraft or aircraft lights seen from an unusual angle or in unusual meteorological conditions.

15. The trouble is that the dedicated ufologist will not listen and is more concerned with selective evidence to support his own thesis. The more common criticisms are:-

a. MOD will not let the public see its files. There is a "cover up" for security reasons.

There is no cover up and no security ban. It is true that when people ask to see the MOD UFO files they are told the papers must remain confidential. But there is a mundane reason

[redacted]

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[redacted]

for that. The files contain volumunous correspondence from the general public and we cannot divulge the identity of the correspondents, or the references to classified subjects which some of the files might contain. To remove these details would require extensive editing and we have not the staff to do the job. It follows that the files must remain closed under the rules laid down in the public Records Acts which at present preclude disclosure until 30 years have elapsed since the date of the particular correspondence. The earliest reports MOD hold are dated 1962. All earlier UFO papers were destroyed many years ago.

b. MOD employs a special UFO organisation.

Quite untrue. Nobody is employed full time to monitor UFO sightings. There is no UFO section in MOD. One of the Secretarial branches answers letters from the public about UFOs but it has many other, quite different, responsibilities as well. It does not review or analyse the sightings. It merely sends the letters to the specialised branches who examine them solely to see if they have any bearing on the air defences.

c. Vast numbers of UFO sightings are reported to MOD, many are unexplained.

Detailed statistical records are not kept in MOD because the subject does not merit allocation of resources. However, MOD received 435 reports from the public in 1977, and 864 in 1978. The latter included a flurry of 121 sightings when

[redacted]

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[redacted]

some Russian rocket material re-entered on 31 January 1978. Other main surges of activity were when the BBC broadcast a UFO programme and during the Daily Express campaign for the premiere of "Close Encounters of the Third Kind".

ATTITUDE OF FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO UFOs

16. Apart from American policy we have recent information on only two Governments - those of France and Grenada. The French official procedure is not unlike ours. Reports from the public go in the first place to the Gendarmerie who if necessary interview the observer and take statements. The Gendarmerie send on the reports simultaneously to the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CENS) and to the French Ministry of Defence, who check radars etc to discover any military implications. The reports are then fed into a computer so that they can be "added to the statistics of the problem".

17. The view of the French Ministry of Defence may be summarised as follows:

a. The role of the Air Force consists solely in estimating whether certain information amongst the evidence they receive is likely to affect national defence; this is not in fact so ..... No acts of aggression either against persons or property civilian or military have been detected.

b. The phenomena cannot at present be analysed by means of known measuring instruments ..... Whilst maintaining an open mind we must restrain ourselves from hasty conclusions regarding the nature and origin of the phenomena and accept the fact that this problem like many others remains suspended in space.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

18. During 1978 a small study group was set up under the auspices of the CNES. It is chaired by Monsieur Clade Poher and is called the Groupe d'Etude des Phenomenes Aerospatiaux Non-identifies. The terms of reference for this group are not yet known but the title seems to be self-explanatory. The group has no formal links with the United Kingdom, and the Department of Education and Science advise that there is no similar scientific group in UK to study unidentified objects to phenomena.

19. Lord Clancarty drew attention to this group in a recent Parliamentary Question, when he also referred to a broadcast on France-Inter radio in February 1974 when M. Robert Galley, the then French Minister of Defence was interviewed about UFOs. The interview is reported in a book, "The Crack in the Universe" which contains an accurate translation of the broadcast and introduces the transcript quite fairly as an interview in which the Minister declared "there are phenomena which are unexplained". The blurb on the dust cover, however, has M. Galley freely admitting that UFOs exist and that they are a serious problem. According to the official transcript M. Galley made only two points of substance:-

a. There are things about UFOs which are not understood and have not been explained.

b. "We must adopt an extremely open attitude of mind to this, not put into doubt the sincerity of people reporting UFOs ..... but at the moment it is really far too soon to draw the least conclusion".

[redacted]

[redacted]

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ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA

20. In December 1977 Sir Eric Gairy, Prime Minister of Grenada, tabled a resolution at the United Nations calling on the Special Political Committee to set up a special agency or department to conduct research into unidentified flying objects and related phenomena. The British (and we believe other) representatives were briefed to oppose such an agency on the grounds that it would reduce the credibility of the United Nations. Sir Eric withdrew the proposal and circulated a draft resolution requiring the Secretary General to conduct a wide-ranging investigation into flying saucers; including an analysis of the benefits, problems and dangers stemming from any contact with terrestial life. In December 1978, as a result of persistent pressure by the Grenadans, the Special Political Committee finally agreed on a concensus resolution (albeit a very weak one). The implications are that Grenada may present its views to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space some time in 1979. That Committee is unlikely to do more that listen politely.

DATA

Age of the galaxy	-	about ten thousand million years (10^{10})
Number of stars in the galaxy	-	about one hundred thousand million (10^{11})
Diameter of galaxy	-	about one hundred thousand light years.

/Note 1 light years is about 6 million million miles (6×10^{12})

Position of sun	-	about 27000 light years from centre of galaxy
Age of sun	-	about 4½ thousandmillion years (4.5×10^{9})
Currently achievable speeds	-	about 12 miles/sec, to which can be added the earth's orbital speed of 18 miles/sec to give a total of 30 miles/sec.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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Time to journey to Pluto	- Depending on the gravitational assistance, or otherwise, of the major planets of Jupiter and Saturn, 3 to 5 years.
Ultimate speed	- In principle speeds near that of light should be achievable but technology does not yet exist.

[redacted]

27

000434

U N C L A S S I F I E D

CYD1ØS Ø3/1835 ØØ3Ø296Ø

FOR CYD

ROUTINE Ø31545Z JAN

FROM BDS AIR WASHINGTON
TO MODUK AIR

U N C L A S S I F I E D
SIC Z6F
1524
FOR S4F(AIR) FROM AIR 2 PD. YOUR Z6F 2815ØØZ DEC REFERS PD CAN NOW CONFIRM THAT USAF POLICY ON UFOS IS UNCHANGED CMM AND FUTURE INVOLVEMENT IS UNLIKELY PD THESE VIEWS MAY BE QUOTED PD
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F
F
CAB 2 S 4 (Air) ACTION (.CXJ 1 DSC(AFDO)
CAN 1 ACS(P)
CYD 1 DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
CAV 2 DDSTI
CAL 1 DI 55 L(SIO)

[redacted]

(24)

UNCLASSIFIED

050427

CYD042 25/1513 362A1476

FOR CYD

ROUTINE 2815ØØZ DEC

FROM MODUK AIR
TO BDS AIR WASHINGTON

UNCLASSIFIED
SIC Z6F
FROM S4F(AIR) FOR AIR 2. YOUR Z6F 221615Z DEC. — E23.
IN 1976 YOU ADVISED THAT SINCE PUBLICATION IN 1969 OF CONDON
REPORT ON SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND
TERMINATION OF PROJECT BLUE BOOK NO EVIDENCE HADBEEN PRESENTED
TO WARRANT FURTHER UFO INVESTIGATION BY USAF. IN VIEW OF
CONSIDERABLE USAF COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES IN PAST AND EXTREME
PRESSURE ON FUNDS THERE WAS NO LIKELIHOOD OF RENEWED USAF
INVOLVEMENT IN UFOS. DOES THIS STILL REFLECT USAF VIEWS?
CAN THESE VIEWS BE QUOTED IN DEBATE IF REQUIRED? REPLY NOT
LATER THAN 8 JANUARY
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F
F
CAB 2 S 4 (Air) ACTION (CXJ 1 DSC(AFDØ))
CAM 1 ACS(P)
CYD 1 DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
CAV 2 DDSTI
CAL 1 DI 55 b(SIC)

[redacted]

23

050250

UNCLASSIFIED

CYDØ94 22/1731 356C2864

FOR CYD

ROUTINE 221615Z DEC

FROM BDS AIR WASHINGTON
TO MODUK AIR

UNCLASSIFIED
SIC Z6F
FOR S4F(RAF) FROM AIR 2. YR Z6F 211530Z DEC. 24/E32.
GRATEFUL YOU INDICATE WHEN UFO DEBATE IS TO BE HELD.
OUR COPY OF UK-181-6 13 AUG 76 MISLAID, WOULD APPRECIATE COPY
FROM YOU, SINCE USAF 1976 FILES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DESTROYED.
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F
F
CAB 2 S 4 (Air) ACTION (CXJ 1 DSC(AFDO))
CAM 1 ACS(P)
CYD 1 DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
CAV 2 DDSTI
CAL 1 DI 55 b(SIC)

CC26

10/4/1

[redacted] Section 40

24 Dec

22

050056

U N C L A S S I F I E D

CYD030 21/1545 355A2702

FOR CYD

ROUTINE 211530Z DEC

FROM MODUK AIR
TO BDS AIR WASHINGTON

U N C L A S S I F I E D
SIC Z6F
FROM S4F (AIR). SUBJECT UFOS. YOUR Z6F 201620Z DEC REFERS. USAF INFORMATION FORWARDED UNDER COVER RAFS/1280/1/ORG OF 19 AUGUST 1976 WAS REFERENCED CASE NO. UK-181-6 DATED 13 AUGUST 1976 AND COMPRISED UFO FACT SHEET AND SIGHTING SUMMARY WITH UFO-RELATED MATERIALS. OUR ENQUIRY IS IN CONNECTION WITH FORTHCOMING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON UFOS. IS IT IN ORDER TO QUOTE FROM USAF UFO FACT SHEET OR FROM ANY LATER INFORMATION YOU CAN PROVIDE IF WE SO WISH?
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F
F
CAB 2 S 4 (Air) ACTION (CXJ 1 DSC(AFDO))
CAM 1 ACS(P)
CYD 1 DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
CAV 2 DDSTI
CAL 1 DI 55 b(SIC)

Gp 2 b

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

21

LOOSE MINUTE

D/CS(RAF)/38/5

Head of S4 (Air)

copy to: D I 55
Ops (GE)2b(RAF(✓

UFO's - DEBATE IN THE LORDS

I am content with the line of argument your propose for Lord Strabolgi's concluding speech.

[redacted]

29 December 1978

ASSISTANT CHIEF SCIENTIST(G)
(RAF)

049854

U N C L I F I E D

CYD079 19/1625 353A2781

FOR CYD

ROUTINE 191535Z DEC

FROM MODUK AIR
TO BRITAIRAT PARIS

U N C L A S S I F I E D
SIC Z6F
FROM S4F(AIR). SUBJECT UFO S. YOUR Z6F 181415Z DEC.
NO FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY. OUR ENQUIRY WAS MADE BECAUSE OF
FORTHCOMING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON UFOS. IS IT IN ORDER TO
QUOTE FRENCH VIEWOINT AS GIVEN BY COLONEL ALEXIS IN 1976
AND IN M. GALLEYS RADIO INTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.?
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F
F
CAB 2 S 4 (Air) ACTION (CX. 1 DSC(AFDO))
CAB 1 ACS(P)
CYD 1 DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
CAV 2 DDSTI
CAL 1 DI 55 b(SIC)

19

049786

U N S S F I

CYØØ31 19/1154 353A149C

FOR CYD

ROUTINE 151430Z DEC

FROM MODUK AIR
TO BDS AIR WASHINGTON

E17

U N C L A S S I F I E D
SIC Z6F CORRECTED VERSION
FROM S4F(AIR). SUBJECT UFOS.
REQUEST YOU ADVISE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WHETHER INFORMATION CONTAINED IN YOUR RAFS/128Ø/1/ORG DATED 19 AUGUST 1976 STILL REFLECTS CURRENT USAF VIEWS, OR REPORT ANY CHANGE OF POLICY
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F
F
CAB 2 S 4 (Air) ACTION (CXJ 1 DSC(AFDO))
CAM 1 ACS(P)
CYD 1 DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
CAV 2 DDSTI
CAL 1 DI 55 D(SIC)

[redacted]

10/8

FILE

in GE 2c

Section 40

Section 4[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

LOOSE MINUTE

D/S4(Air)/8/3

PS/CS(RAF)
DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
ADI/DI55

UFOS - DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Reference my minute of 17 May 1978, you will I think have heard that Lord Clancarty has withdrawn his Question because he fears poor attendance in the House. However he proposes to put it down again in the autumn, so we will build up a file against the day when we may have to put a speech together quickly.

2. I am grateful for replies from PS to CS(RAF) and ADI/DI55 and I look forward to the promised reply from DD Ops(GE). I will build this information into our file, and I would be grateful if you would assemble any other ideas or evidence that occurs to you.

3. We have heard from both DES and FCO, and both are in accord with the general line I proposed in the letter I copied to you. Thus when we hear that Clancarty is about to strike again, we can save much time because we know that we all start from general accord.

4. It does not do to be complacent. The Daily Telegraph reported the other week about the technical feasibility within the next 100 years of a space-craft capable of 80 million mph, offering unmanned travel to Barnards Star in a 50 year flight; and there could of course be civilisations 100 million or so years in advance of our own and already capable of 'manned' space travel. However, the existence of such possibilities is still a huge remove from Clancarty's claim that this planet is constantly overflown by UFOs;

[redacted]

1 June 1978

MB 8245

[redacted]

1/68/9/2

[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

11

LOOSE MINUTE

D/DD Ops(GE)/10/8C

S4(Air)

Copies to:
PS/CS(RAF)
DI 55

UFOS DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Reference:
A. D/S4(Air)/8/3 dated 17 May 78

1. Reference A asked if we could comment more fully about the evidence of extra terrestial activity based on the reports received in the Ministry of Defence. Additionally you wished to know how UFO reports are processed and whether there has been any attempt to consider them as a whole.

2. All aerial phenomena reports received by the Air Force Department of the MOD are reviewed by the Directorate of Operations (A Def & O); specifically by Ops(GE)2c. Each report is assessed on its merits and can be subjected to further investigation if considered necessary. An example of such an investigation is contained in Annex A; a number of time co-incident reports concerning the sighting of aerial phenomena over Southern England in the early hours of 16 April were eventually linked, by RAF Fylingdales (a BMEWS site), to the re-entry into earth's atmosphere of a satellite or satellite debris.

3. In the period 1 May 77 to 30 April 78 a total of 501 aerial phenomena reports were received and processed; of these only 6% indicated that further investigation was required; each report needing approximately 3 working hours to process fully. Such investigation requires that detail contained in each report be mapped and the resultant possible trajectory/track be correlated with any factual evidence that may be available either from the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) or the Air Defence Ground Environment (ADGE) radar sites. During this period Air Defence radar sites have no record of unusual observations. Indeed none of the unusual phenomena reports have ever been confirmed as having an unknown origin by our ground radar sites.

[redacted]

[redacted] REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

4. Until the receipt of Reference A no attempt has been made to consider the reports as a whole, indeed the effort required would be difficult to justify. A review of the reports still held on file has been carried out; the statistical results appear in Annex B. Two points of interest emerge: firstly there appears to be a dramatic increase in the number of reported sightings since the end of 76, although it is possible that some reports received during the period 72-76 may have been destroyed. Secondly the detailed plotting of a number of the reports received in the period 1 Jan 78 to 30 April (Annex C) reveals a number of observation patterns which could be interpreted as the sighting of manmade space objects and/or decaying satellite debris re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The CS may wish to comment on this. However, much detailed work would be necessary to investigate fully this hypothesis.

5. RAF Fylingdales advise that on 23 May a total of 4,661 items of manmade space objects were orbiting the earth. Of these, 65% (3,343) had an angle of inclination which would result in an overflight of the United Kingdom. At Annex D is a table of the number of manmade objects launched each year since 1972. The table also shows yearly additions to the space catalogue and the number of items which were removed from the catalogue as they decayed from orbit and entered earth's atmosphere. It is estimated that approximately 20% of decaying objects are of sufficient size to be visible on their entry into the atmosphere.

6. We believe that the majority of aerial phenomena sighting reports have a rational explanation; meteorological balloons, atmospheric phenomena, orbiting space hardware, space debris re-entering the earth's atmosphere, cosmic debris and high-flying aircraft (both military and civil) are among the most probable explanations. Of the reports reviewed to date we can find no evidence of extra terrestial visitation to either earth, its atmosphere or near space. The total lack of primary radar observations of unnatural phenomena leads us to be sceptical of Lord Clancarty's claims although we would not wish to state categorically that "UFOs" do not exist.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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Undoubtedly a very small proportion of sightings reports will defy rational explanations but within MOD AFD we have neither the staff, information nor the time to investigate fully all reports.

