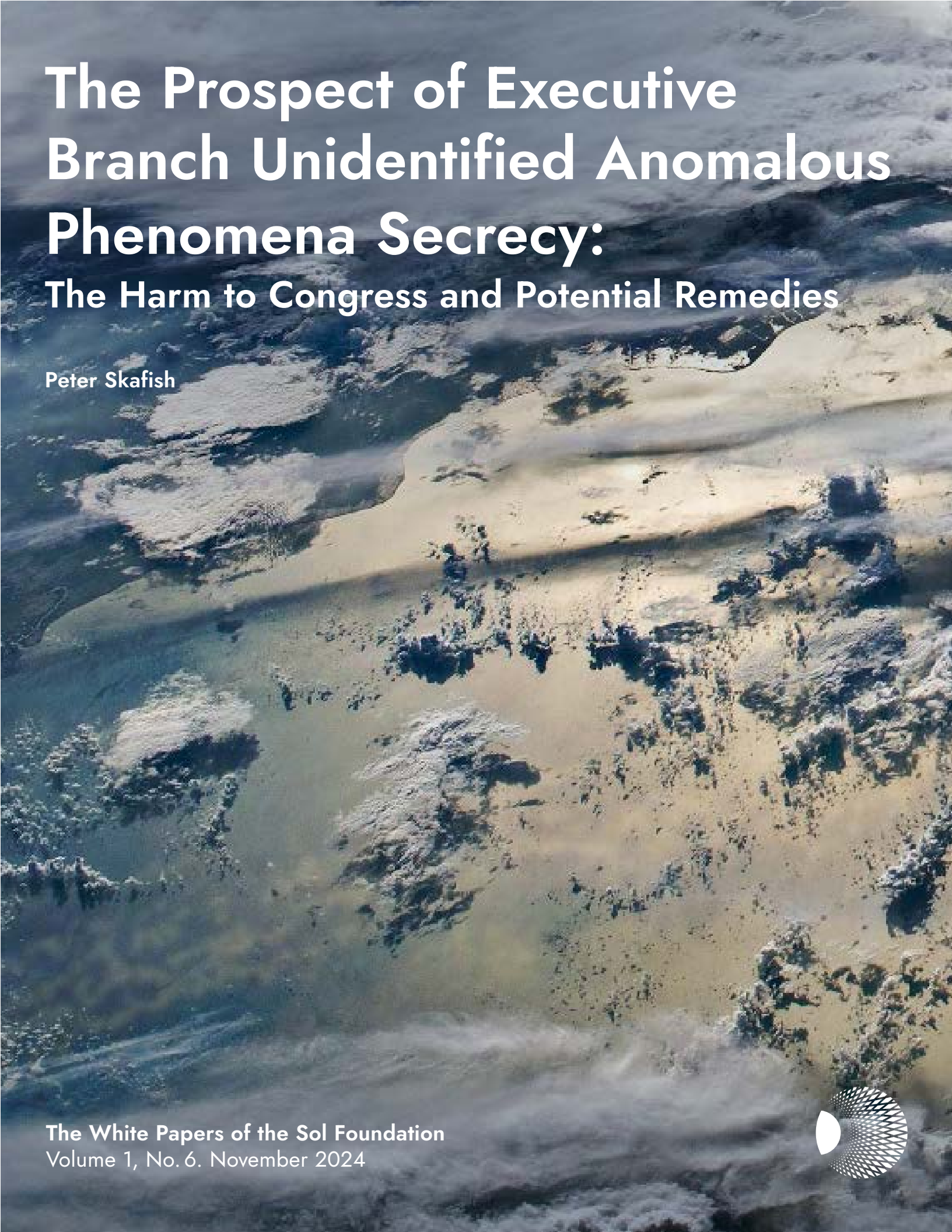

The Prospect of Executive Branch Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Secrecy:

The Harm to Congress and Potential Remedies

Peter Skafish

The White Papers of the Sol Foundation
Volume 1, No. 6. November 2024

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"What is true—and I'm actually being serious here—is that there's footage and records of objects in the skies that we don't know exactly what they are."

—President Barack Obama

"The United States government has gathered a great deal of information about UAPs over many decades but has refused to share it with the American people. That is wrong and additionally breeds mistrust. We have also been notified by multiple credible sources that information on UAPs has also been withheld from Congress, which, if true, is a violation of laws requiring full notification to the legislative branch."

—Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer

Executive Summary and Introduction

Legislative action concerning unidentified anomalous phenomena (or UAP) initiated by the US Congress from 2020 to the present responds to a challenge that may be among the greatest and most complex faced by the United States since its dawning with the Declaration of Independence and through the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Great Depression, WWII, the civil rights era, and the Vietnam War. There may not be social consensus within government, academia, and the media about whether some UAP are indeed nonanthropogenic vehicles, but evidence from sources as diverse as US government intelligence, allied foreign government assessments, scientific analyses, aviator and ground witness reports, and public record testimony strongly favor that interpretation. Should public certainty about the UAP presence be attained, Congress's legislative efforts to date will pale in comparison with those that will inevitably follow.

It might therefore seem that continued engagements with UAP by Congress will be sufficient to enable it to reckon in broad fashion with the myriad national security, geopolitical, scientific, economic, and social challenges raised by that presence. Yet recent federal UAP legislation reveals that Congress's concern is less with UAP vehicles themselves than the prospect that components of the US Intelligence Community, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and other executive branch departments and agencies have known since the 1940s or 1950s of the existence of the vehicles and taken it seriously enough to initiate and maintain related classified intelligence and research programs that were almost entirely concealed from Congress—and certainly, in that case, never made known to the American people.

Concern with that possibility runs through federal UAP legislation and is most pronounced in the UAP Disclosure Act, an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2024 sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Michael Rounds that seeks to establish an elite panel under the authority of the President to review for potential declassification all extant government records on UAP, any such "technologies of unknown origin" retrieved by the government or its defense contractors, and biological evidence of related "nonhuman intelligences" (NHI). There is very little in the Disclosure Act to indicate that Schumer, Rounds, and their cosponsors Senators Marco Rubio and Kirsten Gillibrand deem such records to be conjectural, and 2022 legislation that established a process by which members of the Intelligence Community can legally disclose information to Congress invokes with similar confidence programs to detect, track, retrieve, and reverse engineer UAP vehicles as well as efforts to conceal them through disinformation.[1] Both these and several other expressions of interest from Congress about such programs strongly indicate that the challenge of UAP for the US government is due not only to the vehicles themselves, but also to the executive branch's extension of secrecy about UAP and its activities to the legislative branch.

In other words, that legislation concerning that possibility has been passed at all implies that the problem raised for the federal government by UAP is far greater than all but a few of the most informed public commentators have dared to acknowledge. In essence, the likely terrestrial presence of UAP and, at least by proxy, their nonhuman designers and operators, holds almost unfathomable existential implications for Americans and humanity and therefore requires the informed participation of Congress in all pertinent US government decisions and policy. If the texts of the UAP Disclosure Act and related legislation are accurate, however, in their assertions that the executive branch has imposed blanket secrecy—what might be called "hyperclassification"—over apparently decades-old government UAP knowledge and activities, then Congress has been entirely excluded from decision-making and governance of these. As much as some in government might believe that this could be justified due to the potential national and global security threat posed by UAP, it would prevent Congress from carrying out its constitutionally prescribed responsibilities of legislating and exercising oversight over possible defense, intelligence, scientific, and other federal government activities concerning the vehicles. Put in more fulsome terms, the almost exclusive purview that the executive branch seems to enjoy over UAP affairs infringes on the legislative branch to such an extent that it may have rendered the American system of separate powers inoperative with respect to one of the most important issues government has faced and thereby fomented a latent constitutional crisis—conditions that would also hinder the government's ability to reckon with the very matter that UAP secrecy presumably would have been intended to help address in the first place.

Should this indeed be true, it urgently calls for a forceful response from Congress, a radical public reassertion of its full role in the US government, as well as legislation powerful enough to ballast the executive branch—perhaps the presidency included—and thereby restore balance. The present text (which the author is publishing as a white paper rather than as an academic article for reasons of expediency) lays out a summary case for why it is highly likely that the executive branch indeed harms Congress with UAP secrecy and proposes a suite of remedies. These are as follows:

1. **Passage of the UAP Disclosure Act.** As the current draft language of this legislation includes provisions for the establishment of a board of retired government officials that would gather and review on behalf of the President classified records concerning UAP, subpoena witnesses and material evidence by which the reality of classified government UAP activities and programs might be verified, and propose specific UAP records for declassification.

2. **A Congressional Inquiry into Executive Branch UAP Secrecy, Supported by an Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum Review.** As the Disclosure Act's review panel would execute its work over a five-year period and meet with success only if backed with the full support and power of the President, an additional measure is needed: a congressional investigation into UAP secrecy, modeled on the Church Committee, that would seek to determine which government entities have knowledge of and taken action regarding UAP and assesses the damage done to Congress and the US system of separate powers by secrecy. The Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum, a forum by

which the Inspectors Generals of all intelligence agencies and components coordinate their work, should also conduct a review of any potential classified federal government UAP activities and programs in preparation of and support of the congressional inquiry.

