

# THE SCU REVIEW

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## Table of Contents

### Fireside Chat with Dr. Laura Dominé

Robert Powell p.2

### UAP News

*SCU 2025 Conference, Huntsville, Alabama* p.4

### Press Release

*SCU Press Release on Concerns for Science in U.S.* p.6

### Opinion

By Professor Ted Peters  
*UFOs, UAP, and Science Plus* p.8

By Marco Bianchini  
*USOs: The Underwater UFOs, Part I* p.13

### UAP and Government

Dr. Joshua Pierson, MS, DSS  
*The Threat Proposition* p.19

### Potpourri

By Robert Powell p.27

## What's Going on in SCU

- Read about SCU's upcoming conference on page 4 and listen to the talks from last year's SCU conference here: <https://www.youtube.com/@scientificcoalitionforuaps>
- SCU is pleased to announce the addition of physicist Dr. Cameron Pratt to our Board of Directors. Cameron is a research assistant in astronomy at the University of Michigan, where he earned his Ph.D. in 2024. His research employs advanced machine learning methods to extract high signal-to-noise measurements.
- Read SCU's recent press release regarding our view that the current freeze in federal grants will hurt the development of science in the U.S.
- SCU member Dr. Kevin Knuth released a paper in arXiv that also includes several SCU members as co-authors. It covers much of the historical information on UAP/UFOs and is available here: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2502.06794> arXiv is a research-sharing platform open to anyone.
- Matthew Szydagis represented SCU at the Deep Tech Week in New York City and Robert Powell represented SCU at the Archives of the Impossible meeting at Rice University. Lee Dines, our SCU European representative, will attend an event at Durham University on April 24.
- Stay tuned for SCU outgoing emails and press releases as new and interesting changes for SCU will be announced in the coming few months.
- *The SCU Review* needs your thoughts, articles, and writings. Please send them to us.

# SCU FIRESIDE CHAT

## Meet SCU Board Member, Laura Dominé

*By Robert Powell*

### **Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I grew up in France in a town about 20 minutes west of Paris by train. We were a family of five—I have two younger siblings—living in a tiny one-bedroom apartment. My mother was born in France, but she lived in Russia for a decade during her childhood as a result of her father's work. My father is Vietnamese and came to France as a teenager, not speaking a word of French. His family fled Vietnam after the war and scattered around the world in Australia, New Zealand, the US, Belgium, and France. I do not think I grew up in a typically French family!

### **What were you like as a kid?**

I was the kind of kid who spent every single break reading in the library in middle school, borrowing books in the morning and returning them the same day, reading *The Three Musketeers* cover-to-cover within three days. I loved languages, learning languages, and I was confident that someday I would be able to speak most languages that existed in the world. I was always hungry for more knowledge about everything, not just science and computers, and I was very frustrated that so much was locked away behind paywalls, access barriers, costly textbooks, and so on. The hacker ethic definitely resonated with me at the time!

### **Was there anything unusual about your childhood?**

My siblings and I were all homeschooled, for different lengths of time, studying by correspondence with the Cours Hattemer in Paris. It allowed us to go through the materials much more efficiently than being in a classroom, so I "skipped" about two years of school that way.

### **When your family hears that you are interested in UAP, what are their reactions?**

My parents had an interest in UAPs when they were younger themselves, so my family was always a safe space to discuss this interest as a kid and a teenager. I even remember a period of time when my dad would let the SETI@home program run overnight in the kitchen!

### **In what subject is your degree and why did you choose that field?**

I obtained my PhD in physics from Stanford in 2023. My research was in the field of particle physics, specifically neutrino oscillation experiments.

My interest in UAP had convinced me that physics would be key to studying the phenomenon, so I wanted to learn how to do research in physics. In high school I read an article in *Scientific American* that put particle physics near the top of my list of topics of interest. I was intrigued by the idea that there could be these elegant mathematical structures, group symmetries, underlying the properties and interactions of fundamental particles.

After that initial interest in particle physics, ending up in neutrino physics was mostly an accident! In college I decided to join a neutrino research group largely because it was the only way for me to go back to Japan for a second summer. Then, during my first year of graduate school, I realized that the exact topic of your PhD matters a lot less than who you work with. I wanted to work with and learn from my advisor much more than I was "taken" by neutrino physics specifically. There are a lot of fascinating research topics out there, and I find equally interesting what people do in other fields of physics, such as astronomy, cosmology, astrophysics, condensed matter physics, atomic, molecular and optical physics, etc.

**What has been the reaction to your research with UAP from the academic communities you engage with?**

Overall, fairly supportive, certainly much more than I initially expected. Not every physicist agrees that UAP research falls within the purview of physics, and some people may have knee-jerk reactions or fears due to the stigma. Typically, once I take the time to explain how one needs to take a long-term, agnostic, and data-driven approach to the topic, following the scientific method, we find common agreement that this research needs to happen.

**What is your passion when you're not at work or thinking about UAP?**

Crafting. Both the "design phase" and the "making with my hands" are important to me. And I appreciate how I keep fresh perspectives on all objects around me when I learn how they are made. My main focus is wood. I started designing and making furniture in order to teach myself enough hand tool skills to make wooden string instruments. But I also restored an old Italian sewing machine from the '50s to design and make my own backpacks. I taught myself enough about pottery to make an ocarina (wind instrument) that works. And I signed up for a Japanese timber-framing workshop this summer because I hope to one day restore a traditional house in the countryside in Japan!

**How can we progress the science of UAP, and what is SCU's role in this?**

The science questions surrounding UAP will not be answered quickly. Progress will happen on a scale of years and decades. To keep investigations going for that long requires establishing the scientific study of UAP within academia. We need to engage undergraduate students, graduate students, postdocs, faculty—and even high school students! No field of science can survive long if one rung of the academic ladder is missing. For that, SCU is a great "beacon" to attract and connect people motivated to progress the science of UAP: we provide a safe space where scientists, aspiring scientists, and citizen scientists can connect, learn, and collaborate, even as they may have different ideas and research directions they wish to explore.

**What are the main challenges we face in progressing UAP research?**

Establishing a new field of research takes funding and persuasion. Private funding can help jumpstart the field, but in the long term, we need public research funding from governments for UAP research to be democratized. Funding is absolutely critical. Yet to convince academic scientists to devote part or all of their research to the subject of UAP, funding alone is not enough: we also need to work hard on erasing the stigma still attached to UAP and convince the academic, scientific community at large that UAP research is not just acceptable, but that it is needed and valuable for many fields. Increasing the professional visibility and quality of UAP scientific research, for example in academic conferences, workshops, seminars, and respected publications, is a challenge that we urgently need to address if we want this field to blossom.

# UAP NEWS

## SCU 2025 Conference, June 6-8, 2025

Jay Stratton, the former head of the UAP Task Force, will be our guest speaker this year. Please register for the SCU conference if you have not already done so. Here is the link: <https://scu.regfox.com/2025-scu-conference>

### **In-Person Attendance**

This year's SCU Conference (our sixth) has moved into the Von Braun Center located in downtown Huntsville. Our growth continues and the need for more space is becoming apparent. The SCU membership is rapidly approaching 400 strong and our presence is global.

If you are able to attend in person, it gives you the opportunity to meet SCU leadership and other members, as well as interesting people in the government who show up at our conference. Enjoy ample networking opportunities, delicious meals, and roof-top happy hours. Meet and engage with speakers and colleagues who are creating the scientific foundations of open UAP science.

### **Virtual Attendance**

Only \$75, our virtual conference is thoughtfully designed to inspire connection, engagement, and community-building. The virtual community board is your central hub for interaction where you can initiate meetups with fellow attendees, participate in fun and interactive icebreakers, and connect with others who share your passions and interests.

