

SECRET OF 14 YEARS

UFO Debunking Laid To CIA by Scientist

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By ROBERT WALTERS
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The government's failure to fully investigate reports of unidentified flying objects stems, in large measure, from a 1953 Central Intelligence Agency proposal for a systematic "debunking of flying saucers," an Arizona scientist said yesterday. Dr. James E. McDonald said the government has refused to declassify a 14-year-old report which contains the CIA recommendation and also lists as the objective of the proposal "to reduce public interest in flying saucers."

McDonald told the American Society of Newspaper Editors that he was inadvertently allowed to examine the classified report by Air Force officials before the CIA decided to contin-

ue the document's secret classification.

McDonald, a senior physicist at the University of Arizona's Institute of Atmospheric Physics, said the disputed report was the result of a 1953 study of UFOs by a committee chaired by H. P. Robertson, theoretical physicist at the California Institute of Technology.

McDonald said the committee study was "a pivotal point in UFO history" because "instead of a recommendation that the problem to be taken out of Air Force hands and turned over to some scientific agency for adequate study" the study group adopted the CIA proposal.

"I do not regard this as a dark and sinister action of a covert body trying to deceive the

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Air Force Defends Its UFO Work

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citizenry of the nation. Rather, the reason behind this regrettable decision was entirely understandable when seen from a solely national security viewpoint," McDonald said.

"Viewed narrowly from security viewpoints, it made good sense to get this noise (UFO reports) suppressed. It has indeed been effectively suppressed in the ensuing 15 years," he added.

McDonald said that he knew of "no evidence indicating that the CIA then maintained, or now maintains, any scientific scrutiny of the details of the UFO phenomena."

CIA officials told a reporter the 1953 action apparently stemmed from a belief at the time that there was a possibility that flying saucers might have been developed by a hostile foreign power.

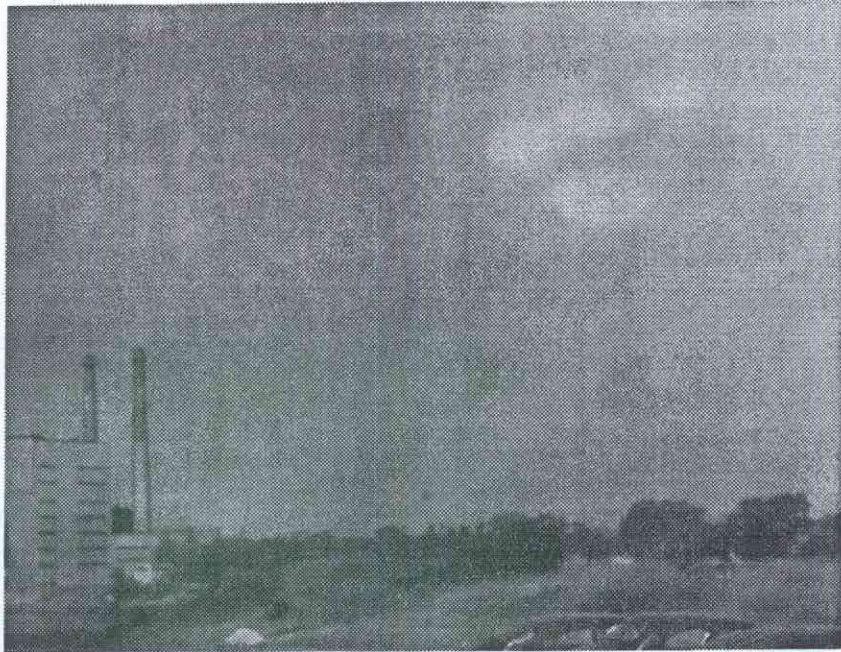
Security was necessary, they said, to give government intelligence officers an opportunity to check on that possibility without alarming the public, but all such theories have since been discounted.

McDonald also charged that the country has "been misled" about flying saucers and that the UFO problem "has been mishandled for many years" but said that "scientific and official concern is beginning to change."

He said that Project Blue Book, the Air Force unit assigned to investigate UFO reports, "has been gradually downgraded to an extremely low-priority project."

The problem has been "superficially and incompetently handled by the Air Force," McDonald said, calling for a "full and fair congressional inquiry" and a probe by top-caliber scientists all over the world.

The recently granted \$300,000



—U. S. Coast Guard

Three "flying saucers" reportedly photographed over a Massachusetts wooded area.

Air Force contract for an 18-month study of UFOs by Dr. Edward U. Condon, former director of the National Bureau of Standards and now a physics professor at the University of Colorado, is a good start, McDonald said, "but they have not taken the problem seriously enough to muster the scientific strength to do justice to the problem."

Air Force Maj. Hector Quintanilla, in charge of Project Blue Book, was one of two men appearing on the ASNE panel who disputed McDonald's views. He told the editors:

"To date the firm conclusions

of Project Blue Book are:

"1. No unidentified flying object reported, investigated and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security."

"2. There has been no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings characterized as unidentified represent technological developments or principles beyond the range of present-day scientific knowledge."

"3. There has been no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as unidentified are extra-terrestrial vehicles."

Another panel member, Dr.

Donald H. Menzel, professor of astrophysics and astronomy at Harvard University, said "the possibility of manned spacecraft is not an impossibility—but neither are ghosts, witches or hobgoblins."

"It is perfectly possible that intelligent life—far more intelligent life than we—may exist in far-off outer space," Menzel said. "But other natural explanations exist for the unexplained (flying saucer) sightings."

Menzel attributed most UFO reports to airborne ice crystals, ball lightning, mass hallucination, hoaxes and visual "after images" resulting from looking too long into a bright light.

Virginian Tells of UFO Blast-Off From Highway

SOUTH HILL, Va. (AP)—“You can imagine how it felt to see a big thing like that sitting in the road in front of you, and all of a sudden a ball of fire flies out and it disappears.”

This was the reaction of a South Hill warehouse manager in describing an Unidentified Flying Object which he said momentarily blocked the road as he was on his way home from work Friday night.

C. N. Crowder, manager of the Mobil Chemical Co. warehouse in this Southside Virginia town near the North Carolina line, said he was driving away from the warehouse about 9 p.m. when he saw the object sitting in the middle of the road.

He described it as looking like a metal storage tank about 12 feet in diameter, aluminum in color, sitting on legs that appeared to be about 3 to 3½ feet high.

“I turned on my bright lights and just about the time I did this, a tremendous burst of white-looking fire came from the bottom of the object and it went right straight up in the air like a bullet.

“It was just a flash and it was gone, but when I had my bright lights on, I got a perfect look at it.”

Crowder said the macadam road where the object had been sitting caught on fire. When the

fire died down, he said, he went to the police station and reported the incident.

“Two of the town police came back with me,” he said. “We found a black burned spot in the road where the thing took off. The spot still in here in the road today.”

Crowder said he talked with the driver of another car that had been near the scene and confirmed that “he saw the flash too.”