3. Crafting and Passage of a Congressional UAP Governance Act. The passage of legislation establishing that Congress has the responsibility and power to legislate over matters concerning UAP, and that it understands these to be a priority of such consequence as to demand the involvement of all branches of the federal government and all relevant federal agencies, rather than only the DoD, DoE, and agencies within the IC. By declaring that Congress and the rest of the federal government must play a role in UAP affairs, the legislation would make it untenable for any executive branch element or component to maintain blanket or extreme classification over fundamental facts about UAP. And for the legislative branch to execute its responsibilities over UAP, Congress and its various committees would be entitled to receive information on UAP from the executive. This legislation could also contain a declassification provision that would expedite the release of UAP information to the public.

Short of a course of action involving these or equally forceful measures, Congress will remain in a subservient and inconsequential position vis-à-vis the executive branch with respect to UAP and thereby leave a democratic system already suffering several other ills in a damaged state. Even worse, UAP secrecy could then continue unimpeded, compounding the dangers and lost opportunities that Americans may already face on account of their collective ignorance about the UAP presence.

As the current government discourse about UAP is split between congressional calls for transparency and executive branch silence and denial, this paper also makes a case for the high likelihood of US government UAP secrecy before discussing the provisions by which it might be addressed. This case for the reality of secrecy is made in four steps, each of which deals with a specific pool of historical evidence and culminates in a key finding.

1. Although the AARO's 2024 report says otherwise, examination of the US government's extant publicly available data suffices to show that it is all but certain that some UAP are nonanthropogenic vehicles. Both US Air Force Captain Edward Ruppelt's account of the UAP reports received by the service's Project Blue Book and analyses of these by astronomer J. Allen Hynek most clearly shows this, and it is reinforced by the work of other pioneering scientists and researchers, including Coral Lorenzen, James McDonald, and Jacques Vallée.

2. Several pools of historical data, including declassified US Air Force, CIA, FBI, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other government records, additionally show that some components of the DoD, the Intelligence Community, and the Atomic Energy Commission / DoE as well as some National Security Council members and staff are highly likely to have known that some UAP are nonanthropogenic vehicles. The most significant data are records and corroborating testimony of UAP events that occurred from the 1940s through the 1970s at US Air Force bases and other federal government

facilities housing nuclear weapons and nuclear energy research programs. Due to the extreme value for national security of these areas, those UAP events would inevitably have been made known to the uppermost tier of senior executive branch leadership.

3. There is a high likelihood that the executive branch has maintained excessive secrecy about its knowledge of UAP vehicles and activities and programs that may concern them. This is obvious from congressional legislation asserting this to be the case, but it is strongly attested to by historical events, such as the meeting of the CIA-convened Robertson Panel, CIA and DoD records and testimony, and the assessments of foreign governments.

4. It is likely that the executive branch has undertaken efforts to retrieve and reverse engineer crashed UAP vehicles and successfully cloaked these in secrecy. As unbelievable as that may seem, it is attested to by congressional UAP legislation, the public statements and action of several former cabinet-level officials and former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a recent Intelligence Community whistleblower, and current US senators.

1. Recent and Prior Government UAP Activity: The Case for the Reality of the Secrecy

The current state of government discourse on UAP may make a discussion of unlawful secrecy about the phenomena seem premature, if not misguided. Although various members and committees of Congress have shown sustained interest in that possibility, no executive branch element or component with the ability to confirm that some UAP are nonanthropogenic vehicles has done so, and the publicly known DoD office devoted to the phenomena instead has categorically denied that there is evidence for this. The congressional activity of the last seven years thus could appear to be without firm basis and destined to embarrass its main proponents. Closer examination of the context of the government discourse, however, shows that Congress's interest is warranted due to the high likelihood that there is an official executive branch policy to subject information concerning the UAP presence to blanket if not extreme classification.[2]

Since the publication in 2017 of the *New York Times* story that broke the existence of a Department of Defense UAP office informally known as the Advanced Aerial Threat Identification Program, Congress has engaged in a series of actions demonstrating the increasing confidence of some members about the nonhuman provenance of the phenomena, including the successful request for the 2021 report on UAP from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; the passage, over a period of three years, of eight distinct pieces of UAP-focused legislation, nearly all of which concern in some way the possibility of unreported classified government UAP activities and programs; the convening of three public hearings, including a July 2023 House Oversight and Government Accountability Committee hearing in which an Air Force officer formerly with the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) provided testimony under oath about the existence of a classified UAP crash retrieval and reverse engineering program; the comments of numerous current and retired members of Congress expressing their confidence about the reality of UAP and government secrecy surrounding it; and a bipartisan proposal from members of the House of Representatives to form a UAP committee or subcommittee.

Despite all this activity, however, the executive branch has made no parallel moves and very few positive statements about the phenomena and is now even showing signs of making official denials. The Biden White House only sparingly remarked on the recent congressional legislation, and it otherwise vaguely commented on UAP only after being compelled to following media inquiries about the shootdown of a People's Republic of China surveillance balloon and three as-yet unidentified objects over US airspace in February 2023. The DoD has been more direct but nonetheless terse, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff establishing in 2023 an official procedure for UAP reporting but not remarking on the nature of the phenomena, and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Information and Security confirming

the authenticity of well-known UAP footage taken by US Navy pilots yet not opining on the objects it depicts. And a NASA team, meanwhile, undertook in 2022 and 2023 a UAP study at the behest of the agency's director, former Senator Bill Nelson, that resulted in serious proposals about how to analyze pertinent data along with the judgment that "there is no reason to conclude that existing UAP reports have an extraterrestrial source."[3]

Most important for public perception about the reality of UAP, the current public DoD program that Congress recently established to study UAP, the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) published in March of this year a review of past government engagements with UAP.[4] In addition to requiring the AARO to produce regular updates on its progress with analyzing the UAP reports of military and other government personnel, recent law stipulated that the office was to submit to Congress an assessment of the history of UAP events in the United States and potentially secret executive branch activities concerning them. The AARO was categorically negative in this report about the accuracy of reports of nonanthropogenic UAP stretching back to 1947, and it dismissed the very notion of heretofore unknown classified government UAP activities as an artifact of rumor and confusion among government officials.

Between the dismissiveness of the AARO historical report and the lack of significant public support from the Biden cabinet and relevant executive branch components for the congressional interest in UAP, it would be easy to conclude that Congress's actions over the last years are neither significant nor based on sound information. Yet several factors, as we will soon see, make such a conclusion premature and almost certainly wrong. Despite the widespread media coverage enjoyed by the AARO's report, its authors' account of the history of UAP observations in the United States and government engagements with the phenomena is casually executed, often blatantly inaccurate, and thus neither authoritative nor intellectually responsible.[5] Beyond this, the continued marginality of UAP in government, academia, and other institutions has left scholarship, journalism, and popular writing showing the "phenomena" to constitute a real, long-standing presence in the world unknown to most outside observers of the government controversy, which leads them to assume that extraordinary scientific verification of the nonhuman origins of UAP is needed before credence can be given to the congressional interest. Last and most important for our purposes, it is highly likely that components of the DoD and the IC, some National Security Council members and staff, and even some presidents have been and continue to be well aware of nonanthropogenic vehicles and subject knowledge and activities concerning them to a high level of classification.

For all these reasons, the US government discourse about the nature and significance of UAP should be regarded as not ambiguous but *equivocal*, and the part of it emanating from Congress—especially through the recent legislation—as being at least justified in its claims about potential secrecy and arguably correct. To be more precise, the disparity between the two poles of the discourse indicate not uninformed enthusiasm within the legislative branch and rational sobriety within the executive, but instead a more surprising and perhaps historically predictable situation: Members of the Senate and the House have become apprised of the existence of classified defense, intelligence, and other government UAP activities for which Congress never received proper notification and are seeking to gain further information on and verify them. The recent AARO report notwithstanding, both extant academic, journal-

istic, and popular writing as well as declassified government records on UAP strongly favor the prospect that the "phenomena" are artificial objects of a distinct kind: vehicles of nonhuman provenance. If that is true, then relevant executive branch departments and agencies are unlikely to not have discovered this themselves and, given the dearth of reliable public record information on them, kept it secret.

AARO's Errors Exposed: The Extant US Government Data

As unlikely as it may seem that some UAP are nonanthropogenic vehicles and that this is already known within the executive branch, even the sort of brief examination of the AARO Historical Record Report, relevant scientific and other UAP literature, and the known history of government UAP engagements that is possible here suffices to show that this is almost certainly the case. To begin to see why, the AARO's chief claims about Cold War government UAP data need only be contrasted with some of its leading and most well-known analysts' assessments.

