

The Pentagon UFOs - 2004, 2014, 2015, 2019, 2022

The **Pentagon UFO videos** are selected visual recordings of cockpit instrumentation displays from United States Navy fighter jets based aboard aircraft carriers USS *Nimitz* and USS *Theodore Roosevelt* in 2004, 2014 and 2015, with additional footage taken by other Navy personnel in 2019. The four videos, widely characterized as officially documenting UFOs, have received extensive coverage in the media since 2017. The Pentagon later addressed and officially released the first three videos of unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) in 2020, and confirmed the provenance of the leaked 2019 videos in two statements made in 2020.

Below, are the original three videos that were leaked and later confirmed by the Pentagon.

US Navy "Go Fast" Video
US Navy "Gimbal" Video
US Navy "FLIR1" Video

The Events Leading up to the Pentagon UFO Video Disclosure

National Press Club - 2001

On May 9, 2001, Steven M. Greer took the lectern at the National Press Club, in Washington, D.C., in pursuit of the truth about unidentified flying objects. Greer, an emergency-room physician in Virginia and an outspoken ufologist, believed that the government had long withheld from the

American people its familiarity with alien visitations. He had founded the Disclosure Project in 1993 in an attempt to penetrate the sanctums of conspiracy. Greer's reckoning that day featured some twenty speakers. He provided, in support of his claims, a four-hundred-and-ninety-two-page dossier called the "Disclosure Project Briefing Document." For public officials too busy to absorb such a vast tract of suppressed knowledge, Greer had prepared a ninety-five-page "Executive Summary of the Disclosure Project Briefing Document." After some throat-clearing, the "Executive Summary" began with "A Brief Summary," which included a series of bullet points outlining what amounted to the greatest secret in human history.

Over several decades, according to Greer, untold numbers of alien craft had been observed in our planet's airspace; they were able to reach extreme velocities with no visible means of lift or propulsion, and to perform stunning maneuvers at g-forces that would turn a human pilot to soup. Some of these extraterrestrial spaceships had been

“downed, retrieved and studied since at least the 1940s and possibly as early as the 1930s.”

Efforts to reverse engineer such extraordinary machines had led to “significant technological breakthroughs in energy generation.” These operations had mostly been classified as “cosmic top secret,” a tier of clearance “thirty-eight levels” above that typically granted to the Commander-in-Chief. Why, Greer asked, had such transformative technologies been hidden for so long? This was obvious. The “social, economic and geo-political order of the world” was at stake.

Greer's “Executive Summary” was woolly, but discerning readers could find within it answers to many of the most frequently asked questions about U.F.O.s—assuming, as Greer did, that U.F.O.s are helmed by extraterrestrials. Why are they so elusive? Because the aliens are monitoring us. Why? Because they are discomfited by our aspiration to “weaponize space.” Have we shot at them? Yes. Should we shoot at them? No. Really? Yes. Why not? They're friendly. How do we know?

“Obviously, any civilization capable of routine interstellar travel could terminate our civilization in a nanosecond, if that was their intent. That we are still breathing the free air of Earth is abundant testimony to the non-hostile nature of these ET civilizations.”

At the press conference, Greer appeared in thin-framed glasses, a baggy, funereal suit, and a red tie askew in a starched collar. “I know many in the media would like to talk about ‘little green men,’ ” he said. “But, in reality, the subject is laughed at because it is so serious. I have had grown men weep, who are in the Pentagon, who are members of Congress, and who have said to me, ‘What are we going to do?’ Here is what we will do. We will see that this matter is properly disclosed.”

Among the other speakers was Clifford Stone, a retired Army sergeant, who purported to have visited crash sites and seen aliens, both dead and alive. Stone said that he had catalogued fifty-seven species, many of them humanoid. “You have individuals that look very much like you and myself, that could walk among us and you wouldn’t even notice the difference,” he said.

Leslie Kean, an independent investigative journalist and a novice U.F.O. researcher who had worked with Greer, watched the proceedings with unease. She had recently published an article in the Boston *Globe* about a new omnibus of compelling evidence concerning U.F.O.s, and she couldn’t understand why a speaker would make an unsupported assertion about alien cadavers when he could be talking about hard data. To Kean, the corpus of genuinely baffling reports deserved scientific scrutiny, regardless of how you felt about aliens. “There were some good people at that conference, but some of them were making outrageous, grandiose claims,” Kean said. “I knew then that I had to walk away.” Greer had hoped that members of the media would cover the event, and they did, with frolicsome derision. He also hoped that Congress would hold hearings. By all accounts, it did not.

