

SECOND LOOK

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UFOs as government spycraft

by Robert K.G. Temple

UFOs, or "flying saucers," are a phenomenon which cannot be ignored by anyone purporting to consider the subject of extraterrestrial intelligence, for it has been suggested by hundreds of thousands of individuals that UFOs are spaceships from an extraterrestrial civilization. Whatever the true nature of UFOs, even if not a single one is a spaceship, we are still left with the extraordinarily important fact of this mass opinion.

The psychologist Carl Jung, in his book *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies* (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1959), suggested that UFOs were a welling up from the collective unconscious of humanity of a mass apparition occurring as a series of multiply perceived hallucinations among great masses of people, over many years. The cause of this was, he thought, the anxiety felt by mankind in an era of nuclear weapons. Jung thus saw "flying saucers" as a mass dream-archetype. He did not believe that they had any objective reality of their own, beyond their obvious reality as hallucinations (if hallucinations are classed as real—a metaphysical point).

Although I have a great deal of respect for Jung, I believe his theory is too drastic. It implies too pronounced a susceptibility to hallucinations among too many disparate people with too little in common—and certainly not a "psychic epidemic" (Jung's terminology) in common.

Arthur C. Clarke, in *The Promise of Space*, dismisses most UFOs as meteors, optical apparitions, satellites, etc. But, he concludes; "There still remains a tiny residue of reports, some of them backed by photographs, which are very difficult to explain...My own feeling—it is nothing so definite as a belief—is that the spaceship explanation is a little too obvious and simpleminded. It is just possible that UFOs may turn out to be something *really* surprising, not merely humdrum visitors from other planets..."

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What are the UFOs which are the "tiny residue of reports" which cannot be explained by normal means?

It is at this point that I wish to make my own modest contribution to the debate. I have a theory. It may be wrong, but it seems to fit the contours of the problem reasonably well. I believe that it satisfactorily provides answers to a number of curious features of UFO sightings simultaneously.

I believe that many UFOs are R.P.V.s. — Remotely Piloted Vehicles.

These aerial vehicles have been developed in earnest since about the time when "flying saucers" began to be reported en masse after World War

II. Hence, the first unusual feature of UFOs which is accommodated by the theory: the sighting of "flying saucers" coincides in time with the existence and use of RPVs.

A report on RPVs appeared in 1973 by Bill Gunston in the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies* (of which I myself have been a member for many years) entitled "Unmanned Aircraft—Defense Applications of the RPV." Rather than merely refer to it, I will quote Gunston's article verbatim for certain passages:

"Since 1945 remote radio control has been used for more than 200 types of research or experimental aircraft, at least 180 types of target drones, and more than 50 types of aircraft having other military uses."

