

UFO INVESTIGATOR

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The New Politics Of UFO Research

By Stuart Nixon

For those who like to put labels on social phenomena, it might be said that the political course of UFO research has now entered Phase III. Phase I was the initial three or four years of the modern period when sightings first excited national attention and the government made a serious effort to find out if a foreign power were behind the reported apparitions. Those were the days of Project Sign (later Grudge) and the highly controversial "Top Secret Estimate of the Situation."

As the 1950s began and military intelligence ruled out the "hostile device" hypothesis, Phase II dawned, heralded by an onslaught of sightings in 1952 that created much grumbling in the Pentagon and prompted the CIA to convene the Robertson Panel. Blue Book, and its debunking campaign, had arrived.

Today, followers of the UFO subject look back on that period as the good old days, when the good guys and bad guys squared off and sightings were popping faster than the Air Force could explain them away. It was a time of unprecedented interest, with paperback books in every drugstore and articles in every magazine.

All that came to an end in 1969 when the Condon Report was released and Blue Book closed its doors, apparently for good. As the news media turned to other issues and sightings seemed to stop, a lot of people decided the "UFO craze" had run its course and the flying saucers — whatever they were — had finally been put to rest. It was a dark hour for the multitude of believers who had been raised on the gospel according to Keyhoe (or Edwards or Lorenzen or any of the other major figures of the Blue Book era).

The obituaries, however, proved to be somewhat premature, because widespread interest in UFOs remained alive, even among scientists. Today, two years after the supposed denouement, the UFO field is not only active but growing, and reports of unusual phenomena continue to be received. In terms of public opinion, there have been significant changes from the politics of the pre-Condon period, but some of the familiar old faces are still in evidence, and some of the old-style clash-

EDITORIAL

25 Years: A Mandate To Get The Job Done

Twenty-five years is a long time to prosecute a cause. Many people aware of UFOs may wonder why organizations like NICAP continue to call for investigation of something that by now would seem to have been investigated almost to death. If, after 25 years, the UFO research community is still devoting the greatest part of its effort to collecting reports that only repeat what has already been reported many times before, why should the public believe that further research is going to produce anything more useful or informative?

It is perhaps a question that everyone seriously interested in UFOs should ask on this 25th anniversary of Kenneth Arnold's epochal encounter.

It is one thing to gather information for people to read and discuss. It is quite another to apply the techniques of science to that information to gain new understanding. Just as it would be shortsighted to overlook the contributions of those who have spent the past 25 years getting the facts about UFOs, so would it be shortsighted to now overlook the need for a more effective research program.

If the work of men like Major Keyhoe, James McDonald, and a hundred other pioneer researchers means anything at all, it means that those who would embark on further investigation must accept the legacy of past effort as a mandate to get a tough job finished. Time may be running short. Twenty-five more years of reporting on UFOs might suffice for some, but neither science nor the UFO cause will be properly served if that is the highest goal to which the research community aspires. A bigger task awaits, and NICAP urges all qualified researchers to join together to help insure that the task will be accomplished.

ing of personalities can still be heard, echoing in the political arena.

For a detailed look at the current situation, see the May and June 1971 issues of the newsletter, and the chart inside this issue.

NICAP and APRO Take Major Step Toward Improved Relations

In an important three-day meeting last month, representatives of the two major American UFO organizations, NICAP and APRO, discussed means of seeking cooperative relations between their groups, and ways in which the organizations might direct their research programs so as to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Meeting in Tucson, Arizona, where APRO has its headquarters, NICAP Executive Director Stuart Nixon and the APRO Assistant Director Richard Greenwell conferred at length on the need to resolve past differences that may have prevented the organizations from working toward common objectives. Both men felt the two groups would benefit from better communication and a policy of mutual support.

One move discussed as a first step toward active cooperation was a joint statement to clarify the positions of each group and define those areas in which NICAP and APRO could coordinate their efforts. If agreed upon, the statement would be published in each organization's newsletter so that both memberships could have the opportunity to voice reaction.

Nixon and Greenwell felt that both organizations have made distinctive contributions to the investigation of UFOs, and a cooperative program in certain areas of research is clearly indicated. One example is the computer study each group is currently conducting. An exchange of scientific data once these two systems are operative could be an important incentive to serious study of the UFO problem.