After the Press Conference

In the years after the press conference, the expected announcement was apparently postponed by the events of September 11th, the War on Terror, and the financial crisis. In 2009, Greer issued a “Special Presidential Briefing for President Barack Obama,” in which he claimed that the inaction of Obama’s predecessors had “led to an unacknowledged crisis that will be the greatest of your Presidency.” Obama’s response remains unknown, but in 2011 ufologists filed two petitions with the White House, to which the Office of Science and Technology Policy responded that it could find no evidence to suggest that any “extraterrestrial presence has contacted or engaged any member of the human race.”

A Change in Perception

The government may not have been in regular touch with exotic civilizations, but it had been keeping something from its citizens. By 2017, Kean was the author of a best-selling U.F.O. book and was known for what she has termed, borrowing from the political scientist Alexander Wendt, a “militantly agnostic” approach to the phenomenon. On December 16th of that year, in a front-page story in the Times, Kean, together with two Times journalists, revealed that the Pentagon had been running a surreptitious U.F.O. program for ten years. The article included two videos, recorded by the Navy, of what were being described in official channels as “unidentified aerial phenomena,” or U.A.P. In blogs and on podcasts, ufologists began referring to “December, 2017” as shorthand for the moment the taboo began to lift. Joe Rogan, the popular podcast host, has often mentioned the article, praising Kean’s work as having precipitated a cultural shift. “It’s a dangerous subject for someone, because you’re open to ridicule,” he said, in an episode this spring. But now “you could say, ‘Listen, this is not something to be mocked anymore—there’s something to this.’ ”

Since then, high-level officials have publicly conceded their bewilderment about U.A.P. without shame or apology. Last July, Senator Marco Rubio, the former acting chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence, spoke on CBS News about mysterious flying objects in restricted airspace. “We don’t know what it is,” he said, “and it isn’t ours.” In December, in a video interview

with the economist Tyler Cowen, the former C.I.A. director John Brennan admitted, somewhat tortuously, that he didn't quite know what to think:

“Some of the phenomena we're going to be seeing continues to be unexplained and might, in fact, be some type of phenomenon that is the result of something that we don't yet understand and that could involve some type of activity that some might say constitutes a different form of life.”

Last summer, David Norquist, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, announced the formal existence of the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force. The 2021 Intelligence Authorization Act, signed this past December, stipulated that the government had a hundred and eighty days to gather and analyze data from disparate agencies. Its report is expected in June. In a recent interview with Fox News, John Ratcliffe, the former director of National Intelligence, emphasized that the issue was no longer to be taken lightly. “When we talk about sightings,” he said, “we are talking about objects that have been seen by Navy or Air Force pilots, or have been picked up by satellite imagery, that frankly engage in actions that are difficult to explain, movements that are hard to replicate, that we don't have the technology for, or are travelling at speeds that exceed the sound barrier without a sonic boom.”

The Center for American Progress

In June of 2011, John Podesta invited Leslie Kean to make a confidential presentation at a think tank he founded, the Center for American Progress. Standing alongside a physicist from Johns Hopkins University and foreign military figures, Kean advised the audience—officials from NASA, the Pentagon, and the Department of Transportation, along with congressional staff and retired intelligence officials—that the challenge was “to undo fifty years of reinforcement of U.A.P. as folklore and pseudoscience.”

Podesta told Kean, “It wasn't a bunch of people coming in looking like they were going to a 'Star Wars'-memorabilia convention—it was serious people from the national-security arena who wanted answers to these unexplained phenomena.” Soon after the event, he said, a Democratic senator invited him for a meeting. “I thought it was going to be on food stamps and tax cuts or whatever, and the door closed and they said, ‘I don't want anybody to know this, but I'm really interested in U.F.O.s, and I know you are, too. So what do you know?’ ”

The White House

In August, 2014, Kean visited the West Wing to meet again with Podesta, who was by then an adviser to President Obama. She had scaled down her request, proposing that a single individual in the Office of Science and Technology Policy be assigned to handle the issue. Nothing came of it. She was, however, a well-known figure on the international U.F.O. circuit and had a cordial relationship with the Chilean government's Comité de Estudios de Fenómenos Aéreos Anómalos (CEFAA). She had begun breaking stories from its case files with an atypical recklessness. Kean's work from this period, mostly published on the Huffington Post, shows signs of agitation and

evangelism. In March of 2012, she wrote an article called “UFO Caught on Tape Over Santiago Air Base,” which referred to a video provided by CEFAA. Kean described the video as showing “a dome-shaped, flat-bottomed object with no visible means of propulsion . . . flying at velocities too high to be man-made.” there were always other cases. Hynek, in “The UFO Experience,” had contended that U.F.O. sightings represented a phenomenon that had to be taken in aggregate—hundreds upon hundreds of incredible stories told by credible people.

