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Chapter 1, page 1, paragraph 2

"There seems to be a campaign building up to criticise government policy about the release of information on unidentified flying objects. The authors of the campaign are firmly convinced that extra terrestrial manifestations have appeared, whereas the Air Staff are by no means certain. As it is not possible to release official data which does not exist it is difficult enough to satisfy those with preconceived ideas to the contrary". Memo 19, August 1958

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL STUDY BACKGROUND & AIM

INTRODUCTION

1. **Historical** Objects in the atmosphere, sometimes on the ground, but often much higher in visible space, have been reported for millennia. Reports from within UK airspace alone, number thousands since the 1950s, as shown at Figure 1.1. Clearly these reports are of something not being understood at the time by the observer. Since manned flight commenced and with the advent of outdoor laser displays, space flight, unmanned aircraft and greater public awareness, caused largely by media hype, the phenomenon of "unidentified flying objects" (UFOs) has reached heights of unprecedented public interest. In the past this has undoubtedly distorted the clarity of approach needed for a scientifically-based analysis. It has been recent MOD practice to refer to such phenomena, in the absence of rational explanation, as Unexplained Aerial Phenomena (UAP). Further, from the record, it is clear that it was MOD policy from the outset that any interest in UAP is only necessary as an assurance that any such object is not a threat to UK airspace or assets. In August 1950 a Working Party was set up (at the suggestion of Sir Henry Tizard) who thought "flying saucers should be investigated". Records show that the 11th meeting of the Joint Technical Intelligence Committee (Ref. DSI/JTIC(51) Item 8 (1951)) received the Chairman's Report of the "Flying Saucer Working Party". The Committee decided that "the document should be regarded as the final report and, in view of the conclusions the Working Party should be dissolved". The Chairman (Mr. G.L. Turney DSI3) went on to say that, "following the lead given by the Americans on this subject, the Report should have as little publicity as possible and outside circulation should be confined to one copy, for Sir Henry Tizard". The Report was approved. The Department does not possess a copy of this report (it may exist within Sir H. Tizard's papers), but it is implied that nothing important was found. Great Britain was happy to allow the US studies to answer any outstanding questions. However, there must have been further concern and the Prime Minister's request, quoted at the Preface, came the following year and the brief subsequent reply, produced a few days later, is shown here at the Historical Annex.(U)

2. The United States Air Force had started to take an official interest in 1948 (PROJECT SIGN), later changed to PROJECT GRUDGE and then to PROJECT BLUE BOOK. Such was the concern in the US that by 1952 the CIA instigated a covert study group to investigate the "10% of incredible reports from credible witnesses". In fact, over 10,000 reports, spanning 19 years, were processed by 1965 (of which it was reported that about 7% were unexplained). It was also questioned whether any use could be made of the phenomena for psychological warfare. The covertness of this investigation subsequently contributed greatly to charges of a government 'cover-up' - a notion that has continued to this day. In 1952-3 the US had set up the Robertson Panel (Intelligence Scientific Advisory Panel) and observed that British experts (Prof R.V. Jones and others) were taking the increase in UAP sightings seriously. Meanwhile, it is noted, the

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