MEMORANDUM TO: Director, Psychological Strategy Board

SUBJECT: Flying Saucers

1. I am today transmitting to the National Security Council a proposal (CAS 4) in which it is concluded that the problems connected with unidentified flying objects appear to have implications for psychological warfare as well as for intelligence and operations.

2. The background for this view is presented in some detail in CAS 3.

3. I suggest that we discuss at an early board meeting the possible offensive or defensive utilisation of these phenomena for psychological warfare purposes.

Walter B. Smith
Director

Enclosure
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It is the purpose of this study to determine what concern to the public, if any, is present in the problem of "unidentified flying objects," and to recommend, if such interest is found, steps that should be taken to improve U.S. intelligence positions and reports relating to national security.
FACTS BEHIND THE MYSTERY:

1. Since 1947, there have been about 1500 official reports of sightings plus an enormous volume of letters, phone calls and press reports. During this July alone, official reports totaled 250. Of the 1500, Air Force carries 20% as unexplained and of those received since the first of this year, 20% unexplained.

2. The administrative unit now handling the Air Force inquiry on these phenomena is a small section headed by an Air Force Reserve Captain, E. J. Ruppelt, assisted by two lieutenants and two secretaries at Air Technical Intelligence Center, Wright Field. It is from this small group that the controlling collection directive to the entire Air Force originated and it is this small group that the flood of reports on flying saucers comes for collation and analysis.

Research and analysis at this time is limited almost exclusively to the
The three man OZI team entered into its inquiry fully aware that it was
coming into a field already charged with partisanship, one in which objectivity
had been overridden by numerous sensational writers, and one in which there are
pressures for extravagant explanations as well as for oversimplification. They
consulted with a representative of Air Force Special Intelligence groups discussed the
problem with those in charge of the Air Force Project at Wright Field; reviewed
a considerable volume of intelligence reports; checked the Soviet press and
broadcast indices; and conferred with three of our consultants at OZI, all leaders
in their scientific fields.

The present small scale inquiry at OZI, which thus far has been able only
to use the case history approach, examining each incident carefully to determine
whether it can be explained or whether it must be put into the "unexplained"

was considered a perfectly valid procedure but one that offered but

was in opening up explanations regarding the nature of these phenomena,

At all told us, it would probably be found on the margin or just

state of our present knowledge in the fields of atmospherics,

of so-called phenomena, taking into account the possibility

be a factor to consider. A systematic

of simplest sorts would encompass a generally coordinated

a number of fronts and involving a variety of
The problem of "flying objects" is a national security problem of concern to operations as well as to intelligence.

2. Operational problems are of primary importance and should be attacked at once. They include:

a. Taking immediate steps to improve identification of "phantoms" so that in the event of an attack, instant and positive identification of enemy rockets or planes could be made.

b. Determination of what if any utilization should be made of these phenomena by US psychological warfare planners and what, if any, defenses should be planned in anticipation of Soviet attempts to utilize them.

3. Intelligence problems include:

a. Knowledge of the exact nature of these phenomena especially as regards:

(1) Whether any are susceptible to control, and can be thus utilized for either military or psychological offense or defense.

(2) Whether any are predictable and can thus be taken advantage of in military and psychological operations.

b. The present level of Russian knowledge regarding these phenomena.

c. Possible Soviet intentions and capabilities to utilize these phenomena to the detriment of US security interests.

d. The reasons for silence in the Soviet press regarding "flying saucers".

e. Intelligence responsibilities in this field as regards both collection and analysis can be discharged with maximum effectiveness only after much more
The problem transcends the individual departmental responsibilities, and is of such importance as to merit cognizance and action by the National Security Council.

6. Additional work, differing in character and emphasis from that presently under way will be required to meet the specific needs in this field of both operations and intelligence.

