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AIR BRIEF - SPECIAL STUDY

UNIDENTIFIED AERIAL OBJECTS

During the past six months very few reports have appeared in the press on the subject of flying saucers. However, recent allegations on the radio and in the press that the saucers are actually Soviet guided missiles find no real support in the continuing, exhaustive investigations and analyses which have been conducted as project "Grudge" (formerly project "Sign") by the USAF Air Materiel Command. Realistic treatments of the subject will appear this week in the Saturday Evening Post.

A total of 294 incidents involving unidentified aerial objects have been recorded. The majority of these are domestic observations but there are many reports from foreign sources. Data on unidentified aerial objects places them in several distinct groups; disc, spherical, elliptical, or cylindrical shaped objects, winged objects, and light phenomena. The extreme lack of accurate observed details and the unpredictable occurrence of incidents have made positive identification difficult. However, extensive checks by field investigators, project personnel and such agencies as Air Weather Service and the Rand Corporation in addition to the study of incidents by specialists such as Dr. G. E. Valley (USAF Scientific Advisory Board) and Dr. Hynek, Ohio State University astro-physicist, point to the following conclusions:

1. The majority of reported incidents are reliable to the extent that they have involved actual sighting of some object or light phenomena.
2. The majority of reported incidents have been caused by misidentification of weather balloons, high altitude balloons with lights or electronic equipment, meteors, bolides, and celestial bodies.
3. There are numerous reports from reliable and competent observers for which a conclusive explanation has not been possible. Some of these involve descriptions which would place them in the category of new manifestations of probable natural phenomena, but others involve configurations and described performance which might conceivably represent an advanced aerodynamical development. A few unexplained incidents surpass these limits of credibility.

Representative of an unexplained incident which has credible features, but which has defied definite proof or denial, was the sighting by two

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SECRET

Eastern Air Lines pilots in the air near Montgomery, Alabama, of an object resembling a V-2 in horizontal flight. While the cigar or torpedo-shaped body represents an efficient form for the fuselage of an airplane or of a guided missile, it has not been used as a primary lift-producing surface. It is estimated, however, that a fuselage of the dimensions reported by the Eastern Air Lines pilots, could support a load comparable to the weight of an aircraft of this size at speeds in the subsonic range. Although the craft sighted by these pilots was reported to be without wings and fins, it is possible that such a craft could be equipped with extensible wings for take-off and landing. The propulsion system of this type of vehicle would appear to be by jet or rocket, and the specific fuel consumption of such engines for this type craft would be rather high. This, coupled with the fact that aerodynamic lift on such a body would be accompanied by high drag, places a serious limitation on the range of this type of craft for any particular gross weight. If this type of unidentified aerial object has extremely long range, a method of propulsion far in advance of presently known engines would be required. It is believed unlikely that this and similar unexplained incidents represent a foreign craft. It seems improbable that a foreign power would expose any superior aerial weapon by a prolonged ineffectual penetration of the United States, and there is no basis on which to speculate that advanced civilizations exist outside the earth and are responsible for any such activity.

Recently, the repeated occurrence of green fireball phenomena in New Mexico was given special attention by Dr. Joseph Kaplan, Member of the USAF Scientific Advisory Board. This phenomena has caused considerable concern on the part of Hq. Fourth Army, and has occupied the interests of Dr. Lincoln LaPaz of the University of New Mexico. Dr. LaPaz believes that the phenomena are not meteorites. Because of Dr. LaPaz' outstanding ability for accurate observation and his experience in identification of meteoric phenomena, Dr. Kaplan expressed the belief that the green fireball phenomena should be further investigated. Dr. Kaplan's views were discussed with Dr. Theodore von Karman, Chairman of the USAF Scientific Advisory Board, who feels that the problem might belong more properly in the field of upper atmosphere research than the field of intelligence.

Investigations continue in an effort to find definite explanations for the many unidentified aerial objects which have been reported during the past two years.

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