It should be kept in mind that the AARO was established through legislation sponsored by members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services (SASC) and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) and based on publicly reported briefings about likely and known vehicular UAP of nonanthropogenic and nonprosaic origin.[6] The office nevertheless categorically states (or at least attempts to say) in the report that the UAP understanding of the legislation's authors and their briefers is incorrect and without any evidentiary basis, particularly where US government data is concerned. "AARO found no evidence," the authors write in the introduction, "that any USG investigation, academic-sponsored [*sic*] research, or official review panel has confirmed that any sighting of a UAP represented extraterrestrial technology. All investigative efforts, at all levels of classification, concluded that most sightings were ordinary objects and phenomena and the result of misidentification."[7] This assessment—which is, to be clear, that the AARO did not find that any government or academic inquiry "confirmed" that a single UAP event involved extraterrestrial technology, and that all such inquiries concluded that the majority of such events had prosaic causes—sounds authoritative. But the authors nowhere clarify what it would mean to "confirm" that a particular UAP is an extraterrestrial technology, what kinds and quantities of evidence would be sufficient to do so, or why this lack of confirmation matters per se if certain recent UAP turn out to be vehicles of nonhuman manufacture. Rather than flesh out the method, evidence, and criteria by which its judgment was reached, the AARO staff only reiterate with slight variation its two parts, first by making the true but irrelevant and vague point that "some" UAP sighted during the Cold War were novel aerospace technologies ("some portion of sightings since the 1940s represented misidentification of never-before-seen experimental and operational space, rocket, and air systems, including stealth technologies and the proliferation of drone platforms") and then by incorrectly asserting several times that the acknowledged Air Force UAP investigations projects Sign, Grudge, and Blue Book that occurred between 1947 and 1970 neither received evidence nor produced assessments indicating that any UAP at all were technologies that the United States, the Soviet Union, or some other state could not have produced.[8] Of these claims about the Air Force data, the most general and consequential for our purposes is made in the course of the authors' comments about Project Blue Book, but it equally applies

to projects Sign and Grudge (as their data was absorbed into that of Blue Book): "No evidence [was] submitted to, or discovered by, the USAF that sightings represented [*sic*] technological developments or principles beyond the range of then-present day scientific knowledge."[9]

This is a patently false statement, and it is refuted by the published writings of two individuals who helmed the very Cold War government inquiries being discussed. According to engineer and Air Force Captain Edward Ruppelt and astronomer J. Allen Hynek, analysis of the data from UAP events reported to the Air Force during the period in question revealed that a significant portion of the objects—at least nearly 6 percent—were neither natural phenomena nor aircraft and therefore not unidentifiable as known entities.

Although a handful of parallel assessments were made during the late 1940s and early 1950s by Air Force analysts, the most thorough of them came from Ruppelt, the initial head of both Blue Book and its immediate predecessor, Project Grudge. In a 1956 book on the projects titled *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, Ruppelt offered that some dozens of UAP events reported to Blue Book and prior projects involved anomalous objects under intelligent control that were highly unlikely to have been US or Soviet aircraft due to their performance. Among these events are multiple observations of UAP made by Navy scientists at White Sands Proving Ground in 1948 and 1949 in the course of conducting missile tests, including a minute-long observation through both a theodolite and with the naked eye of an elliptical and soundless whitish-silver object making extremely rapid and steep ascents and dives; a radar-confirmed starlike object near Wright-Patterson Air Force base that two fighter jets unsuccessfully tried to intercept and that one of their pilots described as "huge and metallic"; the experience of much of the population of Farmington, New Mexico, of scores to hundreds of disclike UAP engaged in an apparent display of themselves for a weekend in 1950; an object tracked on radar flying at eighteen thousand miles per hour; a Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, radar operator's 1951 detection of an object that evaded automated tracking due to its ("faster than a jet") speed before being observed nearby by a fighter pilot (who described it as a disc) and again registered on radar at the then-unreachable altitude of ninety-three thousand feet and seen at the same time by ground observers; and the nine objects famously tracked by radar and visually over a weekend in Washington, DC, in July 1952.[10] Just as significant, Ruppelt and his staff deemed a staggering 27 percent of the cases that Blue Book, Grudge, and Sign investigated before 1954 from an initial pool of 1,593 to be unidentifiable, or "unknowns." "Unknown" of course did not mean "nonhuman," but the category was reserved for events that Project Blue Book's staff could not attribute to balloons, aircraft, astronomical bodies, and hoaxes (each of which respectively claimed 18.51 percent, 11.76 percent, 14.2 percent, and 1.66 percent, alongside an "other" category's 4.21 percent), but for which there was data sufficient to produce an evaluation (22.72 percent were excluded for lacking such data).[11] While Ruppelt was far from an advocate of the extraterrestrial hypothesis—he often just soberly reports facts in the *Report*—he nevertheless frankly states that the most interesting of the reported UAP simply could not be aerial vehicles that were possible at the time:

I wouldn't class myself as a "believer," exactly, because I've seen too many UFO reports that appear to be unexplainable fall to pieces when they were fully investigated. But every time I begin to get skeptical, I think of the other reports, the many reports made by the experienced pilots and radar operators, scientists, and other people who know what they're looking at.

These reports were thoroughly investigated, and they are still unknowns. Of these reports, the radar-visual sightings are the most convincing. When a ground radar picks up a UFO target and a ground observer sees a light where the radar target is located, then a jet interceptor is scrambled to intercept the UFO and the pilot also sees the lights and gets a radar lock-on only to have the UFO almost impudently outdistance him, there is no simple answer. We have no aircraft on this earth that can at will so handily outdistance our latest jets.[12]

Ruppelt was not alone in drawing such conclusions. J. Allen Hynek, the chief scientific consultant to projects Sign, Grudge, and Blue Book until the latter's termination, went further in several publications from the 1970s in which he sought to establish a science of UAP. In the most accessible of them, the books *The UFO Experience* and *The Hynek UFO Report*, the astronomer arrives at a more restrained but arguably more significant figure for the "unknowns" in the Blue Book reports received between 1947 and 1969. Following a retrospective evaluation of the 13,134 reports received by Blue Book, Hynek deemed 640 of the 10,675 for which there was sufficient data to be unidentified—that is, 5.8 percent.[13]

It is already significant enough that this figure concerns the US government's publicly acknowledged data from 1947 to 1969, but of greater import is Hynek's assessment of the unexplainable nature of at least half the objects described by witnesses in these 640 reports. As some readers undoubtedly know, the astronomer classed the reported events involving genuine "unknowns" into a typology of six kinds. It comprises the three types of effectively "distant encounters"—"Nocturnal Lights," "Daytime Discs," and "Radar-Visual," or reports of radar detection supported by human observation (or vice versa)—and the three types of "close encounters," events in which witnesses met with the phenomena at a distance of no more than five hundred feet—"Close Encounters of the First Kind," or reports of UAP observed at this close range that are uncorroborated by physical evidence; "Close Encounters of the Second Kind," which are accounts of UAP witnesses at the same distance in which aspects of the natural environment, living beings, and technologies are affected (e.g., plants pressed down or burned, animals frightened, car engines stopped); and, last, the notorious "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," or reports of not just UAP but also near or in them beings that usually appear biological and often physically similar to humans (bipedal, dorsal asymmetry, with faces, etc.) that Hynek and other researchers at the time termed "occupants."[14] While it could seem that the astronomer simply sorted the reports according to their affinities instead of first determining if these were indicative of anomalous vehicles, no single report was placed in any of the categories unless it contained one or several traits that clearly distinguished the observed object from a meteorological or other natural phenomena or a possible aircraft. Reports in the "Nocturnal Lights" category, for instance, were not of vague, mysterious lights, but rather of illuminated objects moving at trajectories unattributable to natural objects, balloons, and airplanes; and "Daytime Discs" reports were of objects that not only had clearly nonaerodynamic shapes like discs, ovals, ellipsoids, and cigars, but moved at velocities too fast to be those of aircraft or too slow for their altitude, sometimes even hovering in place. As for the close encounter reports, the first kind were of objects that were distinct from possible aircraft due to their glowing or bright luminosity (and sometimes counterclockwise rotating lights), oval or ellipsoid shape, hovering and rapid takeoff, and absence of sound as well as the unlikelihood of misperception because of the observer's proximity; while close encounters of the second kind were little different, except that they left behind what Hynek called the

physical "mementos" of ground traces, scorched or blighted vegetation, physiological effects on witnesses (like temporary paralysis and heat), and apparent disturbances to gravity, only some of which could sometimes be attributed to known aircraft. In short, each of the six kinds of UAP reports were of not only unknown phenomena but, more crucially, tangible objects that had only a low chance of being classified or known aircraft.