Join the virtual networking table for a unique opportunity to meet attendees from a wide range of backgrounds and countries. Engage directly with expert speakers, SCU staff, and fellow participants in real-time conversations that enrich your conference experience. As a truly international organization, SCU brings together a global audience, offering you the chance to expand your network, gain new perspectives, and forge meaningful connections around a topic that captivates minds worldwide. Our virtual platform is built to deliver an immersive and dynamic experience, no matter where you are.

### **Dynamic Speakers**

What new and exciting plans will be discussed at the SCU Conference? Imagine setting up a UAP detection system on Mars! Lennart Neuhaus, a scientist from Würzburg University in Germany, will be discussing just such an idea that is being supported by the German government.

Talk with the former head of the UAP Task Force, Jay Stratton. With a distinguished career in the Navy and Naval Intelligence, he is a down-to-earth type of person, so ask him questions (whether you participate online or in person). Jay is credited with moving the name of the phenomenon from UFO to UAP. Find out why he heralded that change.

Understand new methods for getting information out of old UAP reports from Dr. Stephen Bruehl, also a SCU contributing member. Stephen's background is in the biomedical industry and his expertise is in statistical analysis of data, especially with clusters of events.

SCU Board member Dr. Doug Buettner and security specialist Ben Hansen will update you regarding an active UAP investigation they are conducting in Connecticut. You've likely seen both these gentlemen on NewsNation.

Hear from a top researcher applying AI to multi-sensor field data from the Galileo Project, Dr. Laura Dominé. Laura is also a member of the SCU Board of Directors. She completed her PhD in physics at Stanford in 2023, working at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory on machine-learning methods.

Learn from Dr. Wesley Watters of Wellesley College who has focused on developing low-cost, portable instrumentation platforms, which can be deployed at short notice. Dr. Watters is an associate professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Wellesley College, where he currently holds the Whitehead Chair of Critical Thought. He is also a SCU contributing member.

Get firsthand information about using passive radar for UAP detection from SCU contributing member Gene Greneker. Gene spent 33 years at the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) before his retirement as a principal research scientist. He was responsible for the establishment of the GTRI Severe Storms Research Center

Dr. Kevin Knuth's talks are always inspirational. Kevin, a SCU contributing member, will review some of the major scientific efforts to study UAP, while dispelling many of the popular misconceptions. You don't want to miss his talk.

Listen to two SCU contributing members experienced in law enforcement investigation techniques, Dr. Keith Taylor and Sean Grosvenor, describe how to provide UAP response training for public safety professionals.

Doctoral candidate and SCU contributing member Courtney Bower will present a new conceptual framework for UAP as local SETI, such as the local production of plasma-based signals.

Firey Professor Matthew Szydagis will consider the question of how long we have until catastrophic disclosure. One of Matthew's areas of study is dark matter. He is also a SCU contributing member and is a mainstay at this conference.

Dr. Silvano Colombano is a retired NASA scientist and a SCU contributing member. While at NASA, Silvano worked on AI and robotics. He will discuss how the field of UAP studies faces challenges that go beyond just overcoming the stigma of the subject itself.

SCU's speakers look forward to seeing you at the conference and meeting you, whether in person or online.

Register at: <https://scu.regfox.com/2025-scu-conference>

# PRESS RELEASE

## **Robust U.S. Government Investment in Science is Key to Discovery and Prosperity that Benefits All Americans**



**SCU** [Scientific Coalition of UAP Studies](#)

### SCU Stands with Science

[Washington, DC, March 7, 2025] – Today, the Scientific Coalition for UAP Studies (SCU) released the following announcement:

The Scientific Coalition for UAP Studies (SCU) strongly opposes the federal government’s sudden and capricious funding freezes to public science and research agencies, which include overhead caps, mass firings, blanket credit card freezes, communication blackouts, data deletions, key-word censorship, and other interferences.

These agencies directly and indirectly support our nation’s valuable investment in scientists, scientific institutions, and research programs, including projects related to the study of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP).

Every part of the U.S. research landscape is suffering harm from these impulsive actions. We join millions of scientists, citizens, and organizations nationwide in standing up for science.

These funding disruptions have already severely reduced graduate school admissions across the U.S., caused widespread hiring freezes at universities, cancelled undergraduate summer and yearlong programs, damaged long-term data collection, derailed projects, and choked off the submission of new research proposals. Top researchers and early career scientists are looking overseas for more stable funding opportunities, suggesting the nation risks a “brain drain” if these interruptions continue. This will undermine our economic growth for decades to come.

Federally funded scientific research has already transformed society in profound ways, demonstrating the power of investment in discovery:

- **Space Exploration:** NASA’s Apollo program not only put humans on the Moon but also led to innovations such as satellite communications, GPS, and miniaturized computer technology, all of which power today’s global economy.

- **Medical Advancements:** Research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has been instrumental in developing lifesaving vaccines, including those to prevent polio, influenza, and cancer. These science investments have drastically improved American health, prosperity, and longevity.
- **Extreme Events:** Programs administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have advanced Earth environmental forecasting, allowing for more accurate predictions of severe weather and climate shifts, enabling fire, flood, hurricane, tornado, and tsunami disaster preparedness, and improving asteroid detection. These data, modeling, and forecasts are freely available to all Americans who want to develop effective strategies to confront the harsh realities associated with the rise of extreme events on Earth.

“Without robust funding for scientific research, we risk falling behind in the technological race,” added SCU Board Member and scientist Dr. Doug Buettner. “Scientific discoveries fuel economies, create high-paying jobs, and ensure that we remain at the forefront of global advancements.

The federal funding freeze on major research grant agencies, such as NIH, NSF, NASA, NOAA, USGS, and EPA, continues, despite multiple court orders to restore it.

All science, including UAP science, builds on itself. Progress relies on researchers being able to learn from one another through accessing the latest scientific papers on cutting-edge methods, which are developed and published openly under public funding from government agencies. UAP research involving ground-based observatories to detect aerial objects relies on real-time and historical public datasets from federal agencies like NOAA, USGS, FAA, NASA, NSF, EPA, and DOD. It also relies on papers describing these data sets written by researchers whose work is paid for by government grants, and websites maintained and supported by staff at these agencies. If the basic foundational work done and/or paid for by these federal science agencies is no longer accessible, *Americans* will suffer long-term as discovery and innovation slow down.

“History has shown us that every major technological breakthrough—from aviation to the internet—began with curiosity and rigorous scientific inquiry,” said Robert Powell, SCU Executive Director.

As an interdisciplinary STEM science, studying UAP will likely lead to groundbreaking developments in physics, engineering, and materials science. Scientific research that pushes researchers into the unknown guarantees novel discoveries in space exploration, national defense, and advanced aeronautics that could hold the key to new industries and technologies that can enhance the prosperity of all Americans.

SCU urges policymakers, industry leaders, and the public to protect American science by honoring, expanding, and stabilizing public support for the nation’s scientific institutions. Scientific research and exploration have been key to the nation’s long history of celebrating discovery and fostering prosperity. These investments must continue.

# OPINION

## UFOs, UAP, and Science Plus

By Ted Peters, Professor Emeritus

Permission to reprint from Ted's Newsletter on the *Voice of Public Theology*

### UAP Studies need science and more than science

I'm reading a most thoughtful recounting of the familiar UFO history from pre-1947 to date. It's *After the Flying Saucers Came: A Global History of the UFO Phenomenon*, by Greg Eghigian.<sup>1</sup>

Here is a key passage in Eghigian's book I'd like us to ponder.

"Many of those today seeking to legitimate the study of UFOs are intent on weeding out what they consider to be this unwanted cultural baggage from the phenomenon itself. The decision to replace the acronym UFO with the more generic UAP was done in the hope of accomplishing that. But this misses the point. The baggage is the phenomenon—or certainly as much as anything else can claim to be—and a name change will not divest it of its entanglements with politics and popular culture."<sup>2</sup>

Now I ask: just how do scientific methods and supra-scientific methods diverge or converge on the UAP mystery?