Robert Bigelow

Robert Bigelow was three years old in the spring of 1947, when his grandparents were almost run off the road by a glowing object in the mountains northwest of Las Vegas. The Nevada desert of the early atomic age was one of the few places a child could see nuclear tests or rocket launches from his back yard, and Bigelow’s dreams of space exploration commingled with his curiosity about U.F.O.s. In the late nineteen-sixties, when he was in his early twenties, he began to invest in real estate—first in Las Vegas, then across the Southwest—and eventually he made a fortune with Budget Suites of America, a chain of extended-stay motels. Later, he founded a private company, Bigelow Aerospace, to build inflatable astronaut habitats. In 1995, he established the National Institute for Discovery Science, which described itself as “a privately funded science institute engaged in research of aerial phenomena, animal mutilations, and other related anomalous phenomena.” Among the consultants he hired was Hal Puthoff, whose work in paranormal studies dated back decades, to Project Stargate, a C.I.A. program to investigate how “remote viewing,” a form of long-distance E.S.P., might be useful in Cold War espionage. The next year, Bigelow purchased Skinwalker Ranch, a four-hundred-and-eighty-acre parcel a few hours southeast of Salt Lake City, named for a shape-shifting Navajo witch. Its previous owners had described being driven away by coruscating spheres, exsanguinated cattle, and wolflike creatures impervious to gunshots. In 2004, in the wake of a purported decrease in domestic paranormal activity, Bigelow shut down his institute, but he kept the ranch.

In 2007, Bigelow received a letter from a senior official at the Defense Intelligence Agency who was curious about Skinwalker. Bigelow connected him to an old friend from the Nevada desert, Senator Harry Reid, who was then the Senate Majority Leader, and the two men met to discuss their common interest in U.F.O.s. The D.I.A. official later visited Skinwalker, where, from a double-wide observation trailer on site, he is said to have had a spectral encounter; as one Bigelow affiliate described it, he saw a “topological figure” that “appeared in mid-air” and “went from pretzel-shaped to Möbius-strip-shaped.”

Bigelow believes, as one source put it to me, that “there are aliens walking around at the supermarket.” According to an article by MJ Banias, on the Web site the Debrief, Bigelow hired investigators to look into reports at Skinwalker of doglike creatures who smelled of sulfur and goblins with long, pendulous arms, as well as U.F.O. activity near Mt. Shasta. The program appears to have produced little more than a series of thirty-eight papers, all unclassified except one, about the kind of technology a U.F.O. might exploit—including work on the theoretical viability of warp drives and “spacetime metric engineering.” Bigelow’s researchers, convinced that crash debris was being hidden in some remote hangar, wanted access to the government’s classified data on U.F.O.s. In June, 2009, Senator Reid filed a request that the program be awarded “restricted special access program,” or *SAP*, status. The following month, *BAASS* issued a four-hundred-and-ninety-

four-page “Ten Month Report.” The portions of the report that were leaked to Tim McMillan were almost exclusively about U.F.O.s, and the information provided was not limited to mere sightings; it included a photo of a supposed tracking device that supposed aliens had supposedly implanted in a supposed abductee. As one former government official said, “The report arrived here and I read the whole thing and immediately concluded that releasing it would be a disaster.” In November, 2009, the Defense Department peremptorily denied the request for *SAP* status.

AATIP

Reid reached out to Senator Ted Stevens, of Alaska, who believed he’d seen a U.F.O. as a pilot in the Second World War, and Senator Daniel Inouye, of Hawaii. In the 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Bill, twenty-two million dollars of so-called black money was set aside for a new program. The Pentagon was not enthusiastic. As one former intelligence official put it, “There were some government officials who said, ‘We shouldn’t be doing this, this is really ridiculous, this is a waste of money.’ ” He went on, “And then Reid would call them out of a meeting and say, ‘I want you to be doing this. This was appropriated.’ It was sort of like a joke that bordered on an annoyance and people worried that if this all came out, that the government was spending money on this, this will be a bad story.”

The Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications Program was announced in a public solicitation for bids to examine the future of warfare. U.F.O.s were not mentioned, but according to Reid the subtext was clear. Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies, or *BAASS*, a Bigelow Aerospace subsidiary, was the only bidder. When Bigelow won the government contract, he contacted the same cohort of paranormal investigators he’d worked with at his institute. Other participants were recruited from within the Pentagon’s ranks.