7. We propose to continue with the compilation of Annex B in order that you may be given a current statement of figures at the time of the resubmission of the PQ.

[redacted]

12 Jun 78

DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
MB 425 [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

10

ANNEX A TO
D/DD Ops(GE)/10/8C
DATED 12 JUN 78

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

INVESTIGATION OF AERIAL PHENOMENA REPORTS - 16 APRIL

Reference:
A. D/S4(Air)/8/3 dated 17 May 78.

1. As a result of the receipt on 17 April of a number of reports relating to time co-incident sightings of aerial phenomena in the early morning of 16 April, an investigation as to the probable cause was initiated. The period initially investigated was 15, 16 and 17 April and Appendix 1 shows the initial results which indicated that on 16th and 17th sighting reports revealed that phenomena were observed to travel from the South-West to the North-East across the Southern half of the United Kingdom, whilst on 15 April a reverse direction was observed. As the predominant number of sightings were after midnight on 16 April these were reviewed in more detail and appear at Appendix 2. Subsequent discussion with Fylingdales on 18 April revealed that 3 items of space hardware had been deleted from the space catalogue and from the trajectory of the phenomena reports it could be reasonably assumed that the witnesses had observed decaying items of hardware re-entering the earths atmosphere.

2. Subsequent to the receipt of Reference A the incident on 16 April has been re-examined. A geographical plan of the reports is at Appendix 3 together with numerically related reports. It is of interest that while the majority of the reports describe what was seen by the observer, reports 1 and 5 contain a limited amount of embellishment. Over the period May 77 to April 78 .2 percent of all received reports contained descriptions which could be interpreted as a report of the sighting of an "UFO". Two examples are shown at Appendix 4.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

3. The information given in all aerial phenomena reports is related to the following paragraph sequence:

A. Date, Time and Duration of Sighting

B. Description of Object

C. Exact Position of Observer

D. How Observed

E. Direction in which Object was first seen

F. Angular Elevation of Object

G. Distance of Object from Observer

H. Movements of Object

J. Meteorological Conditions During Observations

K. Nearby Objects

L. To Whom Reported

M. Name and Address of Informant

N. Any Background Information on the Informant that may be Volunteered.

O. Other Witnesses

P. Date and Time of Receipt of Report.

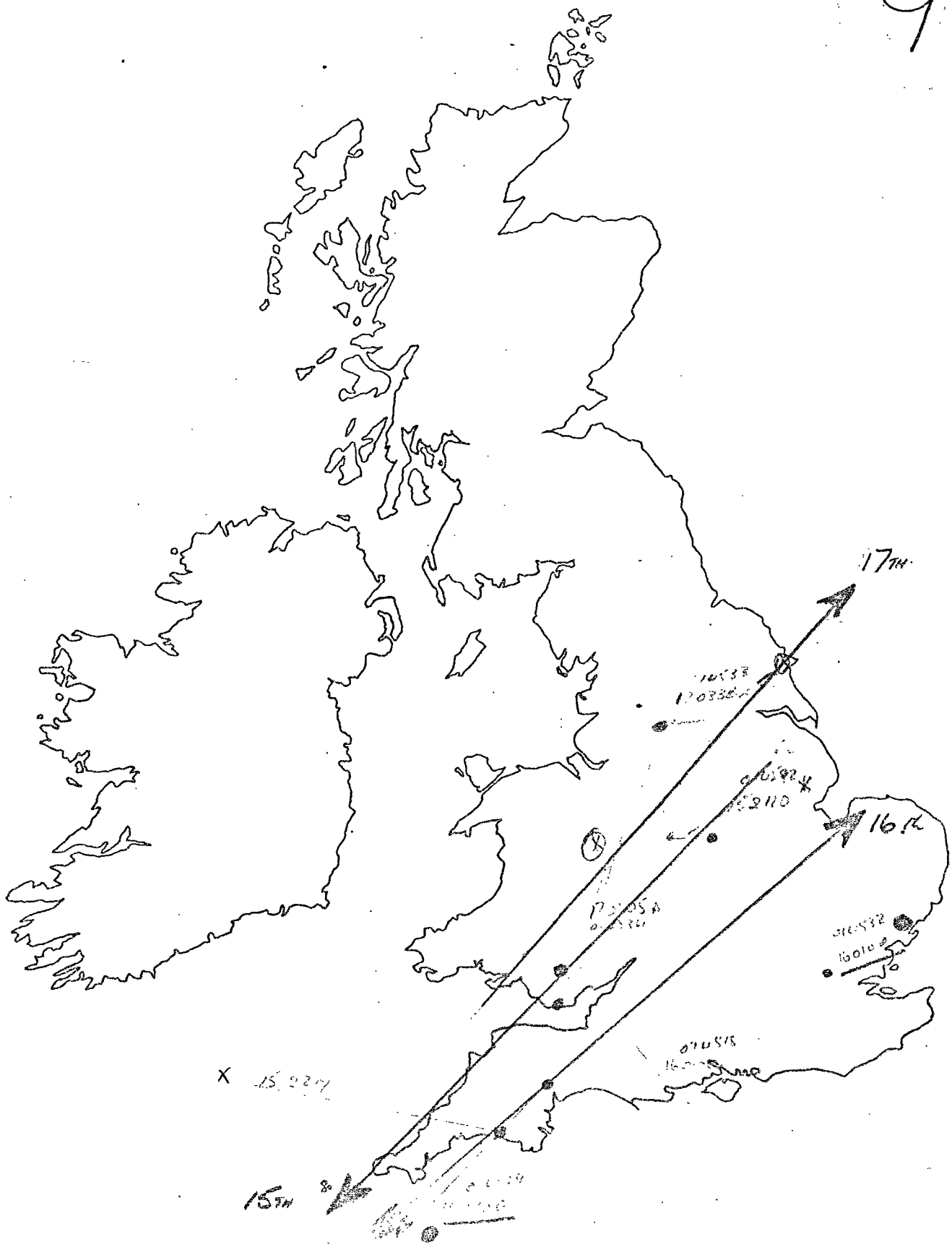
[redacted]

AERIAL PHENOMENA REPORTS - 15/16/17 April 78

INITIAL INVESTIGATION

APPENDIX 1 to
ANNEX A to
D/DD Ops (GE)/10/8C
Dated 12 June78

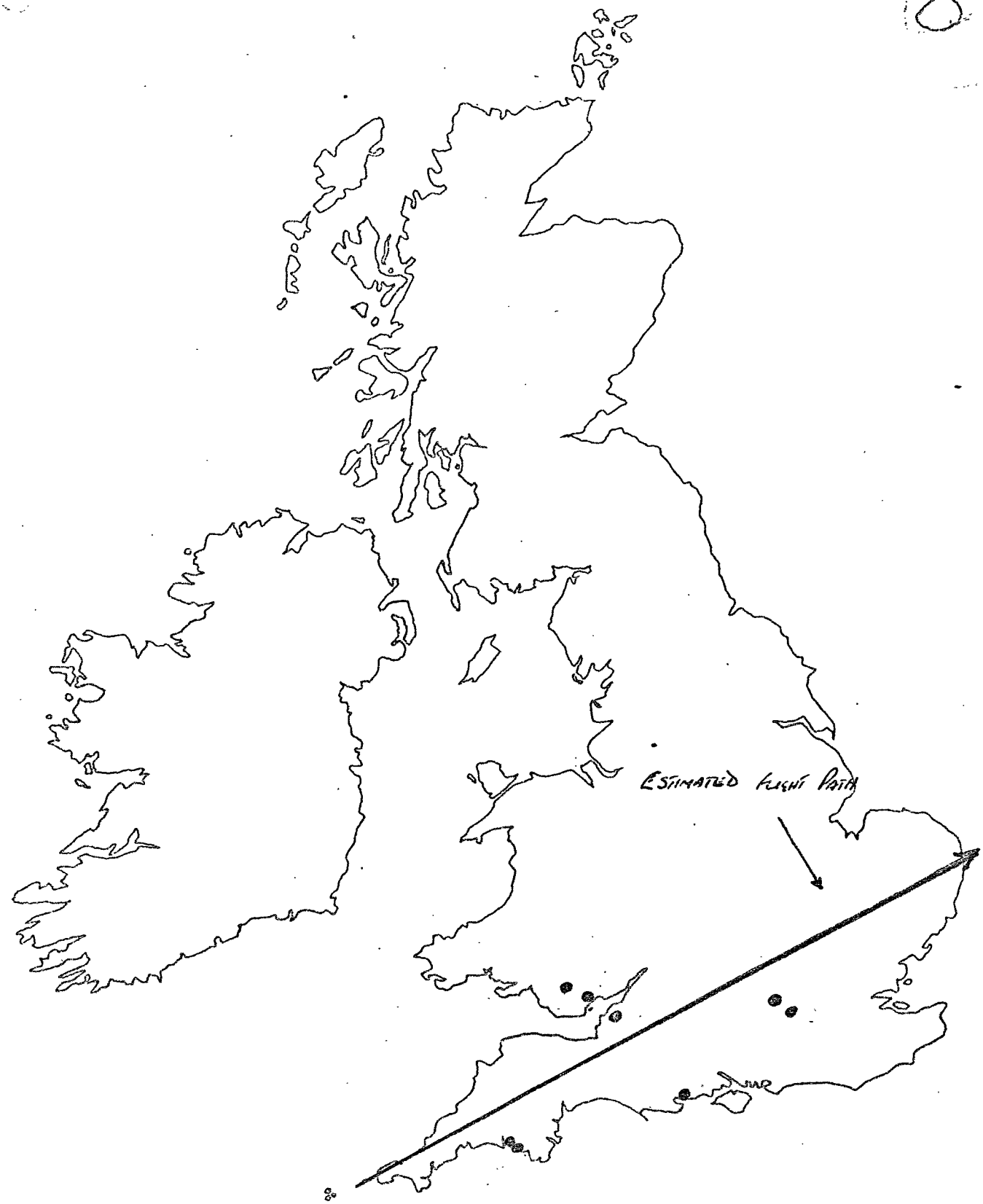
9



AERIAL PHENOMENA REPORTS - 16 April 78 - 0100 to 0130Z

APPENDIX 2 to
ANNEX A TO
D/DD Ops(GE)/10/8C
Dated 12 June 78

8

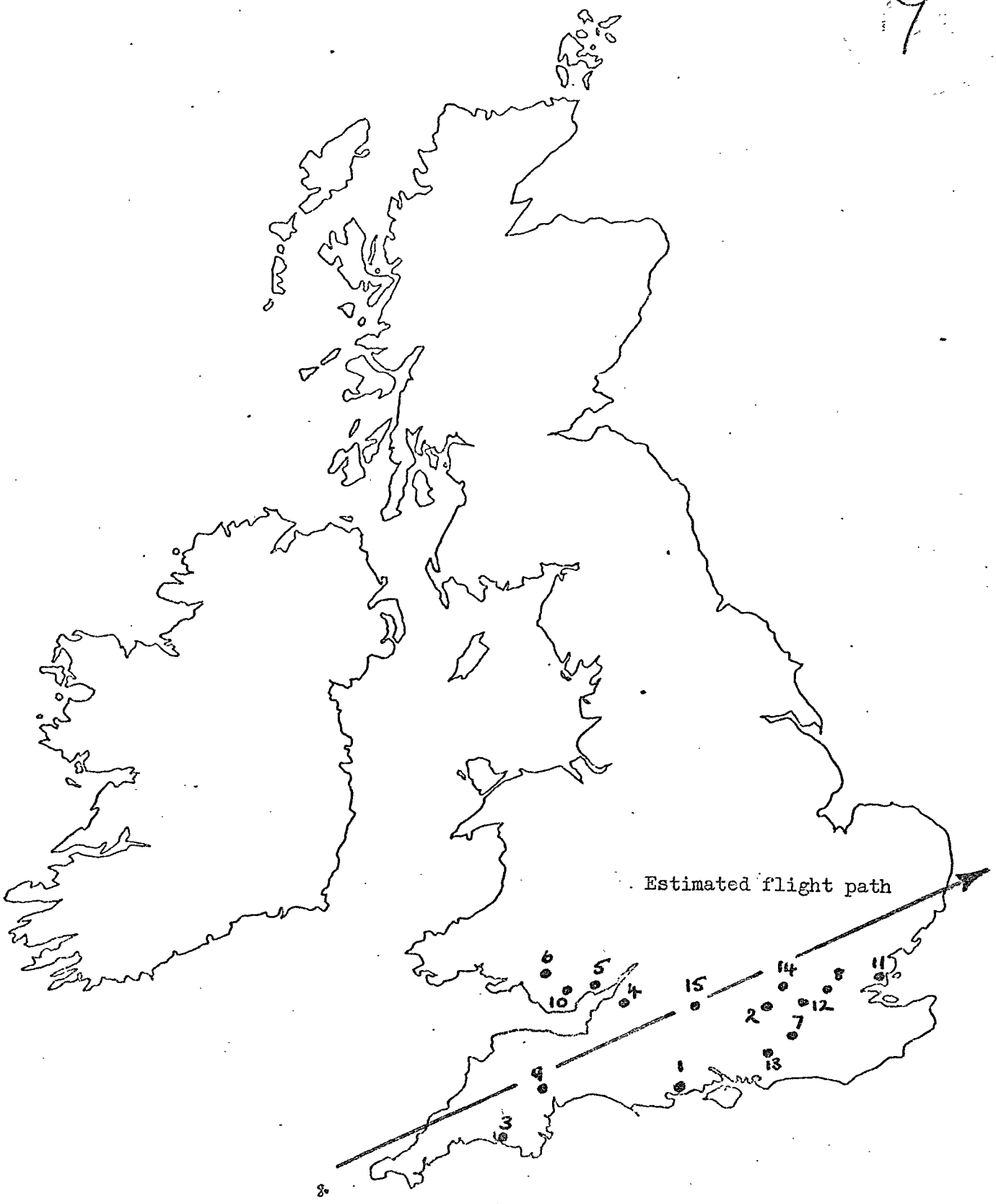


AERIAL PHENOMENA REPORTS - 160100 to 160130Z

FINAL REVIEW

APPENDIX 3 to
ANNEX A to
D/DD Ops (GE)/10/8C
Dated 12 June 78

7



CG/53/8/1

[redacted]

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ANNEX B TO
DD OPS(GE)10/8c
DATED 12 JUN 78

RECORD OF AERIAL PHENOMENA REPORTS STILL RETAINED BY D OF OPS(A DEF & O)

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS.
1972	4	7	7	18	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
1973	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	1	4	-	1	-	10
1974	-	1	-	10	-	2	5	21	9	3	-	-	51
1975	-	7	8	2	4	6	6	18	6	7	18	9	91
1976	-	-	11	6	-	11	17	10	3	9	5	14	86
1977	17	20	13	14	70	25	62	27	43	49	27	20	387
1978	39	23	48	68	37	28	31	58	103 99	69	119	17	~~178~~ 500

NOTE: It is possible that a number of Reports received between 1972 and 1975/76 could have been destroyed.

[redacted]

ET/54/8 - 1

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

[redacted]

5

ANNEX D TO
D/DD CPS(GL)10/8/C
DATED 16 JUNE 1978

SPACE CATALOGUE - TABLE OF MAN-MADE SPACE HARDWARE - WORLDWIDE

a	b	c	d
Year	Total added to Catalogue	Total Launches	Total Decay
1972	568	99	373
1973	763	108	524
1974	510	106	361
1975	976	125	316
1976	1128	128	674
1977	979	124	525
1978	~~279~~ 592	~~51~~ 246	210 1884

NOTES

1. Column b identifies the number of items of space hardware that are added to the Space Catalogue each year, (Includes all hardware remnants from a Space launch).

2. Column c. The total number of launches (worldwide)

3. Column d. Total number of items of space hardware that have decayed into earth atmosphere, 20% are large enough to be visible from earth.

4. Total number of items in Space Catalogue up to 23 May 78 = 4661
Of these 75% (3643) have a trajectory which would result in overflight of UK.

