

MEMORANDUM FOR EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND 863511

By WGLewis NARA, Date 8/13/86

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

18 December 1947

PROBLEM:

1. To prepare for signature of the Director of Intelligence an R&R for the Director of Research and Development outlining available information and recommendations concerning problems proposed by "flying discs."

FACTS AND DISCUSSION:

2. At the request of the Chief, Air Intelligence Division, an earlier memorandum dated 6 October 1947, Subject: "Recommendations Relative to Unidentified Flying Objects," was reanalyzed and rewritten as a memorandum.

3. This memorandum together with a letter from Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, Subject: "AMC Opinion Concerning 'Flying Discs'," dated 23 September 1947, were attached to an R&R addressed to the Director of Research and Development. Note was made in this R&R that the Director of Intelligence concurred with the recommendations of AMC concerning a specific project to study the "flying disc" situation.

ACTION:

4. R&R forwarded for signature of Major General MacDonald.

COORDINATION:

Colonel J. F. Olive, Chief, Air Intelligence Division - Ext. 2542
Lt. Colonel J. E. Thomas, Offensive Air Branch - Ext. 6625



By G. Lewis NARA, Date 3/13/86 . 17

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Written: 18 Dec. 1947

"Analysis of 'Flying Disc' Reports"

Director of Research and Development

Director of Intelligence

22 DEC 1947

Lt. Col. Thomas/mss/6625.

1. Attached are two papers, one prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence, USAF, Subject: "Analysis of 'Flying Disc' Reports," and one prepared by the Air Materiel Command, Subject: "AMC Opinion Concerning 'Flying Discs'."

2. The Directorate of Intelligence paper summarizes present information and observations concerning 'flying discs' and indicates the lines of investigation which have been pursued since the first sightings were reported.

3. As part of these investigations the AMC was requested to make an independent study, and the attached reply indicates that "it is possible within the present U. S. knowledge—provided extensive detailed development is undertaken—to construct a piloted aircraft which has the general description ... (of the flying disc) ... which would be capable of an approximate range of 7,000 miles at subsonic speeds."

4. The AMC report recommends the issuance of "a directive assigning a priority, security classification and code name for a detailed study of this matter to include the preparation of complete sets of all available and pertinent data" which would be made available to all interested agencies.

5. In view of the conclusions reached as a result of the study of the problem made in this office, the Director of Intelligence concurs in the AMC recommendation and forwards it for your consideration and reply to the CG, AMC. Request reply be coordinated with this Directorate.

2 Incls.

- 1. Subj: "Analysis of 'Flying Disc' Reports."
- 2. Subj: "AMC Opinion Concerning 'Flying Discs'," dtd Sep. 23 1947.

GEORGE C. McDONALD
Major General, USAF
Director of Intelligence

600-9
Flying Discs
FILE COPY - DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

ACT.
FFO

By W. Lewis NARA, Date 8/13/86~~SECRET~~"ANALYSIS OF 'FLYING DISC' REPORTS"1. Summary of Information

a. During the past six months reports from several areas of the world have indicated that unidentified flying objects, variously identified in flying discs, lights, smoke trails, etc., have been observed by separate and unrelated sources.

b. Sightings of "flying discs" in the United States occurred principally in the far west. Observers have been indicated to be reliable and in some instances several observers have corroborated separate observations of the same phenomenon at the same time.

c. Outside the continental United States, an object and its trail were seen over Newfoundland; a light which had the appearance of a twin-jet was observed near Necker Island from an aircraft en route between Midway and Honolulu; a flying disc reputedly larger than a DC-3 was sighted near Bethel, Alaska.

d. In the Far East, three radar intercepts of rapidly moving, unidentified objects were made by United States radars operating in Japan.

e. No connection has been indicated between the "ghost rocket" sightings in Sweden, some of which conceivably might have been the result of guided missile operations, and the unidentified flying objects sighted in the United States and Pacific areas.

