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STATUS OF PROJECT BLUE BOOK

I. OVERALL STATUS

A. Change of Project Nickname

The nickname of the project, which was formerly "Grudge", has been officially changed to "Blue Book".

B. Directive for Reporting Incidents

A proposed directive to replace the AFOIN-C/CC-2 directive dated 19 December 1951, subject, "Reporting of Information on Unconventional Aircraft", has been coordinated with ATIC and forwarded to D/I for approval.

This directive is similar to the directive of 19 December 1951 except it will require that all reports be made by wire to ATIC, ADG, and V/TC and that these wire reports be followed up by an Air Force Form 112 sent directly to ATIC and V/TC. Past experience has shown that in order to carry our investigations successfully ATIC must be informed of sightings immediately, by direct channels.

C. Holloman Report

Project Blue Book has recently received a copy of a report written by personnel of Holloman AFB, New Mexico. This report, dated 25 July 1951, compiles the results of an investigation of unidentified aerial phenomena carried out at Holloman AFB.

The project consisted of an organized watch for the objects, the watchers being equipped with cameras. Several photos were obtained with hand held cameras. The photos show only a round image with no details for identification. On two occasions objects were photographed with Askania theodolites, once on 27 April 1950 and again on 29 May 1950. The results were not satisfactory, however, and no data could be obtained because in the first instance only one station was tracking and in the second instance two stations tracked two different objects.

The report makes no conclusions as to the identity of the objects. However, it does establish the fact that some type of object did exist.

Action will be taken by Project Blue Book to establish liaison with Holloman AFB and determine if any additional results have been obtained.

D. Life Article on Unidentified Aerial Objects

Mr. Robert Ginna of the Life Magazine Staff visited ATIC on 3 March 1952 to obtain material for an article which will appear in Life on 4 April 1952. He was very familiar with this subject as he has spent a great deal of time in research. The article has been coordinated with Hq USAF.

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One interesting aspect of the visit by Mr. Ginna was the fact that Life has information on several sightings by highly qualified observers that were unknown to ATIC. These people, all civilians, had not reported their observations to any military sources, consequently, ATIC did not have the reports. With the exception of these and several more minor reports, ATIC did have information on all of the incidents that he inquired about.

It is believed that Mr. Ginna's contact with the Air Force established an excellent source of material in that Life has representatives all over the world and these people are sending reports to Life as a matter of routine. ATIC will have access to these reports.

E. Visit by Dr. Joseph Kaplan

On 7 March 1952, Dr. Joseph Kaplan, Professor of Physics at UCLA and a member of the AF Scientific Advisory Board visited ATIC to discuss methods of obtaining more factual information on the reported unidentified aerial objects than has been obtained in the past. His primary interest is the "Green Fireball" phenomena, but the methods he suggested can be applied to any object.

Dr. Kaplan's suggestion is to use spectrum analysis as an aid in identifying the objects. Any object that emits light will have a definite spectrum. The first step in Dr. Kaplan's suggested plan is to obtain the spectrum of the object. This spectrum is then matched with the spectrum of known objects such as meteors, stars, etc., to eliminate or establish the fact that they are known objects. If the objects are not astronomical bodies and spectrum will give some indication as to what they might be. For example, a spectrum of an exhaust trail would show the composition of the exhaust. These examples apply to night sightings in general; however, bright objects appearing in the daytime could be analyzed in a similar manner. If the object were reflecting light instead of emitting it, the spectrum would be the same as that of the sun. Then it would be a case of establishing whether or not there was an aircraft in the area.

The system will afford a means of determining whether or not reported objects are actually some new type of aircraft or merely misidentification of known objects. This suggested system would not completely fulfill the requirements of the project, however, it is a quick, economical means of obtaining more concrete information than now exists and is considered a first step in the investigation.

To obtain the spectrums of the objects, two methods have been suggested. One is the use of a comparatively large (8" x 8") diffraction grating. The observer upon seeing an object would hold up the grating and observe the object through the grating. A means would be provided for marking the observed spectrum on the grating. This would then be sent to some expert for analysis. The second method, and the one under consideration would be to construct an inexpensive hand held camera with a diffraction grating over the lens. With this method a permanent record of the observation would be obtained.

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The gratings or grating camera combinations would be inexpensive enough so that several hundred could be procured. Areas where observations have been concentrated would be stressed. Groups such as security patrols, control tower operators, and anyone who spends a great deal of time out-of-doors would be equipped with the instruments and be given a set of instructions as to how to use them.

Action has been taken to determine the feasibility of such a program.

F. Air Defense Command and Joint Air Defense Board Briefing

On 19 March 1952, General Chidlaw and his staff, of the Air Defense Command, and General Gardner and his staff, of the Joint Air Defense Board, were briefed by an ATIC briefing team. The groups were briefed on the history and operations of Project Blue Book and a member of the Aircraft Performance and Characteristics Branch of ATIC presented data on missiles and types of unconventional aircraft that are known to exist or have existed.

The purpose of the briefing was to present the problem to ADC and determine how they can help. It was found that ADC presently has about 30 radar sites equipped with scope cameras. These cameras are not operational on a 24-hour basis but this could be accomplished in a minimum time particularly in locations of special interest to Project Blue Book. Radar scope photographs would be of great value in interpreting some of the unusual radar returns that are reported.

Action has been taken to initiate a program with ADC to utilize their radar facilities.

G. Beacon Hill Group Briefing

The Beacon Hill Group, Air Force Technical Advisers, were briefed on 26 March 1952 in Boston. This group, consisting of AF consultants in the fields of electronics, optics, acoustics, data collation and other fields, was briefed so that they would have an understanding of the problems confronting Project Blue Book and could offer suggestions. After the briefing several hours were spent discussing the project. The main point of the discussion was to arrive at some means of establishing whether or not there is some unusual type of aircraft flying over the United States.

Several very excellent suggestions were offered. One was to employ sound detection apparatus in the locations where concentrations of sightings have been reported. This equipment, which is very sensitive to sound, can be left unattended eliminating the problem of personnel for a continual watch. Sounds from aircraft, wind, insects, etc., can be identified, consequently, if the apparatus were placed far enough from a populated area and highway to eliminate a large percentage of the sounds, any unknown sound would be of value in indicating the presence of an unidentified object. It is understood that this equipment is available.

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The problem of photographic equipment was discussed. It was found that almost any type of photographic surveillance equipment desired could be built, however, some of it would be expensive. The question of the ability of large astronomical observatories detecting any unusual objects with any of their telescopes or meteor cameras was brought up. It was agreed that their chances of observing an object at random was low, unless they knew of its presence and directed their equipment toward it. This was very interesting because some people have had the theory that no unusual objects could exist because they would have been detected by observatories. In the future, cameras, professionally termed "patrol cameras", will be developed that can detect such objects, but this development is not contemplated in the near future.

Another suggestion offered by the group was to go back through old newspaper files and other sources and try to determine whether or not this phenomena is new. This has been done by several authors but the sources of some of these reports are doubtful. The group believed that if such phenomena as disk-shaped objects, green fireballs, etc., did occur they would have been reported and would be recorded.

This group, all of whom were experts in their fields, were very much interested in the problems of trying to identify these objects and can be counted upon for aid as problems arise.

II. REPORTS OF SPECIFIC INCIDENTS

A. Inclosed Summary List of Incidents

The inclosed list of incidents is (1) a summary of all incidents reported during the period 1 March 1952 to 31 March 1952; and (2) those incidents reported in Status Report No. 4, dated 29 February 1952, which are still pending or have been closed during the month.

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