### UFO science? No! But, wait!

For three quarters of a century, we've divided the populace into *believers* and *disbelievers*. Some of us believe UFOs are real. This assumes *sub rosa* that UFO believers also believe Earth is being visited by tourists from Zeta Two Reticuli or some other extraterrestrial civilization.

The monikers for most disbelievers are *skeptic* or *debunker*. Skeptics and debunkers typically appeal to the authority of science in order to consign UFO believers to pre-scientific atavism or superstition. The task of science should be to turn mysteries into materialistic explanations, and to do so with no-trespassing signs that keep out anything smacking of paranormal or religious implications.

The "Archdemon of Saucerdom" during the early decades was Harvard astronomer Donald H. Menzel. The claims of contactees and ufologists lay somewhere between implausible and absurd, contended this Ivy League debunker. Science provides no home for the unwarranted extraterrestrial hypothesis.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greg Eghigian, *After the Flying Saucers Came: A Global History of the UFO Phenomenon*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>3</sup> Donald H. Menzel, "The Truth about Flying Saucers." *Look*, June 17: 35-39, 1952. <https://www.project1947.com/fig/look61752.htm>.

Harvard is different today. At home in Harvard's astronomy department we find Avi Loeb, director of the Galileo project. The task of this project is to study UAP directly. And the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis is on the table. The task of the Galileo Project is "to collect scientifically rigorous, multimodal measurements using calibrated instruments to establish whether UAP represent a class of phenomena currently unknown to science".<sup>4</sup> UAP are now scientifically credible.

What had gone unnoticed from 1947 to 2017 is that ufologists largely thought of themselves as adhering to the objective values of science. The mission of MUFON (Mutual UFO Network), for example, has been to pursue the "Scientific Study of UFOs for the Benefit of Humanity." But ufologists were largely amateurs with scientific aspirations. "Despite...rebuffs from the mainstream scientific world, ufologists continued to claim the mantle of science for themselves and their field of study," observed Brenda Denzler.<sup>5</sup> As I've frequently noted, ufologists did not receive invitations to barbecues with astrobiologists.<sup>6</sup> In the year 2017, ufology got an upgrade.



<sup>4</sup> Wesley Watters, Abraham Loeb, et.al., "The Scientific Investigation of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) Using Multimodal Ground-Based Observatories," *Journal of Astronomical Instrumentation* 12:1 1-43, 2023; DOI: 10.1142/S22511717234000682340006-1.

<sup>5</sup> Brenda Denzler, *Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs*. (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Ted Peters, "One Science for both Astrobiologists and Ufologists," *Limina* 2:1 93-100, 2025. <https://limina.scholasticahq.com/article/131694-one-science-for-both-ufologists-and-astrobiologists>.

### Science, yes. But Science Plus.

Since the 2017 *New York Times* article on the Pentagon's mysterious UFO program, a sea change has taken place in UAP studies.<sup>7</sup> Chemist and UAP researcher Robert Powell notes how "attitudes toward UFOs have changed. This is demonstrated by the existence of organizations such as SCU [Scientific Coalition for UAP Studies] and GP [Galileo Project]. The rebranding of the word *UFO* to *UAP* was arguably instrumental in that change."<sup>8</sup> We've seen a leap in the number of white lab coats working on the phenomenon.

What scientists want is data. And scientists need instruments and experiments and measurements to get this data. "Instrumented field research has played a crucial role in establishing the scientific study of UAP," observes Philip Ailleris.<sup>9</sup>

When it comes to UAP Studies, however, scientific data is not enough. We need more. Why? Because the UFO phenomenon is a deep, wakeless cultural phenomenon, not merely a scientific problem.

Strange things seen in the sky are tied to a complex and nuanced history interweaving symbols, myths, philosophy, religion, politics, and the arts. The unidentified flying object engenders confusion and even transformation in the observing subject.

According to Christian Peters (no relation to me, as far as I know), "an increasing number of scholars in the social and cultural sciences now acknowledge that UAPs are far more than just unexplained physical objects in our skies and oceans."<sup>10</sup> We need more than science to study UAP. We need Science +.

Where do we go to study the supra-scientific dimensions of UAP?

### UAP Studies as Science Plus

"UAP Studies is not ufology," declares *Limina* editor Michael Cifone. "UAP Studies is broader than both classical ufology and the nascent scientific study of UAP; it constitutes a richer conceptual landscape that is critical, empirical, and interpretative, applying the rigor of academic scholarship to UAP as well as the accounts surrounding them".<sup>11</sup> Are UAP Studies scientific? Yes. But more.

Scientific inquiry "will not resolve all aspects of UAP," Cifone claims.<sup>12</sup> Cifone wants to add hermeneutical and empirical methods to interpret *experiential objects*. As experiential objects, UAP include both objective and subjective dimensions.

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<sup>7</sup> Helene Cooper, Ralph Blumenthal, and Leslie Kean, "Glowing Auras and 'Black Money': The Pentagon's Mysterious U.F.O. Program," *The New York Times*, December 16, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/16/us/politics/pentagon-program-ufo-harry-reid.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Powell, *UFOs: A Scientist Explains What We Know and Don't Know*. (Lanham MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2024.)

<sup>9</sup> Philip Ailleris, "Exploring Unidentified Aerospace Phenomena through Instrumented Field Studies: Historical Insights, Current Challenges, and Future Directions," *Limina 1:1* 11-30, 2024. <https://limina.scholasticahq.com/article/92682-exploring-unidentified-aerospace-phenomena-through-instrumented-field-studies-historical-insights-current-challenges-and-future-directions>.

<sup>10</sup> Christian Peters, "UAPs and AI: Socio-Cultural Perspectives on a Complex Relationship," *SCU Review 5:4* 7-13, 2024. <https://www.explorescu.org/post/scu-review-5-4>.

<sup>11</sup> Michael C. Cifone, "Editorial," *Limina 2:1* 6-11, 2025. <https://limina.scholasticahq.com/article/131857-editorial>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

In her *Limina* article, “The Importance of Phenomenology for UAP Studies,” Kimberly Engels emphasizes the foundational research status of subjective experience. Phenomenological methods begin by “taking the lived, first-person, conscious experience of the experiencing subject as our only natural access point to reality.” This includes, for Engels, the “intersubjective dimensions” of UAP encounter.<sup>13</sup>

To interpret the UAP experience, the researcher may draw a tool from elsewhere in the toolbox of Husserlian phenomenology. Which tool? The bracket. The phenomenologist brackets out the reality question in order to attend to the experience itself. Temporarily, then, we set aside the question: is the UFO real?

Just why does bracketing the reality question help? Because we may wish to grasp just how UAP is manifested in human consciousness. In short, in addition to traditional scientific methods, UAP Studies will include phenomenological investigation into UAP as an experience.

We do not stop here. After bracketing out reality, we must at some point return to it. We must ask the ontological question. Not just about UAP. Rather, the ontological question as it pertains to everything real.

For many researchers with philosophical yearnings, the UAP question is simultaneously *the* reality question. Nothing less. The UAP experience collapses object and subject, perception and consciousness, matter and mind. Yet, pines Cifone, we have no mind-matter framework that bridges the physical and the psychical.<sup>14</sup> If the UFO investigator pursues a unifying theory to put mind and matter back together again, for all intents and purposes we are pursuing being itself.

This leads UAP researchers such as Brenda Denzler,<sup>15</sup> Jensine Andresen,<sup>16</sup> and Jeffrey Kripal<sup>17</sup> to dive like an Olympian into the depths of ontology. Each of these three scholars in their respective ways explores a supra-scientific worldview that incorporates human subjectivity along with scientific objectivity set within a unifying metaphysical scheme.