PROPOSAL

Fourth

One of the two feasible courses of action set forth below is proposed; one requires ESC action, and the other requires action by Secretary of Defense:

1. ESC action: under this course, it is recommended:

a. That the ESC present to the ESC a draft ESC directive (213 A) which prescribes that a centrally administered research program under ESC be established, in accordance with Sec. 214 (a), National Security Act of 1947, this program having for its research objectives requirements to be specified by the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, and Director Psychological Strategy Board.

That upon issuance of this ESC directive, CIA exercise its functions by providing coordinated intelligence requirements and intelligence support to ESC.

2. Secretary of Defense action: under this course, it is recommended:

That the ESC subject to Secretary of Defense along lines of the that coordinated research program would be available to CIA, and a study in intelligence by Defense, that coordinated intelligence requirements be provided by CIA before the study is started.
SUBJECT: Unidentified flying objects.

1. The National Security Council has recognized as a national security problem our present limited capabilities in making prompt positive visual or mechanical identification of flying objects. The problem is recognized also as one which bears directly upon both offensive and defensive capabilities of the armed forces; as one of concern to operations as well as to intelligence; and as one having possible implications for psychological warfare.

2. As the nature of the problem is such that a centrally administered inquiry rather than a divided effort offers the best promise of progress, the Director, Research and Development Board is charged with the responsibility of administering in this field a program of research which meets the specifications of Secretary of Defense and as regards operational requirements; of the Director of Central Intelligence, as regards the intelligence requirements and of Director, Psychological Strategy Board, as regards psychological warfare implications.
TO: Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Intelligence interest in a study of unidentified flying objects.

1. Recently CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence made an inquiry into
the possible intelligence implications of this subject. It concluded that while
the operational problem of improvement in identification of "phantoms" was of
first priority because of the need to make instant and positive identification of
enemy rockets or planes, the solution of intelligence problems are of sufficient
importance to justify vigorous support by this Agency of an organized attack on
the problem.

2. In our inquiry three of our men consulted with a representa-Ioo of Air
Force Special Projects groups discussed the problem with those in charge of the
Air Force Project at Wright Field; reviewed a considerable volume of intelligence
reports; checked the Soviet press and broadcast indices; and conferred with three
of our consultants at MIT, all leaders in their scientific fields.

3. The present small scale inquiry at AFIC, which thus far has been able

... - history approach, examining each incident carefully to

... - to be explained or whether it must be put into the

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... - beyond the frontiers of our present knowledge in the fields
the possibility that nuclear waste products might also be a factor to consider.

A systematic attack on the as-yet unexplained cases would contemplate a centrally coordinator program involving projects on a number of fronts and involving a variety of techniques not now used.

4. As the strictly US military operations problem of improved identification at home and abroad is closely tied to a number of intelligence questions, it would be advantageous to CIA, as well as to the interests of the intelligence components of Department of Defense, if intelligence research requirements could be included in any organized inquiry into the subject.

5. At this time we know so little of the exact nature of these phenomena that additional research would be necessary before it could be said whether anyone susceptible to control and can thus be utilized for either military or psychological offense or defense, or whether any are predictable, and can thus be taken advantage of in military or psychological operations.

6. It may be found that an appropriate center for such research would be in a group such as Project Lmocin which is now working for Department of Defense on problems of air defense.

7. At this time we are unable to find any basis in our information for any Soviet intentions or capabilities to utilize these phenomena to our detriment. The Soviet Press has been silent on the subject — which is itself provocative — and we are not yet able to appraise the present level of knowledge of Soviet scientists regarding these phenomena.

8. It would be appreciated if this agency could participate in any plans for further inquiry into this subject.
Mr. Strong has discussed with you some of the general features of this problem, and now I should like to describe briefly how the Air Force has organized its study of reports on unidentified flying objects and outline its methods.

The administrative unit now handling the Air Force inquiry on these phenomena is the unidentified flying objects section of the Aircraft Propulsion Branch of the Technical Analysis Division of Air Technical Intelligence Center, Wright Field.