These RPVs are frequently of such a

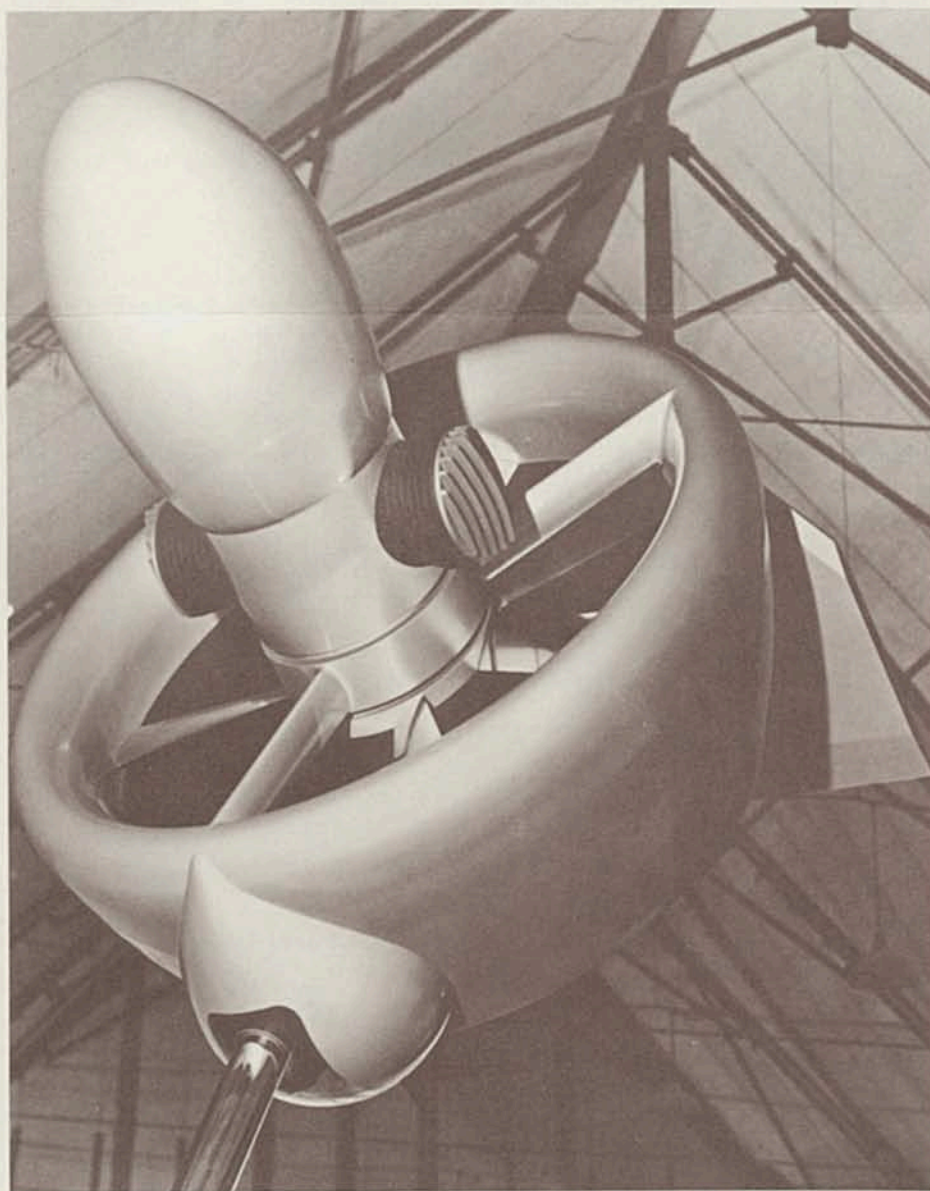
secret nature that it is impossible that the public should be aware through any normal means that they even exist. They constitute a major portion of the means used by the United States and the Soviet Union to spy on each other electronically, with military satellites frequently acting as the links of communication between the RPVs and their control centers. One nowadays reads about the uses of satellites for spying purposes, and one assumes that the satellites are crammed with powerful cameras or listening devices, but what is not said is that they are often instead crammed with relay devices used in liaison with RPVs, for direct line-of-sight communication is not possible between RPVs and their controls which are over the horizon.

It is possible that the United States and Soviet governments could make public sufficient information about RPVs and their similarity to "flying saucers" to do much to debunk most sightings. However, they could only do so at enormous, possibly intolerable, cost to security considerations. Each side no doubt has RPVs which the other side does not have. It would be puerile to assume that they would ever, under any circumstances imaginable, release all information about their respective RPVs. To do so would be one of the most irresponsible acts which either government, acting from the point of view of its own interests, could ever conceive.

If I were a government, I would not write this article. But as an individual with no official connections of any kind, I am free of the slightest aura of authority. In short, I don't expect anyone to believe what I have to say. For, how many people are there who are interested in "flying saucers" who do not already know exactly what they think about them? Only a miniscule number of thoughtful individuals have open minds on this subject. It is to these few that I address my theory.

The suggestion that "flying saucers" were secret aircraft of some kind was first made to me by a cousin, since deceased, named Byron Miller, who worked at Oak Ridge National Laboratories in Tennessee, where some secret government work is done. He told me in the late 1950s that he had accidentally come across such a craft in a special room at Oak Ridge. He wanted me to know that this was the real explanation of "flying saucers." He prom-

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Short's Skyspy...an explanation for UFOs?

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ised to tell me more when I next saw him, but he died suddenly. What I did learn from him was that he had been witness to trial of such a craft inside a building, and he had been amazed at the maneuvers of which it was capable. The craft was shaped just like the traditional "flying saucer" and he learned that it flew only at night. It was operated by remote control.