Luis Elizondo

In 2008, Luis Elizondo, a longtime counterintelligence officer working in the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, was visited by two people who asked him what he thought about U.F.O.s. He replied that he didn’t think about them, which was apparently the correct answer, and he was asked to join.

Soon afterward, Elizondo, the counterintelligence officer, was asked to take over the program. Beginning in 2010, he turned an outsourced study of Utah cryptids into the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program, or AATIP, an in-house effort that focussed on the national-security implications of military U.A.P. encounters. According to Elizondo, the program studied a number of incidents in depth, including what later became known as the “Nimitz encounter.”

The Nimitz Carrier Strike Group was conducting training operations in restricted waters off the coast of San Diego and Baja California in November of 2004, when the advanced SPY-1 radar on one of the ships, the U.S.S. Princeton, began to register some strange presences. They were logged as high as eighty thousand feet, and as low as the ocean’s surface. After about a week of radar observations, Commander David Fravor, a graduate of the elite Topgun fighter-pilot school and the commanding officer of the Black Aces squadron, was sent on an intercept mission. As he approached the location, he looked down and saw a roiling shoal in the water and, hovering above

it, a white oval object that resembled a large Tic Tac. He estimated it to be about forty feet long, with no wings or other obvious flight surfaces and no visible means of propulsion. It appeared to bounce around like a Ping-Pong ball. Two other pilots, one seated behind him and one in a nearby plane, gave similar accounts. Fravor descended to chase the object, which reacted to his maneuvers before departing abruptly at high speed. Upon Fravor's return to the Nimitz, another pilot, Chad Underwood, was dispatched to follow up with more advanced sensory equipment. His aircraft's targeting pod recorded a video of the object. The clip, known as "FLIR1"—for "forward-looking infrared," the technology used to capture the incident—features one minute and sixteen seconds of a blurry ashen dot against a gunmetal background; in the final few seconds, the dot appears to outwit the FLIR track and make a rapid getaway.

Elizondo's exposure to cases like the Nimitz encounter convinced him that U.A.P.s were real, but the government's willingness to invest resources in the issue remained uncertain. Elizondo tried repeatedly to brief General James Mattis, the Secretary of Defense, about AATIP's research, and was blocked by underlings. (General Mattis's personal assistant at the time does not recall being approached by Elizondo.)

On October 4, 2017, at the behest of Christopher K. Mellon, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Leslie Kean was called to a confidential meeting in the bar of an upscale hotel near the Pentagon. She was greeted by Hal Puthoff, the longtime paranormal investigator, and Jim Semivan, a retired C.I.A. officer, who introduced her to a sturdy, thick-necked, tattooed man with a clipped goatee named Luis Elizondo. The previous day had been his last day of work at the Pentagon. Over the next three hours, Kean was taken through documents that proved the existence of what was, as far as anyone knew, the first government inquiry into U.F.O.s since the close of Project Blue Book, in 1970. The program that Kean had spent years lobbying for had existed the whole time.

After Elizondo resigned, he and other key AATIP participants—including Mellon, Puthoff, and Semivan—almost immediately joined To the Stars Academy of Arts & Science, an operation dedicated to U.F.O.-related education, entertainment, and research, and organized by Tom DeLonge, a former front man of the pop-punk outfit Blink-182. Later that month, DeLonge invited Elizondo onstage at a launch event. Elizondo announced that they were

“ planning to provide never-before-released footage from real U.S. government systems—not blurry amateur photos but real data and real videos.”

Kean was told that she could have the videos, along with chain-of-custody documentation, if she could place a story in the Times. Kean soon developed doubts about DeLonge, after he appeared on Joe Rogan's podcast to discuss his belief that what crashed at Roswell was a reverse-engineered U.F.O. built in Argentina by fugitive Nazi scientists, but she had full confidence in Elizondo. "He had incredible gravitas," Kean told me. She called Ralph Blumenthal, an old friend and a former Times staffer at work on a biography of the Harvard psychiatrist and alien-abduction researcher John Mack; Blumenthal e-mailed Dean Baquet, the paper's executive editor, to say that they wanted to pitch "a sensational and highly confidential time-sensitive story" in which a "senior U.S. intelligence

official who abruptly quit last month” had decided to expose “a deeply secret program, long mythologized but now confirmed.” After a meeting with representatives from the Washington, D.C., bureau, the Times agreed. The paper assigned a veteran Pentagon correspondent, Helene Cooper, to work with Kean and Blumenthal.