2. Discussion of Reports

a. Study of the various reports describing unidentified flying objects, lights, and smoke trails discloses that certain features are common to many of the observations as follows:

(1) In shape the objects are a thin disc, rounded on top and flat on the bottom, perhaps approximating a C-54 in size. The front half of the disc is often circular, sweeping back to a square tail across the full width.

(2) The surface is described as metallic or light reflecting.

(3) Extreme maneuverability, coupled with high lateral stability, is noted. Speed is high, with a banking motion or a lateral oscillation. A few reports indicate an ability to hover; to appear suddenly as if from a dive; to disintegrate or to disappear, perhaps by

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increasing speed; to group quickly in a tight formation, and to take evasive action. Good control of flight is indicated.

(4) Trail is absent, except in a few instances when the object apparently is operating under high performance conditions. The trail, when seen, seems to be very hot, as indicated by night observations of a glowing trail, and a daytime observation of a trail that cut a wide, clean swath in a cloud.

(5) Sound is normally not associated with the sightings, although a hum or rumbling roar was heard in two or three instances. No connection between sound and trail is indicated.

(6) Estimated level speed is normally greater than 300 knots.

(7) Formation flights of three to nine objects are reported by several observers.

(8) During one night observation, a change in glow from blue-white when approaching to a reddish glow when withdrawing was observed. This could indicate ram-jets.

b. The following are typical reports of observations of discs, and indicate the type and variety of the sources of information:

✓ (1) On 7 July, 1947, five Portland, Oregon, police officers saw varying numbers of discs flying over different parts of Portland. All observations were made within a minute or two of 1305 hours.

✓ (2) On 7 July, 1947, William Kneads of Phoenix, Ariz., saw a disc in the glow of sunset and took two photographs. The resultant picture showed a round front and square tail in plan form.

✓ (3) On 10 July, 1947, a Mr. Woodruff, FAA mechanic, observed a circular object flying at high velocity and leaving a trail. The sighting occurred near Harmon Field, Newfoundland. Two other persons also saw the trail.

(4) On 11 July, 1947, three persons at Codroy, Newfoundland, saw a disc flying at high velocity and leaving a smoke trail.

(5) On 29 July, 1947, Kenneth Arnold, while flying near Tacoma, Washington, saw a formation of flying objects. His sketch of their shape corresponds closely to that shown in the photographs made by Mr. Kneads. On the same day, two United States Air Force pilots at Hamilton Field, Calif., saw two flying discs trailing a P-50, following it toward Oakland, Calif.

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(6) On 4 August, 1947, the pilot and co-pilot of a DC-3, flying for Al Jones, were near Bethel, Alaska, when they saw a flying disc larger than their DC-3. Their airplane was flying 170 mph, but the disc flew out of sight in four minutes.

(7) On 12 November, 1947, two flying discs trailing jet-like streams of fire were sighted from the bridge of the tanker Ticonderoga, according to Second Officer Claude Lee Williamson. The Ticonderoga was 20 miles off the Oregon shore. Williamson said the two discs were in sight 45 seconds, moving at a speed estimated at 700-900 mph out of the north horizon and curving westerly in a long, low arc.

c. Typical of the observations made of lights and trails rather than discs or objects, are these three:

(1) On 28 June, 1947, four USAF officers observed a light from some object which did not fly like a conventional aircraft. The light was sighted over Maxwell Field, Alabama.

(2) On 6 July, 1947, several persons, including a USAF sergeant, saw a strangely moving light over Birmingham, Alabama. A photograph was taken.

(3) On 12 September, 1947, the pilot and co-pilot of a Pan American aircraft, passing Becker Island at 0518 OCT, en route from Midway to Honolulu, saw a blue-white light approaching, changing to a reddish glow upon withdrawal. The pilot estimated speed of the light at about 1,000 knots.

d. The three United States radar intercepts of unidentified radar targets flying near or over Japan are as follows:

(1) On 1 July, 1947, a GCA radar at Chitose AAB, Hokkaido, Japan picked up a target at 16 miles, speed in excess of 900 mph. This target split up into two targets, each larger than a P-51.

