

UFO INVESTIGATOR



AIAA RECOMMENDS NEW UFO STUDY

Hard-Core Cases Difficult to Ignore, Says Group

In a strong counterproposal to the Condon Report, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) has recommended renewed scientific investigation of UFOs. Reporting on a three-year study by an 11-man panel of its own members, the New York-based society of aerospace scientists and engineers said "the only promising approach (to the UFO problem) is a continuing, moderate-level effort with emphasis on improved data collection by objective means and on high-quality scientific analysis."

Pursuant to the recommendation, the AIAA called on government agencies to maintain an open mind toward UFO research and to seriously entertain new study proposals. Concluded the Institute: "The approach recommended by this committee requires not only the attention of the scientist and engineer, but also a readiness of government agencies to consider sound proposals in this field without bias or fear of ridicule or repercussion -- or, as the Condon Report expresses it, 'on an openminded, unprejudiced basis.' This perhaps is our most important conclusion."

The Institute cited as its reason for urging further studies "the small residue of well-documented but unexplainable cases which form the hard core of the UFO controversy." These cases, the AIAA said, "are characterized by both a high degree of credibility and a high abnormality." It would be "unacceptable," said the group, "to simply ignore substantial numbers of (such) unexplained observations and to close the book about them on the basis of premature conclusions."

Condon Report Fails to Convince

The AIAA scientists rejected the Condon Report as the last word on UFOs, saying they could find no "basis in the report for Dr. Condon's prediction that nothing of scientific value will come of further studies."

"In fact," the group stated, "(we) find that the opposite conclusion could have been drawn from the content of the report -- namely, that a phenomenon with such a high ratio of unexplained cases (about 30 per cent) should arouse sufficient scientific curiosity to continue its study."

The Institute charged that the Condon Report is not as negative in its conclusions as Condon's "Summary of the Study" (Section I of the Report) would suggest. The Summary "contains more than its title indicates," said the AIAA; "it discloses many of Condon's personal conclusions." Moreover, "not all conclusions in the report itself are fully reflected in Condon's summary."

The Institute also questioned Condon's assertion that "no intelligent extraterrestrial life has any possibility of visiting

Earth in the next 10,000 years." "We find no convincing basis for (this) statement," the group said, adding, "When does one start counting?"

In addition to the Condon Report, the Institute rejected studies (not identified but presumably Air Force) conducted prior to the Colorado inquiry. The Institute said it "was greatly perturbed by the paucity of thorough scientific and technological analysis applied to practically all observations before the Condon study."

The Institute emphasized that any new investigation should be on-going, with attention given to older cases as well as current sightings. "The immediate question," said the study group, "is how to attack the UFO problem without the pitfalls of past attempts. There is little doubt that the short-time, one-shot approach of an *ad hoc* team is neither promising nor economical. This is especially true if the study team decides -- as the University of Colorado group did -- to concentrate on current rather than past observations. As the UFO statistics show, this results in the devotion of precious time to investigating the noise rather than the signal."

Air Force Did Not Heed Its Own Advisers

The one-shot approach might have been avoided, said the Institute, if the Air Force had followed the recommendation of its own Scientific Advisory Board, which convened a group of scientists in 1966 (the O'Brien Committee) to review Project Blue Book and propose ways of upgrading the government's investigation of UFOs. The O'Brien Committee recommended that "contracts be negotiated with a few selected universities" to provide for "scientific investigation of selected sightings in more detail and depth than has been possible to date." This was not done.

The AIAA group said it saw no purpose in attempting to deal with the UFO problem from the slant of a particular hypothesis. Expressing "disenchantment" with arguments over whether the extraterrestrial hypothesis is "the least probable" (Condon Report) or "the least unprobable" (Dr. James McDonald), the AIAA said "there is no scientific basis for assessing such probabilities at this time."

The group went on to ask "whether there is a need at all to speculate on a specific hypothesis, such as ETH, in order to decide on the significance of a scientific problem." "We think," the group said, that "any known phenomenon in nature is worth investigating."

In warning about premature dismissal of the UFO problem, the AIAA cited parallels between UFOs and weather modification. "After almost 20 years of taboo by the scientific community," noted the group, "weather modification has now achieved scientific recognition, due to the fact that some courageous, high-caliber scientists entered the arena. This has resulted in a revision of the viewpoint of the National Academy of Sciences."