[redacted]

[redacted]

17 10/8

019722

U N C L A S S I F I E D

CYD293 18/1628 352B2499

FOR CYD

ROUTINE 181415Z DEC

FROM COMMCEN FCO LONDON
TO MODUK AIR

U N C L A S S I F I E D
SIC Z6F
UNCLASSIFIED
FM BRITAIRAT PARIS
181415Z DEC
SIC Z6F
TO ROUTINE MODUK AIR

FOR S4F (AIR) RE UFOS. YOUR Z6F 151430Z DEC. CONFIDENT THERE ARE NO MAJOR CHANGES. INVESTIGATION OF DETAILED SITUATION AND PROGRESS OF POWER STUDY GROUP WOULD TAKE TIME, PERHAPS A MONTH. DO YOU WISH US TO PROCEED?
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F
F
CAB 2 S 4 (Air) ACTION (CXJ 1 DSC(AFDO))
CAM 1 ACS(P)
CYD 1 DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
CAV 2 DDSTI
CAL 1 DI 55 b(SIC)

[redacted]

Section 40

LOOSE MINUTE

D/S4(Air)/8/3

DI55 - [redacted]
Ops(GE)2b(RAF)

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

Copy to: ACS(G)(RAF)

UFOs - DEBATE IN THE LORDS

I enclose a first draft of a proposed concluding speech for Lord Strabolgi in the Lords' debate.

2. The draft tries to take account of the points made to us on Thursday by Lord Strabolgi. However, on starting to re-read the Earl of Clancarty's book 'Mysterious Visitors' I have appreciated more fully how heavily the Earl has hedged his bets about space travel: indeed he suggests that the 'sky people' are 'paranormal' and come from 'another space/time dimension'. I do not recommend trying to track the Earl through other dimensions, and suggest we stick to the bare essentials that we proposed to Lord Strabolgi - that there are plenty of phenomena, that there are perfectly sensible explanations for them, and that the explanations offered by ufology are unncessary and prove idiotic under critical examination.

3. I would be grateful for any recent recorded cases to cover the parts of para 6; otherwise I shall draw on the Condon Report and Klass (the anti-UFO investigator).

4. Clancarty is likely to produce some 'documented and fully authenticated cases'. I would like to be able to demolish one as an illusion. I have provisionally chosen the disappearance of the Norfolk Battalion at Gallipoli, which Clancartry quotes in one of his books: Hd of Army Historical Branch says that this is a 'regular', about which the facts can be produced.

5. I would be grateful for comments, criticisms and additional arguments or cases. At this stage I am particularly anxious to know whether you agree to the main line of arguments. Because time is short I would be grateful for telephone comments.

6. The present draft is about 2,000 words, around 15 minutes.

7. I have copied this minute to ACS(G)(RAF), and I would be grateful for his comments on the general line of argument.

[redacted]

[redacted]

18 December 1978

MB 8245 [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

UFOs - DRAFT CLOSING ADDRESS

There are three grains of truth upon which the great myth of ufology is built.

FIRST: intelligent life could exist elsewhere in the universe. With 100,000 million stars in our own galaxy alone, it is probable that there are many planets capable of supporting life.

SECOND: the technical difficulties of inter-stellar travel are stunning. Even at the speed of light it would take 4 years to reach the nearest star, and 100,000 years to cross our galaxy. But it would be a brave man who said there could never, ever, be manned inter-stellar travel.

THIRD: there really are strange phenomena in the skies, and many are reported by cool and intelligent people.

2. But it is a far cry from this to the proposition that there have been great numbers of sightings of UFOs - implying alien space craft - sometimes claimed as running into hundreds of thousands. Her Majesty's Government is not in the least impressed with the idea that there is anything worth investigating in the information offered by ufologists.

3. On the one hand, there are perfectly simple explanations for the phenomena; on the other, the explanations offered by ufologists are most unconvincing. These explanations are unconvincing when they relate to space craft from other stars: they are even more unconvincing when they claim that UFOs come from another space-time dimension, from a hole in the earth, or the depths of the sea, as Lord Clancarty has suggested.

4. Let us first consider the phenomena. There have always been strange things to see in the sky, and strange explanations have been given. Since World War II we have seen development of powerful rockets, and voyages to the Moon and planets. We have also seen the development of science fiction, where space ships can be switched to 'inter-stellar drive' and our hero can ~~come~~ cross the 2M light years to Andromeda Galaxy in a flash. We have also seen the development of ufology and the UFO industry, which accepts the delightful fantasies of science fiction as proven fact and interprets the phenomena in our skies as alien space craft. Most of the phenomena are seen unexpectedly and very briefly, and are gor before the eye has focussed. The words 'UFO' and 'space craft' have been firmly implanted and too readily spring to mind.

6. But what are the real causes of the phenomena?

α. Some have always occurred: tricks of light on cloud; comets, meteors or showers of meteors; meteorites; bright planets, or even the moon or stars in unusual atmospheric conditions. Venus is popular: there are recorded cases of pilots reporting Venus as an 'unidentified flying object following them'.

β. Meteorological balloons. The Met Office alone release 50 a day, which expand to 40 foot diameter and rise to 100,000 feet and can be lit by the sun well after dark. Many other organisations use balloons, some are much larger, and there are recorded cases of balloons being reported as UFOs by airline pilots.

c. Meteorological searchlights shine on clouds: you cannot see the beam, only a light apparently dancing in the sky.

d. A surprising number of reports relate to aircraft seen in unusual conditions at unusual angles, some very high, some at low level. One recent 'UFO' was confidently reported on local radio: we cannot prove that it was not a 'UFO', but we do know that an RAF Vulcan bomber on a low flying mission passed the same spot at the same time and on the same course as the reported UFO.

e. And satellites: there are some 5000 listed objects in orbit, satellites and space debris. More are added each year, and about 600 re-enter the atmosphere every year. Early this year MOD received many reports of a large peice of debris re-entering across the South of England: most reports were factual, but one spoke of an 'oval shaped thing with a white cockpit which hovered for a while than shot off at great speed'. We cannot prove it wasn't a UFO, but it occurred at the same time and place as some known re-entry of space debris.

7. And of course there are optical illusions. Any phenomena seen through glass are particularly suspect.

8. There are also genuine hallucinations, sometimes on people under stress: the excited tales of the gullible; the embellishments of the born story teller. Also, I fear, downright lies. There are also hoaxes: there are some very effective aerial hoaxes which have been perpetrated by children - which I will not describe for fear of precipitating a new rash of UFO reports.

9. In sum, we cannot prove that all or even most of these so-called sightings were not UFOs. But we can say that there is a great variety of phenomena in the skies for which there are perfectly ordinary explanations. We have no reason to believe that the so-called UFOs are attributed to anything but these same causes.

10. But what of these famous arrivals of UFOs, claimed to be fully documented and authenticated by many witnesses. On scrutiny they tend to be elusive. I will select one, which Lord Clancarty has described in his book Mysterious Visitors as 'one of the most remarkable and unexplained mysteries of modern times'. He claims that during the Gallipots campaign in 1975, an entire British regiment, the First Fourth Norfolks, was advancing towards Hill 60: a cloud descended and picked up the regiment and it was never heard of again ..... (checking with Army Historical Branch)

11. As I have indicated, there is no criticism of those who accurately report phenomena. The criticism is of over-readiness to call them 'UFOs', and to transpose that into 'alien space craft'. The reports are passed without critical scrutiny to the ufologists; who add them without critical scrutiny, to their huge files of 'reported sightings and landings'.

12. I am sure no-one will deny that - at the least - there are possible rational explanations for the phenomena. Let us now look at the other side of the coin, the range of explanations offered by Lord Clancarty and other ufologists - it is a wide and confusing range, for there are as many different explanations as there are ufologists.

13. Lord Clancarty has been reported as claiming there have been some 80,000 sightings. Other ufologists would put the figure even higher. Now, there is a strange thing about these huge numbers. To put it in simple terms: either these 'space people' prefer to keep out of the way, or they don't. If they prefer to keep out of the way, we must assume that the number of 'sightings' is a tiny proportion of the actual UFO 'sorties', which must run into millions. If they don't one would expect some unmistakable appearances.

14. But let us look at their strange track record:

a. Not a single artefact has been produced - not a single extra-terrestial chap has dropped an extra-terrestial spanner, no bent pieces, no prangs from perhaps millions of sorties, no nothing. Lord Clancarty has an answer: the CIA has hidden them all.

b. There is no correlative evidence on radar of this huge number of movements.

c. There has been no radio contact (far easier than space travel) and no evidence on radio.

d. There have been no convincing photographs, in these days when so many people carry cameras.

d. There has been no approach to Governments, and no direct knowledge of UFOs by Governments. Lord Clancarty has an answer: there is a great inter-Governmental conspiracy of silence, initiated by the CIA.

15. The idea of the inter-Governmental conspiracy of silence is at once the most astonishing and the most flattering claim of all. On so few things can the Governments of the world agree unaminously, but they have all supposedly agreed to conceal the evidence of UFOs from their peoples. Let me assure this House that Her Majesty's Government has never been approached by people from outer space.

16. There is no internal consistency about the idea of this huge number of sightings. If they have come from another solar system, what is the point of this huge number of visits to our planet, to no apparent purpose? At best it seems wasteful. This was once explained by the claim that aliens had advance bases the other side of the moon. When that became untenable the bases were assumed to be on another planet in our solar system. As that has become untenable ever more fantastic explanations are advanced. In a recent TV broadcast Lord Clancarty claimed that the UFOs are based in a great hole in the earth. Elsewhere he has claimed that they have bases in remote parts of South America, or in the depths of the oceans. Because these physical places have become untenable he has claimed that (I quote): 'UFOs are paranormal, that is from invisible universes'. They come from 'other space-time continua'. Another ufologist talks of 'space mind/full mind/Mana'. Indeed the explanations get more and more fantastic, and more and more incapable of either proof or disproof.

17. The most telling argument of all is that the scientific community is unmoved by the claims of ufology. A visitor from outer space - or from another space time continua, or the depths of the sea, or anywhere else they are supposed to be hiding - would be one of the greatest events in human history, and the greatest scientific event. You would expect serious and sensible scientists to be devoting much time and effort to making contact with these supposed space people. The scientific community is as unimpressed as the Government. If the ufologists claim that the Government has gagged the scientific community, it would be as amazing as the alleged conspiracy of silence between Governments.

18. One could go on indefinitely trying to chase the elusive - indeed devious - arguments of the ufologists. Yes, there has been an increase in the number of 'sightings' reported to the Government: the biggest upsurges occurred when the BBC put out a programme on UFOs, and when the Daily Express launched a campaign in connection with the film premiere of 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind'. No, the Government is not in the least concerned by the increases. /As has been said/ Grenada is financing a study into UFOs, and the United Nations has, in a moment of casualness, given that study a vague sort of recognition, and one or two other countries have offered to contribute reports. Her Majesty's Government, if it contributes at all, will contribute on the lines of my speech.

19. There are tens of thousands of strange things to see in the sky. It has become fashionable to call these things 'UFOs'. There are perfectly sensible explanations for these sightings. The ufologist explanations are not sensible at all. In 1968 -

a comprehensive study on UFOs conducted for the US Government by the University of California concluded that 'nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge'. Ufologists may, if they wish, continue to believe that Governments and scientists alike are engaged in a massive cover-up. However, perhaps our debate will help confirm in some other peoples minds ufology may be pleasant fantasy but has nothing to do with truth.

[redacted]

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FROM MODUK AIR
TO BRITAIRAT PARIS

U N C L A S S I F I E D
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FROM S4F(AIR).SUBJECT UFOS.
REQUEST YOU ADVISE AS SOON A S POSSIBLE WHETHER INFORMATION CONTAI-
NED IN YOUR PAR/106/9/AA DATED 30 JANUARY 1978 STILL REFLECTS
FRENCH VIEWS AND PROCEDURES OR REPORT ANY CHANGE OF POLICY
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REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT Section 40

13

LOOSE MINUTE

30 Nov.

D/S4(Air)8/3

GE2b for action

PS/C5(RAF)

DD Ops(GE)(RAF)

ADI/DI55

UFOs - DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

You will recall that the Earl of Clancarty put down a motion in the House of Lords last May calling for a debate on Unidentified Flying Objects. Although he subsequently withdrew it, we are informed it has now been restored to the order paper in the following terms:-

> "To call attention to the increasing number of sightings and landings on a world-wide scale of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and to the need for an intra-governmental study of UFOs."

2. No date has been fixed for the debate but we should get fourteen days notice if it is to take place. As you know, a Ministerial speech was drafted on the last occasion. Head of S4(Air) considers no further action to be immediately necessary but he would be grateful if you would continue to put aside any relevant material about UFOs that comes to hand. (D/S4(Air)8/3 dated 1 June refers).

29 Nov 78

[redacted]

MB 8241 [redacted]

4520

[redacted]

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4

Reference D/CS(RAF)/5/1/2
OK160

Head of S4(Air)

Copy to: DD Ops(GE)(RAF)
ADI 55

UFOS - DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Reference: D/S4(Air)/8/3 dated 17 May 1978.

1. CS(RAF) has read the correspondence at reference with interest and agrees the general line you are proposing to take.

2. The extensive American studies were conducted in a sensible and open-minded way and no additional information has come to light subsequently to justify further expensive investigation of these phenomena.

[redacted]

PS/CS(RAF)
23 May 1978

[redacted] MINUTE

10/8/c.

D/S4(Air)/8/3

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PS/CS(RAF)
DD Ops (GE)(RAF)
ADI 55

UFOS - DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

There is to be a debate on UFOs in the House of Lords on 12 June based on the following PQ by the Earl of Clancarty, a prominent ufologist:

> 'To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are aware of the increasing number of reports of sightings and landings of unidentifi flying objects (UFOs) on a worldwide scale, and whether they will initiate an inter-governmental study of UFOs'.

2. S4(Air) is required to provide a brief and draft winding-up speech for Lord Winterbottom. I attach a copy of a proposed line, which I have put to the Department of Education and Science (and to FCO, who were recently involved in brushing off an attempt to get UNO to discuss UFOs). You will see that I propose that the Government should take this opportunity to pour a mass of cold water on ufology. I would be grateful for:

a. Your advice on the proposed line of action.

b. Additional arguments or evidence that we might offer.

3. I would be grateful if DD Ops(GE)(RAF) and ADI 55 would say whether we could comment more fully about evidence of extra-terrestial activity from the reports we receive - ie expand more forcefully on para 4f in the attached letter: '.... perusal of reports received gives us no cause to suspect extra-terrestial activity'. I would also like to know how much work is done on these reports, and whether there has been any attempt to consider them as a whole.

4. The Chief Scientist's department is at a disadvantage, not seeing the flow of UFO reports that arrive in AFD. However, with MOD taking the lead in refuting UFOs, the inference will be drawn that CS(RAF) endorses that line. Putting the matter differently, I imagine that had CS(RAF) thought, as a scientist, that there was something in UFOs, he would have been quick to draw the matter to the department's attention or to have sought immediate access to the UFO reports. As he has not done so we can assume that he is unimpressed with UFOs. But I would be particularly grateful for any advice from CS(RAF)'s department.

[redacted]

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
18 MAY 1978
DD OPS (GE) RAF

17 May 1978

[redacted]

MB 8245

FROM: [redacted]

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Main Building, Whitehall, LONDON S.W.1
Telephone: ~~01-930-7022, ext.~~ [redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

Please address any reply to
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
(Head of S4(Air))

and quote:
Your reference: D/S4(Air)/8/3

17 May 1978

[redacted]
Room 5/56
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1 7PH

Dear [redacted],

There is to be a debate on UFOs in the House of Lords on 12 June 78 based on the following PQ by the Earl of Clancarty:

> 'To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are aware of the increasing number of reports of sightings and landings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) on a worldwide scale, and whether they will initiate an inter-governmental study of UFOs'.

2. The procedure will be similar to an Adjournment Debate in the Commons. The Earl will introduce the subject, interested members will speak, and Lord Winterbottom will reply for the Government. The debate could last anything from 20 minutes to 4 hours: we have been invited to draft a 10-15 minute winding up speech.

3. We do not take this lightly, because Lord Clancarty is an acknowledged expert on UFOs, whilst MOD has no experts on UFOs - for much the same reasons as we have no experts on levitation or black magic. There is much public interest in UFOs at present, drummed up by the Daily Express and in connection with the heavy sci-fi film 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind'. There is a risk that the Government will be persuaded to conduct a study of UFOs, or at least to examine the mass of evidence that Lord Clancarty and his fellow-ufologists have assembled in the last 30 years. Should the Governments defences break, I need hardly warn you that responsibility for the study could very likely fall on your Department! Accordingly we would be grateful for your help in determining the proper line for Government to take.

