

UFO INVESTIGATOR



NICAP, 5012 Del Ray Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20014, (301) 654-8091

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UFOS, CIA AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

With this issue we begin a four part series on a subject that has been a matter of suspicion, accusation and controversy for the past 25 years: What does CIA know about UFOs? What do they tell us and what are they hiding? This series is based on the work of a NICAP Investigator who has read the entire CIA file on UFOs. We publish it in order to give an authoritative report on what it is that CIA does know and what it does not know about UFOs. We believe this report will be of interest to everyone who may have suspicions that CIA is still holding back information that would make it easier to fit the UFO puzzle together.

To sum it up in one paragraph, a close reading of CIA files shows that the Agency never has engaged in secret operations to collect information on UFOs or to influence peoples' thinking about UFOs. The suspicion that CIA covered up some spooky activities about UFOs comes from three things: the way the world was and the scary way Americans felt in 1952; some well intentioned but bureaucratic mistakes, mostly on the part of CIA; and a very human failure, the inability of people to talk intelligibly with one another. The proper description for all of this is garble. There is nothing sinister about it.

WHAT IS THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT?

It is the law of the United States. It was made a law by the elected representatives of the people of the United States. Basically the law says that the U.S. Government will not keep any secrets from the American people. Or, for that matter, from the people of foreign countries or from foreign governments. The Act does say that there are some areas of national security information that may not be disclosed. These areas are clearly stated in the Act.

CIA cannot decide for itself what is secret and what is not. The law states this explicitly. Many people do not know this, but smart civil rights lawyers do. All files must be made public. If CIA feels that some information should not be released, it does not have the authority to make that decision. It must go before a Federal Court and persuade, on a document by document basis, why the release of such information would, under the terms of the Act, be a threat to national security.

And in the end it is the judge, not CIA, who makes that decision.

As a result of this CIA is allowed no discretion about what information would or would not be of interest to people who write in. When a request for information comes in all of it must be released, the trivial with the substantive. This has an important bearing on the state of CIA files on UFOs: they are big, bulky and full of typewritten garbage.

Another provision of the Act leads to complications that may cause doubt about the Agency's good faith. The Act states that a request for information must be answered within ten working days or else the Agency stands in violation of the law. But in most cases it is physically impossible to search all the files and Xerox all the documents within ten working days. When these things happen, the Agency is charged in sensational news stories with foot dragging and cover up. In every government agency, requests for information are handled on a first come, first served basis. And so, there are always backlogs in processing the requests.

DENIAL OF INFORMATION?

For a number of years, well before the passage of the Freedom of Information Act, there have been allegations that high government officials who are interested in UFOs have been denied access to important evidence about them. The stories vary in time, place and detail, but they sort out into two main groups.

One group of stories has it that the Air Force has hidden away in a secret underground place at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base parts of 12, 15, 17, or 22 Unidentified Flying Objects.

The second group of stories tells that the Air Force has under refrigeration the bodies of a number of UFO crew members at a secret location on Langley Air Force Base near Norfolk, Virginia.

It is not unusual in these stories to hear that Sen. Barry Goldwater has requested permission to visit these two areas, but that the permission has been denied. Stories like this come from places that are far away (from Washington, and understandably so, because they show a habit of mind that simply does not know how Washington works.

Sen. Goldwater is, among other things, a senior U.S. senator. He is highly respected for his many activities in public service. He has held and holds many positions of respect in the U.S. Government. He has won his party's nomination to be candidate for president. He is a Major General in the Air Force Reserve.

Anyone who would suggest that a man of such power, such prestige and such influence could be denied access to information about subjects in which he is interested, simply does not know how the world works.

THE CIA "FILES" ON UFOS

They are a mess. First, consider them physically. They consist of a stack of Xerox paper 8 1/2 by 14 inches standing about 8 inches high. The stack weighs about 12 pounds. There are 879 sheets of paper in the stack. You can buy the whole stack for \$89.00 and many American organizations as well as foreign governments have. But there are probably not 40 sheets in the stack that are worth reading twice. And in those 40 sheets there is only one document of 2 pages that has any lasting historical interest.

This stack of paper does not in any way constitute a file in the sense that term would be understood in a well run business. The order of the documents is sometimes chronological and sometimes not. There is no index, no table of contents, no reference tabs on the margins. Sometimes the pages are not even in numbered sequence.

A SIGHTING FROM ITALY

A member of NICAP, who is a citizen of Switzerland, sends this report of a sighting which took place in northern Italy. He photographed the object and sent us the original 35mm slide for evaluation. He was vacationing in northern Italy, 20 miles west of Venice, in a town named Montegrotto. It was late afternoon, mid-September 1979. The sky was clear blue with full sunlight. He observed the object for a period of over one hour and so did dozens of people who were in the garden in front of the hotel where he was staying.

He describes: "I looked through my camera, which had a 200mm telephoto lens. I could see a white object with five yellow stripes at one end. Could this have been an observation balloon? I first saw the object at 6:30 p.m. but as I was looking at it at 7:40 p.m. it disappeared from view. Meanwhile I had photographed it and I send you the best of the pictures that I have taken."

"During the time I was observing it, two jet airplanes came into sight, climbed steeply and looked as if they were trying to pursue the object. But they did not reach it. As I saw it, the object was very shiny. It looked like a small moon. Sometimes it looked round, sometimes it looked oblong and once it looked rectangular."

We have sent this report and the slide to a technical expert who has made the following report:

It is difficult so long after the event to make a proper evaluation. Perhaps what we see is a balloon illuminated at sunset. The size of the image suggests something that would be about 250 feet in diameter at 100,000 feet (19 miles). This would be large for a balloon but not impossibly large.

A problem lies in the fact that there are no reference points for the picture. There is no way to get a distance scale from the photograph. The object looks reddish white. There is some brightness structure. As for the disappearance, in a clear sky, this could have occurred in one of two ways. One is that the fragile membranes of the gas bag could have exploded as it reached high altitude and maximum expansion. Another is simply that the sun went down and there was no longer enough light to see the object. Our specialist's final analysis is that this is probably an Identifiable Flying Object. More than 90 percent of them are, but we continue to welcome sighting reports. There are still the ten percent that keep us being believers.

MEMBERSHIP-RENEWAL APPLICATION

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Please enter my name () or renew my standing () as a member of NICAP. I understand that I will receive the monthly newsletter, have access to the NICAP files, receive information on sightings, and other benefits.

Dues Payment Enclosed

Name _____	Annual Dues
Street _____	Effective 1 September 1979
City & State _____ Zip _____	U.S. \$15.00
	Foreign \$20.00
	Foreign Air Mail \$27.50

WORLD UFO DIRECTORY

The UFO Network, in London, has published a worldwide directory of UFO organizations, societies, groups and the various publications of these organizations. The cost is \$3.00 which includes postage. Members interested in getting this directory should write to: UFO Network, 2 St. Ivian Court, Colneyhatch Lane, London N-10, England.

RENEWALS

No formal application blank is necessary to become a new member or to renew subscriptions. If you do not want to cut up your newsletter, don't. What will be helpful is to state your mailing address. In the case of old members renewing, it is very helpful to peel off (or copy) the mailing label showing the correct mailing address and your NICAP number, which is how we enter things in the computer. For new members, just enter the words "new member" on the check and we can handle accordingly.

FOREIGN AIR MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS

We have made a special effort in the past two months to see that the computer prints out the word AIR on the address labels. As some of you will see, we have added AIR by hand to the labels. If this is not working out satisfactorily, please drop us a note directly and we will do two things: First, air mail you to your address the missing issues. Second, double check to see that the computer gets it right.

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