This small section is headed by an Air Force Reserve Captain, S. J. Ruppelt, assisted by two lieutenants and two secretaries. It is from this small group that the controlling collection directive to the entire Air Force originated and it is to this small group that the flood of reports on unidentified-flying objects comes for collation and analysis.

The strength and position of this central administrative group clearly indicates a low level of support, and, presumably, serious reservations in the Air Force regarding the value of extensive inquiry into the subject. Paradoxically
this central effort at AIC is maintained on a minimal basis while there is concurrently ordered a world-wide reporting system and an interception program which may expend hundreds of man hours and thousands of dollars.

The methods used by Air Force are now in the process of change but the conclusions and explanations given to the public are based on the process I am going to describe.

Research and analysis at this time is limited almost exclusively to the case history method. Reports, which are limited in their coverage to ten broad elements of information, are received from the field, mainly through the Air-intelligence reporting system, though also to a limited extent from the other services and from the Department of State.

These reports come to the Unidentified Objects Section where each one is examined separately to determine whether it is explainable as "misinterpretations of a known object," or whether it must be classed as "unexplained" and subject to further investigation.

In this sorting process, the reports are first examined in the light of established and readily available facts, such as known balloon tracks or aircraft flights. The report may then be referred to an Air Force Base or to the Office.
of Special Investigation for direct interrogation of the reporter. Also, in
some cases, the reports are referred to technical or scientific specialists
for interpretation. It should be born in mind that this is all on an
individual case basis.

There has been no systematic or extensive use of other standard methods of
processing data. It is true that there have been a few attempts to examine
some of the broader questions that have been raised by those reports. AIS has,
for example, laboriously gone through the accumulation of "unexplained" US repor-
t one by one, to plot them on a map. These plots show a high incidence of
reported cases near atomic installations and Strategic Air Command bases but
this might be expected because of the greater number of alert observers in such
places. Actually, a number of accepted research techniques that should be used
in any effort to gain a sound understanding of these phenomena, have not been
employed.

There is, of course, some doubt regarding the extent and kind of effort
required for the future. The Air Force has not yet found any great cause for
concern. Captain Ruppert reminded that, as the problem seems to be of more
concern to operations than to intelligence, it might appropriately be moved out
of intelligence to some operational command. Within the last two weeks, he
[has tried, unsuccessfully, to lead the boy to Air Defense Command.

There are a number of steps in the

formulation of the essential premises that might be used if Air Force considered

the inquiry worth a full scale effort. One could list the following:

- Research objectives should be defined in detail in relation to the
  questions asked in the present collection directive are
  admitted to be inadequate even for the limited case-history approach. Further,
  the answers are not processed in such a way as to easily permit the
  determination of the lines of research and analysis that should be followed.

As there has been no preliminary determination of areas of most profitable
research, there is no way at this time by which to isolate the important

elements in each of the problem areas. No studies have been made, for example,
to establish categories of the objects reported by shape, size, color, etc., or
to show such things as shortest, longest, and average duration of sightings of
objects of various kinds.

Instead, one would be to set out for the

[These deficiencies have pointed against making cross-comparisons. There
many current cases could be

have been no studies, for example, that would compare certain weather conditions

with the appearance of certain colors of lights.]

There are a number of standard analytical processes that might be used if this problem should be considered worthy of a full blown effort. It might define in detail the research objectives to be used in relation to the questionnaire.

After the areas of most profitable research had been determined, a logical next step would be to isolate the important elements in each problem area.

A third step would be to set up means by which to make many useful cross-comparisons. Fourth, trend studies as well as area studies could be made.

Finally, there might be an objective study on the attributes of available data.

In summary, the limited central administrative support given to the project by Air Force, coupled with the extremely limited scope of the analytical work done thus far, has placed a strict ceiling on the kind of interpretations that can be made from material now available.
Further studies as well as rea studies could be made. There is now no
picture of how the various phonema may have formed patterns, either as
regards aggregation or dispersal over specific periods of time.

