

Everywhere, by Stealth Everywhere, by Stealth

by Richard M. Dolan



Every day, spectacular events occur in the skies, in space, in the oceans, and on the ground. Astonished witnesses around the world see them. For many, the shock of something so extraordinary, so inexplicable, is a consciousness-shattering experience, never to be forgotten. Yet few people tell anyone what they saw, save perhaps a close friend or family member.

The things they see are of some variety, but which often fall within one of several categories. Here is a fairly typical report. It describes an event that occurred in Hydes, Maryland, on May 15, 1976, but wasn't reported until 23 years later to the National UFO Reporting Center, on the Internet. The witness who wrote about this was with five other people, all adults and professionals, lying on the front lawn of a farm after dinner at about 7 p.m. To their great surprise, they saw an enormous, round craft approach slowly from the horizon, perhaps at 30 or 40 miles per hour. It slowly rotated in counter-clockwise direction; white lights were visible on the outer edges. The witness estimated the object's diameter to be 1,000 feet, although it was hard to notice details, due to the sunlight at that time of day. When the object appeared over them, it stopped and split into four smaller, wedged-shaped craft. Then, in the "blink of an eye," the objects zoomed away to the North, South, East and West. There was never a sound during the sighting. "To this day," writes the witness, "we have never spoken about this to anyone, not even amongst ourselves."

This sighting is extraordinary, inexplicable, and utter-

ly commonplace. The records of UFO reports describe many examples of craft that are silent, divide into smaller segments, and zip away noiselessly at amazing speeds. Not only do ordinary people report them, but so do military personnel. As with the military, so it is with civilians that silence is usually the rule when it comes to UFOs. Military personnel have their secrecy protocols, of course, but trauma and fear of ridicule usually serve well enough to keep civilians quiet.

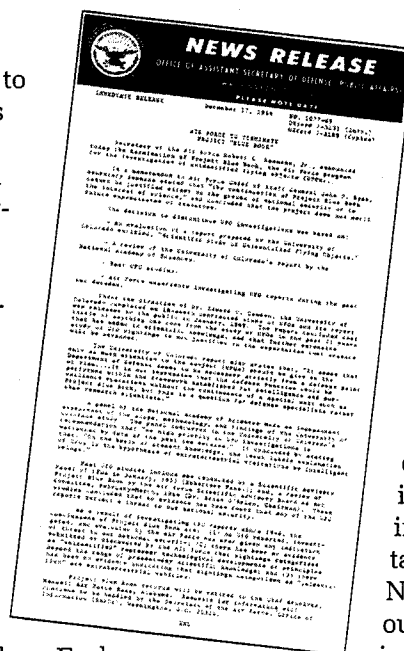
However one wishes to interpret the phenomenon, every indication points to the number of UFO witnesses being not in the thousands, but the millions. Whether one considers the subject to be bunk or of the utmost seriousness, people are seeing things that affect them deeply. Because there are no institutional structures for them to report to, or even talk about with, they keep silent about what they saw and try to forget what is unquestionably the most incredible experience of their lives. For some, time takes its eventual toll on the strength of their convictions, and they convince themselves that maybe what they saw wasn't all that incredible. They remain closemouthed, of course, because they fear being labeled as crazy, a luxury few can afford.

Development of a Problem

Seeing is not always believing, much less understanding. What matters is seeing with the right perspective. History provides many examples of people seeing things whose existence was denied by higher authorities; even more of people who saw old things

in new ways, and were ignored. Galileo failed to persuade the Pope to look through a telescope at Jupiter's moons. In the 18th century, the French Academy of Science denied that stones could fall from the heavens, and rejected the mass of witnesses' testimony as superstitious nonsense. For most of the 20th century, scientists dismissed continental drift as fantasy despite the observations that Africa and South America seemed to fit together and shared many geological properties.

Leaving science for politics, the examples become more dramatic, almost surreal. The 20th century provided several instances of entire peoples being liquidated amid blanket denials from their killers. Each time, witnesses came forth to announce what was happening, only to face silence or dismissal. Meanwhile, entire nations, such as the Armenians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Jews, Slavs, Cambodians, East Timorese and Kurds, to name only the best known, were ravaged.



UFO writers. It is, however, reasonable to suppose, based upon the upsurge in reports by witnesses on the ground. If this is so, we cannot yet know why; we can only guess.

One point is beyond question: UFOs became important to our military and political elites. This required the collection of as much intelligence as fast as possible, and gives full flavor to the intense media coverage of flying saucers following Kenneth Arnold's sighting of June 24, 1947. For months and years before Arnold's encounter, Americans and Europeans, including military personnel, had been seeing UFOs. Early in 1947, for example, military aircraft had "chased" a UFO over the North Sea, only to be outmaneuvered and outpaced. The intense media barrage following Arnold's sighting lasted for two weeks,

encouraged people from around the country to report what they saw, then stopped abruptly. Then, for the next two decades, military programs such as Projects Sign, Grudge and Blue Book continued to accept reports from the public without lending any credence

The mass of ignored UFO sightings fits into this pattern, whatever its ultimate answer may be. You may see; you may know. Whether you can persuade in the face of official denials is entirely different.