NICAP and APRO last conferred in January 1971 when APRO Secretary-Treasurer Coral Lorenzen visited NICAP headquarters during a trip to the East Coast (*UFO Investigator*, January 1971). Although not intended as a business meeting, the session touched on the future of the two groups and possible new approaches to UFO study. Prior to her visit, Richard Greenwell came to Washington in April 1970 and spent almost a full day talking with Stuart Nixon about the status of each organization (*UFO Investigator*, May 1970). That meeting was the first time spokesmen for the two groups had officially met.

Books

Two Views on Dr. Hynek's New Book

THE UFO EXPERIENCE: A SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

By Dr. J. Allen Hynek (Regnery, 1972)

Reviewed by Sylvia Meagher

The appearance of J. Allen Hynek's book indisputably is a signal event in the history of UFOs. It will vex the science Establishment, antagonize Condon, Menzel and the Air Force, but gratify and largely vindicate the position of those who have always recognized UFOs as a genuine material phenomenon deserving of genuine investigation and attention.

In expounding his mature assessment of UFOs, Hynek has decisively come into the camp of serious ufologists and organizations such as NICAP. That is quite a capitulation from the man who for 20 years was the Air Force scientific consultant on UFOs and as such the frequent apologist for official "explanations" of UFO sightings. Now Hynek acknowledges that UFO sightings which remain "unknown" and unexplainable have a high degree of strangeness and probability. He does not go so far as to lean toward the extraterrestrial hypothesis but suggests that the solution to the mystery may "prove to be not merely the next small step in the march of science but a . . . totally unexpected quantum jump."

Hynek claims only that UFOs may constitute a "new empirical observation" and therefore require methodical scientific data-collection and data-analysis by qualified professionals, through some machinery such as the United Nations or an international scientific institute. He argues his case on the basis of some 80 sightings which remain "unknowns" after the most rigorous screening—sightings for which he can vouch on the basis of his personal investigation or equivalent reliability. Narrowing his sample even more severely, he has also excluded all single-witness sightings, thus putting aside a large and important body of credible reports.

Hynek refers to UFO witnesses as "reporters," explaining in a footnote that he does so in case it should turn out that reported UFOs are "not real," although the entire burden of his book is that *UFOs are real but unidentifiable* as terrestrial objects or artifacts. He points out that these "reporters" include many highly educated, highly qualified persons who are often trained observers (pilots, police, scientists) as well as average individuals (housewives, storekeepers, students). On the whole, these witnesses have compelling credibility and coherence, as may be seen in their statements and descriptions of their experiences.

He quotes a trans-Australia Airlines pilot: "I have always scoffed at these

reports, but I saw it. We all saw it. It was under intelligent control, and it was certainly no known aircraft." But Hynek does not describe or evaluate the sighting because he himself had no personal contact with the pilot or the investigator who obtained the sighting report. One might quarrel with such arbitrary and purist criteria. However, the 80 sightings which Hynek has included constitute such a formidable body of evidence that the point is perhaps academic.

These sightings are classified into six major groups: nocturnal lights, daylight discs, radar-visual, and close encounters of three types—objects sighted at close range, sightings accompanied by electromagnetic effects or associated with landing marks or damage to foliage and vegetation, and occupant cases. Most of the sightings are recounted in the body of the book and then listed with precise dates, places, duration of sighting and other details, by groups, in an appendix, in which each sighting is graded for strangeness and probability.

After discussing each class of sightings, Hynek constructs a profile or prototype, based upon the common or similar characteristics of the UFOs described by two or more witnesses in each case. What emerges is a consistent type of object, disc-like in shape, within a fairly narrow range of variation as to size, lights, maneuverability, etc. It is certainly not the insane random assortment of wildly heterogeneous objects described in many UFO books.

Many of the sightings in the book are familiar but some are new, including one occupant case. Four highly reputable men witnessed a UFO landing in North Dakota in November 1961. When they approached the lighted craft they discovered humanoids around it. One waved them off in a threatening manner, at which point one of the four men fired a shot at the humanoid, "which fell as if hurt. The craft soon took off, and the men fled." Hynek grades this sighting at the maximum of "strangeness" and at the midpoint of the "probability" scale.