It does not follow, of course, that these and similar UAP are nonanthropogenic vehicles. Yet Hynek additionally shows that the distribution of the reports across the typology makes it highly likely that a surprisingly large portion of the Blue Book reports fall into this category. This is not readily apparent from the breakdown of the reports into the six kinds, as the most conclusive category of reports, the three kinds of close encounters, capture as small a portion of the total as might be anticipated—forty-six, or 7 percent; thirty-three, or 5 percent; and eight, or 1 percent, for, respectively the first, second, and third kinds—while the least conclusive of the reports, the "Nocturnal Lights," count 243 reports and thus 38 percent of the total. "Daytime Discs," however, number 271 reports, or 42 percent of the total, a figure that casts the rest of the data in a striking light. By Hynek's reckoning, not only these, but the 13 percent of the total falling into the category of the close encounters were reports of diurnal and/or close observations by witnesses of the unambiguous presence of disc, double-saucer, ellipsoid, or similarly shaped nonaerodynamic vehicles exhibiting kinds of movement inconsistent with airplanes, helicopters, and missiles. *In short, over 55 percent—some 358—of the events reported to Project Blue Book and its predecessors are highly likely to have involved unambiguously vehicular objects of nonanthropogenic provenance.*

To return to the AARO report, the implications for it of Hynek's evaluation of the data is evident. The AARO's declaration that no government or academic investigation has "confirmed" that any single reported UAP was an extraterrestrial or presently unachievable technology loses its aura of accuracy and authority. Hynek's and Ruppelt's estimates for unidentified objects from the government data could be justifiably interpreted as saying that more than six hundred such UAP could very well be vehicles of nonhuman provenance, and their accounts of individual cases show at least some 350 of them to belong in that same category. It scarcely matters in that case that the astronomer and the engineer alike regarded, just as the AARO points out, most ostensible UAP to be ordinary things mistaken for extraordinary ships. On the point of what past US government inquiry shows about UAP, the AARO is entirely wrong.

Further Scientific and Government Study: The Reality of Nonanthropogenic Vehicles

Hynek's and Ruppelt's assessments of the Blue Book and other acknowledged government data are of still more significance, as they offer a starting point for a fuller case for why their own and other government, academic, and amateur research shows that it is all but certain that some reported UAP are vehicles of nonhuman provenance.

In the approximately twenty-five-year period during which the Air Force projects Sign, Grudge, and Blue Book were in operation, several academic and amateur researchers undertook parallel inquiries that strongly support and expand on Ruppelt's and Hynek's picture of

the data. This cohort of researchers includes, among others, French astronomer, computer scientist, and eventual venture capitalist Jacques Vallée; University of Colorado astronomer and pioneering climate scientist James McDonald; and the early "ufologist" Coral Lorenzen and her collaborators from the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization.[15] Although the work of this trio remains largely unknown in academia and government, they together developed effective methods for determining if reported UAP events involve nonanthropogenic vehicles and left behind a body of work that almost conclusively demonstrates their reality.

Although a full case for why they succeeded at this would be another book-length paper unto itself, a brief gloss of their respective lines of research shows what it accomplishes if fairly assessed.

Coral Lorenzen: Witness Testimony and UAP Morphology and Performance. Lorenzen investigated thousands of UAP events between 1950 and 1981 and laid out a strong case in a 1962 book that witness testimony alone makes it all but certain that UAP vehicles exist.[16] Although Lorenzen followed the practice of gathering and examining additional data in order to corroborate such testimony, she primarily made this determination by assessing the credibility and observational competence of witnesses. This method of vetting witnesses and then trusting their testimony enabled her to accept the veracity of several UAP events and kinds thereof recounted to her in the 1950s, none of which can be ascribed in good faith to missiles, experimental aircraft, and rockets. Such individual events include a US bomber-fighter gunner's and his crew members' Korean War encounter with a pair of conical/disc-shaped objects that appeared to have diameters of three hundred to four hundred feet, and a daytime sighting by multiple ground witnesses in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, of a silvery, ellipsoid vehicle; and the kinds of events include those involving discs, half and double saucers, and craft shaped like cigars and teardrops; and, most interestingly, close encounters in which pilots experienced instrument, radar, and communications interference and ground witnesses were burned (perhaps in one case intentionally) by the vehicles.[17] Lorenzen also used her correspondence with witnesses and investigators throughout Latin America to show that UAP events were by no means confined to the United States and Europe, and she additionally documented reports of unidentified submersible objects (USO) and UAP displaying the apparent capacity to move between the atmosphere and the oceans or other bodies of water (what the congressional UAP legislation calls "transmedium travel"). In brief, Lorenzen developed a unique but rigorous method of investigation and used it to show that nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles exist.

Vallée's Scientific Approach to UAP Reports. In 1965, Jacques Vallée published in book form the conclusions to his own decade-long research and analysis of thousands of UAP reports.[18] Overshadowed today by his subsequent six decades of research and numerous works on the phenomena, this book was of signal importance due to its characterization of the scientific problem constituted by UAP and the inventive thinking required to "solve" it. After recalling to readers that science rejected the existence of meteorites during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries instead of trying to explain them, Vallée demonstrates that reports of UAP are as consistent as those of any novel scientific phenomenon were and thus merit scientific study. Yet he adds that certain characteristics of UAP makes

them anomalous not only to our classification of nature but also our basic habits of thought. The phenomena evince, Vallée explains, properties and "behavior" that indicate they are designed or operated by other minds of an enigmatic and perhaps radically alien character. This subjective dimension of UAP requires approaching them with even less a priori notions in mind than other novel phenomena must be, as our difficulty in accepting that other subjects are responsible for the phenomena tempts us into interpreting the data in unscientific terms that make it seem palpable—for example, as wholly erroneous perceptions, or as ET craft as they were imagined midcentury—and then trying to furnish "proof" for the interpretation. A more radically empirical approach, free of reductive concepts, is needed.

Vallée's solution is to define "the UFO phenomenon" as reports of sightings of anomalous aerial objects and to refrain from predefining such reports so as to collect, learn from, and analyze any and all made. By making this the axiom of his research, Vallée was able to demonstrate that UAP reports almost invariably evince certain previously unrecognized characteristics and thus correspond to a distinct kind of phenomenon worthy of study:

(1) As Hynek had not yet stated in print, UAP reports tend to be reliable and consistent descriptions of apparent lights and/or vehicles that are unattributable to natural or known technological entities upon close examination.

(2) This baseline consistency allows for reports to be studied scientifically, by sorting classes of reports according to behavior attributed to the object: those of objects hovering close to or "landed" on the ground; of moving aerial objects that come to a temporary or complete halt; moving objects whose trajectory is uninterrupted; and aerial lights.

(3) Reports do not begin during and just after World War II but instead in the nineteenth century and date back to the Middle Ages in Europe and Japan, ancient Greece, and beyond. This strongly supports the idea that UAP have an intelligent, nonhuman source.

James McDonald's Granular, Instrument-Focused Analyses of UAP Vehicles. In 1958, McDonald began gathering and examining data from UAP reports out of sheer curiosity, and soon concluded that many unexplainable objects for which there was sufficient data were generally vehicles with performance capabilities well in excess of those of existing US and Soviet aircraft.

Initially funded in this work by the Office of Naval Research, McDonald reinvestigated UAP events reported to Blue Book, its predecessor projects, and other organizations by finding and interviewing some five hundred witnesses, examining radar and other instrument data, correlating both pools with geographical and meteorological information, and comparing his own reconstruction and analysis of the likely events against those of Blue Book. The atmospheric physicist concluded after three years of study that UAP constitute a genuine problem for science that has been unjustifiably dismissed as an absurdity, and he deemed the Air Force responsible for this by conducting only superficial inquiries well short of the spirit and practice of the sciences.

"My own extensive checks," he averred in a scathing 1969 lecture titled "Science in Default," "have revealed so slight a total amount of scientific competence in two decades of Air Force–supported investigations that I can only regard the repeated assertions of solid scientific study of the UFO problem as the single most serious obstacle that the Air Force has put in the way of elucidation of the matter." He continued:

> Close examination of the level of investigation and the level of scientific analysis involved in Project Sign (1948–9), Project Grudge (1949–52), and Project Bluebook (1953 to date), reveals that these were, viewed scientifically, almost meaningless investigations. Even during occasional periods (e.g., 1952) characterized by fairly active investigation of UFO cases, there was still such slight scientific expertise involved that there was never any real chance that the puzzling phenomena encountered in the most significant UFO cases would be elucidated. Furthermore, the panels, consultants, contractual studies, etc., that the Air Force has had working on the UFO problem over the past 22 years have, with essentially no exception, brought almost negligible scientific scrutiny into the picture.[19]

McDonald was this categorical in his judgment not only because of the glaring superficiality of so many Blue Book analyses—Ruppelt, Hynek, and Vallée, too, all attested to that—but due to the clarity arguably afforded him by his forensic and instrument-oriented mode of analysis. Anticipating and partly establishing the standards now followed in recent UAP investigations, McDonald examined technical quantitative data from reports at a granular level to determine if such factors as observer confusion or error, false radar returns, anomalous radar propagation, and poorly calibrated or faulty equipment were responsible for apparently genuine UAP observations. This method (which he may have invented) revealed that some thirty such events that Air Force investigators attributed to these and other prosaic causes in fact involved extraordinary objects, such as a red, illuminated object tracked visually and by radar that pursued an Air Force plane and its six-member crew for more than six hundred miles during a gunnery and electronic warfare exercise over the Gulf of Mexico and Texas; an event near the UK's Lakenheath Royal Air Force station in 1956 involving twelve to fifteen apparent objects moving at speeds that the astronomer estimated at to be between four thousand and twelve thousand miles per hour, and one that remained stationary for five minutes; and a lighted, egg-shaped object seen crossing and then briefly hovering over Kirtland Air Force Base's runway in 1957 by air traffic controllers, then shooting upward at unprecedented speed before being tracked by radar returning to the base and shadowing a departing aircraft. McDonald's method led him to argue that there were, circa 1970, around one thousand UAP reports deserving scientific scrutiny and that a significant portion of these support the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