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<sup>13</sup> Kimberly S Engels, “The Importance of Phenomenology for UAP Studies,” *Limina* 2:1:12-22, 2025. <https://limina.scholasticahq.com/article/131704-the-importance-of-phenomenology-for-uap-studies>.

<sup>14</sup> Michael C. Cifone, “Editorial,” *Limina* 2:1 6-11, 2025. <https://limina.scholasticahq.com/article/131857-editorial>.

<sup>15</sup> Brenda Denzler, *Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs*. (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> Jensine Andresen, *Bohm's Interpretation of Quantum Theory: Implications for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (ETI) and Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP)*. (New York: Andresen, 2023).

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey Kripal, *How to Think Impossibly: About Souls, UFOs, Time, Belief, and Everything Else*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024.)



### Conclusion

UAP Studies needs rigorous and fertile scientific study, to be sure. But UAP Studies needs more. This field needs Science Plus.

It would be fallacious to assume that science is the only path to reality, the only path to explain UAP. It would be a mistake to write off at the level of assumption dimensions that involve consciousness or even that seem to include the paranormal. These belong to the UFO phenomenon itself, as Eghigian rightly observes.

My own work in UAP Studies has sought to explicate for analysis not only the scientific but also the political, cultural, and religious dimensions of the phenomenon. So, I resonate positively with Greg Eghigian's treatment of UAP history.

## USOs: The Underwater UFOs, Part I

*By Marco Bianchini, Attorney  
CISU President (Italian Center for UFO Studies)*

### Definition of USO

UFOs are Unidentified “Flying” Objects. Mysterious underwater objects would, therefore, be outside this scheme. However, for many years unidentified flying objects have been joined by the phenomenon of Unidentified Submerged Objects (abbreviated USO).

The name USO was officially born in connection with a Cold War-era military operation in Norway. Military forerunners were mystery submarines, which on several occasions alarmed military navies and gained media interest. The most famous series of sightings and sonar detection took place in the Norwegian fjords from November 12 to 22, 1972<sup>1</sup>. The military and almost all commentators were convinced a Soviet submarine had gotten caught in the meshes of NATO defense, then suddenly disappeared, but UFO researchers noticed some parallels between the two phenomena.

The Norwegian Navy first used the term USO. Similarly, the UFO acronym shares a military origin—created by the US Air Force between 1951 and 1952. The term UFO became popular after the 1953 release of Donald Keyhoe's second book, *Flying Saucers from Outer Space*.

### Distinction from UFOs

But what are USOs and how are they different from UFO phenomenon?

The USO connection with the UFO phenomenon has been reinforced by sightings of flying objects descending from the sky that submerged in water (seas or lakes), as well as observations of UFOs coming out of the sea and taking off.

The fundamental difference between UFOs and USOs is that the former “simply” fly and thus move in a “gaseous” element, while USOs have direct contact with water—a liquid and “tangible” element. This aspect is undoubtedly important, as there are physical phenomena such as the movement of water, waves, rolling of boats, and sea trails when the object emerges from or submerges in the water that are perceptible not only by the human eye, but also by touch and instrumentation.

The difference between USOs and UFOs is “objective” and related precisely to the natural environment in which the reports occur.

### What are the “serious” studies on USOs

I expressly indicated in the title of this section “serious” studies because the whole UFO phenomenon must be approached, in my modest opinion, with a scientific study methodology, analyzing data and testimonies, but without necessarily wanting to “force” solutions and theories. Otherwise, the risk is to fall into ridicule or to turn a theory without scientific evidence into a real “faith.”

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<sup>1</sup> J. J. Holst, “Signals, Decisions, and Strategy: The Submarine Hunt in the Sognefjord 1972,” *NISA* 9, 1974; <https://doi.org/10.1177/001083677400900405>

Especially in recent years, there was a proliferation of books dealing with alien bases, which seem to come from the pen of science fiction writers and not from scholars of the UAP phenomenon. As an appendix to this article, I have included a comprehensive bibliography of all published (and to date known) books on the USO phenomenon. This is a list of “only” 43 specific volumes published in seven countries (US, Britain, Italy, Turkey, France, Germany, and Russia).

That being said, there are few scholars who have over the years devoted themselves specifically to the study of the USO phenomenon. One of the first authors to devote a full book to USOs was British-American biologist Ivan T. Sanderson.<sup>2</sup> But the first reference to sightings of unidentified submerged objects can be found in Coral and Jim Lorenzen's *UFOs over the Americas* book<sup>3</sup> in the third chapter, which is titled “Underwater Ufos.” Certainly the most complete worldwide catalog of USO reports was compiled by MUFON (Mutual UFO Network) ufologist Carl Feindt (also an online database called WaterUFO).<sup>4</sup> As many as 1,800 reports are known so far. Readers will forgive me if I quote myself, but I created the first classification of such reports in 1995 based on the dynamic behavior of the objects observed:<sup>5</sup>

- underwater objects, which are observed and remain below the water surface;
- objects that are observed entering or falling into the water;
- objects that are observed leaving the sea and taking off;
- objects that do not enter or leave the water but rest, or sail, on the surface (usually landing or taking off).

After this initial period, the USO phenomenon went somewhat “below the radar” for many years, to return suddenly to the headlines with the US Navy pilots’ revelations in 2017.

Lastly, in order of publication, is Richard Dolan, who, at the beginning of 2025, published three books with a selection of about 650 USO sightings, including deep analysis of the cases, an extensive introduction on the phenomenon, and the methodology of study and classification.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in 2023, an SCU working group called “Project USO” was created. It meets periodically and specifically studies this phenomenon.

### **The USO changed the way in which UFOs were defined, turning the acronym into the UAP**

We can undoubtedly give at least partial credit to the USO for the acronym change from UFO to UAP and for the changed meaning of UAP. The now-famous sightings by US Navy pilots contributed to this.

Long remaining on the edge of the UFO topic, the issue of USOs took on unexpected relevance in 2017 when some of the sightings by US Navy military personnel were revealed, reporting “trans-media objects” capable of transitioning from the airborne to the underwater environment (and vice versa) as no known conventional aircraft would be able to do.

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<sup>2</sup> I. T. Sanderson, *Invisible Residents*. (World Publisher, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> Coral and Jim Lorenzen, *UFOs over the Americas*. (Signet Books, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> ref: <https://waterufo.net>

<sup>5</sup> Marco Bianchini, *UsoCat*, UPIAR edition, 1996 and 2003, Italy.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Dolan, *A history of USOs: unidentified submerged objects, vol. 1: Beginnings to 1969*. (Richard Dolan Press, USA, 2025).

Particularly interesting was the confirmation by the Pentagon press office in May 2021 that the filmed footage of a flying object sinking into the sea was a video taken by personnel in the command center of the battleship USS *Omaha* on July 15, 2019, during a series of sightings of “unidentified drones” that hovered at length around naval ships engaged in an exercise off the coast of California.<sup>7</sup> Their performances were described as unexpected and superior to that of normal drones.

The involvement of the seas and the Navy led to an unprecedented reversal—after being for decades exclusive to the Air Force, UFO sightings and related investigations were entrusted in 2021 to the US Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence. The acronym UAP also changed in meaning—no longer Unidentified *Aerial* Phenomena but Unidentified *Anomalous* Phenomena—thereby losing the historical connotation of air and flight. Symmetrically, the study commission set up in August 2020 by the US Department of Defense was renamed from UAP Task Force to AARO (All-domain Anomalies Resolution Office), where “All-domain” means “in the sky, in water, and in space.”

