

14 January 1969

The Editor  
The New York Times  
New York 10036

Sir,

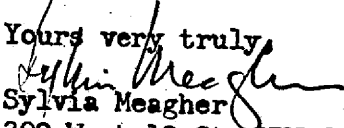
Your editorial "UFO's and All That" (10 January 1969) was published only 24 hours after the release of the 1500-page Condon Report and about the same short interval after the book by David Saunders repudiating the investigation and its conclusions. One can only marvel at your dazzling feat of reading and evaluating these works overnight—or at your audacity in reaching a judgment on the merit of the Condon Report without having troubled to read it.

Your editorial disparages in advance those whom you term "true believers." An authority thus patronized and dismissed is Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Professor of Astronomy and Air Force consultant on UFO's for 20 years. Dr. Hynek said of this phenomenon—at a symposium conducted by the House Committee on Science and Astronautics on 29 July 1968—that "...we should pay attention. Something very important may be going on..." and (surely having in mind The New York Times, among others) "We suffer perhaps from temporal provincialism, a form of arrogance that has always irritated posterity." Other eminent scientists at the Symposium expressed even stronger views; but presumably The New York Times has not troubled to study the proceedings, which were published by the Government Printing Office and which I commend to those who would like to do their own thinking on the subject.

You were quite right to draw an analogy between the Condon Report and the Warren Report. They have much in common. The Warren Report, too, enjoyed the instant championship of The New York Times, which praised it to the skies without awaiting the 26 volumes of the Hearings and Exhibits and a determination of whether or not the testimony and documents sustained the findings of the Report. And if the Warren Report has given rise to a "minor, if lucrative, industry," it has been far more lucrative for those who concurred in the findings than for those who challenged them—lucrative for The New York Times, first and perhaps foremost, in sales of its paperback edition of the Report and later its paperback, The Witnesses, with its very carefully edited excerpts from the testimony. Now, without confronting or disposing of the well-founded, responsible, and thoroughly documented criticism of the Warren Report that stands unanswered in the literature, The New York Times continues to champion this discredited document. (ignoring its own editorial of 11/25/66 on the validity of doubt).

Questions must therefore arise about the independence and objectivity of The New York Times. Is it not at times a propaganda agency for the official Government line on controversial and fateful questions, an Izvestia, American-style? Your editorial posture on the Warren Report, and now the Condon Report, certainly suggests a silent partnership with the federal establishment on the respective issues concerned—a silent partnership exactly like that which the Chairman of the Warren Commission suggested entering with AP and UPI, as revealed in recently declassified Minutes of the Commission's Executive Sessions. It is sad to see a great newspaper descend into an intellectual and moral Bay of Pigs.

Yours very truly,

  
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(Author of the Subject Index to the Warren Report and Hearings and Exhibits and Accessories After the Fact: The Warren Commission, the Authorities, and the Report)