

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF AERONAUTICS AND ASTRONAUTICS

1290 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10019

December 8, 1969

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Philip J. Klass
560 "N" Street, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20024

Dear Mr. Klass:

Thanks for your letter of December 6, bringing to my attention the possibly biased attitude which may appear at the UFO symposium in the New York meeting.

I believe that the average AIAA member has a somewhat light-hearted, wait and see, attitude toward this entire subject, and that he is sufficiently intelligent and well-balanced to recognize and resist when he may be led astray by passionate panelists. However, since our Technical Activities Committee, under John Houbolt (Vice President - Technical) has the function of organizing such meetings within the Institute, I have taken the liberty of sending your letter to him, with a request that he discuss it with the appropriate Technical Committee chairmen within the next few weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roy Smelt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dr. Roy Smelt

RS:ls

MEMO

12-28-69

PHILIP J. KLASS

1/2/70 ~~gm~~
02 to 03 to 04

The AAAS symposium was a near-bust from the "believers" viewpoint. Summary will follow in a day or two.



Here is an interesting response from Kuettner, head of the AIAA UFO Subcommittee, who has carefully stacked their Jan. 21 symposium with believers.



And my reply, together with a P.S. to Jim Harford, the executive secretary of the AIAA.



American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics

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mailing address:

Director, Advanced Research Projects
ESSA Research Laboratories
Boulder, Colorado 80302

December 23, 1969

Mr. Phillip J. Klass
560 N. Street, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20024

Dear Mr. Klass:

In a recent telephone call Mr. James J. Harford mentioned his conversation with you on the AIAA UFO Subcommittee. This served as a reminder to me that our correspondence had been interrupted by the Bomex project, about which my secretary (Mrs. Kridelbaugh) informed you in her letter of June 9, 1969. The reminder is timely, since I do want to have your thoughts before our January 21 panel meeting in New York. Having worked for many years in the field of atmospheric electricity, I read your book with interest. I will make an attempt to meet with you in Washington, if a visit to our headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, brings me there in January.

Our present plans for the panel meeting are to discuss certain vital questions, which I will propose as the moderator, followed by written questions from our AIAA members in the audience. I believe, however, that in your case we would like to have your thoughts and specific questions, which you would like the panel to discuss, in writing before the actual meeting - in order to be sure they are thoroughly discussed by the panel members. (We do not anticipate that time will permit answering all questions from the audience).

Please accept my apologies for my tardiness, and I hope to see you in January if at all possible.

With my best wishes for the holiday season,

Sincerely yours,



Joachim P. Kuettner
Chairman, UFO Subcommittee

PHILIP J. KLASS
560 "N" STREET, S. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20024

December 29, 1969

Dr. Joachim P. Kuettner
Chairman, AIAA UFO Subcommittee
ESSA Research Laboratories
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Dear Dr. Kuettner:

Thank you for your letter of Dec. 23, in response to my letter written more than 12 months earlier. It is fortunate, as your letter explains, that your recent conversation with Jim Harford reminded you that you had never personally replied to my two letters and my offer to meet with you to present another viewpoint on the UFO question.

In view of the elapsed time and the fact that the panelists you have invited for your Jan. 21 symposium are so heavily weighted to favor the extraterrestrial viewpoint, you can understand why it prompted me to conclude that you were firmly entrenched in the extraterrestrial camp as a result of your close association with Allen Hynek and Jim McDonald on the question.

I will be delighted to meet with you, either before or after the Jan. 21 symposium. It is kind of you to express interest in my "thoughts and specific questions, which you would like the panel to discuss." Since you are not sure whether you will be coming to Washington before Jan. 21, there is an easier, more direct approach.

You could, for instance, invite me to appear on your panel, to fill the void left by two of the original panelists who have had to bow out. This would help to redress the present 3:1 imbalance which now exists in favor of the proponents of the extraterrestrial viewpoint. But perhaps you feel that I would be offended to be invited at this late date since the program already is printed.

Not at all. I should be delighted to accept an invitation--if indeed it is your desire to have a reasonably balanced panel and to present all sides of the question, even those which might conflict with your own. I would promise not to even discuss my own plasma-UFO hypothesis and to consider the broader question you have selected. All of this is on the assumption that my membership in AIAA does not disqualify me from appearing.

In my paper, I could reveal new data on the now-famous McMinnville/Trent UFO photos--the only ones showing a craft-like object which the University of Colorado report was not able to expose as a hoax. Dr. William Hartmann concluded that they probably were authentic. Only two days ago, on the basis of new evidence turned up by me and an associate, Hartmann told me that he now thinks the Trent photos are a hoax.