4. We believe it would be unprofitable to indulge in too much flippancy, and intend to propose that the Government injects a dose of massive common sense into the debate on UFOs. The general line we have in mind is:

a. We do not discount the possibility of intelligent life elsewhere among the huge number of other worlds and other galaxies.

b. The technical difficulties of space travel are stunning, with the nearest star 4 light years away, but it would be unwise to say 'impossible ever'.

c. The phenomena lumped together as 'UFOs' are often reported by responsible and intelligent people.

d. But there is a huge gap between those three statements and the assumption that 'UFO reports' constitute serious evidence that extra-terrestial beings are reconnoitring this planet (Clancarty reports 80,00 verified sightings, the introduction to the book of 'Close Encounters' refers to 'millions!).

e. The phenomena reported often have common-sense explanations (eg aircraft or met balloons in unusual light, or space debris): it is always difficult to interpret accurately unusual events seen fleetingly: and the constant publicity about UFOs leads people to interpret the phenomena as extra-terrestial spacecraft and to embellish their reports unconsciously .

f. Extensive US studies indicate no evidence of extra-terrestial visits. No studies have been considered necessary in UK, but perusal of reports received gives us no cause to suspect extra-terrestial activity.

g. If there was serious scientific evidence of extra-terrestial visits we would expect the scientific world to be agog and committed; but the scientific world seems at best unimpressed, more likely heavily cynical.

h. There is no internal consistency about the idea of there having been 80,000 or perhaps millions of genuine sightings. We would expect some accidents or artefacts (Clancarty has suggested that the CIA has collected and hidden them all): or some approach to or direct evidence held by Governments (Clancarty has suggested there is a conspiracy of silence between Governments until they know how to cope); or some overt political or cultural activity to show for 30 years of presumably high-technology reconnaissance (Clancarty's own UFO references go back to the Star of Bethlehem and earlier).

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We would plan to lead up to the argument that it is pointless to try to persuade the Government unless and until the scientific community has been persuaded. We could offer the suggestion that the scientific community is most unlikely to be persuaded by mere quantity of reported sightings (as one newspaper recently remarked, 80,000 times nothing still equals nothing); a more profitable course would be for Clancarty, being so certain about his case, to present say 10 well-documented readily-verifiable recent cases in this country on which he would state his professional reputation as a ufologist. It is doubtful whether the 'scientific community' would welcome our directing Clancarty towards them, but this is surely the proper course for a layman who believes he has evidence of a matter of massive scientific concern upon which he cannot convince the Government

6. I would be grateful for your advice on the above proposed line of action; and, if you agree it, advice on any other arguments that could be advanced. Attached is a first draft of a background note describing the past attitudes of MOD, US, France and Grenada.

7. Because of the deadline for briefing Ministers and the intrusion of the Spring Bank holiday, I am afraid I must ask for your advice by pm Wednesday 24 May.

8. I am copying this letter to Mr [redacted] Energy, Science and Space Department, Room E022, FCO: I have noted the robust line taken by FCO recently with UNO proposals to study UFOs.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

BACKGROUND NOTE

ENCLOSURE NUMBER 1

The Earl of Clancarty

1. We understand from the Press that Lord Clancarty is a staunch believer in UFOs. He is reported to have seen two and he has written seven books on the subject having studied the phenomena for 30 years. He has asserted that a former French Minister of Defence admitted that UFOs exist, that there are serious problems and that many landings have taken place. When asked to comment on a report that a UFO had followed a young housewife home Lord Clancarty told the Evening News that the lights may have been those of a space craft sent to spy on us by an unknown civilisation from another planet. A lot of UFOs, he said, seem to disguise themselves in clouds. ? To just one observer.

The American Attitude to UFOs

2. There has been no British scientific enquiry into the possible existence of UFOs. However, the Ministry of Defence has kept in touch with the United States Air Force who made a systematic attempt to record and investigate UFO sightings between 1947 and 1969. During this period the USAF received 12,618 reports: of these 701 were not explained.

3. This USAF investigation known as Project Blue Book was followed by a study which was originally suggested a member of a congressional investigation in the Armed Forces Committee and which was assigned by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research to the University of Colorad It was led by Dr Edward V Condon, Professor of Physics and formerly Director of the National Bureau of Standards. The main findings of this study, published in 1969 were that:-

a. About 90% of all UFO reports prove to be plausibly related to ~~natural~~ natural phenomena.

b. Little if anything had come to light from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that added to scientific knowledge.

c. Further extensive study of UFO sightings was not justified in the expectation that science would be advanced thereby.

b. No evidence had come to light in the study to indicate that UFO sightings might represent a defensive hazard.

c. The US Department of Defence should continue to handle UFO reports in its normal surveillance operations without recourse to special units such as Project Blue Book.

4. These findings were endorsed by a Panel of the National Academy of Sciences, which advised that the Condon enquiry had been an adequate scientific study of UFO phenomena and that the methodology and approach were well chosen and in accordance with the accepted standards of scientific investigation. The Panel added: "We are unanaminous in the opinion that this (the Condon Report) has been a very creditable attempt to apply objectively the relevant techniques of science to the solution of the UFO problem. The Report recognises that there remain UFO sightings that are not easily explained. The Report does suggest, however, so many reasonable and possible directions in which an explanation may eventually be found that there seems to be no reason to attribute them to an extra-terrestial source without evidence that is much more convincing. The Report also shows how difficult it is to apply scientific methods to the occasional transient sightings with any chance of success. Whilst further study of particular aspects of the topic (eg atmospheric phenomena) may be useful, a study of UFOs in general is not a promising way to expand scientific understanding of the phenomena. On the basis of present knowledge the least likely explanation of UFOs is the hypothesis of extra terrestial visitations by intelligent beings*."

5. The USAF wound up their Project Blue Book investigation on 17 December 1969 on the strength of the Condon Report, the advice of the National Academy of Sciences, past UFO studies and their own experience of investigating UFO reports over two decades. Their conclusions were that no UFO reported, investigated or evaluated by the Air Force had ever given any indication of a threat to their national security; that there had been no evidence sumitted or discovered by the Air Force that technological developments or principles beyond the range of present day

scientific knowledge, and that there had been no evidence indicating that sightings categorised as "unidentified" were extra terrestial vehicles.

6. The Condon Report caused a good deal of controversy and, we believe, was much criticised. In August 1976, however, the RAF Staff in Washington were informed by the US Department of the Air Force that there was no likelihood of renewed Air Force involvement in this area. The Department pointed to the considerable Air Force Commitment of resources in the past, the extreme pressure on Air Force funds in 1976 and the fact that since 1969 no evidence had been presented to warrant further investigation by the Air Force. The Department of the Air Force added that a number of universities and professional scientific organisations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science had considered UFO phenomena. Private organisations had also shown interest in aerial phenomena. It was considered that such timely review of the situation by private groups insured that sound evidence would not be overlooked by the scientific community.

Ministry of Defence attitude

7. The MOD policy takes its cue from the Americans. It is always possible, of course, that the considerable correspondence addressed to MOD might contain some hint, not of UFOs, but of something with a hostile terrestial origin which could have a bearing on national security. All letters are therefore referred to specialist authorities in MOD for any further investigation thought to be necessary; we do not take the enquiries further than that and we do not enter into detailed correspondence with the public. The standard reply to Members of Parliament and the public is that we have not the resources to conduct a scientific investigation into the nature of UFOs and, although we invariably pass reports of sightings to the staffs responsible for the air defences, we do not pursue enquiries to the point of positive identification. We do not dismiss the possibility that intelligent life could exist in outer space but to date no evidence has emerged to suggest that UFOs have extra terrestial origins

r that they represent a threat to national security. In fact, most of the sightings have commonplace origins, such as aircraft or aircraft lights seen from an unusual angle or in unusual meteorological conditions.

8. The trouble is that the dedicated "UFO-ologist" will not listen and is more concerned with selective evidence to support his own thesis. The more common criticisms are:-

a. MOD will not let the public see its files. There is a "cover up" for security reasons.

There is no cover up and no security ban. It is true that when people ask to see the MOD UFO files they are told the papers must remain confidential. But there is a mundane reason for that. The files contain volumunous correspondence from the general public and we cannot divulge the identity of the correspondents, or the references to classified subjects which some of the files might contain. To remove these details would require extensive editing and we have not the staff to do the job. It follows that the files must remain closed under the rules laid down in the public Records Acts which at present preclude disclosure until 30 years have elapsed since the date of the particular correspondence. The earliest reports MOD hold are dated 1962. All earlier UFO papers were destroyed many years ago.

b. MOD employs a special UFO organisation.

Quite untrue. Nobody is employed full time to monitor UFO sightings. There is no UFO section in MOD. One of the Secretarial branches answers letters from the public about UFOs but it has many other, quite different, responsibilities as well. It does not review or analyse the sightings. It merely sends the letters to the specialised branches who examine them solely to see if they have any bearing on the air defences.

c. Vast numbers of UFO sightings are reported to MOD, many are unexplained

No statistical records are kept in MOD because of the staff shortage. All we can say is that MOD received rather more than 400 reports from the public in 1977, at a rate of 20 to 40 per month on average. There was a flurry of correspondence recently when the Daily Express launched its advertising campaign for the commercial film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind".

Attitude of French Government to UFOs

9. Apart from American policy we have recent information on only two Governments - those of France and Grenada. The French official procedure is not unlike ours. Reports from the public go in the first place to the Gendarmerie who if necessary interview the observer and take statements. The Gendarmerie send on the reports simultaneously to the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CENS) and to the French Ministry of Defence, who check radars etc to discover any military implications. The reports are then fed into a computer so that they can be "added to the statistics of the problem".

10. The view of the French Ministry of Defence may be summarised as follows:

a. The role of the Air Force consists solely in estimating whether certain information amongst the evidence they receive is likely to affect national defence; this is not in fact so .... No acts of aggression either against persons or property civilian or military have been detected.

b. The phenomena cannot at present be analysed by means of known measuring instruments .... Whilst maintaining an open mind we must restrain ourselves from hasty conclusions regarding the nature and origin of the phenomena and accept the fact that this problem like many others remains suspended in space.

11. In the last few months a small study group has been set up under the auspices of the CNES. It is chaired by Monsieur Claude Poher and is called the Groupe d'Etude des Phenomenes Aerospatiaux Non-identifies. The terms of reference for this group are not yet known but the title seems to be self-explanatory. The group has no formal links with the United Kingdom, and the Department of Education and Scienc advise that there is no similar scientific group in UK to study unidentified objects to phenomena.

12. Lord Clancarty drew attention to this group in a recent Parliamentary Question when he also referred to a broadcast on France-Inter radio in February 1974 when M. Robert Galley, the then French Minister of Defence was interviewed about UFOs. The interview is reporte in a book, "The Crack in the Universe" which contains an accurate translation of the broadcast and introduces the transcript quite fairly as an interview in which the Minister declared "there are phenomena which are unexplained". The blurb on the dust cover, however, has M. Galley freely admitting that UFOs exist and that they are a serious problem. According to the offical transcript M. Galley made only two points of substance:-

a. There are things about UFOs which are not understood and have not been explained.

b. "We must adopt an extremely open attitude of mind to this, not put into doubt the sincerity of people reporting UFOs .... but at the moment it is really far too soon to draw the least conclusion".

Attitude of the Government of Grenada

13. In December 1977 Sir Eric Gairy, Prime Minister of Grenada, tabled a resolution at the United Nations calling on the Special Political Committee to set up a special agency or department to conduct research into unidentified flying objects and related phenomena. The British

(and we believe other) representatives were briefed to oppose such an agency on the grounds that it would reduce the credibility of the Unite Nations. Sir Eric withdrew the proposal and circulated a draft resolution requiring the Secretary General to conduct a wide-ranging investigation into flying saucers, including an analysis of the benefits, problems and dangers stemming from any contact with terrestia life.

14. The UN Special Political Committee advised the General Assembly to take note of the various statements made by the Prime Minister of Grenada and to instruct the Secretary General to transmit the text to Member States of the UN and to interested specialist agences. In other words the resolution has been shelved indefinitely.

No. 4.

Copied from
D/DAS(Sec) 64/1
Part D

Section 40 [redacted]

Loose Minute

D/Sec(AS)/64/1

8 September 1999

APS/USofS

Copy to:

AO/AD1

'UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS' – MOD INTEREST

ISSUE

1. To provide a note on the Department's interest in 'UFOs'.

RECOMMENDATION

2. To note.

DETAIL

Policy

3. It is Government policy that any air defence or air traffic implications of 'UFOs' are a matter for MOD and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) respectively. MOD's interest is limited to establishing from any reported sightings it receives whether the UK Air Defence Region has been breached by hostile military activity, and responding to any associated public correspondence.

4. Military Task 9 is to maintain the integrity of the UK's airspace. This requirement is met by the continuous recognised air picture (radar) and an air policing capability. Any threat to the UK Air Defence Region would be handled in the light of the particular circumstances at the time (it might, if deemed appropriate, involve the scrambling or diversion of RAF air defence aircraft). From that perspective, reports sent to us of 'UFO' sightings are examined, but consultation with air defence staff and others as necessary is considered only where there is sufficient evidence to suggest a breach of UK air space: such as reports from credible witnesses (pilots, air traffic controllers etc); those supported by photographic, video or documentary evidence; corroboration by a number of witnesses; or are of a phenomenon currently being observed and might, therefore, be capable of detection. Only a handful of reports have been received in recent years in these categories and further investigation of them has found no evidence of a threat.

Airprox Reports

5. Where a military or civilian pilot considers that his aircraft has been endangered by the proximity of another aircraft (including any flying object he was unable to

identify), or in regulated airspace where an Air Traffic Controller believes there has been the risk of a collision, the pilot or ATC would be obliged to file an airmiss report (Airprox).

Spaceguard Programme

6. The Department of Trade and Industry is responsible for the Spaceguard Programme. We understand that there are currently no plans to set up a national spaceguard agency; the potential threat of impact by near earth objects (such as asteroids) is taken very seriously but they regard this as an issue where a common international approach is essential. In June, the House of Lords debated the Spaceguard Programme; Lord Sainsbury, Minister for Science at the DTI, led the debate for the Government.

Role of Sec(AS)2

7. Sec(AS)2 is the focal point within MOD for the Government's limited interest in 'UFOs'. A 24-hour answerphone is provided so that members of the public can telephone through sighting reports. Reports made elsewhere, either to military establishments, air traffic control centres or the civilian police, all eventually make their way to Sec(AS)2 where each report is considered only to establish whether it has any defence significance. Some 230 sighting reports and 250 letters were received last year; so far this year c150 reports and 160 letters have been received. Sec(AS)2 is not constituted as a 'UFO' information bureau. There are no defence resources allocated for this purpose and, where there is no evidence in a report of defence concern, no action is taken to try and identify what might have been seen. From the types of descriptions generally received, aircraft or natural phenomena probably account for most of the observations.

8. Some 'ufologists' are unhappy with MOD's limited interest. A small number lobby vociferously for defence funds to be used for 'UFO' research, have their own agenda for such work and use all possible avenues (eg writing to the Prime Minister, other Government Departments, the media etc) to pursue their aims. All such approaches find their way to MOD, Sec(AS) for action.

'UFO' Files

9. As is the case with other Government files, MOD files are subject to the provisions of the Public Records Act of 1958 and 1967 and official files generally remain closed for 30 years. Prior to 1967 it was the case that 'UFO' files were destroyed after five years as there was insufficient interest in the subject to warrant their retention. However, since 1967 all 'UFO' files have been preserved and routinely released to the Public Record Office at the 30-year point.

10. For some time, Lord Hill Norton, the only Parliamentarian with any interest in 'UFOs', has been asking that all files containing 'UFO' information be released to the PRO ahead of the 30-year point. We have looked carefully to see whether this is possible. However, in the absence of a Departmental-wide file database and without knowing the details of all the originating branches, a manual search of in excess of one million files at two main MOD archives would be necessary to locate and list

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them. In November last year the location of some 55 'UFO' files was established. The files contain personal details of all those contacting and corresponding with the Department. Legal advice was sought: the Public Record Act gives an implied override of the Department's duty to protect the third party confidentiality by use of the 30-year rule. Release after that date would present no problems to MOD, but release in advance would lay the Department open to the risk of legal action for breach of confidence. To remove the personal details from these files would be a time consuming task. Staff in CS(RM), the MOD's Records Branch would need to be diverted from their essential tasks to manually scrutinise and sanitise some 5,000 pages on the files. The knock-on effect would be a major disruption to the Department's overall programme for the release of files to the PRO and cannot be justified.