Taken together, the work of Hynek, McDonald, Lorenzen, and Vallée indeed leaves little doubt that UAP are at the very least not misperceptions and hallucinations but real phenomena that cry out for scientific investigation. Yet the group also arguably succeeded at showing that many evaluable UAP reports are of nonanthropogenic vehicles, as each researcher demonstrates in their own way that witnesses to UAP events are generally reliable, describe consistent UAP morphologies and performance characteristics, and can be corroborated through correlating features of their testimony with that of other witnesses, subsequent inves-

tigation of event sites, flight and instrument data, data from other reported events (e.g., those of the close encounters), and patterns of data specific to event types.[20]

By the mid-1970s, a community of other researchers had formed around the consensus that there indeed is a UAP presence constituted by nonanthropogenic vehicles, and they relitigated the case for it across several academic and para-academic works over the next decades. These include, to name only a few, historian David Jacobs's *The UFO Controversy in America*, NASA psychologist Richard Haines' *UFO Phenomena and the Behavioral Scientist* and *Observing UFOs,* Illobrand von Ludwiger's *Best UFO Cases: Europe*, Stanford astrophysicist Peter Sturrock's *The UFO Enigma*, popular historian Richard Dolan's two-volume *UFOs and the National Security State*, and investigator Roberts Hasting's *UFOs and Nukes*. It is unlikely that any of these researchers would have disagreed with McDonald's estimate that at least some of the one thousand reported UAP events he examined were brought about by so-called nonhuman intelligences, and most of them would have by the 1980s and 1990s affirmed that of a far greater number, ranging between the thousands and the tens of thousands, due to continued event reporting and collection.

As demonstrating the likely accuracy of such assessments is well beyond the scope of this paper, the reader can be assured of their accuracy by examining here a handful of exemplary reported events that it is quite difficult to attribute to human technology (see list 1, below). Unless the research on these events is subjected to the unrestrained skepticism ordinarily reserved for thought experiments, the most reasonable and sure interpretation of them is that they were brought about by one or more vehicles designed, fabricated, and at least remotely operated by nonhuman beings. Each of these events was witnessed by multiple individuals who were interviewed following their initial reports; corroborated by radar, other sensor data, and subsequent investigation; and involved aerial objects with nonaerodynamic morphologies as well as performance characteristics not possible for any known air or space technologies. Just as important, the shapes and behavior of the vehicles are largely consistent across all the events, despite the decades separating them, which significantly lowers the chance that the most recent of them may somehow be classified US or adversarial aerospace assets.

As verification of just a single event involving a nonanthropogenic UAP vehicle forces us to accept that some portion of all known possible events are also of "genuines," this list should give us high confidence about the reality of the presence of nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles.

List 1: Exemplary Events Involving Nonanthropogenic Vehicles

The Washington DC Events of July 26-27, 1952. Following reports of UAP in the vicinity of the capitol city from commercial airliner crews on July 10, 13, 14, and 16, radar operators at Washington National Airport detected on the night of Saturday, July 26, in Edward Ruppelt's words, "eight unidentified targets east and south of Andrews Air Force Base" that "weren't airplanes because they would loaf along at 100 or 130 miles an hour, then suddenly accelerate to 'fantastically high speeds' and leave the area." Nearby Andrews Air Force Base also registered the UAP on radar soon after, as did the crews of commercial airliners with whom Washington National and Andrews radar operators established contact; one pilot reported seven separate anomalous lights, and another that he was shadowed by a UAP

that came within four miles of the airport's runway. "One target was clocked at 7,000 miles an hour," Ruppelt recounts. "The targets moved [...] through the prohibited flying areas over the White House and the Capitol." Eventually, Washington National would inform Andrews that it showed a radar contact just south of the base's air traffic control tower, whose radar operator confirmed "a 'huge, fiery orange sphere' hovering in the sky."

Morphology: Lights and luminous objects, some spherical.
Performance characteristics: Sudden and instantaneous acceleration, hypersonic velocity, positive lift.
Data: Ruppelt's narrative, Blue Book report, newspaper reports, USAF press conference. .

Multiple UAP Observations from the Lakenheath Air Traffic Control Center and Bentwaters Ground Control Approach Radar Installation, United Kingdom, August 13, 1956. Three separate radar observations taken by civilian air traffic controllers indicate objects moving at speeds of 4,000-10,000 mph; a noncommissioned US Air Force officer at Lakenheath is asked to assist in tracking, which results in a report to Project Blue Book. One of the radar targets began as a group of 12-15 smaller objects that appeared to merge into a large single object (malfunctioning radar or operator error was ruled out by researchers). A DH-112 Venom fighter is scrambled to intercept one of the objects but fails at this, and the pilot is diverted to another object and obtains a radar lock on it before it performs the remarkable feat of instantaneously displacing itself behind him and then giving pursuit. A second Venom fighter is dispatched to pursue another unknown object but must return to land due to mechanical problems.

Morphology: Unknown.
Performance characteristics: Sudden and instantaneous acceleration, hypersonic velocity, positive lift.
Witnesses: Ground witnesses, radar operators, USAF radar officer, interviews with pilots.
Data: Blue Book report and data, interviews with witnesses.

Iranian Airforce UAP Intercept Attempt, 1976. After reports of a UAP above Tehran were made to the Iranian air force by air traffic controllers and ground observers, a fighter jet is scrambled to investigate what turned out to be a fuel tanker-sized, diamond-shaped object, the pulsating, dazzling lights of which made it visible from a distance of 70 miles. The pilot abandoned his intercept attempt after losing all instrument and communications functions, at which point another fighter was launched, obtained a radar lock, observed colored lights, pursued, and was then confronted by a second object that somehow emerged from the first. This second pilot attempted to fire a missile at this other UAP (which he said approached like a missile) but found his weapons control and communications systems disabled and took evasive maneuvers. The second UAP then re-entered the vehicle.

Morphology: The first UAP was diamond-shape and apparently nonaerodynamic; second UAP was round or spherical and without flight surfaces.
Performance characteristics: Sudden and instantaneous acceleration, hypersonic velocity, positive lift.
Data: Testimony of four pilots, several radar operators and air traffic controllers, multiple

military and civilian ground witnesses in Tehran.
Documentation: Two declassified DIA reports, one of which was shared with the CIA, NSA, and the President. Several print and broadcast interviews with pilots, one of whom attained the rank of general in the Iranian Air Force.

Japan Airlines Encounter over Alaska, 1985. A Japan Airlines 747 pilot and his crew in 1985 reported a gigantic, aircraft-sized carrier that kept pace with their cargo flight over Alaska and performed several times the seemingly impossible maneuver of displacing itself 15 miles in a few seconds. The pilot, Kenju Terauchi, told the FAA that the vehicle was round and accompanied by smaller illuminated objects, and radar data confirmed its size as well as its maneuvers. (An FAA official who took the report later claimed that he was asked to share data about it with two officers from the CIA.)

Morphology: Round/ellipsoid, massive.
Performance characteristics: Positive lift, hypersonic velocity.
Data: Testimony of pilots, FAA investigator. .

Air France Sighting near Coulommiers, France, January 28, 1994. A large, brown, and apparently bell-shaped vehicle is seen visually on a clear afternoon at an altitude of 10,500 meters by the crew of an Air France flight connecting Nice to London. The vehicle reportedly changed form, to a lens shape, then became invisible. The nearby Cinq-Mars-la-Pile air traffic control center detected the vehicle on radar for 50 seconds and registered its disappearance at the same moment this was reported by the pilots. French researchers estimated the UAP to have a 750 foot diameter.

Morphology: Bell and lens, nonaerodynamic.
Performance characteristics: Positive lift, low observability.
Data: Testimony of crew, radar data.

Nimitiz Carrier Group Event, November 14, 2004. The four-person crew of two Navy fighters with the USS Nimitz carrier group were conducting combat exercises off the Baja coast on an exceptionally clear day when they encountered a white, compressed cylindrical UAP vehicle that made an instantaneous descent from 80,000 to 20,000 feet before repeating the movement to sea level, where it executed a series of strange, right-angle maneuvers while hovering over a possibly larger, submerged UAP. All four pilots witnessed the event, and a fifth later pursued it and captured thermal video footage.

Morphology: Ellipsoid, nonaerodynamic.
Performance characteristics: Positive lift, hypersonic velocity, low observability.
Witnesses: Five Navy pilots, two radar operators, and several other personnel
Data: Thermal video footage, abundant public testimony of witnesses.