This was followed by public statements from military members or former members (including former US Navy Rear Admiral Tim Gallaudet, former head of the Navy's Oceanographic Department) that UAPs could pose a threat to the national security of the United States of America.<sup>8</sup>

USOs, therefore, are not, as some have tried to imply, unrelated to the UFO phenomenon, but rather are part of it, as are, for example, the many reports of close encounters of the third kind (observations of an entity associated with the object) or when a witness observes a UFO on the ground. Technically, a USO is not an “unidentified flying object,” but since time immemorial these reports have also been within the scope of our studies and have been catalogued by all international associations.

So, yes, USOs are for all intents and purposes part of the general UFO/UAP phenomenon.

### **Possible identifiable causes**

In this section, I divide sightings into four main categories:

- **A** (*objects completely submerged*) – Cases in this category are currently explained as natural phenomena like cetaceans, or as artificial phenomena such as submarines, torpedoes, or ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicles) navigating under the surface of water, or as those connected with the activity of divers.
- **B** (*objects entering in the water*) - The objects that enter into the water can be of any kind, but events are often explained as phenomena connected to weather forecasting, satellite fragments, probe balloons or part of them, parachutes, or airplanes, etc.
- **C** (*objects leaving the water*) – The third category is the one that creates big problems, as only two objects can come out of the water—missiles launched by submerged objects, and signal rockets, which do not come out of the sea but are launched from its surface, even though the optical effect is as if they are coming out of the water.

<sup>7</sup> G. Schwartz & T. Stelloh, “Leaked Navy Video Appears to show UFO Off California,” *NBC News*, May 17, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/leaked-navy-video-appears-show-u-f-o-california-coast-n1267688>

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Gallaudet, “Beneath the Surface,” SOL Foundation, 2024.

- **D** (*objects on the surface of the water*) – The objects of the fourth category are assigned to observation of cetaceans, such as whales when breathing, or to big fish that swim on the surface, and by boats or ships of any kind that are not recognized by the witness.

## Conclusions

It is ironic to write the title “conclusions” when the topic is UFO/UAP/USO because there is absolutely nothing conclusive in our field. What can we answer to the question, “what do we know after seventy-five years of ufology?” If the answer was simple, I probably would not be writing this article and you would not be reading it.

Seven decades of investigations and studies have not closed the debate on the subject of UFOs. More importantly, they have not provided an unambiguous answer on the existence and nature of what lies behind millions of sightings, despite the “certainties” flaunted by one or the other faction, between “believers” and “skeptics.” USOs are rightfully part of the UFO/UAP mystery, and it is undeniable that USOs are the focus of attention in the international ufological scene as never before.

But what is the conclusion? Simple—there is no conclusion. Not yet or perhaps there never will be. Perhaps that is the actual appeal of ufology: the constant questioning, the nurturing of the desire to know and of keeping curiosity alive.

In the July 2015 edition of *The SCU Review*, I will present some interesting cases involving the phenomenon of USOs.

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# HISTORY

## **The Threat Proposition: A Historical Summary of the US Intelligence Community and Its Response to UAP**

*By Dr. Joshua Pierson, MS, DSS*

**Introduction:** The intricate and evolving landscape of intelligence has long perplexed scholars and practitioners alike. The US Intelligence Community (USIC) has undergone profound transformations, responding to the shifting tides of global politics and security threats. From the nascent stages as a tool of strategic engagement during World War II to the calculated maneuvers throughout the Cold War and beyond, US intelligence efforts are pivotal in shaping national security policies. This essay embarks on a journey through the history of the USIC, tracing its roots from the enactment of the National Security Act of 1947. This landmark legislation was a response to the burgeoning need for a coordinated approach to intelligence and national defense. It established the Department of Defense (DoD), the National Security Council (NSC), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), thereby laying the foundation for a unified direction of the armed forces under civilian authority.

This history will cover events like the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, all of which have affected the structure and teaching methods of the USIC. These episodes underscore the importance of intelligence in informing policy decisions, influencing geopolitical strategies, and safeguarding national interests. Furthermore, the essay examines the USIC's role in the Global War on Terror and the ongoing strategic competition in the contemporary era. Through these explorations, the objective is to clarify the complexities and challenges inherent in intelligence work and to highlight the critical ways in which it continually evolves in response to emerging threats and opportunities.

**The National Security Act of 1947:** Prior to the Act, the War Department and the Navy Department both occupied the role as principal advisor to the president on military actions.<sup>1</sup> Coupled with the Office of Strategic Services Director and the Bureau acting as an advisor on foreign intelligence matters and the FBI advising on domestic intelligence matters, often information dominance ensued.<sup>2</sup> Looking to

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher M. Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*, Nachdr. (New York: HarperPerennial, 1998). Prior to the National Security Act of 1947, the Department of the Navy controlled Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) information gathering, analysis, and dissemination and was not situated to collaborate with the War Department on their information gathering efforts. These coordination issues between the branches created consternation with the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and with the Office of Strategic Services. Strategic intelligence information sharing often required leveraging personal relationships to ensure decision-makers were informed adequately.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Riebling, *Wedge: From Pearl Harbor to 9/11: How the Secret War between the FBI and CIA Has Endangered National Security*, 1st Touchstone ed., Updated with a new epilogue (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002, 2002). The FBI,

end the myriad of advisors who were not decision makers approaching the president and to federate organizational leadership to the executive cabinet members, the bill was introduced to the Senate.

Noticing the gaps in strategic management between the different service branches and the need for evaluated intelligence to reach the president, Congress passed the National Security Act of 1947. The act created the Department of Defense (DoD), elevated the head of the War Department to a Secretariat position in the White House Cabinet, and unified direction of the armed forces under civilian authority.<sup>3</sup> Also to alleviate the quantity of advisors seeking the president's ear with information deemed vital to the national defense, the act also created the National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The formation of the NSC standardized the process of briefing the President on national security issues and presenting response options.

The establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) mitigated the risk of a single individual, with access to all information gathered by members of the United States Intelligence Community (USIC), unduly influencing the president without appropriate external oversight. The NSC also created an equitable environment by instituting statutory requirements for council membership and granting the president the authority to appoint advisors. The CIA Director was tasked with coordinating intelligence activities and covert actions. The 1947 National Security Act also designated this role as the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). The DCI led the US Intelligence Community, overseeing all intelligence gathering and analysis efforts across various departments and organizations. The National Security Act of 1947 established a framework for a coordinated approach to addressing national security concerns, including during the Cold War, the Global War on Terror, and Strategic Competition. It also provided a mechanism to ensure that foreign intelligence entities cannot penetrate the White House and act as advisors to the president.<sup>4</sup>

Coinciding with the enactment of the National Security Act of 1947, two pivotal events in UAP history unfolded. The first—the Roswell incident—took place between June 4 and July 8, 1947, while the second—Kevin Arnold's sighting—occurred on June 24, 1947.<sup>5</sup> These two encounters set the stage for a disorganized and incoherent government response to the UAP problem. Shortly after the Arnold sighting in 1947, the US Air Force, charged with investigating the UAP problem and determining the threat to US National Security, sequentially established Projects SIGN, Grudge, and Blue Book. These three projects were all charged with a similar objective—determine if UAP posed a threat to US national security. Controversy surrounded Project SIGN due to its estimate of the situation in favor of the extraterrestrial hypothesis. Instead of expanding the operation, the USAF closed Project SIGN and replaced it with Project Grudge, which sought to rule out any hypotheses that were other than prosaic. Due to the bias in Project Grudge, the USAF then established Project Blue Book. Blue Book sought to determine

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under J. Edgar Hoover, would purposefully send foreign agents who the FBI knew were compromised to the OSS for possible recruitment. This dangerous game caused a serious rift between the two organizations.

<sup>3</sup> US Congress, "The National Security Act of 1947," Pub. L. No. 253, 17 (1947). <https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195385168/resources/chapter10/nsa/nsa.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> William Fowler, *British-American Relations, 1917-1918: The Role of Sir William Wiseman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969); Joshua Pierson, "Defining Intelligence and The History of the US Intelligence Community," *The SCU Review* 5.2, no. 17 (May 3, 2024): 26–33.