Fourth of a Series

MAN AND NON-MAN

What Impact the Discovery of Extraterrestrial Intelligence?

The following is a continuation of the NICAP interview with Dr. Richard S. Young, Chief of Exobiology for NASA, on the search for extraterrestrial life. The interview began in the September issue.

NICAP: In the popular press, it is inevitable that speculation is going to center upon the way-out things, upon far-out possibilities. So it's good that you brought out this other point of view; it helps balance some of these other ideas, such as an ammonia-based life system.

YOUNG: It's interesting to think about these other possibilities. But until we've done something in the laboratory that gives us some reason to think that this might actually work, there's nothing in the laboratory to indicate that life can be supported on the basis of liquid ammonia instead of water, for example. We just have no evidence that this is feasible. So it's fun to think about it, it's fun to theorize about it, to make models; but until you have something better than that to go on, you just can't go that far.

NICAP: You have probably been asked this many times before, but we are always asked about it: Based on present knowledge, which of the nine planets within our solar system appear to offer any chance at all of finding something?

YOUNG: Of finding life? Or of finding evidence related to the origin of life?

NICAP: Of finding life.

YOUNG: That's where the interest of the public is. It's not where the scientific interest is, or it's not where the scientific interest is exclusively, but that's the question of most public interest.

I think Mars is generally considered to be the planet most likely to have life in the solar system. Next to Mars, I think Jupiter and Venus are the planets of greatest interest. The environment on Mars shows us nothing that precludes the possibility of life. By the same token, there's no evidence that there is life there, so it's an open question. The surface of Venus appears to be too hot -- 900 degrees; not only couldn't there be life, carbon compounds can't exist and neither can water. So we rule out a whole series of fundamental requirements.

Jupiter we are extremely interested in, not so much because we believe there is life there, but because it looks as though chemical evolution may be going on in the atmosphere of Jupiter. It has a primitive atmosphere. We think Jupiter may be undergoing the same sequence of events which took place on the primitive Earth before there was life. In other words, we think organic compounds may be being synthesized in the atmosphere of Jupiter, and this would be an extremely important thing to find out about and to get some real data on: just how things are being synthesized, what kinds of molecules are being synthesized, etc.

So I would say Mars, Jupiter, and Venus, probably in that order, are the planets of major interest. And we will have a great deal of interest in the moon, primarily from the point of view of organic analysis, looking into the prebiological record, if there is one. We are pretty well convinced there's no life on the moon, but that doesn't mean there is no evidence of early chemical evolution. As a matter of fact, there's some reason to think that there probably is.

NICAP: From the scientist's point of view, a fossil is as useful to him as the animal or organism itself.

YOUNG: Yes. Or even less than a fossil, even the organic compounds from which the organism was made, or the organic compounds that were synthesized before life even arose. It would be important to know whether chemical evolution took place on Mars but never produced a living system. Or, if there were living systems and are now gone, what does the fossil record show they were like, why did they die out, or indeed is there life? All these are relevant questions.

NICAP: There has been a great deal of publicity given to evidence of fossils on meteorites. Has this ever proved fruitful in any way?

YOUNG: Well, it's still a controversial subject. Meteorites have been analyzed -- or at least that family of meteorites that has a high percentage of carbon; these are the carbonaceous chondrites. It's only a small group of meteorites that are of interest, and they are called carbonaceous chondrites. These things have a fair amount of organic matter in them; I think there's no question about that. There's also no question that the organic matter is indigenous; in other words, it came with the meteorites. They are contaminated too; as soon as they entered the Earth's atmosphere, they were contaminated. Most of them sat around in farmer Jones's field or were used as a doorstep or were in a museum, so they are all very much contaminated, both chemically and biologically. So it's very difficult to sort out what came with the meteorite and what is contaminant -- especially when we are dealing with just trace amounts of organic compounds.

I think, however, the question of indigenous organics is pretty well agreed to. I think most people will accept the fact that there are organic molecules that come in with meteorites.