Finally, there might be an objective study on the attributes of available
data. Thus far, reports themselves (not factors present within those reports)
are only classed "explainable" or "not explainable". It is not known to what
extent, or where, elements of consistency may extend through both the
collection of "explainable" and "not explainable" reports.

Also, there is no means by which to sort out valid elements from otherwise
"unexplainable" reports, nor is there a means by which to sort out invalid elements
from otherwise accurate reports. In illustration of a consequence of this
limitation would be the probable unhappy fate of a valid report on what was
actually extripated cloud, then observed on a well established balloon track.

It would, in all probability be classed "explainable" as a balloon. The
relatation of this report to the "explained" category would take any valid
elements present in the report out of the reach of later analysis.

In summary, the limited central administrative support given to the project
by Air Force, coupled with the extremely limited scope of the analytical work
done, thus far, leads us to believe that any broad conclusions presently drawn can be accepted only with caution.

As to the future, a limited amount of improvement may be accomplished.

A revised questionnaire, now being designed by Air Force and Rotelle experts, will give more detail to each case-history. We have heard informally, though, that many objects are not reported in Korea because of the burden of required paperwork. A longer questionnaire would make pilots even more reluctant to report their sightings. Also, many cross comparisons will be possible if present plans to use punch cards are carried out. In addition, improvements may be expected if Air Force follows through on its present plan to establish an advisory board of top level scientists. Further, the current plan to place emphasis on using instrumentation such as refraction grid cameras and new type Schmidt telescopes, will yield more usable facts. The absence thus far, however, of a well planned and properly guided research program makes it appear that it may be some time in the future before we can expect complete explanations of many of these phenomena.

For the next part of our presentation, Dr. Durand will discuss some of the factors that have been found, or may be involved, in these reports.
Part I - Weather Balloons

1. In the analysis of flybys prior to 1 Jul 52 approximately 15% were classified as "possibly" or "probably" balloon. The basis for the decision was generally little more than a form of guesswork; if the flyby did not do anything and such locawas allowed for observer's individuality, that a balloon could not do the same, speed, etc., and if the description corresponded even roughly to that of a balloon, it was so classified. If there was no particular reason to believe a balloon was in the area, the report became a "possible". If the sighting occurred near a balloon launching site or on or about the launch time, it became a "probable". It was obvious that an effort to obtain factual data to support such conclusions was in order.

2. AT84-5 approached the problem of weather balloons first. Weather balloons are of the following types:

   a. Radiosonde - Rubberized tan latex, 6" in diameter at launch, up to 200' ab altitude. Carries a transmitter and telemetering device for temperature pressure, dewpoint sequences, which transmitter under certain conditions would give radar returns. Also carries a white running light during night launches battery operated, which should last for duration of flight. Normal ascent is to 70,000' = 100,000', at 1,000 ft/min, at which altitude the balloon bursts and equipment recovery is affected by a red parachute.

   b. Evin - Same balloon as above, but it carries only a radar "triangle", and is a winds aloft observation.

   c. Radiosonde - Sane, a combination of evin and radiosonde.

   d. Fetal - Same type of balloon, tracked by theodolite for winds aloft observation.

   e. Fetal - A rubberized tan latex balloon, 30" in diameter at release and 2 or 5' at altitude. Burst and climb comparable to radiosonde. A winds aloft observation, tracked by theodolite. Carries running light for night launches.