Let us examine the attitudes of the United States Government towards "flying saucers." We turn to the book by Dr. Edward Condon, *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects*, published in 1969. Condon was Project Director of an Air Force investigation into UFOs. However, it would be wrong to think that the U.S. Air Force demonstrated any intense desire to investigate deeply. In Walter Sullivan's introduction to this book we learn: "It appears that the Central Intelligence Agency, in 1953, was party to a scheme to "debunk" the UFOs."

Why should the C.I.A. do that? It has been suggested that they did it because they knew that people from outer space had landed and they wanted to keep this information from reaching the public. This is obviously ridiculous. The C.I.A. does not have any means of controlling extraterrestrials.

However, secret programs of RPV research in danger of being compromised are a different story—especially at the early date of 1953, when it might reasonably be thought that an attempt at "debunking" might actually work. More recently, it has become obvious that no debunking will ever accomplish its purpose—it is an unsophisticated technique for such an advanced situation.

A more sophisticated technique to divert attention from RPVs is to have an official inquiry which appears to be

thorough but which comes up with nothing conclusive. Let us examine the U.S. Air Force attitudes towards their own official investigation which, prior to 1966, was apparently meant to serve as a sop to the public. Did they really support it in earnest? Sullivan tells us: "Project Blue Book, the Air Force office responsible for assembling UFO reports at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, is a low-priority operation, long manned by one officer, a sergeant, and a secretary."

Sullivan continues: "In 1966 rumblings of discontent, both on Capitol Hill and among the public at large, led the Air Force to seek an independent assessment of the situation... (This) study, at a cost of about half a million dollars, was carried out by the University of Colorado under the direction of Dr. Edward U. Condon... His independence had been many times demonstrated in his support of liberal (and sometimes unpopular) causes."

The fact that Condon was a nonconformist is beside the point, and so are the political aspects. The real point is that the attitude of the Air Force was such that "getting the Condon Report out of the way" was deemed acceptable and indeed desirable. In other words, the Air Force tolerated the Condon investigation but was by no means thrilled by it.

Sullivan also tells us: "A book has been published by a former member of the University of Colorado project who was dismissed. He and his co-author argue that the project may have been organized—without the knowledge of most of its staff—as a cover to divert attention from the real nature of UFOs."

"He supports this conspiracy hypothesis with what he considers evidence that two members of a panel of top scientists convened by the government in 1953 to assess the UFO situation

refused to sign the resulting report... (However) according to surviving members of the panel no one dissented from its findings, although the name of one member was deleted before the report was declassified in 1966. The time was one of sensitivity about involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency..."

The general drift of official attitudes to UFOs seems clear. An attempt was made to debunk them, which did not succeed because the public were too worked up about them (perhaps, indeed, for the reasons which Carl Jung thought, but instead of seeing hallucinations, they were seeing something real.) Then, an obviously token official office was opened to deal with UFOs and the University of Colorado inquiry was opened but with nervousness shown about it for no obvious reasons. My interpretation of all this is quite simple: the really top officials would realize that UFOs are RPVs and wish to dampen or appease interest in UFOs for natural and understandable reasons. However, they could not explain this to very many people and some of the people employed by them to research the UFOs would have to be kept in ignorance of RPVs and hence engaged in a useless exercise.

But let us now look more closely at the nature of RPVs. We return to the article by Bill Gunston. He says of them: "Some were minimum-signature aeroplanes, with radar reflectivity amazingly close to zero and engines so quiet they could not be heard by the average man at a distance of 300 feet. These have for years covertly operated, mainly in an experimental capacity and often with a man on board... If you leave out the pilot you can design quite an effective multi-sensor reconnaissance aircraft much smaller than any manned combat aircraft—except in the matter

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of wing span, which for a subsonic RPV may exceed 100 ft. Like the U-2, this sailplane-like wing is needed to cruise at around 100,000 ft., where such a minimum-signature vehicle is even today quite hard to detect and destroy...100,000 ft. is closer to the terrain overflowed than a reconnaissance satellite can manage, and the RPV can always temporarily swoop down for a very low pass."

Such low and sudden swoops with huge wing span, no noise whatsoever, giving a high reflectivity of light in certain conditions, could explain many UFO sightings. These RPVs also are capable when not carrying a man of making extraordinary, tight right-angle turns. It has been pointed out that "flying saucers" have often been seen to make turns at a rate which no human being aboard (and presumably no living being aboard, even an extraterrestrial) could withstand.