Now, the other part of that question is are these organics evidence that there was life where these meteorites came from, or are they nonbiologically produced organics? Are they evidence of chemical evolution preceding life wherever they came from? Either is a possibility.

The question of fossils in meteorites is a little more difficult, because there are formed microstructures that one can see embedded in the matrix of some of these meteorites. Whether you can really say that indeed these things are fossil micro-organisms, or some kind of crystal formation, or contaminants, is a hotly debated item, and I don't think you could get a consensus of opinion. I think some scientists feel that they are indeed fossils of organisms and evidence of extraterrestrial life. Others will say nonsense, they're contaminants; and others will say, well, they may not be contaminants, but they're not necessarily evidence of life; they could be synthetic, nonliving structures that look like living organisms. And we can make these things in the laboratory, as a matter of fact. So that's not so clear; that's a debatable item.

(Continued on Opposite Page)

CASE INVESTIGATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Follow-Up to Recent Reports

Recent sighting investigations by NICAP have been made in the locales listed below. Publicity of sightings is currently confined to local newspapers and radio reports, with only infrequent coverage by regional, state, or national news media. Reports from individuals who have not disclosed their experiences to the press are being received, but the majority of these are low-grade observations of distant phenomena. Sighting activity in general can be characterized as moderate-to-quiet, although leads to potentially interesting cases continue to come in.

Massachusetts

NICAP's Massachusetts Subcommittee has investigated six primary cases during the past five months. Two of these are classified by the Subcommittee as "Unidentified," with certain qualifications.

The first sighting was made by a Boston accountant, who spotted an object while en route to her office on the morning of July 21, 1970. She described the UFO as a sharply defined disc of "iridescent silver," with a rim. The object appeared stationary in the sky, although it was tilted slightly upward as though in a climbing mode.

On the basis of the witness's credibility, there is no reason to doubt that a physical object was observed. The report suffers, however, from lack of corroborating reports, which might reasonably be expected for cases that occur in clear daylight over heavily populated areas. Also bothersome is the failure of the witness's chauffeur, who was with her in the car, to observe the object, even though it was called to his attention. Logan International Airport, located some six miles from the scene, was contacted for possible confirming reports, but none had been received.

The most likely explanation for the sighting is an aircraft oddly illuminated by the bright sun. Against this is the witness's claim to familiarity with aircraft, and the five-minute duration of the observation. Either of these factors, however, could be in error.

The second "Unidentified" case investigated by the Subcommittee concerns a family in Beverly who saw a "bright red-orange ball" slowly descending over an open space near their home on September 20, 1970. The ball seemed to have "rays" or "spikes" protruding from it, and its glow could be seen briefly after it went down behind some trees.

A priori, this is a weak case, due to the lack of detail (essentially the UFO was a large light) and the short duration of the observation (5-10 seconds). The reported "spikes" add an element of interest, although they could be explained as visual aberrations caused by the screendoor through which the UFO was observed. One explanation is a small balloon made by kids from candles and plastic bags, but the general description of the UFO does not strongly indicate this. Another possibility is the landing light of an aircraft (Beverly Airport is near the witnesses' home), but again the evidence is not strong. A check was made with the Beverly police and other local authorities, but no other UFO reports had been made that might relate to this one.

Michigan

In late October, NICAP investigated a report from Bay City, Michigan, which described two bright lights that flew over a man driving home in the early morning hours of October 10, 1970. The lights did not appear together, but rather one after

the other, out of the dark night without warning. They were identical in appearance: a bright center surrounded by a darker ring, with a "milky" and somewhat indistinct outer edge.

The first light approached the car head-on at an estimated altitude of 20-25 feet, passing quickly overhead and out of sight. It seemed to turn upward as it neared the car, as though adjusting its course to avoid a collision. The second light, moving in the same direction but at a higher altitude, appeared an instant after the first and also passed quickly overhead.

This is a report of limited interest, due primarily to the ephemeral nature of the sighting (an estimated five seconds in duration) and the inability of the witness to gain more than fleeting impressions of the UFOs. A further deterrent is the extremely poor weather that prevailed at the site of the observation: heavy rain, with minimal visibility. Generally, the witness appeared credible, although some doubt might be raised over his admitting to having had "three beers" before starting home. While this by no means suggests he was drunk, his admission that he was traveling at approximately 60 miles per hour under very bad driving conditions does raise the question of his overall state of mind at the time of the sighting.