The New York Times Reveal

The New York Times

Glowing Auras and ‘Black Money’: The Pentagon’s Mysterious U.F.O. Program

By HELENE COOPER, RALPH BLUMENTHAL and LESLIE KEAN DEC. 16, 2017



On Saturday, December 16, 2017, the story—“Glowing Auras and ‘Black Money’: The Pentagon’s Mysterious U.F.O. Program”—appeared online; it was printed on the front page the next day. Accompanying the piece were two videos, including “FLIR1.” Senator Reid was quoted as saying, “I’m not embarrassed or ashamed or sorry I got this going.” The Pentagon confirmed that the program had existed, but said that it had been closed down in 2012, in favor of other funding priorities. Elizondo claimed that the program had continued in the absence of dedicated funding. The article dwelled not on the reality of the U.F.O. phenomenon—the only actual case discussed at any length was the Nimitz encounter—but on the existence of the covert initiative. The Times article drew millions of readers. Kean noticed a change almost immediately. When people asked her at dinner parties what she did for a living, they no longer giggled at her response but fell rapt. Kean gave all the credit to Elizondo and Mellon for coming forward, but she told me, “I never would have ever imagined I could have ended up writing for the Times. It’s the pinnacle of everything I’ve ever wanted to do—just this miracle that it happened on this great road, great journey.”

It was hard to tell, however, what exactly AATIP had accomplished. Elizondo went on to host the History Channel docuseries “Unidentified,” in which he solemnly invokes his security oath like a catchphrase. He insisted to me that AATIP had made important strides in understanding the “five observables” of U.A.P. behavior—including “gravity-defying capabilities,” “low observability,” and “transmedium travel.”

Widespread fascination with the idea that the government cared about U.F.O.s had inspired the government at last to care about U.F.O.s.

The Aftermath

Within a month of the Times article’s publication, the Pentagon’s U.A.P. portfolio was reassigned to a civilian intelligence official with a rank equivalent to that of a two-star general. He channelled the cascade of media interest to argue that, without a process to handle uncategorizable observations, rigid bureaucracies would overlook anything that didn’t follow a standard pattern. At the height of the Cold War, the government had worried that the noise of lurid phantasmagoria might drown out signals relevant to national security, or even provide cover for adversarial incursions; now, it seemed, the concern was that valuable intelligence wasn’t being reported. (The Nimitz encounter didn’t become subject to official investigation until years after the incident, when an errant file landed on the desk of someone who decided that it merited pursuit.) “What we needed,” the former Pentagon official said, “was something like the post-9/11 fusion centers, where a D.O.D. guy can talk to an F.B.I. guy and an N.R.O. guy—everything we learned from the 9/11 Commission.”

In the summer of 2018, Elizondo’s successor made this case to members of Congress. According to the former Pentagon official, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee inserted language into the classified annex of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, passed in August of 2018, that obligated the Pentagon to continue the investigations. “The U.A.P. issue is being taken very seriously now even compared to where it was two or three years ago,” the former Pentagon official said.

The activity intensified. In April of 2019, the Navy revised its official guidelines for pilots, encouraging them to report U.A.P.s without fear of scorn or censure. In June, Senator Mark Warner, of Virginia, admitted that he had been briefed on the U.A.P. matter. In September, a spokesperson for the Navy announced that the “FLIR1” video, along with two videos associated with sightings off the East Coast in 2015, showed “incursions into our military training ranges by unidentified aerial phenomena.”

The point of using the term “unidentified,” he said, was “to help remove the stigma.” He said, “At some point, we needed to just admit that there are things in the sky we can’t identify.” Despite the fact that most adults carry around exceptionally good camera technology in their pockets, most U.F.O. photos and videos remain maddeningly indistinct, but the former Pentagon official implied that the government possesses stark visual documentation; Elizondo and Mellon have said the same thing.

According to Tim McMillan, in the past two years, the Pentagon's U.A.P. investigators have distributed two classified intelligence papers, on secure networks, that allegedly contain images and videos of bizarre spectacles, including a cube-shaped object and a large equilateral triangle emerging from the ocean. One report brooked the subject of "alien" or "non-human" technology, but also provided a litany of prosaic possibilities. The former Pentagon official cautioned, " 'Unidentified' doesn't mean little green men—it just means there's something there." He continued, "If it turns out that everything we've seen is weather balloons, or a quadcopter designed to look like something else, nobody is going to lose sleep over it."

Elizondo never got to Mattis, but his successor managed to get briefings in front of Mark Esper, the Secretary of Defense, as well as the director of National Intelligence, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Senate Armed Services Committee, and several members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Government officials in Japan later divulged to the media that they had discussed the topic in a meeting with Esper in Guam. When the former Pentagon official was asked about other foreign governments, he hesitated, then said, "We would not have moved forward without briefing close allies. This was bigger than the U.S. government."

