

Front Page Edit Page Other Page

Date:

Washington Wire

Inquiry Into UFOs Still Held Needed

By BULKLEY GRIFFIN Chief of Evening Gazette Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Maybe the new administration next year will quietly give the green light to some Congressional committee to investigate the unidentified flying objects (UFOs). Put this down as a long-shot possibility. It is not a probability. The Central Intelligence Agency is still on the matter, as it always has been, and the CIA, by the nature of its duties, does not squander facts among the public.

Yet, the UFO's demand attention. They continue to be seen in the sky by pilots, sundry officials with special cognizance of the atmosphere above us and by others with some reputation for reliability. The Air Force disclaims that these strange objects relate to anything but familiar objects mistakenly identified, often damage the patent truth, and sometimes approach the ridiculous.

"Shielding" the Public

Increasingly, the fact seems to be that the CIA and other security officials are determined to shield the public from the plainly indicated truth, which is that a minority of the mysterious objects represent something real which the Air Force has been unable to identify. The explanation indicated by the former head of the CIA, Admiral R. H. Hillenkoetter, is highly significant.

It is that the Air Force a dozen years ago, when the flying saucers first appeared, thought there might be national panic if it told the truth, that it didn't know what some of the objects were, and so told the public they represented misidentifications of familiar objects; now the Air Force keeps repeating this because it is stuck with that story. Bear in mind that Admiral Hillenkoetter headed the CIA at a time when the UFO's were appearing.

A semi-secret "Air Force Policy Letter for Commanders" of three months ago has caused these comments on the unidentified flying objects. This periodic letter, from the office of the secretary of the Air Force and signed by the director of information, among other matters stated that "Among the Air Force's major contributions to

the nation's scientific progress and military security is the operation of the National Space Surveillance Control Center at Laurence G. Hanscom Field, Bedford, Mass. The Control Center catalogues for defense surveillance purposes all artificial satellites launched by this country or other nations." And so on about the work of the Center.

Then comes this:

"There is a relationship between the Air Force's interest in space surveillance and its continuous surveillance of the atmosphere near earth for unidentified flying objects—UFOs. As the service with the primary responsibility of providing forces for aerospace defense of the United States, the Air Force has been, since 1947, studying and analyzing reported sightings of UFOs, including astronomical objects.

"Dr. J. Allen Hynak, head of the Department of Astronomy and director of the observatory at Northeastern University, is the chief scientific consultant to the Air Force on the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects.

"A selected scientific group under the supervision of the Air Force plus the facilities of the Air Force's Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center, and the entire facilities of the nation's scientific and technical community, as well as the National Space Surveillance Control Center, keeps watch on objects of all kinds in the vast reaches of sky surrounding our planet."

For Commanders' Use

The paragraphs quoted are not written for the public, but for Air Force commanders, and that may be why they seem to treat the UFO subject with somewhat more gravity than the Air Force does in some of its public alleged explanations of sightings. Military pilots, of course, are having sightings, though they are under military secrecy.

Dr. Hynak has, from the start, been the Air Force's chief scientific consultant, and so far as known, he has never failed to explain away every sighting. Some of his explanations, and this writer has read a number of them, strain credulity beyond the limit of common sense.

In conversation, Dr. Hynak is not such a complete scuffer as his official conclusions indicate. It would appear possible that Dr. Hynak has been impressed by the Air Force that its official line of explaining-away is the necessary line in the national interest.

But does the Air Force utilize the correct definitions of "national interest" and "national security"?