As to an explanation of the sighting, no simple solution suggests itself, other than the possibility of meteorites, which on the face of it seems most unlikely. Another possibility is reflections in the windshield, but this too seems improbable in view of the circumstances.

SIGHTING ADVISORY

Preliminary information on new reports. Details and evaluations will be published when available.

November 7, 1970 -- A lone woman, driving near Deland, Florida, encountered a strange airborne object that hovered near her car, causing the motor to stall and the headlights to go out. Pulsating with flashing lights of varying colors, the object gave off a "throbbing sound," which became louder as the UFO moved away. The car functioned normally after the object left.

October 22, 1970 -- A man and wife driving near Pell City, Alabama, observed two cylindrical objects, white in color, flying toward each other on an apparent collision course. As the objects closed, one vanished from sight. The other continued its travel until no longer visible in the distance. Both objects had flat ends and gave no indication of how they were propelled.

MAN AND NON-MAN (Continued from Page 2)

NICAP: This, perhaps, is not surprising. If the evidence were clearer -- certainly, if it were conclusive -- there would be a great deal more publicity and excitement.

YOUNG: Oh, yes, you would have heard a lot more about it, and many more scientists would be involved. There are some very good, sound, reputable scientists working in this meteorite area, trying very hard to sort out the picture. But it is an extremely difficult picture to sort out, and I'm not sure we will ever sort it out until we get an uncontaminated meteorite. This is another reason for being interested in lunar samples. Can we get meteoritic material from the moon that hasn't been contaminated? And can we avoid contaminating it?

NEXT: Should the Public Be Told About ETI?



MEMOS
FOR
MEMBERS

MORE WAYS TO HELP NICAP

To further answer those members who have asked how they can help NICAP, we are continuing below the list of suggestions we began last issue. If you can think of any ideas we have overlooked, let us know so that we can pass them along to all the members.

7. Do you know anyone who has had a good sighting but never reported it? Now is the time for silent witnesses to speak out. Without the cooperation of witnesses, we would soon be out of business. There is no longer any reason for people with reports to hold back. Government debunking has subsided, and public ridicule is giving way to interest and curiosity. As always, NICAP will respect the confidence of anyone who reports a sighting to us with the request that we not use his name. There is little we can do with a fragmentary report of a funny light, but a solid report of a close-range observation is potentially very important, and we should have it. This is particularly true now that our new computer study, Project ACCESS, is underway. It is going to need all the high-grade cases it can get.

8. Perhaps you know someone who would like to support UFO research but does not want to join an organization. For these people, a contribution to NICAP might be a meaningful way to express that interest. All donations to NICAP are tax exempt, regardless of whether the donor is a member.

9. Keep alert to new ways to promote NICAP. Some members circulate their UFO Investigator at the office; others put notices about NICAP on school or office bulletin boards; some put a classified ad in their local paper (Curious about UFOs? Join NICAP, 1522 Conn. Ave., Wash., D.C. 20036); some even give out NICAP literature at hospitals and nursing homes (people who are confined to bed or home appreciate knowing about interesting new reading material).

10. Be careful not to hurt NICAP indirectly by supporting the kooks and cultists. The UFO field abounds with opportunists who offer sensationalism, wild speculation, unsubstantiated claims, and all sorts of commercial gimmicks and gadgets. Ignore them. Encourage people not to join their clubs, buy their books, or attend their lectures. Without cash customers, these individuals will not be able to get the publicity that detracts so greatly from the work of NICAP.

NICAP BOOK OUT OF PRINT

We are sorry to announce that as of December 1, 1970, we can no longer offer our special publication *Projects Grudge and Blue Book*. Our supply of the book is exhausted, and funds are not available for a second printing. We should also mention that our supply of *UFOs: A New Look* is running low, so those members who have not yet ordered it should do so as soon as possible. We will probably freeze sales of it at the end of January.

Q/A

Q. When will Volume II of *The UFO Evidence* be available?

P.M./Anderson, S.C.