Why Some DoD and Intelligence Community Components Most Likely Knew

Yet even if "proof" of the nonhuman provenance of UAP (or of anything else) were something everyone, everywhere would mechanically assent to, providing it would take another paper, purely on UAP themselves rather than government secrecy about them. It is, however, possible and perhaps easy to show that officials and components within the CIA and DoD as well as some NSC members had concluded—probably as early as the late 1940s—that genuine UAP are vehicles that do not originate with human beings. Moreover, this can be done entirely on the basis of historical research, unclassified and declassified records, and public testimony—and without appeal to a cover-up put in place with malign intent.

As we only briefly saw above, reports of disc-like UAP in 1947 and 1948 aroused concern in the military, the newly established CIA, and the FBI, and several intelligence assessments were produced to determine whether the objects (it was assumed that most were of one kind) had a prosaic or "interplanetary" origin. Perhaps the most significant of these was authored by Air Force General Nathan Twinning in response to a request for an evaluation of the hypothesis that the objects were physical and tangible yet possibly classified US aerospace assets. Twinning did not concur with the latter judgment. "It is the opinion that the phenomenon is not visionary or fictitious," the general wrote, "[but corresponds to] objects probably approximating the shape of a disc, of such appreciable size as to be as large as man-made aircraft."[21] He went on to provide a characterization of the morphology and performance characteristics of UAP that remains accurate today, adding that vehicles with these traits could only be constructed and operated with considerable difficulty by the US government: "Metallic or light-reflecting surface; absence of trail, except in a few instances when the object apparently was operating under high performance conditions; Circular or elliptical in shape, flat on bottom, and domed on top; Several reports of well-kept formation flights varying from three to nine objects; Normally no associated sound."[22] Twinning accordingly recommended that the Air Force undertake a classified intelligence study and share all UAP reports it collected with not only the expected defense and intelligence elements but also the AEC, the Office of Scientific Research and Development, and the Joint Research and Development Board (the last two of which were associated with the Manhattan Project, the first as its incubator and the second as the postwar locus of some of its leadership).

Twinning's recommendation led to the establishment of the Air Force's Project Sign and, soon after, its analysts' apparent assessment that UAP vehicles were not anthropogenic and thus of extraterrestrial origin. According to Ruppelt and other sources who acknowledged reading it, Sign produced in 1948 a report, titled "Estimate of the Situation," which bluntly stated this, but it was deemed by the Air Force's secretary incorrect or else too explosive for circulation and subsequently destroyed.[23] Regardless, some personnel within the program and its successors held to this conclusion, which was echoed in adjacent government agencies. Several other extant documents from the time, including letters from and memoranda of FBI discussions involving J. Edgar Hoover, a frank CIA assessment urging that UAP be treated as a priority, and an Air Force memo laying out collection guidelines, show that even elite officials shared the view that it was at least unusually shaped objects, if not discs and saucers, capable of incredible aerial feats that were at issue.[24]

None of this, however, definitively proves there was anything approaching consensus or even sustained concern among Air Force and CIA leadership, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the National Security Council about the reality and nature of UAP between the late 1940s and the early 1950s. Readers should understand that there is no doubt that UAP sightings were frequent during those years and that components of these and other elements of federal government made efforts to study the phenomena, particularly following signal events like the 1947 Kenneth Arnold sighting, the Fort Monmouth event, a wave of sightings in 1952, and the flyovers of the nation's capital that year, with the DC event even triggering an urgent request to the Air Force for information from the Truman Oval Office and a press appearance by the service's Secretary.[25] Yet many other public and internal comments of government officials from the time show them to be indifferent to and dismissive of the nonhuman hypothesis, and this makes it unlikely there was broad agreement that UAP constituted a priority.[26] Absent clearer data from possibly unknown records, it remains difficult to be sure of the general state of mind among AEC, DoD, and IC leadership.

There is, however, a pool of available historical data that should leave one with only moderate doubt that by at least the 1960s, select leadership of these same elements—and probably some presidents—would certainly have taken notice of some of the very same UAP events already discussed here and requested the continuation of their study in classified settings. The evidence for this lies in the public record, typically declassified reports to the Air Force of UAP events that occurred at some of the service's North American bases housing nuclear weapons and bombers as well as certain national laboratories, such as Los Alamos and Sandia, conducting classified nuclear energy and weapons research on behalf of the AEC.

It is easy to overlook the fact that some of the UAP reports discussed before were from incidents that occurred at such government sites, including some known to have been home to squadrons of bombers equipped with nuclear payloads, such as Roswell, et cetera. Such events were by no means rare within the reports received by Blue Book, and several of those retrospectively discovered by amateur researchers stretched across days and involved unambiguously nonaerodynamic vehicles. None of this was lost on government investigators, including Edward Ruppelt, who acknowledged in *The Report on Unidentified* Flying Objects of the data as of 1953 that "UFOs were habitually reported from areas around 'technically interesting places' like our atomic energy installations, harbors, and critical manufacturing areas."[27]

Ruppelt is referring not only to several typical UAP events at such places but others of a more bizarre kind. Personnel at Los Alamos witnessed inexplicable green "fireballs" egressing its facilities in 1948 and 1949, and this so alarmed the Air Force, the AEC, Army intelligence, and the FBI that a conference, which counted theoretical physicist Edward Teller as a participant, was convened to discuss them and a study project (known as Twinkle) soon initiated.[28] Ruppelt might also be alluding to concern within those elements and the CIA of subsequently discovered reports of UAP appearing during nuclear weapons tests, as the AEC requested that Blue Book set up a reporting network at test sites and train local personnel in collecting UAP data. By his own account, he was asked to do this ahead of the initial, 1952 hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific but was unable to get a team to the site for logistical reasons.[29] Interestingly, there is testimony and even records of UAP events occurring near AEC-controlled

ships used during those and subsequent tests, including one involving a luminous, oval-shaped UAP that made a bow-to-stern pass over the AEC's flagship in full view of many of its crew.[30]

It is extremely unlikely that the uppermost tier of AEC, CIA, and DoD leadership would or could have been unaware of the many such events that occurred adjacent to nuclear research, weapons, and test sites in the 1940s and 1950s. It is thus reasonable to conclude that at least a select group of executive branch officials recognized at that time that the UAP presence was real and considered it a priority. Ruppelt in fact attests to this, listing at one point in *The Report* the names of prominent Air Force generals who had sighted UAP and mentioning a group of "rocket experts, nuclear phycisists, and intelligence experts" studying UAP on behalf of the federal government.[31]

Any such executive branch group likely would have convinced their counterparts in government of the UAP presence following further, sometimes more dramatic UAP incidents that were occurring by the early 1960s at nuclear weapons installations in the western United States. During that decade, personnel at the central headquarters and missile launch facilities at Air Force bases like South Dakota's Ellsworth and Montana's Malmstrom witnessed UAP make incursions and even apparent shows of force and reported the incidents to Blue Book and the Strategic Air Command.

Best known from the investigations of Robert Hastings and his book *UFOs and Nukes*, the events commenced in 1962 and 1963 with observations of UAP at such Air Force bases as Forbes and Walker, including a luminous object that made repeated passes over an underground missile silo at the latter base, and had by 1965 escalated into incidents in which personnel reported that UAP appeared to temporarily neutralize the bases' launch capabilities.[32] These incidents occurred in 1966 at Ellsworth AFB, and in 1967 at the Malmstrom and Minot bases and were recounted to Hastings by base personnel who witnessed them firsthand; and they received, in one case, strong corroboration from a declassified base history.

The 1966 event at Ellsworth is known from a missile technician, who testified that he was officially alerted by colleagues to the presence of a UAP, watched it move over the base, and then discovered that the launch and power systems at two underground silos had inexplicably failed.[33] A single witness might be of little significance were similar events at Malmstrom and Minot not attested to by several witnesses with mutually corroborative accounts. No less than five such UAP events occurred at Malmstrom that year, but it is two of these that are of primary interest. On the nights of March 16 and 24, 1967, UAP were observed by multiple witnesses at two underground missile launch facilities within the Malmstrom complex and appeared to remotely shut down their launch control systems.[34] Three base personnel independently attested to Hastings that on the first of those dates, all missiles at one launch facility inexplicably went offline during a UAP event, and Hastings was able to verify through a declassified history that such an event indeed took place following a base-wide alert about UAP. The October 24 event saw a loss of launch capabilities of several missiles at a different facility during a UAP event and was attested to by at least four witnesses. As though these incidents were not astonishing enough, Hastings became acquainted with a deputy commander to a missile launch crew who claimed to have experienced firsthand yet another event in which

UAP appeared to interfere with nuclear weapons in a silo, this time in 1966 at Minot AFB in North Dakota. Rather than missiles being knocked offline, however, indicators signaling that they were about to be sent hurtling toward their target were somehow activated and then suddenly terminated while the UAP (a "large, bright object") was lingering over launch sites.[35]

These and other UAP events at nuclear weapons installations from the era could not have escaped the notice of Air Force leadership, the AEC, and the Joints Chiefs of Staff, and it is likely that the National Security Council would have been notified. It is therefore highly probable that these and other cabinet- and secretary-level officials had begun by the mid-1960s to take the UAP presence seriously if their counterparts in the 1940s and 1950s had not already, and that they treated it as a matter so grave as to require a high level of classification. If that is so, the UAP data held by the Air Force to that point would have been the object of renewed scrutiny and the obvious evidence it offers for nonanthropogenic vehicles given its due. Unless everything understood by serious researchers about the reporting data through 1970 is wrong, relevant executive branch elements and components would have by then been cognizant of nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles and engaged in their study.