RPVs are designed as minimum-signature machines which cannot be detected on radar. Many are the tales of UFOs which have been seen visually but not detected on radar screens, leading to mysterious theories of extraterrestrials jamming earthly radar systems so as to remain undetected. Of course, one must bear in mind that with larger RPVs nowadays, there are bound to be radar-jamming devices used as well.

RPVs can be extremely small. One of the smallest, Short's Skyspy, which is shaped exactly like a "flying saucer" with an annular wing and a silenced piston engine is shown in a photograph accompanying this article. This "flying saucer" is much too small to carry a man. A photograph and description of it are to be found in *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*; there is nothing secret about it by now. One of these Skyspys of four-foot overall diameter and using a super-charged engine of 110 horsepower could operate at altitudes of up to 20,000 feet.

In his article already cited, Bill Gunston says: "The entire avionic and autopilot installation of many RPVs could be put into two suitcases and carried easily by one man. Before long it will all fit into a small briefcase." Gunston tells also of "the U.S. Army's Mini-RPV projects...Most of these vehicles are essentially large powered model aeroplanes, but designed to carry various reconnaissance systems, laser target markets and designators, il-

luminating systems, miniaturized E.C.M. and real-time transmitting systems. These are not mere toys...in the mid-1970s there are not many missions a manned combat aeroplane or helicopter can do that a properly conceived RPV cannot do at least as well, if not better..."

As for the number of RPVs, Gunston tells us that "over the next 10 years, American jet firms will build 10,000 engines for RPVs." That would seem to indicate quite a number of them flitting through the skies like fairies. Indeed, it is impossible for obvious reasons to know exactly how many and what kind of these apparitions are going over our heads at any given time.

The sightings of UFOs began after World War II about the same time as RPVs began to be developed in earnest. Since then, RPVs have become

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a daily part of the Cold War, with Soviet RPVs constantly in operation over non-Soviet territory and vice versa. In any relevant locale, therefore, one is confronted with both native experimental or operative RPVs and with foreign operative RPVs on spying missions. The negligible radar detectability of some RPVs coincides with official announcements of non-perception by radar of some UFOs, for if these RPVs could be detected on radar their purpose would be ruined. This, plus the sudden swoops, instant ascents, and other "impossible" maneuvers so well known by UFOs, all go to create bewilderment and mystery for those who happen to spot one of these craft. But RPVs are not known to all of officialdom, and puzzled denials by many echelons of military hierarchies are purely genuine.

It is quite likely that the University of Colorado Project was also blissfully ignorant of RPVs to all intents and pur-

poses, though we have seen that one of their staff certainly suspected something of this kind. Most of those people at radar screens and high-ranking military desk positions who express their bafflement are, therefore, being perfectly honest. None of those people are involved in any conspiracy to keep the public ignorant of an extraterrestrial invasion.

This part of the problem has always been one of the most enigmatic. How was it possible to reconcile definite observation with simultaneous non-detection? The fact that my theory proposes a way to do this is one of its strongest points. In a way, this was the crux of the whole matter. For, when something could be seen in the sky from a certain angle or in a certain way, or in certain light, or under certain conditions, but not seen or detected in any way simultaneously by someone else not in that angle, condition, light, or whatever, there was an obvious temptation to come up with some drastic explanation.

The facts, then seem to be these: the great majority of reported UFO sightings can be explained by "normal" means, such as balloons, birds, satellites, weather conditions, bright stars or planets, ball lightning, etc. There remain, however, an incontestable residue of sightings which cannot be explained by any of these "normal" means. There is something about this residue which is genuinely a problem, and seems really to involve some extraordinary phenomena.

This residue of sightings can be explained by RPVs and similar craft which are classified and cannot be discussed in public, due to their extreme importance in secret surveillance connected with defense.

I may be wrong, but the evidence produced seems fairly substantial. The wave of mass sightings really formed from about 1947, about the same time as RPVs really commenced in earnest. So many facts fit. But perhaps most important of all would be this factor accommodated by my theory: if UFOs are really spaceships, what the hell do they think they are doing? ■

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