Mr Nicholas Pope

11. An ex-Sec(AS)2 employee, Nick Pope, has published two books on 'UFO' matters since leaving the branch in 1994: 'Open Skies, Closed Minds' and 'The Uninvited', the latter about alien abduction. A third book, about an alien invasion of the UK, is likely to be published next month. In all three books Mr Pope puts forward his personal views and is critical of MOD's limited interest in 'UFOs'. The two books already published resulted in an increase in media and public interest in 'UFOs', which in turn led to temporary increases in the number of enquiries and sighting reports received. Mr Pope continues to be employed by the Department.

CONCLUSION

12. There is no evidence to support the view that the UK Air Defence Region is being breached by hostile foreign military activity or anything else. There are no plans to change Government policy on 'UFOs' or implement a research programme to investigate 'ufologists' claims. We are unable to release to the PRO all 'UFO' files because there is a need to maintain third party confidentiality.

[redacted]

Sec(AS)2

[redacted]

[redacted]

MY TELNOS 2732 AND 2733 AND YOUR TELNO 1563. UFOS

1. THIS MORNING, THE SPC ADOPTED THE DECISION REPORTED IN MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE, BY CONSENSUS.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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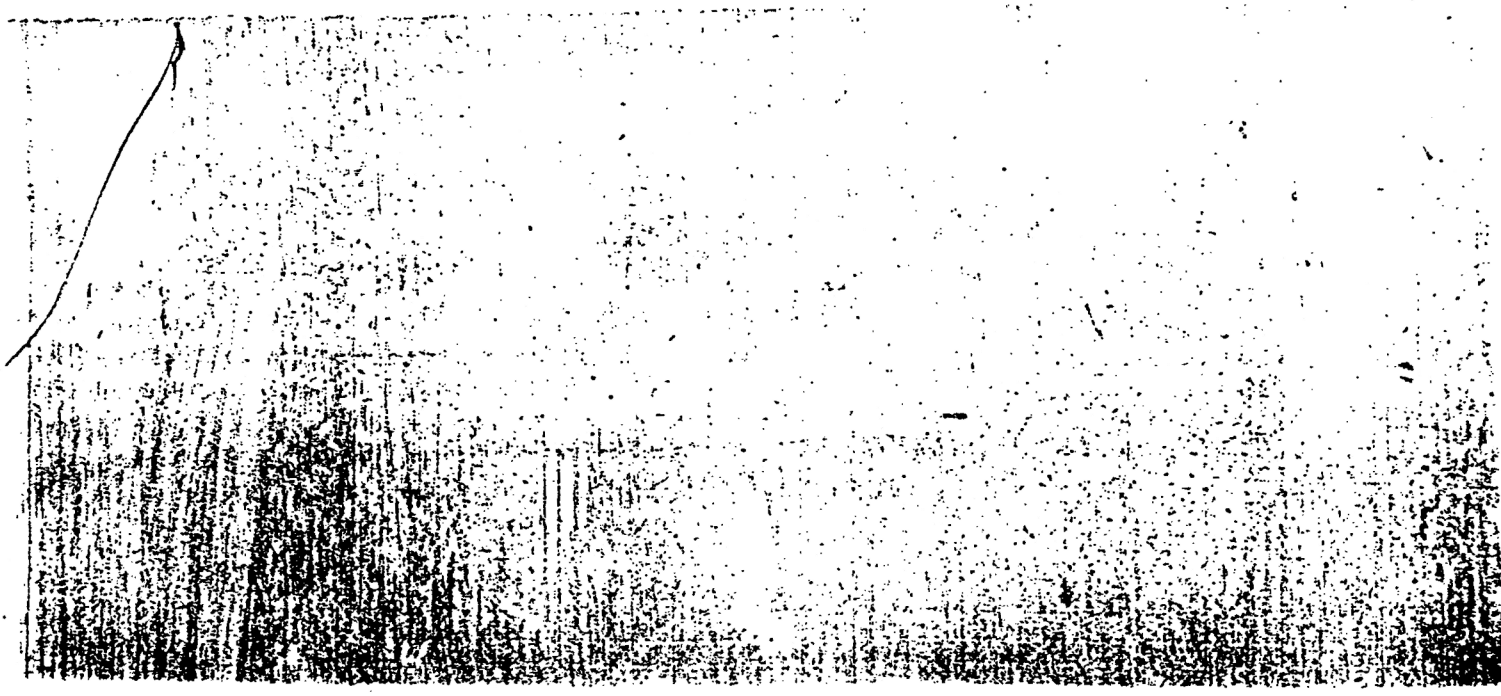

[redacted]

MY IPT. UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS.

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FOLLOWING IS DRAFT TEXT:

THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING CONSENSUS:

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS TAKEN NOTE OF THE STATEMENTS MADE, AND DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY GRENADA AT THE 32ND AND 33RD SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY INVITES INTERESTED MEMBER STATES TO TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO CO-ORDINATE ON A NATIONAL LEVEL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION INTO EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE, INCLUDING UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS, AND TO INFORM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OBSERVATIONS, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION OF SUCH ACTIVITIES.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REQUEST THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO TRANSMIT THE STATEMENTS OF THE DELEGATION OF GRENADA AND THE RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, SO THAT THEY MAY CONSIDER THEM AT THEIR 1979 MEETING.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE WILL PERMIT GRENADA, UPON ITS REQUEST, TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS TO THE COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT SESSION. THE COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATION WILL BE INCLUDED IN ITS REPORT WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS 34TH SESSION.

[redacted]

[redacted]

YOUR TELNOS 1537 AND 1539, MY TELNO 2698 AND [redacted]
LETTER OF 4 DECEMBER TO [redacted] UN DEPARTMENT: UNIDENTIFIED
FLYING OBJECTS

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1. THE AUSTRIANS HAVE INFORMED US THAT THE GRENADANS AND THE RUSSIANS NOW ALSO HAVE AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT THE CONSENSUS TEXT (WHICH IS REPEATED IN MIFT IN CASE YOU STILL HAVE NOT RECEIVED LETTER UNDER REFERENCE). THE AMERICANS DO NOT EXPECT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON AND ALSO INTEND TO GO ALONG WITH THE CONSENSUS. WE PROPOSE TO DO LIKEWISE. THE ISSUE IS DUE TO BE DECIDED IN THE SPECIAL POLIT/ CAL COMMITTEE ON 8 DECEMBER.

2. ALTHOUGH THIS TEXT IS NOT IDEAL, IT HAS NO FINANCIAL OR MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UN, DOES NOT COMMIT THE UN TO ANY SPECIFIC ACTION ON UFO'S AND PRECLUDES THE INSCRIPTIO: OF A SEPARATE UFO ITEM ON NEXT YEAR'S AGENDA (THE SUBJECT WOULD BE SUBSUMED IN THE OUTER SPACE ITEM AS A PARAGRAPH IN TH: REPORT OF THE OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE). IN ANY EVENT THERE IS NO REAL PROSPECT OF NEGOTIATING FURTHER AMENDMENTS.

[redacted]

F I L E S

[redacted]

[redacted]

YOUR TELNOS 2539, 2566, 2567 AND [redacted] LETTER OF 21 NOVEMBER: UFOS

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1. WE REMAIN OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE GRENADAN INITIATIVE FOR THE REASONS STATED IN THE BRIEF. IF THE RESOLUTION IN YOUR TELNO 2567 IS PUT FORWARD YOU SHOULD OPPOSE IT.

2. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER, BE WILLING TO HELP THE GRENADANS OFF THE HOOK IF IT CAN BE DONE WITHOUT ANY FINANCIAL AND MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS (OTHER THAN GRENADA) OR THE UN. WE COULD THEREFORE ABSTAIN ON A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GROUP OF EXPERTS OR A SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR, PROVIDED THAT AS WE ASSUME FROM YOUR TELEGRAM 2566 THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES WOULD BE FINANCED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA. IT WOULD ALSO HELP IF THE SUBJECT COULD BE PUT ON THE AGENDA OF THE 35TH SESSION: IN LINE WITH THE RECOMMENDATION IN THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT THAT ITEMS SHOULD NOT AUTOMATICALLY GO ON THE AGENDA FROM SESSION TO SESSION.

3. YOU SHOULD ALSO KEEP IN MIND GRENADA'S ABSENCE (WHETHER PLANNED OR FORTUITOUS, WE DO NOT KNOW) FROM THE FOURTH COMMITTEE VOTE ON FOREIGN ECONOMIC INTERESTS. THE FRG MAY BE WELL PLACED TO SUGGEST TO THE DELEGATION OF GRENADA THAT SOME DELEGATIONS WOULD BE BETTER DISPOSED TO ACCEPT A PROPOSAL ON THE LINES OF PARA 2 ABOVE IF GRENADA WERE TO ABSTAIN IN THE PLENARY VOTE ON FOREIGN ECONOMIC INTERESTS.

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS: UN INITIATIVE BY GRENADA

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Problem

1. How to react to further proposals by Grenada, following up their 1977 initiative on UFOs.

Background

2. At last year's General Assembly Premier Gairy of Grenada urged the United Nations to establish an agency or working group for research
A into unidentified flying objects. Mr [redacted] expressed the view that the proposal would bring the UN into disrepute. Accordingly, the UK delegation was instructed to oppose the draft Grenadan resolution. In the event, no vote was taken on the resolution; as a compromise, the General Assembly "studied the text" and requested the Secretary-General to transmit it to state members of the UN and to interested specialised agencies so that they might communicate their views to the Secretary-General.

B 3. The Secretary-General's subsequent report contained only three replie from Governments, (India, Luxembourg and the Seychelles) and unforthcoming reactions from two specialised agencies.

C 4. The Permanent Mission of Grenada circulated a letter to Permanent Missions in New York on 10 November, which was followed up by a statement to the Special Political Committee on 27 November by the Prime Minister
D of Grenada, who complicated matters by introducing a new resolution inste
E of the one previously circulated. Subsequent developments are reported in UKMIS telno 2566 of 27 November.

F 5. The brief for this item is at flag F.

Argument

6. The Grenadan initiative continues to hold no attractions whatsoever for us. It is obvious, however, that some of our Western partners

/including

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(including the FRG Presidency and the United States) are making an effort to help Grenada off the hook if this can be done without cost to the UN. It must also be said, in fairness, that the Grenadan proposal is no more ridiculous than many other proposals before the UN. Indeed President Carter has in the past reportedly taken a personal interest in the subject of UFOs. The proposal is at least not positively harmful to UK interests, whereas taking too strong and open a stand against Mr Gairy could be. Moreover, if we can help the Grenadans to reach a compromise, it could conceivably help us to persuade them to abstain on the vote on foreign economic and other interests in plenary (the Fourth Committee Resolution which inter alia strongly condems the UK and others for dealings with South Africa).

Recommendation

7. I recommend that we instruct the Mission to continue to resist the original Grenadan proposal but to give discreet support to efforts by Western or other countries to postpone or reduce the scope and cost of the Grenadan proposal as much as possible. I accordingly submit a draft telegram to UKMIS New York.

8. UND were consulted on UN aspects, and concur.

[redacted]

4 December 1978

[redacted]

MY TELNO [redacted] AGENDA ITEM NO 128: UFOS

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1. THE TWO MEETINGS IN THE SPC ON THE ABOVE ITEM TODAY FOLLOWED THE SCENARIO OUTLINED IN MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE, EXCEPT THAT MR GAIRY COMPLICATED MATTERS BY INTRODUCING A NEW RESOLUTION IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT INSTEAD OF THE ONE PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED TO MISSIONS ([redacted] LETTER OF 21 NOVEMBER TO [redacted]. THE NEW RESOLUTION ELABORATES ON THE IDEA IN THE INDIAN REPLY TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/33/268), PROPOSING INTER ALIA THAT THE SECRETARY-GENERAL SHOULD APPOINT A THREE-MEMBER GROUP OF EXPERTS MEETING UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE AND REPORTING THROUGH THAT COMMITTEE TO THE 34TH SESSION. (TEXT IN MIFT).

2. THERE HAD BEEN NO PRIOR WARNING THAT THE GRENADANS INTENDED TABLING A NEW RESOLUTION TODAY AND MEMBERS OF THE OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE, PARTICULARLY THE AUSTRIAN CHAIRMAN WHO HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED, WERE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THIS FURTHER ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE THE OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE IN THE SUBJECT OF UFOS. THE AUSTRIANS, AMONG OTHERS, PRIVATELY INTIMATED THEIR DISMAY TO THE GRENADAN MISSION, WHO BY THE END OF THE AFTERNOON MEETING GAVE SIGNS OF REGRETTING THEIR PRECIPITANCE. BEFORE THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING FRIDAY (MINISTER OF EDUCATION) INTERVENED TO SAY THAT THE GRENADANS WERE FLEXIBLE ABOUT THEIR DRAFT RESOLUTION AND INVITED DELEGATIONS TO CONVEY ANY SUGGESTIONS THEY MIGHT HAVE TO THE GRENADAN MISSION PENDING RESUMPTION OF DISCUSSION OF THE ITEM AT A LATER DATE.

[redacted]

/3. THIS WILL

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[redacted]

3. THIS WILL ALLOW TIME TO WORK OUT AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL. THE GERMANS, WITH AUSTRIAN BACKING, FAVOUR A GROUP OF EXPERTS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA, WHICH MIGHT IN DUE COURSE REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL. THE US MISSION, WHEN MR GAIRY CALLED ON THEM ON 24 NOVEMBER, FLOATED THE IDEA OF A SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR (TO BE FINANCED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA) WHO WOULD STUDY THE PROBLEM AND REPORT BACK TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL. THE RUSSIANS WOULD LIKE TO SEE A REPETITION OF THE PROCEDURE ADOPTED LAST YEAR: IE TO DEFER THE ITEM WITH SOME FACE-SAVING PROPOSAL FOR FURTHER COMMENTS BY INTERESTED PARTIES, OR A FURTHER STUDY. THIS LAST WOULD BE THE BEST SOLUTION, BUT GAIRY IS SAYING THAT HE WILL NOT BE PUT OFF AGAIN THIS YEAR.

4. WE ASSUME THAT YOU WOULD NOT WISH THIS SUBJECT TO BE LANDED IN THE LAP OF THE OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL, IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ARE BOUND TO TAKE PLACE DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS, TO HAVE AN INDICATION AS TO WHETHER YOU WOULD INCLINE TO AN ABSTENTION OR A VOTE AGAINST IN RESPECTABLE COMPANY ON THE RESOLUTION IN MY I.F.T. WE ASSUME, ALSO, THAT YOU WOULD WISH US TO WORK FOR ALTERNATIVES ON THE LINES DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE ANY COMMENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

[redacted]

FILES

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

MIPT: AGENDA ITEM NO 128: UFO'S

GRENADA: DRAFT RESOLUTION

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MINDFUL OF ITS COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN SOLVING INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS,

NOTING THE STATEMENTS MADE BY GRENADA AT THE THIRTIETH, THIRTY-FIRST, THIRTY-SECOND AND THIRTY-THIRD SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARD UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA WHICH CONTINUE TO BAFFLE MANKIND, AND GRENADAS APPEAL TO HAVE THE UNITED NATIONS CONDUCT AND CO-ORDINATE RESEARCH INTO THESE BAFFLING PHENOMENA, AND TO DISSEMINATE MORE WIDELY AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD INFORMATION AND OTHER DATA GATHERED AND AVAILABLE ON THE PHENOMENA,

AWARE OF THE GROWING INTEREST TAKEN BY PEOPLE OF THE WORLD IN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA, AND ALSO INTEREST IN STRANGE HAPPENINGS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD, AND RECOGNISING THE COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH INTO THESE PHENOMENA DEMONSTRATED BY CERTAIN NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, INDIVIDUAL SCIENTISTS, RESEARCHERS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS,

1. RECOMMENDS THAT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE APPROPRIATE SPECIALISED AGENCIES, THE UNITED NATIONS INITIATE, CONDUCT AND CO-ORDINATE RESEARCH INTO THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA:

2. REQUESTS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO INVITE MEMBER STATES, SPECIALISED AGENCIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS TO TRANSMIT TO HIM BY 31 MAY 1979 INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD FACILITATE THE PROPOSED STUDY:

[redacted]

/3. FURTHER

[redacted]

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[redacted] FURTHER REQUESTS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO APPOINT AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE A THREE-MEMBER GROUP OF EXPERTS UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFINING GUIDELINES FOR THE PROPOSED STUDY:

4. DECIDES THAT THE GROUP OF EXPERTS MEET DURING THE SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE TO STUDY INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL BY MEMBER STATES, SPECIALISED AGENCIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS:

5. FURTHER DECIDES THAT THE GROUP OF EXPERTS REPORT ON ITS WORK THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE TO THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

6. DECIDES FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AN ITEM ENTITLED "REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE FOR THE DEFINING OF GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDY OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA".

