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A paper trail suggests Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was the anonymous party who bought the Chateau Louis XIV, a new Versailles, for over \$500 million in 2013. Amenities include a 57-acre park, a gold-leafed fountain and a luxurious pool.

One More Jewel for a Saudi Reformer

Pushing Austerity at Home, and Spending Millions Abroad

BY NICHOLAS KULISH
and MICHAEL FRANZTHE

LOVECECENNES, France — When the Chateau Louis XIV sold for over \$300 million two years ago, Fortune magazine called it "the world's most expensive home," and Town & Country swooned over its gold-leafed fountain, marble statues and helipad landing, set in a lush, landscaped park. But on a closer look, the fact that the identity of the buyer was missing.

Now, it turns out that the paper trail leads to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi throne's heir, driving force behind a series of policies that have transformed the kingdom into a modern Middle East.

The 2015 purchase appears to be one of several extravagant acquisitions — by a prince known as a "reformer" — that have helped Saudi Arabia and its kingdom to become a global power.

Continued on Page 11

Real U.F.O.s?

Pentagon Unit Tried to Know

This article is by Helene Cooper, Ralph Blumenthal and Leslie Kean. WASHINGTON — In the \$600 billion annual Defense Department budget, the \$22 million spent on the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program was almost impossible to find.

For years, the program investigated reports of unidentified flying objects, according to Pentagon officials. But the program was quietly canceled in 2012, but its legacy lives on in the Pentagon's C Ring, deep within the building's maze.

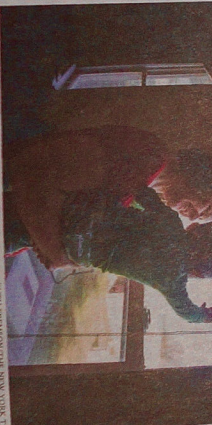
The Defense Department has never before acknowledged the existence of the program, which it says it shut down in 2012. But its legacy lives on in the Pentagon's C Ring, deep within the building's maze.

Continued on Page 37

Ravaged by Opioids, Tribe Fights Big Pharmacies

BY JAN HOFFMAN

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. — Cherokee leaders were disappearing. At weekly staff meetings, Todd Hemmire, the attorney general of the Cherokee Nation, kept hearing about babies in opiate withdrawal and youngsters with addicted parents, all being removed from their homes.



With permission of the New York Times, a Cherokee child is shown in a photo taken by Jan Hoffman.

Continued on Page 12

A Rallying Cry or a Racial Taunt?

Invoking the President: 'Trump!'

By DAN BARRY and JOHN ELGIN

The high school basketball team from Eagle Grove, Minn., had a rally cry to play the game. It was "Trump!"

Continued on Page 22

G.O.P. Pledge Of Simplicity Proves Elusive

New Bill Adds Layers Of Complexities to Code

BY JIM TINKERSTY

WASHINGTON — The Republican tax bill does not pass the House, it creates a new layer of complexity to the tax code.

Continued on Page 13

TAX BILL UPENDS LONGTIME PERKS OF OWNING HOME

DEDUCTIONS PAID BACK

By GORDON DOWD

For decades, the tax code has rewarded homeowners with a host of deductions and credits.

Continued on Page 14

Democrats Are With Her

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., is the only woman in the Senate who has been elected to four terms.

The Energy of Wyoming

PATCH, Wyo. — Wyoming is a state of contrasts, with vast open spaces and a rich history.

Behind Bars, a Beautiful Game

Once a year in Utah, a nonprofit organizes soccer matches inside prisons to foster better relationships between inmates and their children.

SUNDAY REVIEW

Amy Sullivan



...as a pearl there," he said. In response to questions from The Times, Pentagon officials this month acknowledged the existence of the program, which began as part of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Officials insisted that the effort had ended after five years, in 2012.

"It was determined that there were other, higher priority issues that merited funding, and it was in the best interest of the DoD to make a change," a Pentagon

cessor, whom he declined to name. U.F.O.s have been repeatedly investigated over the decades in the United States, including by the American military. In 1947, the Air Force began a series of studies that investigated more than 12,000 claimed U.F.O. sightings before it was officially ended in 1969. The project, which included a study code-named Project Blue Book, started in 1952, concluded that most sightings involved stars, clouds, conventional aircraft or

learned that they wanted to start a research program on U.F.O.s. Mr. Reid then summoned Mr. Stevens and Mr. Inouye to a secure room in the Capitol.

"I had talked to John Glenn a number of years before," Mr. Reid said, referring to the astronaut and former senator from Ohio, who died in 2016. Mr. Glenn, Mr. Reid said, had told him he thought that the federal government should be looking seriously into U.F.O.s, and should be talking to

said, Mr. Stevens recounted being tailed by a strange aircraft with no known origin, which he said had followed his plane for miles.

None of the three senators wanted a public debate on the Senate floor about the funding for the program, Mr. Reid said. "This was so-called black money," he said. "Stevens knows about it, Inouye knows about it. But that was it, and that's how we wanted it." Mr. Reid was referring to the Pentagon budget for classified pro-

people who said they had experienced physical effects from encounters with the objects and examined them for any physiological changes. In addition, researchers spoke to military service members who had reported sightings of strange aircraft.