(2) On 28 August, 1947, a MEW radar at Fukuoka, Japan picked up a target at 26 miles in instrument weather. Target withdrew in a climb to 34 miles before it faded.

(3) On 16 September, 1947, the same MEW radar at Fukuoka, Japan picked up a target at 89 miles and tracked it in to 19 miles, where it faded. Speed was 240 to 900 miles per hour. This observation indicates use of a homing receiver; fading at short range further indicates the possibility of good radar evasion techniques. The speed measurement is believed accurate, since it was made by a good crew, through a 70-mile long track.

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By J. Lewis NARA, Date 3/13/86~~SECRET~~3. Investigations made

a. In addition to analyzing the reports concerning flying discs and other phenomena observed both in the United States and elsewhere in the world, the Directorate of Intelligence, USAF, has taken the following actions:

(1) Requested the Air Materiel Command to conduct an independent investigation. The results of this study are contained in a Headquarters, AMC letter, Subject: "AMC Opinion Concerning 'Flying Discs'," dated 23 September 1947, which includes recommendations for further study of this problem.

(2) Sought information from appropriate agencies to determine whether the phenomena might be the result of highly classified project being conducted under United States auspices. Responses to date have not indicated existence of any American developmental work which might explain the reported observations.

(3) Submitted to a group of scientists the question whether the "flying saucer" observations might be the result of some natural phenomenon, such as falling meteors. While it was admitted there was a possibility some few of the incidents could have been caused by natural phenomena, the scientists concluded that such phenomena could not have been responsible for all of the observations.

(4) Requested the Federal Bureau of Investigation to check the possibility that the "flying saucer" episodes might be the result of a deliberately planned subversive effort to create mass hysteria, possibly Communist-inspired. Backgrounds of the first four persons who had reported sightings of flying disc were investigated by the FBI, with negative results in each case.

(5) Forwarded to the Air Weather Service a list of the first ten sightings reported by responsible persons for comparison with dates and locations of the release of meteorological balloons. The resultant check indicated there was no connection, or coincidence, between meteorological balloons aloft and the times, dates, and locations of the selected sightings.

(6) Investigated the possible existence of foreign aircraft projects which might be related to these observations. Of interest in this regard are two German designs that could be under current exploitation by the U.S.S.R.

(a) The Horten Brothers' "Parabola," a flying wing of low aspect ratio and a very low induced drag. The plan form of this design were crescent shaped.

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(b) The B7-130, a long range bomber, was a flying wing design that could satisfy the few indicated features of the "flying discs."

(7) Analyzed the possibility that the flying objects were operated or controlled by representatives of a foreign nation—perhaps for photo reconnaissance purposes, or to ferret out our defensive capabilities, or to test the American psychological reaction. Principal sightings were near the borders of the United States, which lends credence to a foreign source of origin. Sightings were not reported, however, at or near the principal strategic target areas of the United States. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive why any foreign nation, if it possessed such an unconventional aircraft or missile, would risk sending it near or over the United States for anything short of an attack. Even if the disc contained a self-destructing device, any crash landing would disclose a certain amount of information which the nation possessing such an aircraft or missile would desire to keep secret. This would be particularly true if the form of propulsion was one outside American knowledge. The final answer still has not been obtained from this line of inquiry.

4. Conclusions

a. Flying discs, as reported by widely scattered observers, probably represent something real and tangible, even though physical evidence, such as crash-recovered exhibits, is not available. While a portion of the observations may be the result of natural phenomena, such as meteors, or may have other conventional explanation, the likelihood that some observers actually saw disc-shaped objects sufficiently large to be compared in size with known aircraft cannot be dismissed.

b. Considering the described content of these disc-like objects when sighted, it must be considered a possibility that they may have been humanly controlled, either manually or remotely, or by pre-set automatic controls.

c. On the basis of presently available information, if these discs actually exist they are foreign in origin, so investigation of the possible country of development and the place of origin should continue.

d. The Directorate of Intelligence, USAF, will continue to collect and analyze all reports of sightings of flying objects, lights, trails, etc., in an effort to develop an answer to the puzzling problem which they present.