[redacted]

FILES

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

AGENDA ITEM NO 128: UFO'S

8) [redacted] LETTER OF 21 NOVEMBER TO [redacted]

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

1. THIS ITEM IS NOW SCHEDULED TO START ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER IN THE SPC. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE FIRST MEETING WILL OPEN WITH A STATEMENT BY MR GAIRY, THE PRIME MINISTER OF GRENADA, (WHO IS COMING TO NEW YORK ESPECIALLY FOR THE OCCASION) AND WILL BE FOLLOWED BY STATEMENTS BY SEVERAL EXPERTS ON UFO'S WHO ARE ACCOMPANYING MR GAIRY, AND BY A WALT DISNEY FILM WHICH MR GAIRY HAS ALSO LAID ON. THE COMMITTEE WILL THEN MOVE ON TO ANOTHER ITEM TO ALLOW TIME FOR CONSULTATIONS.

2. THE IDEA IS TO LET MR GAIRY HAVE HIS DAY, WAITING UNTIL HE HAS LEFT NEW YORK BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE A COMPROMISE WITH THE GRENADA MISSION WHICH WILL IDEALLY REQUIRE MINIMAL, OR EVEN NO, UN INVOLVEMENT AND NO ADDITIONAL UN EXPENDITURE. VARIOUS IDEAS ARE BEGINNING TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE CORRIDORS. WE MAY BE ABLE TO REPORT AFTER MONDAYS MEETING WHICH LOOK WORTH CONSIDERING.

[redacted]

FILES

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

AGENDA ITEM NO 128: UFOs

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1. The attached letter which has been circulated to Missions by the Permanent Mission of Grenada is self-explanatory. In their preliminary soundings this year it would seem that the Mission of Grenada has found little if any support for its more ambitious proposal for establishing an agency, or department, and is therefore falling back on a more modest proposal.

2. I assume that you would wish us if possible to discourage this too, provided we are in good company and do not take the lead. It is possible however that it will acquire support as a fallback position which the majority will be prepared to go along with to save Grendada's face. We will keep in close touch with our allies.

[redacted]

PERMANENT MISSION OF GRENADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
866 SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 502, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TELEPHONE: (212) 759-9675
CABLE: "GRENDUM" NEWYORK

OUR REF:

The Permanent Mission of Grenada to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations and with reference to the Permanent Representative of Grenada's letter of August 29, 1978 has the honour to remind that Grenada's item on the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects and extra-terrestrial phenomenon will come up for discussion in the Special Political Committee this week beginning November 27th.

The Permanent Mission of Grenada wishes to bring to the attention of Member States that, in the interest of not foisting upon the United Nations, at this point in time, the setting up of a Department or Agency which would involve heavy financial costs, the Government of Grenada is proposing that the contemplated study and research be placed in the hands of a small committee or ad hoc group of experts, whose task will be to submit a preliminary report on a possible framework for the study and research into the baffling phenomenon.

It is the hope of the Government of Grenada that this proposal and a draft resolution formulated along these lines will receive the support of Member States at the United Nations at this 33rd Regular Session of the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission of Grenada further has the honour to attach the general outline of the draft resolution contemplated.

The Permanent Mission of Grenada to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations the assurances if its highest consideration.

New York, November 10, 1978

Permanent Mission of Member States
to the UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

PRELIMINARY DRAFT RESOLUTION

The General Assembly,

Mindful of its committment to promote international co-operation in solving international problems,

Aware of the growing interest taken by people of the world in Unidentified Flying Objects and related Phenomena which continue to baffle mankind, and in strange happenings in various parts of the world.....

Noting the statement made by the Prime Minister of Grenada at the 30th, 31st, 32nd, and 33rd Session of the General Assembly regarding these baffling phenomena, and his appeal to have the United Nations conduct and co-ordinate research into Unidentified Flying Objects and related phenomena and to disseminate more widely among the Nations of the world information and other data gathered.

Recognising the committment to research into these phenomena demonstrated by individual scientists, researchers, educational institutions and National Governments.

1. Recommends that there be initiated a special official United Nations study on the nature and relationship of Unidentified Flying Objects and extra-terrestrial phenomena.

2. Requests The Secretary-General to appoint at the earliest possible date an "ad hoc group of experts" of not more than seven (7) scientific experts drawn from within the United Nations Secretariat and from private research organisations with the task of elaborating a possible framework for the above-mentioned study.

3. Further requests the Secretary-General to make available to the ad hoc group of experts all the relevant material, including proposals made by Member States as well as previous and current studies available on the subject.

4. Further requests the Committee to submit a preliminary report on its work by June 1, 1979.

5. Further requests the Secretary-General to transmit the preliminary report of the ad hoc group of experts to Member States not later than July 30th, 1979.

6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of the Thirty Fourth Session of the General Assembly the item entitled "Report of the ad hoc group of experts" to investigate the nature and relationship of Unidentified Flying Objects and extra-terrestrial phenomena.

7. Decides further that a comprehensive report of the committee will be tabled at the 35th Regular Session of the General Assembly.

[redacted]

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15 SEPTEMBER 1978

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33RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM NO 128

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGENCY OR A DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR UNDERTAKING, CO-ORDINATING AND DISSEMINATING THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH INTO UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA (ITEM PROPOSED BY GRENADA (S/33/131)).

[redacted]

The attached brief has been prepared by the Energy Science and Space Department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in consultation with Department of Industry and the Home Office. Any comments should be addressed to D A Lloyd in Energy Science and Space Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Tel Section 40 [redacted]

[redacted]

A UK AIMS

To oppose the establishment of any such agency.

B POINTS TO MAKE

2. The British delegation does not think that the establishment of an agency for research into unidentified flying objects is appropriate to the functions of the United Nations. It considers that the existence of such an agency under UN auspices would be an unjustifiable drain on UN resources which could be better deployed elsewhere.

C TACTICS

3. Hopefully a confrontation with the representative of Grenada can be avoided, but the UK should not hesitate to make its views known as and when appropriate. You should seek whatever support you can particularly among the Nine.

BACKGROUND

4. At last year's UN General Assembly, the Grenadan delegation, with the full support of Premier Gairy, sought to establish an ad hoc working group of the UN to evaluate UFO reports. FCO Minsiters expressed the view that to set up any such body would reduce the credibility of the UN; accordingly the UK delegation was instructed to oppose. In the event, no vote was taken on the Grenadan Resolution; as a compromise, the General Assembly "studied the text" and requested the Secretary-General to transmit it "to states members of the UN and to interested specialised agencies so that they might communicate their views to the Secretary-General".

[redacted]

MY TELNO 1205: UFOs (7)

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MINISTERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT, SINCE AGREEMENT TO SET UP SUCH AN AGENCY WOULD REDUCE THE CREDIBILITY OF THE UN, WE SHOULD OPPOSE IT. YOU SHOULD BE GUIDED ACCORDINGLY SEEKING WHATEVER SUPPORT YOU CAN, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE NINE.

[redacted]

FILES

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

YOUR TELNOS. 2241 AND 2242 AND TELECON [redacted]

UFO ITEM.

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1. WE REMAIN FIRMLY OPPOSED TO A GRENADA RESOLUTION ON UFOS. WE DO NOT CONSIDER SUCH OPPOSITION LIKELY TO BE DAMAGING EITHER TO THE UK OR TO THE UN. YOU SHOULD, THEREFORE, MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO CONCEAL THE UK'S INTENTION OF VOTING AGAINST ANY RESOLUTION CONTAINING AN OPERATIONAL OUTCOME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THIS LEAVES US IN A MINORITY.

2. IF THE GRENADANS CAN BE PERSUADED TO ABANDON THEIR RESOLUTION WE THINK THAT REFERRAL OF THEIR UFO INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE ON OUTER SPACE WOULD PROVIDE THE BEST FACE SAVING DEVICE. THIS COMMITTEE IS AFTER ALL THE ESTABLISHED UN BODY DEALING WITH OUTER SPACE MATTERS. WE UNDERSTAND THE AUSTRIAN CHAIRMAN'S ANXIETIES BUT THINK THAT IN VIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S EXISTING WORK LOAD, THIS ITSELF SHOULD BE A REASONABLE GUARANTEE THAT THE UFO ISSUE WOULD BE PLACED AT THE BOTTOM OF ITS AGENDA WITH A FAIR CHANCE OF BEING IGNORED INDEFINITELY.

3. WE ARE LESS ATTRACTED TO THE SUGGESTION IN PARAGRAPH 6 OF TELNO. 2241. IT HAS THE DISADVANTAGE THAT ONCE THE UFO ISSUE WAS INSCRIBED AS AN AGENDA ITEM FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IT WOULD BE THERE IN BLACK AND WHITE AND WE COULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE CERTAIN THAT CONTINUING PRESSURE FROM GRENADA, PERHAPS WITH THE SUPPORT OF OTHER DELEGATIONS, WOULD NOT LEAD TO ITS DISCUSSION EITHER AT THE 33RD OR 34TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

[redacted]

F I L E S

[redacted]

[redacted]

MY TELNO 2271

SPC: UFO ITEM

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

1. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPC WAS SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING THE GRENADANS AND THE CHAIRMEN OF THE REGIONAL GROUPS TO ACCEPT HIS COMPROMISE SOLUTION, AND THIS AFTERNOON READ OUT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THE ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING DRAFT CONSENSUS:

1. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS TAKEN NOTE OF THE STATEMENTS MADE IN THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF GRENADA ON 28 NOVEMBER 1977 AND BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF GRENADA ON 28 AND 30 NOVEMBER AND ... DECEMBER 1977 (A/SPC/32/PV.35, A/SPC/32/SR.37 AND A/SPC/32/SR. ...).

2. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS ALSO STUDIED THE TEXT OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY GRENADA (A/SPC/32/L.20).

3. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REQUESTS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO TRANSMIT THE TEXT OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/SPC/32/L.20), TOGETHER WITH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED STATEMENTS, TO STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND TO INTERESTED SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, SO THAT THEY MAY COMMUNICATE THEIR VIEWS TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL.

4. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ALSO REQUESTS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO BRING THEIR REPLIES TO THE ATTENTION OF ALL MEMBER STATES AND INTERESTED SPECIALIZED AGENCIES.

[redacted]

F I L E S:

[redacted]

United Nations

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTY-THIRD SESSION

Official Records *

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Monday, 27 November 1978
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: [redacted] (Costa Rica)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 126: ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGENCY OR A DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR UNDERTAKING, CO-ORDINATING AND DISSEMINATING THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH INTO UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA (continued)

* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be incorporated in a copy of the record and should be sent *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550.

Corrections will be issued shortly after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

78-58753

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/33/SR.36
29 November 1978

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

/...

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 126: ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGENCY OR A DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR UNDERTAKING, CO-ORDINATING AND DISSEMINATING THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH INTO UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA (continued) (A/33/141, A/33/268; A/SPC/33/L.20)

1. [redacted] (Grenada)* read out a letter from [redacted], a former astronaut, expressing the belief that unidentified flying objects were extraterrestrial vehicles whose crews were visiting Earth from more technically advanced planets. [redacted] had himself spent two days in 1951 observing UFOs of different sizes flying in fighter formation, generally from east to west over Europe. A top-level co-ordinated programme was needed to collect and analyse data from all over the world concerning all types of encounters and to determine how best to make friendly contact with such visitors. Man might have to prove to the visitors that he had learned to solve his problems by peaceful means rather than by warfare before he could be accepted as a fully qualified universal team member. Such acceptance would have tremendous possibilities for the advancement of the world in all areas, and it would certainly seem that the United Nations had an interest in handling the subject properly and expeditiously. If the United Nations agreed to pursue the project, many more well-qualified people might agree to provide help and information.

2. [redacted] (Grenada)* said it was important to remember that men throughout the world had something in common: they were all earthlings, a fact which tended to be forgotten when man's many differences were aired. After 20 years of study, he believed that there was overwhelming evidence to suggest that the planet was being visited by intelligently controlled extraterrestrial vehicles. The evidence took the form of eye-witness testimony from responsible persons, physical trace cases producing changes in the environment observable long after the UFO had left, radar visual sightings, photographs and abductions, apparently by aliens of earthlings and the subsequent return of the earthlings, although there was no knowledge of cases where earthlings had not been returned.

3. Every large-scale scientific study of UFOs had provided a substantial number of cases in which the observations clearly indicated that the UFO was a manufactured object behaving in ways which could not be duplicated by manufactured objects on Earth. The ability of UFOs to move and manoeuvre at thousands of miles an hour, without any visible external engine, wings or tail, indicated that the spacecraft had been manufactured by someone other than man. Many people wished to know why UFOs should visit Earth and what was happening on Earth that could be of interest to an advanced civilization. Probably there were many things of interest to someone concerned with the development of a primitive society. However, one thing was guaranteed to be of interest to another civilization and that was the fact that within one hundred years men would be going to the stars. He himself, as a nuclear physicist, had worked on fission and fusion propulsion systems which would be capable of transporting man to nearby star systems within reasonable periods of time, and it would be obvious to any alien in the neighbourhood that man would be doing so within a hundred years. Since the end of the Second World War, with the development

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* The full text of this statement will appear in document A/SPC/33/PV.36.

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

([redacted] Grenada)

of nuclear weapons, rockets and electronics, man had become of interest to other, advanced civilizations. Naturally, such civilizations would be concerned with their own survival and security and would therefore wish to be informed of the activities of another civilization which was just beginning space travel; it was therefore clear that the UFOs were obtaining data for their own purposes, acting as a kind of galactic federation intelligence agency.

4. People also wondered why UFOs did not make contact. He suggested that there was no one leader with whom such alien beings could make contact. Whereas the smallest reasonable political unit on a galactic neighbourhood basis was a planet or a solar system, from the alien viewpoint man's was a primitive society whose major activity was tribal warfare; it would make no more sense for alien beings to speak to individual countries than for the United Nations to address individual cities.

5. Some people were worried at the significance of flying saucers and wondered why, in the light of the importance of questions of peace, survival and hunger, people should concern themselves with such matters. He suggested that man's very survival might depend on his taking an earthling orientation. The easiest way of doing so was for him to try to see himself as others saw him. From up above, coming into the planet Earth, there were no boundary lines. Acceptance of oneself as an earthling would become natural when it was recognized that the planet Earth was being visited.

6. There were also practical aspects such as the significance of man's acquiring motive propulsion which would enable him to travel and to transport goods from place to place without using the traditional means of transport and without expending valuable resources which were normally burned and thrown away. It was clear that aliens had solved problems such as the development of new and better means of producing energy. In addition, the Earth might well have some resources which could be exported to alien civilizations; as the densest planet in the solar system, the Earth had more valuable heavy metals than any other planet in the neighbourhood and might also have plant life and other materials which would be of interest to aliens.

7. Modern astronomy frequently assumed, in relation to the possibility of contact with extraterrestrial intelligences, that all other solar systems were isolated in the same manner as our own, in which the nearest star to the sun was four light years away. However, within our own galactic neighbourhood there were approximately 1,000 stars, of which 46 were similar to the sun and might well be expected to have planets and life; some of those planets would be much older than Earth. In addition, research into UFOs had revealed the existence of two sun-like stars, Zeta I Reticulae and Zeta II Reticulae, which were separated by only three light weeks; such close proximity would suggest that interstellar travel and communication might have been developed much earlier than on our isolated planet. Three recent professional publications had expressed the view that our entire galaxy had probably already been colonized. Perhaps the most important thing to recognize was that the next generation would grow up in a drastically different situation; unless something was done to prevent it, another dozen countries would soon have nuclear weapons and the world would be further divided into groups instead of becoming the earthling civilization which was necessary for its survival.

/...