"We're sort of in the position of what would happen if you gave Leonardo da Vinci a garage-door opener," said Harold E. Puthoff, an engineer who has conducted re-

not seem to originate from any country. "That fact is not something any government or institution should classify in order to keep secret from the people," he said.

For his part, Mr. Reid said he did not know where the objects had come from. "If anyone says they have the answers now, they're fooling themselves," he said. "We do not know."

But, he said, "we have to start someplace."

2 Airmen and an Object That 'Accelerated Like Nothing I've Ever Seen'

The following recounts an incident in 2004 that advocates of research into U.F.O.s have said is the kind of event worthy of more investigation, and that was studied by a Pentagon program that investigated U.F.O.s. Experts caution that earthly explanations often exist for such incidents, and that not knowing the explanation does not mean that the event has interstellar origins.

Cmdr. David Fravor and Lt. Cmdr. Jim Slight were on a routine training mission 100 miles out into the Pacific when the radio in each of their F/A-18F Super Hornets crackled: An operations officer aboard the U.S.S. Princeton, a Navy cruiser, wanted to know if they were carrying weapons.

"Two CATM-9s," Commander Fravor replied, referring to dummy missiles that could not be fired. He had not been expecting any hostile exchanges off the coast of San Diego that November afternoon in 2004.

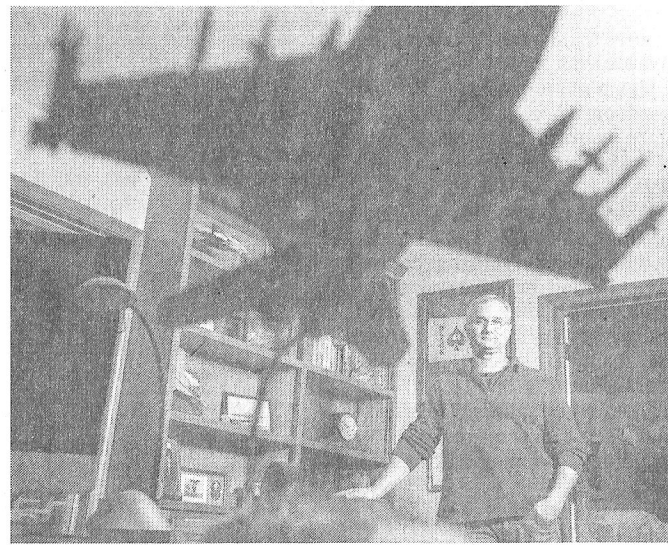
Commander Fravor, in a recent interview with The New York Times, recalled what happened

next. Some of it is captured in a video made public by officials with a Pentagon program that investigated U.F.O.s.

"Well, we've got a real-world vector for you," the radio operator said, according to Commander Fravor. For two weeks, the operator said, the Princeton had been tracking mysterious aircraft. The objects appeared suddenly at 80,000 feet, and then hurtled toward the sea, eventually stopping at 20,000 feet and hovering. Then they either dropped out of radar range or shot straight back up.

The radio operator instructed Commander Fravor and Commander Slight, who has given a similar account, to investigate.

The two fighter planes headed toward the objects. The Princeton alerted them as they closed in, but when they arrived at "merge plot" with the object — naval aviation parlance for being so close that the Princeton could not tell which were the objects and which were the fighter jets — neither Commander Fravor nor Commander Slight could see anything at first. There was nothing on their radars, either.



M. SCOTT BRAUER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

David Fravor at home in Windham, N.H. As a Navy pilot, he investigated mysterious aircraft.

Then, Commander Fravor looked down to the sea. It was calm that day, but the waves were breaking over something that was just below the surface. Whatever it was, it was big enough to cause the sea to churn.

Hovering 50 feet above the churn was an aircraft of some kind — whitish — that was around 40 feet long and oval in shape. The craft was jumping around erratically, staying over the wave disturbance but not

moving in any specific direction, Commander Fravor said. The disturbance looked like frothy waves and foam, as if the water were boiling.

Commander Fravor began a circular descent to get a closer look, but as he got nearer the object began ascending toward him. It was almost as if it were coming to meet him halfway, he said.

Commander Fravor abandoned his slow circular descent and headed straight for the object.

But then the object peeled away. "It accelerated like nothing I've ever seen," he said in the interview. He was, he said, "pretty weirded out."

The two fighter jets then conferred with the operations officer on the Princeton and were told to head to a rendezvous point 60 miles away, called the cap point, in aviation parlance.

They were en route and closing in when the Princeton radioed again. Radar had again picked up the strange aircraft.

"Sir, you won't believe it," the radio operator said, "but that

thing is at your cap point."

"We were at least 40 miles away, and in less than a minute this thing was already at our cap point," Commander Fravor, who has since retired from the Navy, said in the interview.

By the time the two fighter jets arrived at the rendezvous point, the object had disappeared.

The fighter jets returned to the Nimitz, where everyone on the ship had learned of Commander Fravor's encounter and was making fun of him.

Commander Fravor's superiors did not investigate further and he went on with his career, deploying to the Persian Gulf to provide air support to ground troops during the Iraq war. But he does remember what he said that evening to a fellow pilot who asked him what he thought he had seen.

"I have no idea what I saw," Commander Fravor replied to the pilot. "It had no plumes, wings or rotors and outran our F-18s."

But, he added, "I want to fly one." — HELENE COOPER, LESLIE KEAN AND RALPH BLUMENTHAL