<sup>5</sup> Jerome Clark and Brad Sparks, *The UFO Encyclopedia: The Phenomenon from the Beginning*, 4th edition, vol. Volume 1: A-M, 2 vols. (Southfield, MI: Relevant Information, LLC, 2024); Jerome Clark and Brad Sparks, *The UFO Encyclopedia: The Phenomenon from the Beginning*, 4th edition, vol. Volume 2: N-Z, 2 vols. (Southfield, MI: Relevant Information, LLC, 2024).

the threat to US national security and used innovative information gathering, fusion, and analytical techniques.<sup>6</sup>

**The Cold War:** The end of World War II saw the advent of a new conflict that was fought in the shadows through intelligence activities and covert action. The United States and its allies competed with the Soviet Union for global influence. The US designed a policy of containment to remedy the Soviet threat. The NSC and US policymakers deciding on this policy did so because the intelligence gathered and analyzed indicated a coordinated and comprehensive effort of the Soviet Union to establish global hegemony.<sup>7</sup> During the Cold War, the United States Intelligence Community (USIC) focused its efforts on opposing a single entity and allocated resources to that effort. The clandestine espionage and covert influence operations conducted by the two principal actors persist in exerting a profound impact on the global geopolitical order.<sup>8</sup>

While the Cold War is filled with numerous historical episodes, three significant events stand out for their substantial influence on the structure and pedagogy of the United States Intelligence Community: the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Leading up to the Korean war, the NSC debated the merits of an expansion of CIA activities in Asia to address growing communist influence and agreed that the CIA needed to expand its psychological operations concurrently with an exponential increase in the DoD budget. These requests were captured in NSC-68.<sup>9</sup> During the Korean War, 1950-1953, the USIC coalesced around the establishment and execution of psychological operations and the use of covert action. The CIA attempted to dispatch influence and resistance agents into the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea (DPRK) with marginal success.<sup>10</sup> The psychological operations efforts were also not wholly effective. The Korean War offered an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the NSC and the DCI. Through the NSC, presidential findings were approved for covert action, DoD responded swiftly to communist aggression in the DPRK, and the parameters of psychological operations were established. Even though the outcomes of these acts were not wholly successful, the NSC offered a mechanism for the US to reduce strategic response timeframes, focusing on safeguarding national and strategic interests.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The efforts of Project Bluebook by fusing information gathered through Human Intelligence with technical efforts through the Air Force Technical Intelligence Center provides a model by which citizen scientists can apply to their UAP research efforts.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*; Christopher M. Andrew and Vasilij N. Mitrochin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*, 1st ed (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999); Christopher M. Andrew and Vasilij N. Mitrochin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2005). Debate rages, regarding the inception of the Cold War, as to whether the Soviets had a comprehensive strategy or if they were haphazardly acting and responding to perceptions of conflict.

<sup>8</sup> Kent Clizbe, *Willing Accomplices: How KGB Covert Influence Agents Created Political Correctness and Destroyed America* (El Monte California: Andemca Publishing, 2011); Thomas Rid, *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare* (New York, NY: Picador Paper, 2021); Andrew and Mitrochin, *The Sword and the Shield*; Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*.

<sup>9</sup> John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006); Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*. NSC 68 is entitled "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security." The document outlined the national security threat posed to the US by the 'hostile design' of the Soviet Union, which justified the budgetary increase and authority expansion of the DoD and the CIA.

<sup>10</sup> Prados, *Safe for Democracy*.

<sup>11</sup> During the advent of the Cold War, the US Air Force was duly charged with determining the national security threat posed by UAP. Projects Sign, Grudge, and Bluebook were ongoing efforts during the Korean War. 1952 was deemed to be the 'year of the UFO' as the phenomena was reported globally, notably servicemembers in Korea reported sightings during the

Reports of these phenomenal encounters spiked globally in 1952, marked as the “year of the UFO.”<sup>12</sup> The Intelligence Advisory Council (IAC) directed the Director of Central Intelligence to convene a panel.<sup>13</sup> The Robertson Panel, attempting to explain the reason for these encounters, sought to determine if UAP were either a US or Russian technological development or if they originated from another location. The panel drew four conclusions, all of which were considered definitive at the time. The panel found a lack of evidence pointing to a threat to US national security, UFOs [Note: The term UFOs and UAP are used interchangeably in this article.] were not worthy of further scientific inquiry, and UFOs were not of direct intelligence interest.<sup>14</sup> In the fourth conclusion, the Robertson Panel stated that UFO study has operational interest for three reasons: UFOs may interfere with air defense mechanisms; reports or sightings of UFOs could overwhelm current air defense observation nodes; and an adversary may execute a psychological effort aimed at diminishing the credibility of the US national security institution through the use of spurious reports of UFOs.<sup>15</sup>

The panel recommended that national security agencies engage in public education to support the identification of hostile intent and to actively debunk UFO reports. The debunk effort is arguably the primary driving factor behind the stigma in reporting UFO encounters.<sup>16</sup> As the Robertson Panel closed, any meaningful intelligence gathering and analysis by the USIC ended until the inception of the Advanced Aerospace Weapons System Applications Program (AAWSAP) in September 2008.<sup>17</sup> UAP was relegated to primarily a USAF and Department of Defense concern. Even though the USAF and the DOD are members of the USIC, the DCI and the NSC did not deem the UFO issue of needing scrutiny by policy makers and presidential administrations.

The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 offers unique insight into the use of intelligence to affect policy outcomes. The crisis began with imagery intelligence in the form of an aerial photo taken depicting intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) positioned in Cuba and the confirmation by a CIA source, Oleg Penkovsky, that the Soviet Union had, indeed, maneuvered missiles into Cuba.<sup>18</sup> Between the

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conflict (see Clark and Sparks, *The UFO Encyclopedia*, 4th Ed., 2024; Clark and Sparks, *The UFO Encyclopedia*, 4th Ed., 2024; Richard F. Haines, *Advanced Aerial Devices Reported during the Korean War* (Los Altos, Calif: LDA Press, 1990)).

<sup>12</sup> A driving factor for convening the panel was due to the Washington DC UFO Flap which occurred from 12-29 July 1952 (see Clark and Sparks, *The UFO Encyclopedia*, 4th Ed., 2024).

<sup>13</sup> The panel was named after Dr. Howard P. Robertson.

<sup>14</sup> Pierson, “Defining Intelligence and The History of the US Intelligence Community.” This reference provides the definition and purpose of intelligence. Stating something is not of direct intelligence interest means that the intelligence on the particular topic does not have any use to a policymaker to decide on plans of action, not that the topic lacks worthiness for research. The Robertson Panel, however, addressed scientific research in their second conclusion. Furthermore, the nomenclature “UFO” used here is to maintain consistency with the results of the Robertson Panel.

<sup>15</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Report of Meetings of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects Convened by Office of Scientific Intelligence, CIA,” Informational (Washington DC: Central Intelligence Agency, January 14, 1953). <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp81r00560r000100030027-0>. In 1952, if an adversary were to use UFOs as a venue for a campaign geared toward creating chaos, the effort would possibly include attempting to overwhelm law enforcement call center(s) with UFO reports coupled with articles published regarding the lack of a US response to the UFO issue. Technological breakthroughs now offer many venues for psychological operations efforts.

<sup>16</sup> Central Intelligence Agency.