I look forward to your reactions.

Very truly yours,

cc: Dr. Roy Smelt
James J. Harford
John Houbolt

Philip J. Klass

MEMO

PHILIP J. KLASS

P.S. to Jim Harford:

I'll bet you a bottle of scotch that Kuettner finds it impossible to accept *my* suggestion because:

- (1) AIAA members ought not to participate in the panel except for the moderator (Kuettner) OR...
- (2) New York City Blue Law forbids anyone from speaking on a panel if their name is not on printed program, with penalty of 10 years in prison for violators. OR..
- (3) There simply will not be time enough for five panelists even tho Kuettner originally planned to have six, and would have had six, if the other two had not dropped out. OR...
- (4) The panelists presently are equally divided between those with blue eyes and those with brown eyes, and to add me would result in a preponderance of brown-eyed panelists which would not be fair. OR...
- (5) Only panelists with PhD's are competent to discuss the subject of UFOs. OR...
- (6) An equally cogent and insistent principle which simply cannot be bent or broken.

I'll even make it a one-way bet. You win a bottle of scotch if Kuettner accepts my offer and it costs you nothing if he rejects it...as I am quite certain he will do.



McGraw-Hill, Inc., 425 Natl. Press Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20004

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UFO SYMPOSIUM
Sponsored by the American Institute of Aeronautics and
Astronautics
Jan. 21, 1970
NEW YORK CITY
AIAA annual winter meeting.

"Has the UFO Problem Been Settled (Solved)?"

Chairman: Dr. Joachim Kuttner (KUTTNER) of Environmental Sciences
Services Administration (ESSA) research labs Boulder, Colo.

Panelists: Dr. James E. McDonald Univ. of Arizona
Gordon Thayer physicist ESSA labs, Boulder
Philip J. Klass Aviation Week & Space Tech.
Dr. Thornton Page Prof. of Astron. Wesleyan Univ.,
in Connecticut. NASA Manned Spacecraft Center.
Dr. J. Allen Hynek, NU Astronomy Chairman

2 days before the panel, Kuttner was in Washington. He arranged to have dinner with Klass, discussed UFO'S at great length. Asked where to reach him when Klass comes to New York to see the panel. Kuttner called him in NY about 2 hours before the panel, asked him to join. Did some "soul searching", agreed.

(Thornton Page got his PhD. from Oxford. He has done a lot of military research on Naval mines, atomic bomb tests, ~~and~~ nuclear warfare, communications. Was on Robertson panel in 1953, first scientific panel to look into UFOze. Was program chairman in Boston previous December.)

J.A. Hynek likes to ask of audiences, "How many of you have seen a UFO?". It is usually 10-20%, but he recognizes that a selection factor exists. Most, nearly all in the audience didn't report it to anyplace official.

JAH analogizes that the whole study of stellar evolution and white dwarfs started from "one unexplained dot in the lower left-hand corner of the HR diagram", which could easily have been dismissed as an observational error."

PJK says that in law, "the facts speak for themselves", countering a point made by (Thayer or McD.). No facts now speak in favor of UFOze. We need to rely not on whether "this man looks like he has an honest face", but upon actual, physical evidence.

PAGE talks about UFOze in relation to Bridgeman's Operationalism and butchers it completely. For example, since we don't have any thermometers to measure the interior temperature of a star, yet we believe that such a temperature exists, this philosophy poses grave difficulties for astronomers.

PAGE also thinks that when one psychologist at the Boston panel said that UFO's are sex symbols, this represents an entirely new addition to the UFO lore. (Baloney. Jung had this over ten years ago).

JAH sez that when he interviews witnesses he usually finds that they are describing something that to them is very real. PJK adds

that he ought to be more precise, and say that they seem to Hynek to be describing something.... Klass says that he might interview the same witnesses, and get a different impression. Hynek replies sotto voce, "you might".

Kuttner asks about "hard cases", that have extraordinarily credible testimony, and are highly unexplainable. How many do you know of?

JEM says he knows of "hundreds" occurring in the last 20 years THAYER sez that perhaps 20% of all unexplained cases are "hard core".

Klass passes.

PAGE says the Condon study couldn't explain about 30. He believes that to be the approximate number of "hard cores".

HYNEK thinks he has about 1000 astounding goodies, of which about 100 may be thought of as "hard core".

KLASS then asks the other panelists to give him the top ten "hardest of the hard" from each of their collections. Those are the ones he likes to tackle the most.