That case is one of five occupant sightings discussed in the book. The other four are now classics—Socorro, New Mexico; Boianai, New Guinea; Kelly-Hopkinsville, Kentucky; and the famous Barney and Betty Hill episode. In each of the other categories, from 10 to 23 sightings are taken into account. The radar-visual sightings and the close encounters accompanied by physical effects or traces are particularly rich and of high

(See Meagher, page 4)

Reviewed by Richard S. Young

The UFO Experience, as the author hoped in the preface, is a good book on UFOs. It is good because Hynek is knowledgeable and as objective as one could be while as involved in the UFO question as he was. On the other hand the book leaves me as frustrated as ever on the subject.

The book spends many pages on the process by which information on UFO sightings has been accumulated, the people who have made such reports, the attitude of the public and officialdom to such reports, and especially the attitude of scientists to the UFO question.

Next, Hynek goes over a selected group of sightings which he categorizes as nocturnal, daylight, and radar, and far and near encounters in each category. He selects cases which are not easily explained by natural events.

Finally, he describes the official Air Force "Blue Book" program and the Condon study.

Hynek's principal complaint is that a scientific inquiry into the question of UFOs has still not been made. He feels that the Air Force Blue Book program never received the high level management (or scientific) attention it should have; that it was never adequately funded; and that personal bias played a major role in determining which sightings would receive attention, and how much. I am inclined to agree with Hynek on these criticisms.

Hynek feels that the Condon study was poorly done, was misled by personal bias, and is in no way conclusive. Here again, his case is rather convincing.

I assume that Hynek still has an open mind on the UFO question. He points out that most UFO reports are the result of misidentifications, fanaticism of one sort or another, or deliberate hoaxes. The unexplained sightings are few in number. He points out that the Condon report selected many sightings for study that had obvious explanations, while ignoring many which didn't. However, he seems to feel that even though most sightings are not evidence of anything of scientific interest or importance, those few that are not explained must be of great importance and should demand much greater attention.

It is here I believe that the problem lies. Hynek, and others, feel that unexplained events must be important. The majority who have looked at the whole problem do not. Hynek makes his case by

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THE NEW POLITICS OF UFO RESEARCH

A Handy Guide to Current Opinion in the UFO Field

FAR LEFT

Basic position: UFOs are strange phenomena, likely relating to psychic or mystical experience. Research is needed, but not necessarily scientific research.

Once the unchallenged domain of the contactees, the ultraliberal fringe is now dominated by theorists who would link UFOs with ESP, poltergists, and the Fourth Dimension. For many UFO believers tired of ETH, this is an intriguing idea that seems to offer new hope for a solution to the UFO mystery.

MODERATE LEFT

Basic position: UFOs are real phenomena, most probably extraterrestrial vehicles. Research is needed, but only to confirm what is already obvious.

When publicity was widespread, this was the camp of greatest activity. Belief in ETH produced a heavy grass-roots movement and practically eclipsed all other moderate views. Today, the ranks have thinned considerably, and many erstwhile liberals have shifted to the right where they form a "silent majority" of discouraged believers.