REDACTED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

8. [redacted] (Grenada) invited members of the Committee to make suggestions and recommendations concerning the draft resolution submitted by his delegation (A/SPC/33/L.20); his delegation was very flexible as to the actual mechanism to be decided on by the Committee for monitoring and co-ordinating research into UFOs and would be interested to hear the ideas of other delegations on the matter. He assumed that the vote on the resolution would take place at a later date.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that the substantive consideration of and vote on the resolution would be deferred until a later meeting.

10. [redacted] (Liberia) requested that the statements made by the members of the delegation of Grenada should be reproduced in extenso in the records so that delegates could study them more closely.

11. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the General Assembly, at the 4th plenary meeting of its current session, had decided to maintain the option that had traditionally been approved for the Special Political Committee to obtain transcriptions of debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof.

12. [redacted] (United Kingdom) asked what the financial implications of such action would be.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that such expenditure as might be incurred by the provision of transcriptions of the Committee's debates was considered to be part of the normal work of the General Assembly; there were no direct financial implications. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the request made by the representative of Liberia.

14. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

ENCLOSURE TRANSFERRED TO FILE D/DAS/10/2/8/16 PART A

From: Section 40
Directorate of Air Staff – Freedom of Information 1

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
5th Floor, Zone H, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000
(Fax) Section 40

ENCLOSURE 8 NUMBER

Section 40
Section 40
London
Section 40

Your Reference:

Our Reference:
31-01-2005-110656-008
Date:
8 March 2005

Dear Section 40

I am writing concerning your request for a copy of the MOD's policy statement on UFOs. Your request has been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

I am sorry you have had trouble accessing this information on the MOD Freedom of Information Publication Scheme at www.foi.mod.uk. For your information I have enclosed a copy of the statement. The Policy statement can be accessed by searching under 'UFO' on the website and then clicking on 'Policy'. This action will also allow you to view other released information on the Rendlesham Forest incident and the final report of the Flying Saucer Working Party.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

MOD Policy on Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO)

The Ministry of Defence does not have any expertise or role in respect of 'UFO / flying saucer' matters or to the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which it remains totally open-minded. To date the MOD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena.

The MOD examines any 'UFO' reports it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised air activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external source, and to date no 'UFO' report has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. We believe that rational explanations, such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena, could be found for them if resources were diverted for this purpose, but it is not the function of the MOD to provide this kind of aerial identification service. It would be an inappropriate use of defence resources if we were to do so.

If you wish to report a sighting or have any questions about the MOD's position regarding UFOs, you should write to the following address;

Ministry of Defence
Directorate of Air Staff – Freedom of Information
5th Floor, Zone H
Main Building
London
SW1A 2HB

Alternatively you can contact us on any of the following;

Telephone: 020-7218-2140 (24 hour Answerphone)
Fax: Section 40 [redacted]
E-Mail: das-ufo-office@mod.uk

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

Draft - Low flying.

DAS
102No. .....
28 JAN 2005
FILE

TREAT OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

To DAS(LA) P&P

TO Ref No 1028 /2005

CC.

Date 28-1-05

The Prime Minister/SofS/Min(AF)/Min(DP)/USofS/MOD* has received the attached correspondence from a member of the public, which this office has neither retained nor acknowledged. Please send a reply on behalf of the PM/Minister/Department*.

Ministers attach great importance to correspondence being answered promptly, and your reply should be sent **within 15 working days of the above date**. If, exceptionally, this should prove impossible, an interim reply should be sent within the same timescale. You should be aware that No 10 periodically calls for a sample of letters sent by officials on the PM's behalf for his perusal.

Most correspondence involves some form of request for information – even if it is only a request for clarification of Government policy – and is therefore covered by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from January 2005. In general, if you meet the deadline for responding to correspondence, and comply with any requests for information, there is no need to do anything differently as this will meet the requirements of the Act. However, if the correspondence requests information which is not already in the public domain, and which might need to be withheld, then you should treat it as a FOIA request, track it using the Access to Information toolkit, and comply with the separate FOI guidance from DG Info (see http://aitportal/default.aspx for details). However, the deadline for responding to correspondence will still apply. If you are in any doubt as to whether a piece of correspondence should be treated as an FOIA request, you should ask your FOI Focal Point or refer to the guidance produced by DG Info.

It is vital that branches ensure they have simple systems to record and track correspondence received from members of the public. This information should be regularly monitored and reviewed against the targets for answering correspondence published in the Spending Review 2000 Service Delivery Agreement for the Ministry of Defence.

As part of our monitoring procedure, random spot checks on the accuracy of your branch records on correspondence will be performed throughout the year.

Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Floor 5, Zone A, Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB
Section 40 [redacted]
Section 40 [redacted] DII: Ministerial Correspondence; e: Ministerial-Correspondence@mod.uk.

Detailed guidance on handling TO Correspondence can be found on the Defence Intranet at *http://main.defence.mod.uk/min_parl/ParlBrch/TOGuid.htm*
If you do not have access to the Intranet, please inform the Ministerial Correspondence Unit.

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

* Delete as appropriate.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **
** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

31-01-2005-110656-008
Expiry 25 Feb 2005.

Section 40

London
Section 40

Correspondence Unit
MOD
Level 5
Main building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

24th January 2005

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to obtain a copy of the MOD's policy statement on the UFO phenomenon, as described on your website at:

http://WWW.foi.mod.uk/classes1.asp

My address is:

Section 40

London
Section 40

telephone Section 40
fax: Section 40
email: Section 40 @yahoo.co.uk

Many thanks for you help.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

Draft

DAS
102No. .....
26 JAN 2005 /E-MAIL
FILE _____

TREAT OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

To DAS(LA) P+P

CC.

TO Ref No 914 /2005

Date 26/1/05

The Prime Minister/SofS/Min(AF)/Min(DP)/USofS/MOD* has received the attached correspondence from a member of the public, which this office has neither retained nor acknowledged. Please send a reply on behalf of the PM/Minister/Department*.

Ministers attach great importance to correspondence being answered promptly, and your reply should be sent **within 15 working days of the above date**. If, exceptionally, this should prove impossible, an interim reply should be sent within the same timescale. You should be aware that No 10 periodically calls for a sample of letters sent by officials on the PM's behalf for his perusal.

Most correspondence involves some form of request for information – even if it is only a request for clarification of Government policy – and is therefore covered by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from January 2005. In general, if you meet the deadline for responding to correspondence, and comply with any requests for information, there is no need to do anything differently as this will meet the requirements of the Act. However, if the correspondence requests information which is not already in the public domain, and which might need to be withheld, then you should treat it as a FOIA request, track it using the Access to Information toolkit, and comply with the separate FOI guidance from DG Info (see http://aitportal/default.aspx for details). However, the deadline for responding to correspondence will still apply. If you are in any doubt as to whether a piece of correspondence should be treated as an FOIA request, you should ask your FOI Focal Point or refer to the guidance produced by DG Info.

It is vital that branches ensure they have simple systems to record and track correspondence received from members of the public. This information should be regularly monitored and reviewed against the targets for answering correspondence published in the Spending Review 2000 Service Delivery Agreement for the Ministry of Defence.

As part of our monitoring procedure, random spot checks on the accuracy of your branch records on correspondence will be performed throughout the year.

Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Floor 5, Zone A, Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB
Section 40 [redacted]
Section 40 [redacted] DII: Ministerial Correspondence; e: Ministerial-Correspondence@mod.uk.

Detailed guidance on handling TO Correspondence can be found on the Defence Intranet at *http://main.defence.mod.uk/min_parl/ParlBrch/TOGuid.htm*
If you do not have access to the Intranet, please inform the Ministerial Correspondence Unit.

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

* Delete as appropriate.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **
** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40 [redacted]@yahoo.co.uk]
Sent: 24 January 2005 09:54
To: public@ministers.mod.uk
Subject: Request for information

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to obtain a copy of the MOD's policy statement on the UFO phenomenon, as described on your website at:

http://WWW.foi.mod.uk/classes1.asp

Please let me know what I should do to achieve this.

My address is:

Section 40 [redacted]
London
Section 40 [redacted]

(telephone: Section 40 [redacted] fax: Section 40 [redacted]
(email: Section 40 [redacted]@yahoo.co.uk)

Many thanks for you help.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40 [redacted]

ALL-NEW Yahoo! Messenger - all new features - even more fun! http://uk.messenger.yahoo.com

7

Dear [redacted]

I am writing concerning your request for information regarding UFO sighting reports. Your requests have been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

First it may be helpful if I explain that the Ministry of Defence does not have any expertise or role in respect of 'UFO/flying saucer' matters or to the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which it remains totally open-minded. To date, the MOD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these phenomena and we therefore have no information about alleged "UFO crashes". The MOD examines any 'UFO' reports it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised air activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external source, and to date no 'UFO' report has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. We believe that rational explanations, such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena, could be found for them if resources were diverted for this purpose, but it is not the function of the MOD to provide this kind of aerial identification service. It would be an inappropriate use of defence resources if we were to do so.

With regard to your particular request, I should advise you that MOD files on UFOs were routinely destroyed after 5 years until 1967 when they were generally preserved for The National Archives. A few did survive before 1967 and if these included any of the incidents you refer to in 1955 and 1963 they will now be at The National Archives. You can contact The National Archives at Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU or telephone, 020 8876 3444. The National Archives also have a website giving information about the records they hold and how to access them. This can be found on the internet at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

All the surviving MOD documents concerning events at Rendlesham Forest in 1980 can be viewed at The Ministry of Defence Freedom of Information Publication Scheme www.foi.mod.uk. A search in the Scheme under 'Rendlesham Forest' will take you to this information.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

8/3/05.

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

DAS
102No. .....
31 JAN 2005
FILE

FOI
~~Low flying~~ /E-MAIL

TREAT OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

To DAS(LA) PsP

TO Ref No 1072 /2005

CC.

Date 25-1-05

The Prime Minister/SofS/Min(AF)/Min(DP)/USofS/MOD* has received the attached correspondence from a member of the public, which this office has neither retained nor acknowledged. Please send a reply on behalf of the PM/Minister/Department*.

Ministers attach great importance to correspondence being answered promptly, and your reply should be sent **within 15 working days of the above date.** If, exceptionally, this should prove impossible, an interim reply should be sent within the same timescale. You should be aware that No 10 periodically calls for a sample of letters sent by officials on the PM's behalf for his perusal.

Most correspondence involves some form of request for information – even if it is only a request for clarification of Government policy – and is therefore covered by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from January 2005. In general, if you meet the deadline for responding to correspondence, and comply with any requests for information, there is no need to do anything differently as this will meet the requirements of the Act. However, if the correspondence requests information which is not already in the public domain, and which might need to be withheld, then you should treat it as a FOIA request, track it using the Access to Information toolkit, and comply with the separate FOI guidance from DG Info (see http://aitportal/default.aspx for details). However, the deadline for responding to correspondence will still apply. If you are in any doubt as to whether a piece of correspondence should be treated as an FOIA request, you should ask your FOI Focal Point or refer to the guidance produced by DG Info.

It is vital that branches ensure they have simple systems to record and track correspondence received from members of the public. This information should be regularly monitored and reviewed against the targets for answering correspondence published in the Spending Review 2000 Service Delivery Agreement for the Ministry of Defence.

As part of our monitoring procedure, random spot checks on the accuracy of your branch records on correspondence will be performed throughout the year.

Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Floor 5, Zone A, Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB
t: Section 40
Section 40 DII: Ministerial Correspondence; e: Ministerial-Correspondence@mod.uk.

Detailed guidance on handling TO Correspondence can be found on the Defence Intranet at *http://main.defence.mod.uk/min_parl/ParlBrch/TOGuid.htm*
If you do not have access to the Intranet, please inform the Ministerial Correspondence Unit.

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

* Delete as appropriate.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **
** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

31-01-2005-162957-016
Expiry: 28 Feb 05

Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40 [redacted]@hotmail.com]
Sent: 27 January 2005 13:30
To: public@ministers.mod.uk
Subject: Request under Freedom of Information Act

Importance: High

From: Section 40 [redacted] Skipton, North Yorkshire,
Section 40 [redacted]

Dear sir or madam

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I am emailing you to request the release of certain information concerning Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) in the UK. I understand the MoD's official line is that UFOs represent no threat to the defence of the UK and therefore all information relating to them is freely available under the FoI Act as it does not compromise national defence.

I understand a number of UFO crashes have occured in the UK and the MoD holds files documenting as much information on each of them as it could compile. I am therefore requesting all information held by the MoD on the following crash incidents in the UK including copies of letters, official reports, studies and other documentation:

5th May 1955 - Brighton
10th December 1963 - Cosford RAF Air Base 26th & 27th December 1980 - Rendlesham Forest RAF/US Air Base

Please acknowledge your receipt of this email as soon as possible and arrange for the above requested documentation to be posted in hard copy form to my address at the top of this email. I understand you now have 20 days to do this.

Yours sincerely
Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40
Directorate of Air Staff – Freedom of Information 1

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
5th Floor, Zone H, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000
(Fax) Section 40

6

Section 40
Bournemouth
Dorset
Section 40

Your Reference:

Our Reference:
31-01-2005-112656-009
Date:
8 March 2005

Dear Section 40

I am writing concerning your request for information relating to the incidents at RAF Bentwater/RAF Woodbridge and RAF Boulmer. Your requests has been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

All the documents concerning the events at Rendlesham Forest have been released and can be viewed at the MOD Freedom of Information Publication Scheme via the internet at www.foi.mod.uk. A search under 'Rendlesham Forest' will take you straight to this information.

With regard to your request for information about a UFO sighting at RAF Boulmer in 1977, this information was released at the National Archives in January 2005. The National Archives can be contacted at Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU or telephone, 020 8876 3444. The National Archives also has a website giving information about the records they hold and how to access them. This can be found on the internet at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

DAS
102No. .....
28 JAN 2005
FILE _____

Lowflying/FOI

TREAT OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

To DAS(LA)P&P

TO Ref No 970 /2005

CC.

Date 27.1.05

The Prime Minister/SofS/Min(AF)/Min(DP)/USofS/MOD* has received the attached correspondence from a member of the public, which this office has neither retained nor acknowledged. Please send a reply on behalf of the PM/Minister/Department*.

Ministers attach great importance to correspondence being answered promptly, and your reply should be sent **within 15 working days of the above date**. If, exceptionally, this should prove impossible, an interim reply should be sent within the same timescale. You should be aware that ~~No 10 periodically calls for a sample of letters sent by officials on the PM's behalf for his~~ perusal.

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Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Floor 5, Zone A, Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB
Section 40 [redacted]
Section 40 [redacted] DII: Ministerial Correspondence; e: Ministerial-Correspondence@mod.uk.

Detailed guidance on handling TO Correspondence can be found on the Defence Intranet at *http://main.defence.mod.uk/min_parl/ParlBrch/TOGuid.htm*
If you do not have access to the Intranet, please inform the Ministerial Correspondence Unit.

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

* Delete as appropriate.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

** TO BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY **

31-01-2005-112656-009
Expiry 25 Feb 05

Section 40

BOURNEMOUTH
DORSET Section 40
24th JAN '05

Dear Sir

DCA have advised me to contact you. My request is prompted by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Specifically relating to RAF Bentwater/RAF Woodbridge "UFO" incident back in 26th to 29th Dec. 1980.

The events were investigate personally by Bentwater c/o — Deputy Base Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Charles I. Halt (also by the U.S. Dept. of Defence) Popularly known as the 'RENDLESHAM FOREST SIGHTING' + one of the U.K.'s most publicised. Date on this event most appreciated.

Other U.F.O. reports include the July 1977 one by Flt. Lt. A.M. Wood at RAF Boulmer in Northumberland. Radar confirmed this at RAF Boulmer + also at RAF Staxton Wold. I understand the above are now declassified.

Ex RAF (now 76) I've an open mind. However during the 1950's I've observed a 'conventional' UFO, very clearly, in daytime, and stationary for over 20 minutes (20/20 vision at that time!) in Leicestershire.

I enclose S.A.E.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Section 40

Section 40

[redacted]

BOURNEMOUTH,

DORSET,

Section 40

[redacted]

Section 40

From: Section 40

Sent: 09 March 2005 11:53

To: Section 40@hotmail.com'

Subject: Internet-Authorised: Information requested.

Dear Section 40

I have just received your e.mail.