PAGE uses the Michelson-Morely experiment as an analogy to show how important a single devotius observation is.

JAH says that "an u explained thing is an itch that ought to be scratched".

Kuttner asks* Are there any criteria that place UFOZE high or low on a list of research spending proiritities?

JAH passes.

PJK says that although a study of the phenomenon may lead to better understanding of the phenomenon of ball lightning, ETC., plasma physicists say that fusion power is of much greater importance. So he gives UFOze a very low spending priority.

Kuttner rephrases question, emphasises CRITERIA.

PAGE suggests that since such a large fraction of the American public believes the ET hypothesis, and of the large public interest as shown in various polls, perhaps the govt. supported scientists owe it to them to "correct a public misconception". But he admits that he wouldn't want "all of science to be controlled in this limited way".

JAH says that personally, he would give "the same priority to UFO study that I would to astronomy", because while both lack practical applications, they represent an "intellectual adventure".

JAH on the question of when will we see the UFO problem explained. He wants to see it in his lifetime. "certainly the year 3000 will tell us by then whether there is ay truth to this matter or not."

PANELISTS SUMMARIZE THEIR VIEWS:

PJK emphasises that it is important to remember that in UFO reports, it is not strictly true that "the witnesses saw...", but rather "at a certain time afterward, the witnesses said that they had seen...". It is "vitally important" that we keep this in mind, to "prevent us from brainwashing ourselves".

THAYER says that "at the present time we have insufficient evidence to establish or rule out any of the major hypotheses that have been advanced to explain UFO's", and admits that no single hypothesis will suffice to explain them all, not even ETI.

JEM says that he has been investigating Condon report cases almost exclusively for the past six months, and finds it to be a "woefully inadequate scientific evaluation".

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (written, and handed forward)

in response to astronaut-UFO question, PJK adds that if NASA has any secret photographs or evidence suggesting ETI, they need only produce this to justify their extended high-expenditures. Surely they would produce this evidence when faced with a budget cut. (And they recently took a big one.).

Astronaut Borman wrote to McDonald saying that he does not at all regard his Gemini VII unexplained bogey as being in the UFO category, so "Borman disclaims the Gemini VII bogey". (one man's handclapping heard). (some laughter) KLASS-"I applaud your candor, Jim."

THAYER admits that moving-target radars do not infallibly exclude stationary objects. It is generally conceded that they can and occasionally do show up. Also, a sensitive enough radar can detect a hovering helicopter, due to the rapid line-of-sight motion of the blades.

PAGE concedes the story of a Mr. Harding (?) who had been operating the multi-frequency radar at Whallops Island over a period of about 1 year. They were looking for clear-air turbulence with that "particularly powerful radar". They tracked many things, but did not see anything that would be in the class of UFO's.

JAH says that scarcely a week goes by that he doesn't receive in his own mail a "basically hard-core case". Recognizing that the "serious witness" is in "quite a dilemma now" because he has "no one really to turn to", Hynek generously offers to act as a "clearing house" on an interim basis, and volunteered the services of the Dept. of Astronomy at NU as a repository for these "hard-core cases", but concedes that these gems should eventually be placed in the care of several universities, not enjoyed by one alone.

PAGE suggests that this sort of great UFO center may well be located in Chicago, where another great UFOlogist and sociologist named Bob Hall inhabits the Univ. of Ill. (and sells clothes). He was a speaker at the Boston symposium. Suggests that Bluebook & other stuff be dumped in repository where they would be available to all investigators, perhaps on microfilm for easy handling. Will still guarantee anonymity to witnesses. Have Xerox machines so that copies can be made at cost. The cost of setting up this library would not be prohibitive.

Question: Do many UFO's that go supersonic cause sonic booms, and if not, why not?

JEM: almost no reports of sonic booms from UFO's exist though many are reported as being supersonic. This is "simply one of many aspects of the UFO problem of which there is no present scientific answer."

Question on whether UFO's have been photographed by astronomers.

JAH: to the best of my knowledge no astronomer has photographed a UFO" if by a UFO we mean some object that shows any "great detail". But points out that astronomers' photographs are very narrow-angled, and probably wouldn't show anything even if there were something

there. In summing up: "I don't know any astronomer who has photographed a UFO".

JAH thinks that there may be only about a half dozen photographs that are "hard-core photographic cases".

JAH also says that "in~~a~~ all my time with the Air Force I could not honestly as a scientist say that we have at any time found real evidence~~s~~ of extraterrestrial ~~craft~~ craft". Reaffirms his interest in some possible new exciting phenomenon worthy of great scientific interest and regular professional care.