MODERATE RIGHT

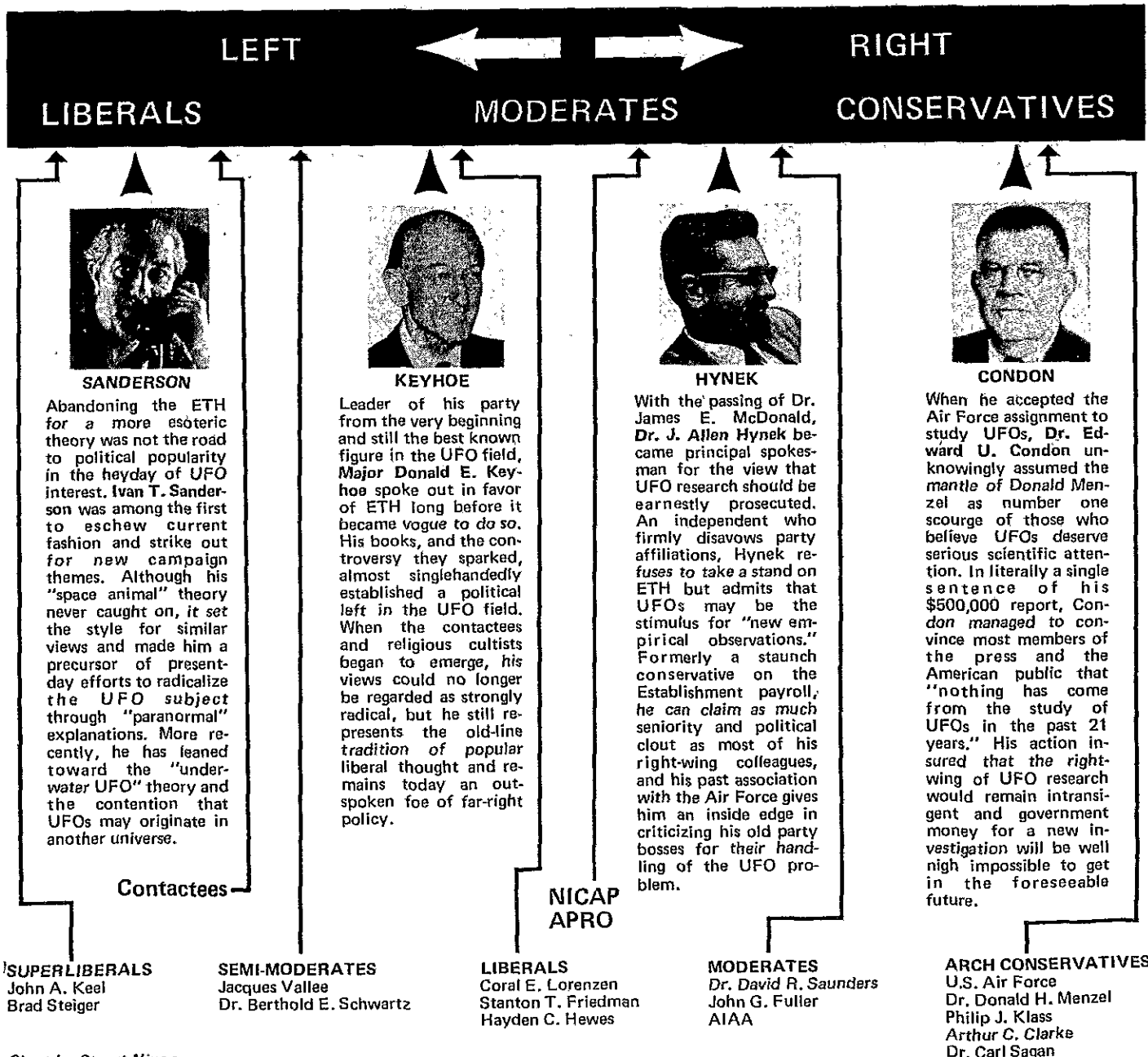
Basic position: UFOs are unexplained phenomena, possibly extraterrestrial in nature. Rigorous scientific research is needed to establish best explanation.

Scientists interested in the UFO problem have generally assumed positions near the center, usually on the right. Much of the bona fide research currently being done falls within this area. NICAP, APRO, and a few other groups have gravitated to the right in recent years as they have become more scientific.

FAR RIGHT

Basic position: UFOs are hoaxes and misidentifications. Further research is pointless, except possibly as psychological study.

The bastion of skeptics and scoffers continues to sit like Gibraltar, content with the view that sooner or later the Condon Report will have its intended effect and advocates of further research will get tired of talking to each other. Only a few ultraconservatives still carry on the fight with their former zeal.



Meagher

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quality. They total 33 sightings to which Hynek assigns a significant degree of both strangeness and probability.

Hynek is as fastidious about UFO photographs as about sightings and he prints only ten photographs, eligible because he interrogated the photographers personally and was convinced of their sincerity. He states that he can "absolutely vouch" for two of the photographs, both taken from the window of an aircraft and showing a UFO that is provocatively reminiscent of the hat-shaped object in the Rex Heflin photographs. I suspect that Hynek himself photographed these two pictures or he would not "absolutely vouch" for them. If so, this must be one of the two sightings he acknowledges that he had. Perhaps he has excluded them because he was a "single witness."

In his detailed critique of Project Blue Book, Hynek reveals from his privileged inside vantage point that the Air Force UFO investigation was a cross between a joke and a scandal, at best. Some readers may ask why then, did Hynek consent to serve Blue Book for 20 years in public silence about the indignities which he suffered personally (refused access to the files, refused permission to copy sighting reports, advice repeatedly ignored) and about the unbelievable derelictions of Blue Book from the scientific method and from plain common sense in its handling and grading of sightings? Hynek explains, "Temperamentally, I am one who can easily bide his time. I also dislike a fight, especially with the military. But, most importantly, Blue Book had the store of data . . . and my association with it gave me access to those data." Rationalization? Perhaps, but who can be sure if he, in Hynek's place, would have reacted more nobly and fearlessly? In any case we must be grateful for the illumination that Hynek has now provided, even if belatedly, on a monumental example of official idiocy or something even worse.

