

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE AIR STAFF SUMMARY SHEET

2	AFRDC	Appr	<i>[Signature]</i>	7	SAFRD	Coord	<i>[Signature]</i>
3	SAFOI	Coord	<i>[Signature]</i>	8	SAFOS	Sig	
4	SAFLL	Coord	<i>[Signature]</i>	9			
5	AFCCS	Appr	<i>[Signature]</i>	10			

SURNAME OF ACTION OFFICER AND GRADE	SYMBOL	PHONE	TYPIST'S INIT.	SUSPENSE DATE
Major Espey <i>45-47</i>	AFRDDG	52181	VC	

SUBJECT: Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO)      DATE: 20 OCT 1969

**SUMMARY**

1. For more than twenty years the Air Force has had the responsibility within the Department of Defense for the investigation of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) (Atch 2). As stated in Project Blue Book, this investigative program has two objectives:

- a. To determine whether UFOs pose a threat to the security of the United States; and
- b. To determine whether UFOs exhibit any unique scientific information or advanced technology which could contribute to scientific or technical research (Atch 3)

Procedures for Project Blue Book reporting are defined in Air Force Regulation 80-17. This regulation requires the Commander of an Air Force base to provide a UFO investigative capability and for Air Force Systems Command to continue Project Blue Book (Atch 4). In response to this regulation most Commanders have appointed a UFO investigating officer, usually as an additional duty. Project Blue Book has two officers, one NCO, and one civilian assigned on a full-time basis. In addition, Dr. A. J. Hynek served as a scientific consultant until 1 July 1969.

2. In 1966 the Air Force Office of Scientific Research contracted to have the university of Colorado conduct an independent scientific investigation of unidentified flying objects. This study, directed by Dr. Edward U. Condon and made available as the "Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects," serves as a basis for evaluating the Air Force investigative effort (Atch 5). After an extensive study of this report as well as the review of the report by a panel of the National Academy of Sciences, past studies, Project Blue Book operations and other inputs, the Office of Aerospace research concluded, and we agree, that the continuation of Project Blue Book cannot be justified, either on the ground of national security or in the interest of science (Atch 6).

3. The general conclusion of the Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects is that "nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge." As to what the federal government should do with the UFO reports it receives from the general public, the authors add that they are "inclined to think that nothing should be done with them in the expectation that they are going to contribute to the advance of science." A panel of the National Academy of Sciences concurred in these views, and the Air Force has found no reason to question this



conclusion. For example, it has been the Air Force experience that although a significant portion of the Air Force's environmental research program is concerned with natural phenomena that could be associated with unidentified flying objects (Atch 7), Project Blue Book reports have not added any useful data to these research efforts (Atch 6). Thus, we concur with the University of Colorado recommendation "that only so much attention to the subject should be given as the Department of Defense deems to be necessary strictly from a defense point of view."

4. As early as 1953, the Robertson Panel concluded "that the evidence presented on Unidentified Flying Objects shows no indication that these phenomena constitute a direct physical threat to national security" (Atch 9). In spite of this finding, the Air Force continued to maintain a special reporting system. There is still, however, no evidence that Project Blue Book reports have served any intelligence function (Atch 8). Moreover, reports of unidentified flying objects which could affect national security are made in accordance with JANAP 146 or Air Force Manual 55-11, and are not part of the Blue Book system (Atch 10). The Air Force experience therefore confirms the impression of the University of Colorado researchers "that the defense function could be performed within the framework established for intelligence and surveillance operations without the continuance of a special unit such as Project Blue Book."

5. The conclusion which follows is that Project Blue Book does not merit future expenditures of resources. Accordingly, we recommend that it be terminated and that the actions which follow from this decision, such as cancelling Air Force Regulation 80-17 and not renewing the consultant contract, be initiated. Termination of Project Blue Book would have no adverse effect on Air Force operations or research programs. It would free manpower for useful purposes, eliminate the need for a scientific consultant and relieve base commanders of a minor responsibility and an administrative burden.

6. Termination of Project Blue Book would leave no official federal office to receive reports of UFOs. However, as already stated, reports of UFOs which could affect national security would continue to be handled through the standard Air Force procedures designed for this purpose. Presumably, local police departments respond to reports which fall within their responsibilities. Similarly, as to scientific research, the Colorado researchers conclude that, although they do not see "any fruitful lines of advance from the study of UFO resorts, we believe that any scientist with adequate training and credentials who does come up with a clearly defined, specific proposal for study should be supported." We see no reason why the normal channels and criteria for the funding of scientific research should not be adequate for UFO-related research.

7. Some feel that a central reporting center should be established, and a proposal has been made to establish a Rare Atmospheric Phenomena Reporting Center (Atch 11 and 12). Because the problem affects a number of agencies, this center might be under the auspices of the Federal Council on Science and Technology. However, in light of the University of Colorado recommendation



that the federal government should not set up a major new agency for the scientific study of UFOs, we do not favor this suggestion and feel that UFO reports should be left to normal scientific and defense channels. If such a center is established, it should not perform an investigative function and should be initiated only on a trial basis for a specified lifetime.

8. Project Blue Book has accumulated records on over 13,000 sighting cases. During his study, Dr. Condon expressed concern about the possible loss of these records and their relative inaccessibility at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. He was assured by Secretary Brown that we would look into the feasibility and desirability of relocating the files in the Washington area and that no action would be taken until the Colorado report was released (Atch 13). If Project Blue Book is terminated, the records should be transferred to an appropriate archive and preserved for their historical value and to prevent charges that the Air Force is concealing facts.

9. To receive the candor and cooperation essential to the successful investigation of UFOs, the Air Force adopted a practice of confidentiality; witnesses were assured that their names would not be used without their permission. Therefore, access to these records and the publications must be carefully reviewed and controlled. SAFOI feels that an Air Force controlled archive away from the Washington, D.C. area is the most appropriate storage facility, Considering the existence of local, privately sponsored UFO investigative organizations, the ready availability of these records in the Washington area would result in an inordinate workload in clearing investigators, providing documentation, and reviewing and clearing manuscripts. Therefore, the Air University was queried about the possibility of storing these documents at the Air Force Archives (Atch 15). Air Force Air University will accept these records providing:

- a. SAFOI will answer all requests about Blue Book, and not require AU research to answer such queries.
- b. SAFOI will rigidly limit the right of access to recognized, legitimate researchers, and
- c. SAFOI will screen researcher's notes to insure that "confidentiality" is maintained (Atch 16).

10. Project Blue Book should be terminated, and Blue Book records should be transferred to the USAF Archives at Air University. The attached memorandum would initiate these actions.

#### RECOMMENDATION

11. That the memorandum be signed.

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C. H. BOLENDER, Brig Gen, USAF  
Deputy Director of Development  
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16 Atch ← no longer in one file  
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