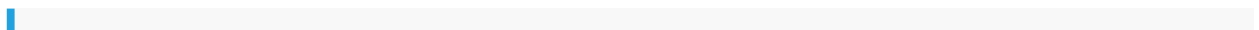
In June of 2020, Senator Marco Rubio added text into the 2021 Intelligence Authorization Act requesting—though not requiring—that the director of National Intelligence, along with the Secretary of Defense, produce "a detailed analysis of unidentified aerial phenomena data and intelligence reporting." This language, which allowed them a hundred and eighty days to produce the report, drew heavily from proposals by Mellon, and it was clear that this concerted effort, at least in theory, was a more productive and more cost-effective iteration of the original vision for AATIP.

UAPTF

In August of 2020, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, David Norquist, publicly announced the existence of the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force, who produced a report to Congress on UAPs in June 2021 (refer to report at the end of this article).

The Intelligence Authorization Act finally passed in December. The former Pentagon official worries that an appetite for disclosure has been heedlessly stoked. "The public, I would hope, doesn't expect to see the crown jewels," he said.

In early April 2021, the eminent U.F.O. journalist George Knapp, along with the documentary filmmaker Jeremy Kenyon Lockyer Corbell, best known for his participation in an ill-begotten crusade to "storm" Nevada's Area 51, released a video and a series of photos that had apparently been leaked from the U.A.P. Task Force's classified intelligence reports. The video, taken with night-vision goggles, shows three airborne triangles, intermittently flashing with eerie incandescence as they rotate against a starry sky. The Department of Defense confirmed that the video was real and said



I can confirm that the referenced photos and videos were taken by Navy personnel," Department of Defense spokesperson Susan Gough told Fox News. "The UAPTF [Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force] has included these incidents in their ongoing examinations."

Video taken from the UAPTF and leaked to the public in 2021. The video was taken from the US Navy ship USS Russell using night vision optics in July 2019 off the San Diego coast.

UAP Report to Congress

On June 25, 2021 the office of the Director for National Intelligence produced a report for the U.S. Congress entitled "Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena". In it, the newly formed Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force (UAPTF) that conducted the study for the report, said

“ The limited amount of high-quality reporting on unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) hampers our ability to draw firm conclusions about the nature or intent of UAP. ”

and went further to say

“ Most of the UAP reported probably do represent physical objects given that a majority of UAP were registered across multiple sensors, to include radar, infrared, electro-optical, weapon seekers, and visual observation.

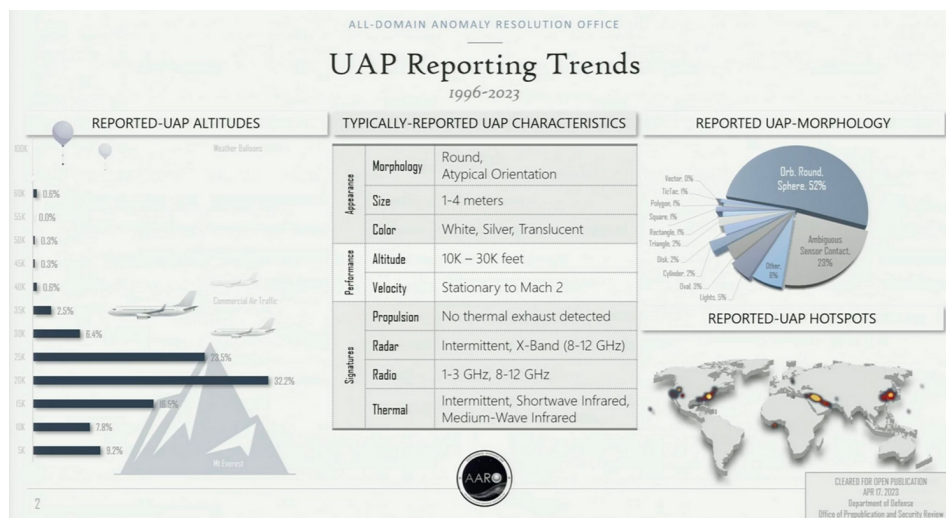
However, the report fell short of stating the objects were of extraterrestrial origin. Instead, grouping any unexplained objects simply as "other".

Update

April 19, 2023

A top official of a US government body created last year to focus on sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFO) has claimed that Washington is tracking more than 650 such potential cases.