<sup>17</sup> James Lacastki, Colm Kelleher, and George Knapp, *Skinwalkers at the Pentagon: An Insiders’ Account of the Secret Government UFO Program* (Henderson, NV: Personal Publishing, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Clarence Ashley, *CIA Spymaster* (Gretna: Pelican Pub. Co, 2004); Andrew, *For the President’s Eyes Only*. Penkovsky is arguably the most productive source the CIA ever managed. The human intelligence operation endured for three years and was managed by George Kisevalter, who is considered a CIA icon of HUMINT operations and activities. Penkovsky provided information that affirmed the missiles were not operational, which gave the Kennedy Administration the latitude to craft a strategic response and avoid catastrophe.

imagery intelligence and human intelligence activities undertaken, the intelligence analytical tradecraft rendered judgment as to the capability of the missiles in Cuba and the intent of the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup> During the tense 13 days, U2 spy planes continued to capture images of the missiles while members of the NSC engaged directly with the Soviet Union. The US Navy also conducted a harrowing flyover in F4 Phantom IIs.<sup>20</sup>

The Cuban Missile Crisis provides two impactful areas worthy of assessment. First, the NSC essentially marginalized the USIC by undertaking the role of direct communications with the Soviet Union, leaving the NSC and the president susceptible to foreign influence. Attorney General Robert Kennedy became the strategic negotiator through his contact, Georgi Bolshakov, a KGB officer.<sup>21</sup> Second, the USIC gathered relevant and timely information, conducted analysis and fusion, and inform the president to provide latitude in strategic response.<sup>22</sup>

As the Cold War progressed, two key events emerged that justified the need for intelligence efforts to focus on the UAP problem.<sup>23</sup> The first was a series of encounters in 1968 and 1969 at US nuclear weapons locations.<sup>24</sup> The Minot and Malmstrom Air Force bases, respectively, had a series of encounters with various types of UAP. These encounters at times were observed by USAF personnel and captured on technical information-gathering devices. As these encounters progressed, the observers reported evidence of tampering with the security mechanisms in the vicinity of the missile silos. Furthermore, testimonial and demonstrative evidence indicates that a disruption to the US ICBM capability occurred concurrently during the presence of a UAP.<sup>25</sup> These two validated flaps at Minot and Malmstrom Air Force bases further lend credence to the need for USIC analytical tradecraft to better define the threat proposition to US national security.

The second event occurred on Sept. 18, 1976, in Tehran, Iran. Reports from Tehran's airport control tower were made regarding a multicolored UAP at 6,000 feet above ground level. Although both military members and civilians observed the phenomenon, radar systems were unable to detect it. The Iranian Air Force then dispatched an F4 jet to intercept the UAP. As the aircraft approached, the instrumentation and communications avionics ceased operations. The F4 was unable to get within 20 miles

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<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Lockwood and Kathleen Lockwood, *The Russian View of US Strategy* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009). Nascent intelligence analytical tradecraft at the time consisted of alternative analysis and mirror imaging. These two forms of analytical tradecraft proved ineffective over time.

<sup>20</sup> US Air Force, "1962 - Cuban Missile Crisis," Military, Air Force Historical Support Division, 2025. <https://www.afhistory.af.mil/FAQs/Fact-Sheets/Article/458954/1962-cuban-missile-crisis/>.

<sup>21</sup> Clizbe, *Willing Accomplices: How KGB Covert Influence Agents Created Political Correctness and Destroyed America*; Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*. The debate rages as to whether this 'back channel' was needed to resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis. The negotiated strategic settlement was the US would remove missiles from Turkey and the Soviet Union would remove the missiles from Cuba. Although viewed as a victory, within the USIC, this deal is viewed with circumspection because Robert Kennedy was in contact with a KGB agent and was not receptive to vetting or training on how to handle a KGB agent.

<sup>22</sup> The USAF continued efforts with Project Blue Book, which culminated in the *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects* (The Condon Report). This report sparked controversy as Condon's findings articulated that UFOs were not worthy of scientific study and posed no threat to US national security. The Condon Report reviewed the 12,618 cases reported to Project Blue Book, of which 706 were deemed "unidentified" (see Peter Sturrock, *The UFO Enigma. A Review of the Physical Evidence* (New York, NY: Hachette Book Group, 1999)).

<sup>23</sup> The nomenclature "UAP" is used here to maintain consistency with the current name of the phenomenal anomalies observed.

<sup>24</sup> Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies, "10 Month Report" (Las Vegas, July 30, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Robert L Hastings, *UFOs & Nukes: Extraordinary Encounters at Nuclear Weapons Sites*, 2nd ed. (AuthorHouse, 2017).

of the UAP.<sup>26</sup> Although the Iranian Air Force formally notified the US Intelligence Community and the National Security Council, only cursory inquiry ever occurred.

These two incidents serve as a guiding principle indicating the need for USIC involvement in gaining insight into the threat posed to US national security. Minot and Malmstrom serve as a sample of consistent occurrences at US nuclear weapons locations. UAP observations at nuclear sites continued into the 1990s with no discernable concern by the USIC, the US National Security Council, or the Department of Defense.<sup>27</sup> The 1976 Iranian F4 UAP issue further perplexed members of government, yet no effort occurred that addressed these issues. Throughout the Cold War, the UAP issue remained in relative obscurity within government entities.

Arguably the most impactful USIC operation conducted during the Cold War and authorized by a presidential finding was the arming of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan during the Soviet Occupation that began in 1979.<sup>28</sup> The Soviet Union established a puppet communist government in Kabul in 1979 and sought to pacify the population through the use of force.<sup>29</sup> The CIA established Operation Cyclone and orchestrated dispatching various arms packages through various strategic partners. Specifically, the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI) were responsible for delivering the packages to the Mujahideen. The ISI, unchecked in their relationships with the Mujahideen, named the Taliban, a global jihadi fundamentalist organization, as their partner of choice.<sup>30</sup> The arming of the Mujahideen, which was a covert action the CIA coordinated, also provided a venue to understand adversarial capabilities and intent. Through the venue provided by Operation Cyclone, the USIC learned the fitness of the Army of the Soviet Union, which offered insight into the failing state of affairs within the Soviet Politburo.<sup>31</sup>

**The Global War on Terror and Strategic Competition:** The provision of arms to the Mujahideen during the 1980s significantly affected the strategic landscape encountered by the United States prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the subsequent military engagements in Afghanistan. Arming the Mujahideen in Afghanistan set the conditions for CIA and US Special Operations infiltration after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The adversaries who orchestrated the attack were so keenly aware of the relationships established during the Afghanistan Civil War that they planned and executed an assassination operation on Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance.<sup>32</sup> Massoud's influence was so significant that Al-Qaida recognized his removal would lead to considerable complications with any external involvement in Afghanistan post-9/11. In response to 9/11, the CIA, under a presidential finding, coordinated and infiltrated Afghanistan into the Panjshir Valley. US Army Special Forces Teams followed shortly thereafter.

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<sup>26</sup> Clark and Sparks, *The UFO Encyclopedia*, 4th Ed., 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Hastings, *UFOs & Nukes*.

<sup>28</sup> Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, Penguin Politics Current Events (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

<sup>29</sup> Coll.

<sup>30</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009); Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, 2nd ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). The shortsightedness of US Foreign Relations Policy is at the forefront of Rashid's work. The USIC was aware and advised the NSC of the growing concern with the ISI primarily arming a global jihadi organization.

<sup>31</sup> Coll, *Ghost Wars*; Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way*; Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*.

<sup>32</sup> Coll, *Ghost Wars*. Massoud was the leader of the resistance movement opposing the Soviets and global jihadis operating in Afghanistan. He maintained his independence and affirmed Afghanistan's national sovereignty in his dealings with various nation-state partners, including the US. Two years after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union dissolved.

The attack on 9/11 was an intelligence failure. The CIA and the FBI did not share information on the cell planning to conduct the attack. Furthermore, the CIA had details stating that members supporting the team who executed the aircraft hijacking were traversing within the US and opted to not share the details with the FBI.<sup>33</sup> These failings led to the attack and subsequent 9/11 Commission.