I am sorry that you have not received the information you requested from The National Archives. Your request was to The National Archives, not the Ministry of Defence, so we are unable to assist you with obtaining these records. I suggest you e.mail The National Archives at enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

Section 40

From: Section 40 @hotmail.com]
Sent: 08 March 2005 22:08
To: Section 40
Subject: RE: FOI Request. - UFOS (Not Properly Processed)

Thanks for your response. Yes, I visited the web site that you list below and placed an order for ufo documents of which I requested electronic copies. I was charged 10 lbs (about $20 US), but never received any data.
Ultimately I had to contact my credit card company to get credited for data that I never received. I still want to obtain these documents. My order was as follows:

On Jan. 28, 2005 I placed an order for the following documents which have
>been recently declassified:
>
>Document reference: AIR 2/18874
>Transaction number: R/05/00029035Q
>
>I requested digital images of the documents (to be made available for
>download). As of today I have not heard anything regarding my order.
>Please advise.
>
>Thanks.
>
>Section 40
>
>Bellevue, WA 98015-0246
U.S.A.
Phone: Section 40

>From: Section 40 @mod.uk>
>To: Section 40 @hotmail.com>
>Subject: FOI Request. Date: Tue, 8 Mar 2005 16:38:24 -0000
>
>Dear Section 40
>
>
>
>I am writing concerning your request for information about recently
>released MOD information on UFO sightings. Your requests have been
>passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry
>of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.
>
>
>
>Some MOD UFO records from the early 1970's were released at The
>National Archives in January 2005. For details please see The National
>Archives website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
><http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> where you can access their
>online catalogue for details. In addition there is information on UFOs
>in the MOD FOI Publication Scheme at www.foi.mod.uk <http://www.foi.mod.uk/> .
>
>
>
>I hope this will be helpful.
>
>

Yours sincerely

Section 40

DISCLOSURE
5

Dear Section 40

I am writing concerning your request for information about recently released MOD information on UFO sightings. Your requests have been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

Some MOD UFO records from the early 1970's were released at The National Archives in January 2005. For details please see The National Archives website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk where you can access their online catalogue for details. In addition there is information on UFOs in the MOD FOI Publication Scheme at www.foi.mod.uk.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

8/3/05.

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 27 [redacted] 003

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: [redacted] 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
- Internal Transfer

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 27 January 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 [redacted]

Other:

First Name:

*Surname: Section 40

Organisation: Meteorologist

Applicant Type: Not Specified

Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1:

Address Line2:

Address Line3:

Town/City:

Postcode:

Country: United Kingdom

Email: Section 40 @hotmail.com

Telephone: Section 40 [redacted]

Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 27-01-2005-091236-003

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: 24 Feb 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
Internal Transfer

View
Audit Trail
Comments Log
Saved Search Result
Contact Details
Documents

Actions
Assign Within My Group
Change Alert Settings
Edit Request Details
Upload Document
Close Case
Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

Hi:

I just learned that the British Government (Ministry of Defense) has released (declassified) many documents relating to UFOs and Xfiles. I would like to obtain some of these documents, but I cannot find the link (website). I had found the link a few days ago, but inadvertantly deleted it.

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

To be held by the help desk until allocation.

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Dear Section 40

I am writing concerning your request for information for "FOI document releases from January 2004 to 2005, relating to Unidentified Flying Objects". Your request has been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

It is not clear what information you are seeking. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 did not come into force until 1st January 2005. We have received FOI requests concerning UFOs and examples of these can be seen in the Reading Room of the MOD Freedom of Information Publication Scheme at www.foi.mod.uk. This Scheme also contains other released information on UFOs.

In addition we are looking to see if further information can be made available to the public and we are currently compiling a database of reports which we intend to publish in the Publication Scheme at the end of June 2005.

The National Archives also hold UFO information. For details about the records and how to access them, can be found on their website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

8/3/05

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 28-01-2005-094657-002

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: [redacted]05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
- Internal Transfer

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 27 January 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 [redacted]
Other:
First Name:
*Surname: Section 40
Organisation: Northumberland UFO Re
Applicant Type: Non-profit organisations
Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1: Section 40 [redacted]
Address Line2:
Address Line3: Morpeth
Town/City: Northumberland
Postcode: Section 40
Country: United Kingdom
Email: Section 40 [redacted]
Telephone:
Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 28-01-2005-094657-002

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: 24 Feb 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
Internal Transfer

View
Audit Trail
Comments Log
Saved Search Result
Contact Details
Documents

Actions
Assign Within My Group
Change Alert Settings
Edit Request Details
Upload Document
Close Case
Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

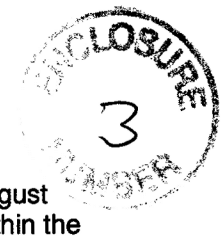
*Enter the request for information:

FOI Document release's from January 2004 to 2005, relating to Unidentified flying objects

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

Email held with Info Access Helpdesk

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel



Section 40 [redacted]

I am writing concerning your request for information about a UFO sighting on 15th August 1967. Your request has been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

I should inform you that the MOD files on UFOs were routinely destroyed after 5 years until 1967 when they were generally preserved for the National Archives.
A few have survived before 1967 and these together with records up to 1977 are now available for viewing. The National Archives can be contacted at Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU or telephone 020 8876 3444. The National Archives also have a website giving information about the records they hold and how to access them. This can be found on the internet at http://www.nationalarchives.go.uk.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Section 40 [redacted]

8/3/05.

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 27-01-2005-092733-004

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: 24 Feb 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
Internal Transfer

View
Audit Trail
Comments Log
Saved Search Result
Contact Details
Documents

Actions
Assign Within My Group
Change Alert Settings
Edit Request Details
Upload Document
Close Case
Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 27 January 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 redacted
Other:
First Name:
*Surname: Section 40 redacted
Organisation: retired
Applicant Type: Private Individuals
Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1: Section 40 redacted
Address Line2:
Address Line3: Bushey
Town/City: Herts
Postcode: Section 40 redacted
Country: United Kingdom
Email:
Telephone:
Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 27-01-2005-092733-004

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: 24 Feb 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
Internal Transfer

View
Audit Trail
Comments Log
Saved Search Result
Contact Details
Documents

Actions
Assign Within My Group
Change Alert Settings
Edit Request Details
Upload Document
Close Case
Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

AUGUST 15th 1967 WOOD GREEN LONDON UFO SIGHTING BY Section 40 AT 2.15am IN THE MORNING AND CONFIRMED BY MOD PLEASE FURNISH YOU FULL FINDINGS TO ME SOONEST

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

To be held by the help desk until allocation.

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

07 March 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 28-02-2005-101918-007

Days Left: 15

Received: 27 Feb 05
Expiry Date: 29 Mar 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
- Internal Transfer

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 27 February 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 Other:

First Name: *Surname: Section 40

Organisation: retired

Applicant Type: Private Individuals Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1: Section 40

Address Line2:

Address Line3: Bushey

Town/City: Herts

Postcode: Section 40 Country: United Kingdom

Email: Section 40

Telephone: Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

07 March 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 28-02-2005-101918-007

Days Left: 15

Received: 27 Feb 05
Expiry Date: 29 Mar 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
- Internal Transfer

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: hardcopy

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

infosubject: august 15th 1967 i viewed a ufo with Section 40 over Tottenam/Wood Green area at 02.10 amd Section 40 was burnt on the face and at that time the MOD took the full details and Section 40 was interviewed in London AT the MOD offices dept.s4F air..
I require full report on this please under the freedom of information act...
Also Section 40 was involed with the MOD in a big way back in the early 1970s at Banbury Oxon when the MOD requested actual UFO reports from him and it was headlines in the news..

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

To be held by the help desk until allocation.

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

infosubject: august 15th 1967 i viewed a ufo with Section 40 over Tottenam/Wood Green area at 02.10 amd Section 40 was burnt on the face and at that time the MOD took the full details and Section 40 was interviewed in London AT the MOD offices dept.s4F air..
I require full report on this please under the freedom of information act...
Also Section 40 was involed with the MOD in a big way back in the early 1970s at Banbury Oxon when the MOD requested actual UFO reports from him and it was headlines in the news..
I need info on all this to as i am lecturing and the info is VERY important..
Yours Sincerely,

Section 40

From: Section 40

Sent: 15 November 2006 10:52

To: Section 40 @aol.com'

Subject: Internet-Authorised: WOOD GREEN UFO INCIDENT - FOI REQUEST

Dear Section 40

Further to your e-mail of 3 November 2006, I have taken action to amend the date of the Wood Green incident that appears on the MoD website. Whilst the original will remain on the site, we will attach an amended version so that any changes are clear. This should happen in the next few days.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40
DAS Sec 1
05-H-Section 40
MoD Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Section 40

From: Section 40
Sent: 06 November 2006 06:33
To: Section 40
Subject: FW: FOI written request

Section 40

A comment from a member of the public which appears to relate to a previous request. Trust that you will deal.

Regards

Section 40
FOI Helpdesk

-----Original Message-----
From: feedback@www.mod.uk [mailto:feedback@www.mod.uk]
Sent: 03 November 2006 21:01
To: Info-Access-Office
Subject: FOI written request

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Friday, November 3, 2006 at 21:01:14
---

txttitle: Section 40

txtfirstname: Section 40

txtlastname:

txtoccupation: retired

txtorganisation: home

txtaddress1: Section 40

txtaddress2:

txttowncity: Bushey

txtstatecountry: Herts

txtzipcodepostcode: Section 40

txtcountry: United Kingdom

txtemailAddress: Section 40 @aol.com

txtinforequest: i draw your attention to the WOOD GREEN UFO seen by Section 40 and 15 other witnesses and have to correct the year for you because the original information given by myself to you was incorrect.
The year was actually 1966 and i would be most grateful if you will rectify this please.

Section 40 was actually interviewed AT the MOD in Whitehall by DEPT/S4F/AIR personnel and also required medical treatment to burns on the face etc..
MOD CLASSED THIS AS AN `UNKNOWN` UFO SIGHTING.....

sincerely
Section 40

28-02-2025-13918-007
PART C
Enc 3

Dear Section 40

I am writing concerning your request for information on the Rendlesham Forest Incident. Your request has been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

You may wish to be aware that all the surviving MOD documents relating to the Rendlesham Forest incident have been released into the MOD Freedom of Information Publication Scheme and can be viewed on the internet at www.foi.mod.uk. A search under "Rendlesham Forest" will take you directly to these documents.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

8\3\05.

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

15 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 09-02-2005-115102-007

Days Left: 16

Received: 08 Feb 05
Expiry Date: [redacted] 05*
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
- Internal Transfer

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 08 February 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 [redacted]
Other:
First Name:
*Surname: Section 40
Organisation:
Applicant Type: Not Specified
Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1:
Address Line2:
Address Line3:
Town/City:
Postcode:
Country: United Kingdom
Email: Section 40 @ntlworld.com
Telephone:
Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

15 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 09-02-2005-115102-007

Days Left: 16

Received: 08 Feb 05
Expiry Date: 08 Mar 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
Internal Transfer

View
Audit Trail
Comments Log
Saved Search Result
Contact Details
Documents

Actions
Assign Within My Group
Change Alert Settings
Edit Request Details
Upload Document
Close Case
Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

Can you forward me recently releaseed files on the Rendlesham Forest incident which occurred over the Christmas period in 1980.

It occurred near the USA aif force base at Bentwaters and Woodhouse in Suffolk.

I am aware you have much information on these cases.

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

To be held by the help desk until allocation.

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Dear Section 40 [redacted]

I am writing concerning your message of 18 January in which you request all the information the Ministry of Defence has on UFOs. Your message has been passed to this office, as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence on UFOs.

First, it may be helpful if I explain that the MOD does not have any expertise or role in respect of 'UFO/flying saucer' matters or to the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which it remains totally open-minded. I should add that to date the MOD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena.

The Ministry of Defence examines any reports of UFOs it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised air activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external source, and to date no 'UFO' report has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each reported sighting. We believe it is possible that rational explanations, such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena, could be found for them, but it is not the function of the MOD to provide this kind of aerial identification service. We could not justify expenditure of public funds on investigations which go beyond our specific defence remit.

With regard to the files the MOD holds on UFOs, these span a 25 year period and the vast majority contain reports and correspondence sent to the MOD, filed in the order in which they were received. These records are not held electronically. Any information released from these files has to be redacted in order to remove personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and it is not therefore possible to supply all the information you are seeking. If however, you would like to specify exactly what information you are seeking we may be able to assist you. In the meantime, the MOD has released some information on UFOs into our Freedom of Information Publication Scheme which can be found at www.foi.mod.uk. A search under UFO will take you to all the classes currently in the Scheme.

I hope this is helpful.

Section 40 [redacted]
Ministry of Defence
Directorate of Air Staff – Freedom of Information
5th Floor, Zone H, Sectior [redacted]
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

das-ufo-office@mod.uk

24 January 2005

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

21 January 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 18-01-2005-093235-004

Days Left: 18

Received: 18 Jan 05
Expiry Date: 15 Feb 05
Status: Open

All sources

Workflow Options
- AIT Main

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 18 January 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 Other:

First Name: *Surname: Section 40

Organisation: Property Director

Applicant Type: Businesses Other:

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1: Section 40

Address Line2:

Address Line3:

Town/City: Nottingham

Postcode: Section 40 Country: United Kingdom

Email: @ntlworld.com

Telephone: Section 40 Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

19 January 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 18-01-2005-093235-004

Days Left: 20

Received: 18 Jan 05
Expiry Date: 15 Feb 05
Status: Open

All sources

Workflow Options
- AIT Main

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

All information on UFO's please.

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

To be held by the help desk until allocation.

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Dear [redacted]

I am writing concerning your request for information about the UFO that you witnessed in Devon in 1967. Your request has been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

Any surviving information from this period will now be held at The National Archives. I should inform you that MOD files on UFOs were routinely destroyed after 5 years until 1967 when they were generally preserved for The National Archives. A few have survived before 1967 and these together with records up to 1977 are now available for viewing. The National Archives can be contacted at Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU or telephone, 020 8876 3444. The National Archives also have a website giving information about the records they hold and how to access them. This can be found on the internet at http://www.nationalarchives.go.uk.

I hope this will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

8/3/05

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 [redacted]

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: [redacted]
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
- Internal Transfer

View
- Audit Trail
- Comments Log
- Saved Search Result
- Contact Details
- Documents

Actions
- Assign Within My Group
- Change Alert Settings
- Edit Request Details
- Upload Document
- Close Case
- Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Date request received: 27 January 2005

Applicant Details

Title: Section 40 [redacted]
Other: [redacted]
First Name: [redacted]
*Surname: Section 40 [redacted]
Organisation:
Applicant Type: Not Specified
Other: [redacted]

Contact Details (Mailing or email address required)

Address Line1: Section 40 [redacted]
Address Line2: [redacted]
Address Line3:
Town/City: Torquay Devon
Postcode: Section 40 [redacted]
Country: United Kingdom
Email: Section 40 [redacted]
Telephone: Section 40 [redacted]
Fax:

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

Section 40

GxAITESTPTCD/

01 February 05

Home | My Cases | Log New Request | Policy Guidance | Help

Request: Section 40 27-01-2005-092020-002

Days Left: 18

Received: 27 Jan 05
Expiry Date: 24 Feb 05
Status: Internal Transfer

All sources

Workflow Options
Internal Transfer

View
Audit Trail
Comments Log
Saved Search Result
Contact Details
Documents

Actions
Assign Within My Group
Change Alert Settings
Edit Request Details
Upload Document
Close Case
Take Ownership

Editing the request details will initiate a new search.
The new search results will be saved and will replace the existing save search results.

Request Details

Response Format Requested: electronic

Language Requested ☐ Welsh

*Enter the request for information:

On April 28th 1967 I, along with 100 others including school teachers, witnessed a silver UFO pass over Torquay, Devon at approx 11.30 am.

The UFO travelled towards Brixham, Devon where it remained stationary for approx. 1 hour.

The object was observed by the Brixham Coastguards which was reported to the RAF in Plymouth.

Record storage location of Applicant request (or upload document).

To be held by the help desk until allocation

Clear | Back | Next | Cancel

On April 28th 1967 I, along with 100 others including school teachers, witnessed a silver UFO pass over Torquay, Devon at approx 11.30 am.

The UFO travelled towards Brixham, Devon where it remained stationary for approx. 1 hour.

The object was observed by the Brixham Coastguards which was reported to the RAF in Plymouth.

According to report the object after remaining stationary over the town proceded to fly off.

I feel that the HM Coastguards must have made a report of this sighting to the authorities, as a matter of procedure.

Under the Information of Freedom Act, I would be very grateful if you would look into this matter.

Regards

Section 40 [redacted]