Any serious intelligence effort to gather and analyze data on the phenomena in the 1960s and 1970s would have been unable to avoid the conclusion that some UAP are of nonanthropogenic provenance. This is because certain UAP events that transpired in the 1970s—several of which are known to researchers from declassified Air Force, Defense Intelligence Agency, and CIA records—leave room for few other possibilities. Among these are other events at Malmstrom AFB and other bases housing nuclear weapons, including yet another incident in which missile launch systems were mysteriously disabled, and the Iranian Air Force's failed attempts to intercept a luminous UAP over Tehran in 1976. (See, again, List 1.) As even the summary provided here shows, that event in particular would be unlikely to leave much doubt with responsible leadership about the reality of the UAP presence. "The government" would have known by the 1970s.

The author says this, however, only for purposes of argument. It is far more likely that the Air Force, the other branches of the armed services, the Joint Chiefs, and the CIA all would have drawn this conclusion well before, in the late 1940s and early to mid-1950s (especially if other governments components had during World War II). The reports collected by government components up until 1970 are no worse, often better, and, at least where their unclassified portions are concerned, more abundant. Moreover, it is nowhere in dispute that US defense and intelligence efforts to comprehend UAP commenced in the late 1940s and received from then through at least the mid-1950s the attention of the AEC, DoD, and CIA and their leadership. If these efforts were serious and enjoyed adequate institutional support, they would have concluded in favor of some UAP being nonanthropogenic vehicles. In that case, Presidents Truman and Eisenhower as well as their CIA Directors, Secretaries of Defense, and other members of their NSCs and cabinets would have been informed of that conclusion and its gravity.

Table 1. UAP Events at U.S. Air Force Bases Housing and Controlling Nuclear Weapons

Place and Date	Event	Evidence
1962		
Forbes AFB	Luminous, ascending UAP sighted in vertical ascent	Blue Book case file
1963		
Walker AFB	UAP repeatedly pass over "Site 9"and shine lights down over it	Witness
Walker AFB	UAP seen maneuvering erratically,at 45-degree angles, and stopping	Witness
Walker AFB	UAP seen from silo, reportedly shoots off during intercept attempt	Written report to National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena by airman then stationed at base
1964		
Walker AFB	Several reports of luminous UAP over base	Witness testimony
Altus AFB, May	Bright light above launch silo	Witness report to Air Force Foreign Technology Division
Warren AFB, August	Hovering object	Single witness
Minot AFB, August.	Two UAP near launch facility; apparent landing	Blue Book file, witnesses, radar (reportedly)
Big Sur, October.	Air Force films UAP destroying war-head from ICBM during test flight from Vanderberg AFB	Witness: AF photographer
1965		
Warren AFB, August	Dozens of UAP hovering and moving over its nuclear missiles launch and launch control facilities	Blue Book logs recording multiple reports from base, including by commanders; report to Air Force Foreign Technology Division; three or four witnesses

1966		
Ellsworth AFB	Power and missile failures at two silos, round metallic UAP landed within fence around silo	Witnesses: missile maintenance technician; possibly missile launch officer
Minot AFB, ca. 1966	"Launch in progress" indicator triggered as UAP passes over launch sites	Witness: deputy commander on duty of missile crew
1967		
Malmstrom AFB, March.	Shimmering, red-orange object passes through base	Witness: AF police officer
Malmstrom AFB, March 24	UAP landing near base	Witness: trucker; declassified Air Force telex
Malmstrom AFB, October. 16	UAP present, missile shutdown at Echo Flight	Declassified Wing (Unit) history, three witnesses
Malmstrom AFB, October 24	UAP present, missile shutdownat Oscar Flight	Five witnesses
Malmstrom AFB, November	Multiple UAP, missile shutdown at India Flight	Single witness
1968		
Minot AFB, Oct. 24–Nov. 14	Luminous UAP over base	Blue Book files, several witnesses
1975		
Malmstrom AFB, October.	UAP over weapons storage area; chased by helicopters	Two witnesses
Loring AFB, Oct. 27–28	UAP over weapons storage area each night—silent, elongated football, red-orange (but "object looked like all the colors were blending," "with waves in front of the object")	Witness, affidavit
1977		
Loring AFB	Bright light shines down on weapons storage area; jets pursue unknown object	Witness: security officer

2. Stranger Than Aliens: US Government UAP Secrecy

It is now time to consider the prospect of UAP secrecy. No matter the strength of the evidence for it, many readers will find it extremely improbable that the US government could possess certain knowledge that some UAP are nonanthropogenic vehicles without this being known. Apart from being understandably reticent about accepting that an idea believed to be fiction is fact, such readers will find this implausible because it seems impossible that such a world-changing truth could be kept secret without significant evidence of it emerging from leaks, unofficial acknowledgments, and the declassification of records triggered by Freedom of Information Act requests. The trouble with this reasoning, however, is that it largely depends on the assumption that there are no nonanthropogenic vehicles to begin with, and then rejecting on that basis the abundant evidence of those very kinds for long-standing cognizance of UAP within the executive branch.

The most decisive such evidence is the reason the present paper was needed in the first place: through recent UAP-focused legislation, Congress has already expressed strong interest in the possibility—including by stating this explicitly—that government UAP activities and programs exist but have been obscured by extreme secrecy. Due largely to the media's almost scandalous neglect of Congress's passage of such legislation each year since 2020, it is a little-known fact that both the Disclosure Act and most of the other seven pieces of legislation concern not just UAP themselves but also programs to detect, track, retrieve, and reverse engineer UAP vehicles so secret that they have not been properly or at all reported to Congress. Unless one is prepared to accuse both the sponsors of the legislation and its originating committees of lacking the sort of sound, corroborated information that would motivate them to take such unusual legislative action, then these laws should be treated as significant evidence for UAP secrecy.

Broadly construed, the legislation expresses three objectives of certain members of Congress concerning secret federal government UAP activities: (1) to obtain information from current and retired government officials about any extant classified defense and/or intelligence UAP activities and programs for which it did not receive notification, which is the objective of the NDAA for fiscal year 2023; (2) to establish and eventually disseminate the facts about any such programs and their history through a review of classified records, which was the aim of the original draft language of the 2023 Disclosure Act and the bill's current, 2024 version; (3) to stop any possibly unauthorized use of federal funds by government and/or private contractor programs to reverse engineer UAP, which is the concern of a section in both the NDAA and Intelligence Authorization Act (IAA) for the 2024 fiscal year. When examined closely, it is clear that the specificity with which such UAP activities are described in the legislation reflects its sponsors' understanding that these exist and are ongoing.

Obtaining Information: *FY2023 NDAA*. Belying its anodyne title of "Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Reporting Mechanism," Section 1673 is focused far less on the "phenomena" themselves than on such possible undisclosed government programs. The amendment's purpose is to establish a secure mechanism by which IC, DoD, and private contractor personnel can legally provide to the AARO classified information on UAP events as well as a range of activities and programs whose existence could be anticipated if there is already cognizance in the executive branch of nonanthropogenic UAP. As Section 1673's initial paragraph clearly states, "authorized reporting" concerns not only "(A) any event relating to unidentified anomalous phenomena" but "(B) any activity or program by a department or agency of the Federal Government or a contractor of such a department or agency relating to unidentified anomalous phenomena, *including with respect to material retrieval, material analysis, reverse engineering, research and development, detection and tracking, developmental or operational testing, and security protections and enforcement*."[36]

The other UAP sections of the FY2023 NDAA serve to reinforce that there is a clear congressional intent to learn about and establish the existence of these possibly undisclosed programs while suggesting that some of these may have been/were in operation at the beginning of public UAP event reporting in the mid-1940s. Section 6802 clarifies and respecifies the duties and congressional reporting responsibilities of the AARO first defined in the previous year's NDAA, and includes among these a written report for the congressional intelligence and armed services committees and majority and minority leaders on the history of US government involvement with UAP from January 1, 1945 onward. Special note is made that the report should contain "a compilation and itemization of the key historical record of the involvement of the intelligence community with unidentified anomalous phenomena," including with respect to "(I) any program or activity that was protected by restricted access that has not been explicitly and clearly reported to Congress"; "(II) successful or unsuccessful efforts to identify and track unidentified anomalous phenomena"; and "(III) any efforts to obfuscate, manipulate public opinion, hide, or otherwise provide incorrect unclassified or classified information about unidentified anomalous phenomena or related activities."[37] And as though to ensure that this demand for a history of possible UAP-focused Compartmented and Special Access Programs and related activities, including in tracking, identification, and disinformation, will be heeded by the DoD and intelligence community officials as well as AARO, the subsequent section of the NDAA, 6803, directs the Comptroller General to name appropriately cleared officials in the General Accountability Office, who will then conduct an audit of the AARO's historical review process and brief congressional leadership and the named committees on the results.