The response to UFO sightings evolved during the last century. The airship wave of 1897, for instance, mirrored our own age by commanding broad public interest, then vanished into the collective memory hole. There were differences, however. Official ridicule was less important, talk of aliens was non-existent (except for a few isolated jokes about men from Mars), and people were more forthcoming to their local independent newspapers in describing what they saw. Mainly, there were fewer genuine UFO sightings, and people were less aware of the phenomenon. It was just as well; there was no official office that collected reports. In 1897, if you thought you saw an alien, you were on your own.

Sightings of anomalous events spiked dramatically after World War II. New technologies certainly played an important role. Radar and widespread aviation, for example, both made it easier to detect UFOs. Therefore, it is impossible to state conclusively that UFOs themselves became more common, despite this being the working assumption of most

to them, providing a useful service to the military for the collection of intelligence.

From the late 1940s to the late 1960s, an American who saw a UFO could rest easy with the fiction that his government would investigate the event. Blue Book, however, was a mere collection point; it could not conduct any true analysis of UFOs and was only charged with debunking the matter to the public. This deficiency was apparent by the early 1950s. In response, two formidable private groups were able to compete with Blue Book for the collection of UFO reports: The National Investigative Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) and the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO). This institutional structure helped to give UFO witnesses a veneer of legitimacy.

Even so, most sightings went unreported. During Blue Book's heyday, Air Force consultant Dr. Allen Hynek conservatively estimated that the program received less than 10 percent of all actual UFO sightings. Accepting this logic translates into over 120,000 sightings of UFOs in the United States for roughly two decades, and a much larger number of witnesses. In light of Blue Book's fallacious method of explaining most of these sightings, we are left with the unsettling

conclusion that there were thousands upon thousands of legitimate UFO sightings during that period.

The era of institutional legitimacy was brief. By the mid-1960s, a new wave of UFO sightings created a sense of near-crisis. The role of Blue Book became a bit obvious when the best it could do, in effect, was to blame UFOs on swamp gas. The loss of public credibility outweighed any counter-value Blue Book might have possessed as a collection agency of UFO reports. Its demise became inevitable from that point; by 1969 it was dead. Ironically, in closing its doors, Blue Book also vanquished its two main competitors, NICAP and APRO, neither of which ever recovered from the "bear market" for UFOs that ensued in the aftermath.

Today and Tomorrow

Which brings us to our present era. An awesome number of UFO sightings continue to occur, but which now leave no echo within the public realm. Officially, the military no longer admits to investigating UFOs. Although several organizations accept UFO reports, few witnesses know of them. The largest UFO organization of the past 30 years, the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), does not compare in size or quality to NICAP or APRO. The result is something like the situ-

fate. They are from our future. Or, they have been here all along and have guided human evolution.

There is no sure way out of this morass. Even official disclosure of UFOs, a laudable goal, cannot reliably lead to a state of clarity. It is not certain from which source disclosure can come: Does the President really know everything? Nor is there a way to verify the extent or accuracy of disclosure. Past official statements do not give cause for confidence. Indeed, the CIA has been claiming for several years that it has provided disclosure, after admitting to an interest in UFO reports as a means to protect the existence of its classified aircraft. Further disclosures from official sources may provide information that fits along any point in the long spectra of completeness, accuracy, honesty and intentions. In other words, we might in theory receive information that is complete, accurate, honest, and with the public's best intentions in mind. Or, it may be incomplete, incorrect, dishonest, and with the intention to sell us down the river. Or anywhere in between.

We must also consider the likelihood that full and accurate disclosure may not be possible. Our leaders may know a little bit about this, or they may know much. There is no reason, however, to believe that they know everything of importance, or that they have.

ation prior to the 1940s, with nowhere for a witness to go, and nothing that officialdom will "do" about it. It is the situation of our six friends sitting on the lawn of their farm, watching in silent, isolated, awe as an object of unimaginable technology flew over their heads. Once again, we are on our own.

Such is the very rough, public development of the human response to the problem. Regarding the UFOs themselves, there have been a few consistent threads spanning the years. They operate by stealth. They are silent. They are everywhere. They have not publicly identified themselves. They represent technology that is impossible by known standards. For decades, people have claimed to see aliens, to have been abducted by them, and occasionally to have communicated with them.

Ensnared by the unknown between the poles of official silence and ridicule, people offer their own theories: The aliens are here to create a race of hybrids for future colonization of the planet. Or, they are tourists here to visit. They are scientists studying us, bound by the prime directive of non-interference. Or, they are here for the Earth's minerals and DNA. They are space brothers seeking to enlighten those humans ready to receive their wisdom. Or, they are indifferent to our

a relationship with aliens on some level of parity. If others have arrived with technology far beyond our own, it is more likely that our leaders have not achieved "diplomatic" parity, or would learn anything more than what these others want them to know. This could be nearly anything. Self-serving dispensing of isolated facts comprises a large part of U.S. diplomatic history, and indeed the history of most nations; there is no apparent reason why it must be different with an advanced race.

Conceding the above, it remains that the fight to end UFO secrecy remains one of the great causes of our day. It is a struggle for truth, self-government, and possibly survival. It is a call for courage in the face of a potentially grave threat. It is fighting the good fight, regardless of the consequences.

"Fight" may well be the most apt of all words. Based upon our limited knowledge about the underside of this phenomenon, humanity appears to be facing the presence of others under the worst possible circumstances: ignorance and atomization in the face of overwhelming force. The maxim "divide and conquer" is well worn in our own history. An observation of the human response to the presence of others suggests it is one they know as well. **UFO**