The commission found that the role of the DCI placed the CIA director in a tenuous and unmanageable position. Oversight and coordination of all intelligence activities across the USIC was an overwhelming task that required one director. Furthermore, the coordination of foreign and domestic intelligence activities was severely lacking. Two acts—the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 and the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004—expanded USIC information-gathering authority within the homeland, established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, established the Department of Homeland Security and Intelligence Fusion Centers within each of the 50 states.

These efforts ensured communication and coordination across the 17 members of the USIC and were responsible for the marginalization of global terrorist organizations.<sup>34</sup> However, as the USIC focused its efforts on the global jihadi terrorist threat, the traditional foreign adversaries were flexing their collective capabilities. The USIC currently works to address the various threat vectors posed by adversarial efforts to penetrate US cultural, media, political, and technological domains. Within the cultural, media, and political domain, the advent of Social Media has expanded the reach of Soviet covert influence efforts while the People's Republic of China focuses its efforts on intellectual property procurement.<sup>35</sup> The USIC has now pivoted to focus on these efforts to undermine American constitutional values and technological efforts.

Arguably the most explosive UAP encounter on record occurred in 2004. While conducting training off the coast of Catalina Island, the USS *Nimitz* Carrier Battle Group encountered phenomena described as having a tic-tac shape. During an interview, the Senior Chief responsible for radar on the USS *Princeton*, Kevin Day, said “it was raining UFOs” to describe the numerous radar contacts.<sup>36</sup> These encounters, coupled with the UAP appearing at the Combat Air Patrol (CAP) point and capturing images on a forward-looking infrared camera and on radar, obliged the US government to act. In 2008, the US government, compelled by Senator Harry Reid, established AAWSAP.<sup>37</sup> Yet, even though US military aircraft and air defense systems were tracking UAP and establishing that UAP, at a minimum, posed a risk to flight safety, the US government did not establish a coordinated effort to address these concerns.

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<sup>33</sup> Ali H. Soufan, Daniel Freedman, and Adrian Kitzinger, *The Black Banners: The inside Story of 9/11 and the War against al-Qaeda*, 1st ed (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2011). Ali Soufan is a former FBI Agent who interrogated Abu Zubaydah, Fahd al-Quso, and other high-profile Al-Qaida operatives. He describes his model and method of interrogation in this work, none of which included enhanced methods.

<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey Richelson, *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, Seventh edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2016). In 2004, 18 members comprised the USIC. The most recent addition is the US Space Force, bringing the total to 19 members.

<sup>35</sup> Scott Tosi, “Steal the Firewood from Under the Pot; The Role of Intellectual Property Theft in Chinese Global Strategy,” *Military Review* September-October 2020 (2020): 15. The PRC steals between approximately \$225 billion and \$600 billion annually.

<sup>36</sup> “Raining UFOs,” *Unidentified: Inside America's UFO Investigation* (History Channel, 2020). <https://www.history.com/shows/unidentified-inside-americas-ufo-investigation>.

<sup>37</sup> Harry Reid, “Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program to DSD William Lynn III” (United States Senate, June 24, 2009). AAWSAP and AATIP are the same program according to numerous sources. AAWSAP/AATIP evolved into the UAP Task Force (UAPTF). When DOD sunset the UAPTF, Congress legislated the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office.

Compelling action on the UAP problem required several whistleblowers to emerge and testify before the legislative branch developed a bill that created the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO).

**Conclusion:** The history of the USIC is an integral part of US history. The USIC traces its inception to the Culper Spy Ring and Benjamin Tallmadge's management during the Revolutionary War. The viewpoint of the executive branch and Congress was that espionage and intelligence activities were only necessary during times of war. Furthermore, these two branches of government affirmed informally that intelligence was a tool of officers that did not require synergetic management and integration. During the 1920s, the US had to pivot from looking at intelligence as purely a wartime function to an enduring necessity due to British penetration of the executive branch of government and Soviet clandestine influence operations. The professionalization of the USIC evolved incrementally and often as a response to a national security concern. The current state of the USIC, which is comprised of 19 members, directly results from the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the need to reconcile adversarial penetration of US cultural and technological domains.

The USIC has a complex relationship the UAP issue. The purpose of the USIC is to provide corroborated and fused intelligence to policymakers to make decisions. While the USIC evolved, it abruptly ceased conducting inquiry into UAP. In 1969, the Condon Report ended any meaningful study of UAP and any investigation to determine risks to national security. The 2004 Nimitz encounter once again opened government inquiry into UAP as a national security problem. The Nimitz encounter influenced the creation of a series of programs culminating in AARO.

AARO, at this time, focuses the majority of its efforts on identifying and reconciling phenomenal objects reported by members of DoD and the USIC. These identification and resolution efforts are akin to previous government UAP research efforts except that civilian reports are not actively pursued at this time. However, the difference now is that AARO is also looking at the possible national security implications of UAP presence with active participation by all DoD and USIC agencies.<sup>38</sup>

UAP are phenomenal and have consistent occurrences for at least the past 80 years, therefore government entities should consider developing a response plan in the event UAP initiates ontological shock. This response plan should integrate leading experts in national security, citizen science, and law enforcement who can frame the necessary requirements for implementation across geographical and social boundaries.

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<sup>38</sup> The difference between determining the threat proposition to US National Security and assessing implications is even though AARO is not a member of the USIC, it has a role within the USIC. Information gathered through AARO's techniques is fused within the greater intelligence processing and cycle within the USIC. Unlike previous efforts where organizations conducted investigations into UAP-related encounters and restricted information sharing, AARO's information is part of the intelligence analytical process. In reviewing the primary sources related to Projects Grudge, Sign, and Blue Book, none of these other projects sought to effectively and holistically analyze UAP-related information and sources. The author has not encountered any testimonial, demonstrative, or physical evidence that reports ATIC analyzed were fused with the USIC to determine if a foreign actor is possibly presenting a new technology.

# POTPOURRI

## Interesting Tidbits and Rabbit Holes to Travel Down

*By Robert Powell*

The National Archives maintains a dedicated section on its website for records related to UAP. The intelligence agencies and military services have been requested to send their UAP files to the National Archives as they come across them. Here's the link: [archives.gov/research/topics/uaps](https://www.archives.gov/research/topics/uaps).

Here are more rabbit holes for those who love finding historical documents:

[CIA](#) [NSA](#) [FBI](#) [UFO Reading Center](#) [GEIPAN](#) [UFO Casebook](#)

For those who love reading, you can't go wrong with Dr. Michael Swords' blog [The Big Study](#). He writes about everything from UFOs to cryptozoology to the paranormal world. There's something there for everyone and it's written by a professor of science history.

Here is an interesting article in the *Debrief* from fellow SCU contributing member, Chris Mellon. Chris's article discusses whether the government might release their UAP videos in the future: <https://thedebrief.org/will-the-declassification-task-force-or-president-trump-compel-dod-to-release-its-trove-of-unclassified-uap-videos/>.

Can UFOs be summoned or signaled? The group Skywatcher claims they will scientifically investigate this possibility. They discuss this in their video with the heading, [Skywatcher Part II: Mapping the Unknown](#). Is this a play for media attention or is there something to this? Let us know your thoughts and we will publish them in a future edition of *The SCU Review*.

*The SCU Review* welcomes submissions of up to 2,000 words, including but not limited to the following categories: UAP research briefs, letters to the editor, current events, historical perspectives, original essays, cases that represent significant sightings, and sci-fi stories. Please submit your document in MSWord or equivalent, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, with page numbers, and include a title, your name, date, and contact info in the document itself. Provide full citations, in footnotes at the bottom of the page, for any sources you reference. Each figure needs a caption that provides sufficient information for it to stand alone. Please email [ExploringSCU@gmail.com](mailto:ExploringSCU@gmail.com) if you have any questions or would like to submit an article.

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