Addressing a Senate Armed Services subcommittee on Wednesday, Director of the Pentagon’s All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) Sean Kirkpatrick said the number of cases was up from the 350 reports referenced in an unclassified intelligence report on unidentified aerial phenomena released earlier this year, reports CNN.



Slide of UAP sightings from the April 19, 2023 Armed Services Senate Sub-Committee UFO hearing

The **All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO)** is an office within the United States Office of the Secretary of Defense that investigates unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and other phenomena in the air, sea, and/or space and/or on land: sometimes referred to as "unidentified aerial phenomena," "unidentified anomalous phenomena," or "U.A.P."

AARO was preceded by The Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force (UAPTF), a program within the Office of Naval Intelligence used to "standardize collection and reporting" of sightings of UFOs. UAPTF was detailed in a June 2020 hearing of the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. The UAPTF issued a preliminary report in June 2021. In July 2022 it was announced that the UAPTF would be succeeded as an organization by AARO. UAPTF itself was preceded by AATIP known as the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program.

The Pentagon released footage taken by a US MQ-9 Reaper drone on Wednesday after it came upon an unknown flying object swooping over the Middle East. The event, which was reported in 2022, marked an unmanned aircraft’s first contact with what the military now refers to as Unexplained Anomalous Phenomena (UAP).

Sean Kirkpatrick, head of the Pentagon’s All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO), described the details of the footage before a Senate hearing by describing the characteristics of the brilliant and shimmering “metallic orb” the military drone witnessed after a “spherical UAP.”

“Silver. Translucent. Metallic. 10,000 to 30,000 feet [in the air] with apparent velocities from the standstill to mach with no thermal exhausts typically seen,” he stated, saying the item had behaved “consistently with other ‘metallic orb’ sightings in the vicinity.”

Kirkpatrick would not rule out the possibility that the orb was “adversary breakthrough technology,” but he did agree that its design and speed were amazing and that it may be related to “known objects or phenomena” or even “extraterrestrials.”

Kirkpatrick informed the Senate that the AARO typically succeeds in identifying its aerial prey and hinted that he had even informed the Defense Department and intelligence officers that the US’s foreign enemies had technologies Washington was completely ignorant of.

Kirkpatrick's opening oral remarks to the Armed Services Committee

Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick
Director, All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office
Statement for the Record
Senate Armed Services Committee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
April 19, 2023

Thank you, Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Ernst, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee and Congress. It is a privilege to be here today to testify on the Department of Defense’s efforts to address Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.

First, I want to thank Congress for its extensive and continued partnership as the Department works to better understand and respond to UAP in an effort to minimize technical and intelligence surprise. Unidentified objects in any domain pose potential risks to safety and security, particularly for military personnel and capabilities. Congress and DoD agree that UAP cannot remain unexamined or unaddressed.

We are grateful for sustained congressional engagement on this issue, which paved the way for DoD’s establishment of the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office in July of last year. Though AARO is still a young office, the spotlight on UAP in recent months underscores the importance of its work and the need for UAP to be taken seriously as a matter of national security. All leadership that I’ve had the pleasure of working with, whether DoD, IC, DOE, Civil, Scientific or Industrial, view Congress as a critical partner in this endeavor.

AARO has accomplished much in the 9 months since it was established. The AARO team of more than three dozen experts is organized around four functional areas: operations, scientific research, integrated analysis, and strategic communications. In the nine months since AARO's establishment, we have taken important steps to improve UAP data collection, standardize the Department's UAP internal reporting requirements, and implement a framework for rigorous scientific and intelligence analysis, resolving cases in a systematic and prioritized manner. Meanwhile, consistent with legislative direction, AARO is also carefully reviewing and researching the U.S. Government's UAP-related historical record.

AARO is leading a focused effort to better characterize, understand, and attribute UAP, with priority given to UAP reports by DoD and IC personnel in or near areas of national security importance. DoD fully appreciates the eagerness from many quarters, including here in Congress and in the American public, to quickly resolve every UAP encountered across the globe, from the distant past through today.

It is important to note, however, that AARO is the culmination of decades of DoD, Intelligence Community, and congressionally-directed efforts to successfully resolve UAP encountered first and foremost by U.S. military personnel, specifically Navy and Air Force pilots.

The law establishing AARO is ambitious, and it will take time to realize the full mission. We cannot answer decades of questions about UAP all at once, but we must begin somewhere. While I assure you that AARO will follow scientific evidence wherever it leads, I ask for your patience as DoD first prioritizes the safety and security of our military personnel and installations, in all domains.