All types of balloons are launched at 0300Z, 0600Z, 1500Z and 2100Z daily. However, some stations launch one, two, three, or four times daily; others launch irregularly, some launch only one type, and others several or all. In addition, time of launch may vary approximately thirty minutes from the scheduled time, either way. All agencies which launch balloons are quick to admit that balloons can malfunction and that rays are lost. In addition, wind currents at altitude can cause the balloons to assume odd shapes and strange maneuvers. The balloons under certain atmospheric conditions can appear to us almost any color, and may be visible even at extreme altitudes, particularly at sunrise and sunset, to an observer on the ground.
3. ATMA-J faced with this situation, compiled in July a file of balloon launch data from Air Weather Service, Naval Air Weather Service, and Southern Bureau launch stations. In addition, this information is plotted graphically on the weather balloon launch location chart. Combining this information with the winds aloft data which ATMA receives from the weather balloon launch location chart, six winds aloft charts have often provided a solution to meteorology. The percentage of reports analyzed as "unknown" has decreased proportionately. This gain is a real one, and results from the accumulation of the background data and the elimination of guesswork.

4. The actual radiosonde meteorological information is extracted by all agencies involved in balloon work and filed in the National Weather Records Center, Office of Records and Distributions, Asheville, North Carolina. ATMA-J has requested the NCAR, which maintains a detachment at Asheville, to permit "Blue Book" to deal directly with Asheville. The intention is to request photocopy of the sounding (U.06, U.07, and U.08) and the balloon track (U.06, U.07, and U.08) at certain specific sites and places. If this is approved, ATMA-J will be in a position to obtain these records for every balloon flight launched in the U.S., from overseas, ocean stations, and from all the U.S. ships and weather stations abroad. In addition, ATMS-J will sometimes use the balloon launch information available in this office and will from time to time review various launch sites for specific information. These methods of approach will solve the problem of weather balloons.

Part II - Upper Air Research Balloons

1. Specialized types of balloons are used by the U.S. Navy in cooperation with various contractors to obtain upper air data for scientific purposes. There is no doubt that these balloons cause meteorologists trouble in identifying cases; positive identification is more accurate. The U.S. Navy, through its field representative of CER at the University of Minnesota, deals with three contractors. The balloons are large white polyethylene types capable of expanding to 1000 square feet and carrying up to 300 pounds of scientific equipment. The expansion and inflation arrangements control floating altitudes. Naturally, they are visible even at extreme altitudes under many conditions and are capable of assuming almost any shape. The contractors often release from time to time free or attached clusters of the KA and J type nuclearized balloons, as well.

2. These flights are often of long duration; one Minnesota released balloon was tracked to Cape Gas and lost, but it was recovered in Bordeaux, France. They are tracked by ten RDF stations throughout the United States.

3. ATMA-J has taken steps to set up a reporting system for balloon flights of the Navy contractors. This procedure will be implemented 15 October and will permanently solve the problem of U.S. Navy upper air research balloons.
A. The USAF operates two projects, "Gopher" and "Davy Dick", which involve the release of large polyethylene type balloons. In all particulars, flight directions, tracking methods, etc., these flights are comparable to the U.S. Navy project. As present, AFFA-5 has no communication or liaison with those projects, but AFFA-5 intends to use the same approach and reporting systems with the USAF projects as with the Naval contractors.

Conclusions

By 1 Oct 52 AFFA-5 should be receiving complete data on all weather, Navy upper air, and USAF upper air balloon releases.

Note:

This paper is a short introduction to the "balloon phase" of Project Blue Book. For anyone desiring the complete information, such as agencies and personalities involved, channels and methods of communication, etc., it will be necessary to read the following supporting papers which are on file in AFFA-5.

a. Balloon Data Folder

b. Miscellaneous Correspondence File - Letter 5 Sep 52, to


d. U.S. Navy Correspondence File - Letter 9 Sep 52, to Air Branch, OIR, subj: OIR Upper Air balloon Projects, and OIR answers thereto.

e. Travel Report - Lt A. A. Fless, 15 Aug 52 to Washington, D.C.

f. Travel Report - Lt A. A. Fless, 15 Sep 52, to Asheville, N.C.

g. Travel Report - Lt A. A. Fless, 30 Sep 52, to Minneapolis, Minnesota.