The Condon Report and the antecedent antics at the University of Colorado project have already been exposed in earlier literature but Hynek recapitulates the shoddy history of this unsavory attempt to bury the whole subject of UFOs. We learn from a letter of resignation by a staff member to Condon, reprinted in an appendix, that many of the scientists and technicians who worked on the project tended to embrace the extraterrestrial hypothesis; some of those were unceremoniously

dumped and others were simply disregarded.

As mentioned above, Hynek does not come out unequivocally for the extraterrestrial hypothesis. He asks only, as other serious students have been asking for a long time, that UFO phenomena be examined seriously as a legitimate subject of scientific inquiry. He is still cautious—some readers will say overcautious—and sometimes writes with a faint air of apology and anxiety, unlike the forthright conviction of the late Dr. James E. McDonald, for example.

Even so, Hynek has shown courage and integrity in the writing of this book. It should serve as an example to the "invisible college", the scientists who take a secret interest in UFOs which they conceal in public out of fear of compromising their careers or attracting the ridicule that lay ufologists have endured for more than two decades while they did the job that the scientists should have done. Besides encouraging the invisible college to become visible, it should also jolt the news media out of inexcusable silence; and ruffle the feathers of all the official ostriches, even those in the Pentagon. Hopefully, the book will launch a whole new round of debate on UFOs that will lead the international scientific community, at long last, to start serious work on this pervasive and mysterious phenomenon.

Mrs. Meagher is a writer and private researcher active in the field of public health. A long-time student of UFOs, she is a recognized authority on the assassination of John F. Kennedy and has written two books on the subject: Accessories after the Fact and The Subject Index to the Warren Report. She also prepared the index for the recently published The Age of Flying Saucers.

Young

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stating that the scientific method relies on the objective study of all the evidence at hand, which of course is true. Most scientists (I believe) feel that there has been nothing offered in the case of the UFOs which demands the attention of scientific study. A small percentage of unexplained sightings (however provocative) is not evidence. Hynek feels that prompt and detailed scientific study of some of these unexplained events would be productive, although he does not make it clear whether he feels that by such study we would find that 1) there is extraterrestrial intelligent life or 2) all

UFO sightings are fallacious in one way or another.

I for one feel that if I thought there was any reasonable chance of casting light on the question of extraterrestrial life by study of UFO sightings, I would be one of the strongest proponents of such study. However, I do not. I am not convinced by Hynek's arguments, although he has many good points to make in criticism of Project Blue Book and the Condon report and in fact about the application of the scientific method to today's problems.

One additional note mentioned in the book which I have not seen before was the fact that the reaction of at least one person when confronted with an extraterrestrial humanoid near its spacecraft, was to shoot it. Perhaps we are fortunate that extraterrestrial life, if it exists, is more tolerant than we.

Dr. Young is an exobiologist who serves as chief of Planetary Biology for NASA's Office of Space Science. He was interviewed in the UFO Investigator for May 1971. His review is done as an individual scientist, not as a NASA spokesman.

This is what they're saying about Dr. Hynek's new book —

THE UFO EXPERIENCE A Scientific Inquiry

"Rumor retailer or not, Dr. J. Allen Hynek may well have stirred up a storm, and it may just blow the Air Force's 'swamp gas' theories away permanently." *California Today*

"As you read thru the documented cases in Dr. Hynek's book, you begin with the unusual, then advance to the dramatic, the extraordinary, the unbelievable, incredible . . . and finally, to the fantastic." *Chicago Tribune Magazine*

"The long-quiet controversy over UFOs . . . is likely to be revived by Dr. J. Allen Hynek's *The UFO Experience — A Scientific Inquiry*." *Playboy Magazine*

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If you haven't *already* ordered your own personally autographed copy of Dr. Hynek's new book (regular price \$6.95 plus handling), here is what to do:

Mail a check or money order for \$6.00 (\$5.75 plus \$.25 handling) to NICAP headquarters. Remember, this special offer is available *only to active NICAP members, so be sure to include your Registration Number*. If your membership is due to expire, also include your renewal payment.