After all, UAP encountered first by highly capable DoD and IC platforms, featuring the nation's most advanced sensors, are those UAP most likely to be successfully resolved by my office assuming data can be collected. If AARO succeeds in first improving the ability of military personnel to quickly and confidently resolve UAP that they encounter, I believe that in time we will have greatly advanced the capability of the entire United States Government, including its civilian agencies, to resolve UAP. However, it would be naive to believe that the resolution of all UAP can be solely accomplished by the DoD and IC alone.

We will need to prioritize collection and leverage authorities for monitoring all domains within the continental United States. AARO's ultimate success will require partnerships with the interagency, industry, academia, the scientific community, and the public.

AARO is partnering with the Services, Intelligence Community, DOE and across the U.S. government to tap into the resources of the interagency. The UAP challenge is more an operational and scientific issue than an intelligence issue. As such, we are also working with industry, academia, and the scientific community, which bring their own resources, ideas, and expertise to this challenging problem set. Robust collaboration and peer-review across a broad range of partners will promote greater objectivity and transparency in the study of UAP.

I want to underscore today that only a very small percentage of UAP reports display signatures that could reasonably be described as 'anomalous.' The majority of unidentified objects reported to AARO demonstrate mundane characteristics of

balloons, unmanned aerial systems, clutter, natural phenomena, or other readily explainable sources. While a large number of cases in our holdings remain technically unresolved, this is primarily due to a lack of data associated with these cases. Without sufficient data, we are unable to reach defensible conclusions that meet the high scientific standards we set for resolution, and I will not close a case that we cannot defend the conclusions of.

I recognize that this answer is unsatisfying to those who in good faith assume that what they see

with their eyes, with their cameras, or with their radars is incontrovertible evidence of extraordinary characteristics and performance. Yet, time and again, with sufficient scientific-quality data, it is fact that UAP often, but not always, resolve into readily-explainable sources. Humans are subject to deception and illusions, sensors to unexpected responses and malfunctions, and in some cases intentional interference. Getting to the handful of cases that pass this level of scrutiny is the mission of AARO.

That is not to say that UAP once resolved are no longer of national security interest, however. On the contrary, learning that a UAP isn't of exotic origin but is instead "just a quadcopter" leads to the question of who is operating that quadcopter, and to what purpose. The answers to those questions will inform potential national security or law enforcement responses.

AARO is a member of the Department's support to the Administration's "Tiger Team" effort to deal with stratospheric objects such as the PRC High Altitude Balloon. When previously unknown objects are successfully identified, it is AARO's role to quickly and efficiently hand off such readily-explainable objects to the Intelligence or Law Enforcement Communities for further analysis and appropriate action. The U.S. Government—and DoD and the IC in particular—has tremendous capabilities to deal with those encountered objects. In the wake of the PRC HAB event, the interagency is working to better integrate and share information to address identifiable stratospheric objects, but that is not AARO's lane.

Meanwhile, for the few cases in all domains that do demonstrate potentially anomalous characteristics, AARO exists to help the DoD, IC, and interagency resolve those anomalous cases. In doing so, AARO is approaching these cases with the highest level of objectivity and analytic rigor. This includes physically testing and employing modeling and simulation to validate our analyses and

underlying theories, then peer reviewing the results within the U.S. Government, industry partners, and with appropriately-cleared academic institutions before reaching any conclusions. I should also state clearly for the record that in our research AARO has found no credible evidence thus far of extraterrestrial activity, off-world technology, or objects that defy the known laws of physics. In the event sufficient scientific data were ever obtained that a UAP encountered can only be explained by extraterrestrial origin, we are committed to working with our interagency partners at NASA to appropriately inform the U.S. Government's leadership of its findings.

For those few cases that have been leaked to the public previously, and subsequently commented on by the U.S. Government, I encourage those who hold alternative theories or views to submit your research to credible peer-reviewed scientific journals. AARO is working to do the same. That is how science works, not by blog or social media.

We know that there is tremendous public interest in UAP and a desire for answers from AARO. By its very nature, the UAP challenge has for decades lent itself to mystery, sensationalism, and even conspiracy. For that reason, AARO remains committed to transparency, accountability, and to sharing as much with the American public as we can, consistent with our obligation to protect intelligence sources and methods and U.S. and Allied capabilities. However, AARO's work will take time if we are committed to doing it right. It means adhering to the scientific method and the highest standards of research integrity. It means being methodical and scrupulous. It means withholding judgment in favor of evidence. It means following the data where it leads, wherever it leads. It means establishing scientific, peer reviewed theoretical underpinnings of observed data. AARO is committed to those standards.

I am proud of AARO's progress over the last nine months. Much remains to be done, but the hard

work is under way.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to your questions.

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