A. *NICAP's plan to publish a companion volume to The UFO Evidence has been shelved until resources permit resumption of an active publishing program. We regret this action but feel our first priority should be the newsletter, which requires a great deal of effort to produce.*

Q. How does NICAP regard the many "wild" articles about UFOs that keep appearing in various men's magazines?

R.C./Chicago, Ill.

A. *Pulp literature exists for one purpose: to sell on newsstands. It is not the place to look for carefully documented facts. Any reputable scientist or researcher who has important information to report is going to do so through established scientific publications or respected news media. Writers who cater to the readers of "girlie" magazines and similar mass markets may or may not be competent reporters, but necessarily they are more interested in the salability of their ideas than the reliability of their information.*

Q. Does NICAP plan any use of its Project ACCESS files other than storing sighting data and making the data available to scientists?

J.B./Miami, Fla.

A. *As its name implies, Project ACCESS -- the Automated Clearinghouse for Collection and Exchange of Sighting Statistics -- is intended to provide data to qualified researchers. Thus it is being designed around the projected requirements of potential users. NICAP, certainly, will be one of these users, but it is hoped that many scientists and research organizations will avail themselves of the ACCESS files and conduct independent studies. Exactly what use NICAP will make of the data in its own study is not yet determined, since ACCESS is not expected to be implemented for many months. We will keep members informed of our plans as they take shape.*

Q. Do you have any information on the so-called "Allende Letters"?

D.L./Garden Grove, Calif.

A. *The "Allende Letters" -- long regarded with suspicion -- are a confessed hoax. According to the APRO Bulletin of July-August 1969, Carlos M. Allende visited APRO headquarters and admitted to the "craziest pack of lies I ever wrote." Allende gave as his motive a desire to discourage the late Morris K. Jessup, a writer on UFOs, who was interested in various speculative aspects of the UFO problem.*

Q. How do I get details on the Piri Reis map mentioned in Major Keyhoe's book "Flying Saucers, Top Secret"?

P.M./Victoria, B.C.

A. *The Piri Reis map is discussed in detail in Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings by Charles Hapgood. The book was published in 1966 by Chilton Books.*

FEEDBACK/Readers write

Dear Editor:

The July issue of the UFO Investigator contains a letter that recalls some events in Velikovsky's book "Worlds in Collision." It is entirely possible that the universe is full of aberrant planets, and that Mars, Venus, the moon and Earth did experience near collisions around 1500 B.C. (as the book suggests), but one must also consider the fact that the nine (or is it eleven) planets in our solar system have occupied their relative positions for more than 5 billion years (a minimum figure), so why should Mars or Venus all of a sudden decide to wander out of their respective orbits?

As for the shifting of the Earth's polar axis (from somewhere in the Sahara desert) to its present position, this is already explained by geophysicists.

For one to suggest that an advanced civilization could (or would) disturb the planets and other heavenly bodies seems to be stretching things a bit too far. No sailor would land on an island on which a volcano is erupting, nor would space travelers approach a planet that is behaving erratically, even if we consider the time element of the speed of planets and that of the space travelers. Let us not be carried away by wild imagination.

Sincerely,

David M. Rupley
Pikesville, Md.

Dear Editor:

My interest in the UFO mystery goes back twenty years when I read Major Keyhoe's "Flying Saucers Are Real" in the paperback form. Since then I have found it interesting to note the changes that have taken place in my own attitude toward the UFO problem. For instance, I find that I have become far more critical of what UFO reports to accept as genuine. Night-time observations of bright lights, balls of fire, glowing objects with no specific shape, etc., I place at the very bottom of the list. These types of reports are open to the most serious challenge. While some of these Nocturnal Light reports are probably genuine UFOs, their value is limited. On the other hand, the reports that argue most strongly for UFO reality are those in which a clearly described craft-like object has been seen. Occupant reports made by apparently reliable witnesses are even more crucial to the question of UFO reality, and indeed the occupant reports lie at dead center of the UFO enigma, with the craft-like object reports (no occupants reported or seen) forming the next layer of importance. I personally am of the opinion that NICAP should concentrate the bulk of its investigations around these two particular types of reports.

Sincerely,

Herbert S. Taylor
Oceanside, N.Y.

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