Establishing, Declassifying, and Disseminating the Historical Facts: The UAP Disclosure Act. The original 2023 and current 2024 draft language of this legislation is by itself strong evidence that secret UAP programs exist, as the amendment not only establishes a process for the declassification of records produced by them but tightly defines these programs and their authorities and members in order to leave no room for certain agencies and individuals to manipulate outcomes. For instance, the legislation stipulates that members of the declassification review panel "shall [not] have had any previous or current involvement *with any legacy program or controlling authority* relating to the collec-

tion, exploitation, or reverse engineering of technologies of unknown origin or the examination of biological evidence of living or deceased nonhuman intelligence."[38] In others words, the amendment explicitly bars persons cleared into such programs from serving on its records review board. And the term "legacy program"—the popular shorthand for retrieval and/or reverse engineering programs—is defined as "all Federal, State, and local government, commercial industry, academic, and private sector endeavors to collect, exploit, or reverse engineer technologies of unknown origin or examine biological evidence of living or deceased nonhuman intelligence that predate [. . .] this Act."[39] Apart perhaps from the attempt to capture unexpected nonfederal government activities, this definition has clearly been written on the presumption, if not from knowledge, that such activities have involved a range of public and private institutions and collaborations.

Fencing Federal Funds for UAP Activities: The 2024 IAA. Section 1104 of the Intelligence Authorization Act explicitly bans the use of federal funds for classified UAP activities that have not been properly reported to Congress. "No amount authorized to be appropriated or appropriated by this Act or any other Act" the text reads, "may be obligated or expended, directly or indirectly, in part or in whole, for, on, in relation to, or in support of activities involving unidentified anomalous phenomena *protected under any form of special access or restricted access limitations that have not been formally, officially, explicitly, and specifically described, explained, and justified* to the appropriate committees of Congress, [and] congressional leadership." The named defunded activities are, again, "capturing, securing, and recovering unidentified anomalous phenomena craft," "analyzing such craft or pieces or components thereof [. . .] including for reverse engineering," and, curiously, "the development of propulsion technology, or aerospace craft that uses propulsion technology, systems, or subsystems, that is based on or derived from or inspired by inspection, analysis, or reverse engineering of recovered unidentified anomalous phenomena craft or materials" ("any aerospace craft that uses propulsion technology other than chemical propellants, solar power, or electric ion thrust" is also denied federal funding).[40]

As though all these expressions of concern with very specific kinds of UAP activities and programs did not constitute evidence enough for government secrecy, the Disclosure Act begins with this forceful declaration: "All Federal Government records concerning unidentified anomalous phenomena should carry a presumption of immediate disclosure and [. . .] should be eventually disclosed to enable the public to become fully informed about the history of the Federal Government's knowledge and involvement surrounding unidentified anomalous phenomena."[41] That is quite the assertion if there is nothing on which to keep records!

Further Recent Evidence

It is fair to say, then, that the UAP legislation evinces a clear and persistent congressional interest in executive branch UAP secrecy that ought to be taken seriously. At the same time, much of the legislation concerns a prospect heretofore largely associated with conspiracy theory—the detection, recovery, and study of crashed UAP vehicles—which raises the question of what motivates this interest, whether it is warranted, and how it affects the simpler and less fraught claim about secrecy.

As this paper ultimately concerns how such a question can be best addressed, the initial and surest answer is that media reports make clear that members and staff of the Senate committees at the origin of the legislation, SASC and SSCI, as well as the chamber's leadership were receiving by at least 2019 credible briefings from current and retired defense and intelligence officials about both UAP and ostensible classified activities and programs concerning them. The frequency of those briefings seems to have intensified in subsequent years, which led to several senators becoming persuaded that components of the DoD, DoE, and IC as well as certain private government contractors are engaged with UAP to the point of having recovered materials originating with them and yet have not properly or fully reported these activities to Congress.

As reported in a 2020 *New York Times* story by Ralph Blumenthal and Leslie Kean, staff from the SSCI and SASC were receiving information about not only UAP but these allegedly unreported programs by at least 2019. After requesting and receiving briefings about UAP from the Senator Harry Reid–initiated program following its public disclosure in the *Times* by this same pair of journalists in 2017—a fact this author has corroborated with retired congressional staff members—committee staff also began receiving communications about UAP activities that Congress may not have been notified of, including some concerning recovered materials.

"For more than a decade," reads the story, "the Pentagon program has been conducting classified briefings for congressional committees, aerospace company executives, and other government officials, according to interviews with program participants and unclassified briefing documents."[42] UAP-only briefings were primarily provided by teams led by an Office of Naval Intelligence official named Jay Stratton during his association with AAWSAP/AATIP and then by him and other members of a group he directed known as the UAP Task Force following its formation in 2019, and some of those same briefings also may have concerned allegedly unreported classified programs. The authors of the 2020 *Times* story state that Eric Davis, a physicist employed until recently by the Aerospace Corporation and who consulted with both AAWSAP/AATIP and the UAP Task Force, gave briefings in late October of that year to SSCI and SASC staff on "retrievals of unexplained objects."[43] According to staff from these same committees, they periodically received similar, corroborating communications from other, usually senior defense and intelligence officials prior to this and until 2023.[44] It was repeatedly conveyed to them and even some senators that genuine UAP are well-known to certain defense and intelligence components, that dedicated efforts to gather and analyze data on them exist, and that a program to retrieve and reverse engineer the vehicles does as well.

Whether these and other such communications justified the legislation that emerged from them is ultimately answerable only if one has full access to the information and records provided to Congress as well as the briefers themselves. It is nevertheless possible to gain insight into that question from certain pieces of historical and more recent public record information. Distinct to some extent from the Cold War government UAP data and scientific characterizations of it discussed here already, the historical information comes from academic and para-academic research, declassified records, and statements to the media of former CIA officials and is indicative of a long-standing executive branch policy of blanket UAP secrecy. The more contemporary information largely consists of further media reports as well as pub-

lic statements and testimony from members of Congress and retired executive branch officials, and it significantly attests to the reality of an as-yet unverified recovery and reverse engineering program.

We now turn to this material, beginning with the historical evidence for a policy of secrecy and then turning to the contemporary testimony concerning the alleged, extremely classified UAP recovery and study activities.

General UAP Secrecy: Evidence for a Policy of Denial

The prospect of an official government policy of secrecy and denial about UAP is significantly supported by CIA and DoD records and testimony from Agency officials. That evidence is too rich and complex to summarize here, but two events stand out and were historically decisive. The first is the CIA's primary known intervention in government UAP activities, a scientific panel its director convened in 1953 by arranging for the NSC to request of the Agency a review of government UAP data and a national policy recommendation. Known as the Robertson Panel, the Agency's committee concluded after a cursory review of evidence (one that both Ruppelt and Hynek publicly characterized as superficial) that UAP were not of nonhuman provenance, and that they were a concern to the federal government only inasmuch as the Soviet Union might have been able to exploit them to undermine domestic confidence of US power and sovereignty. The panel also made a policy recommendation for which it attained notoriety, a mass media "educational or training program"—in other words, a psychological or information operation—that was to have as a primary aim the "debunking" of UAP and thereby "a reduction of interest in 'flying saucers'" and "the strong psychological reaction" they evoke.[45] This recommendation and the Robertson Panel's conclusions carried the imprimatur of the CIA and preceded a marked shift in the Air Force's public stance on UAP, which prior to 1953 was at times frank about its ignorance about the nature and origins of the vehicles but thereafter dismissive of their very existence and indeed intent on debunking it. As the UAP historian Richard Dolan points out, the timing of the Robertson Panel—it met and produced its report just days before Eisenhower's inauguration—alone suggests that its task was to furnish formal justification for a policy decision ahead of the new administration (and, perhaps, it could be added, in anticipation of Allen Dulles's accession to the role of Director of Central Intelligence, or DCI).[46] Moreover, the panel was convened following a period of increasingly intense internal CIA discussion of UAP, including several initiated by its then director of scientific intelligence's express concern that UAP were a serious national security issue, regardless of their provenance. The sequence of events strongly suggests that the CIA played a major role at this point.

The other most significant event is the work of another, this time public, scientific study committee on UAP that the Air Force commissioned in 1966 from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Informally known as the Condon Committee after the physicist the university named to lead it, Edward Condon, the study group was convened by the service in response to pressure from Hynek, McDonald, Vallée, and others dissatisfied with Blue Book's handling of UAP reports and comprised only researchers ostensibly unbiased by previous interest in the phenomena. That seems to have been true of many of the participants, but Condon himself is widely understood to have been dismissive of both the object and stakes of the inquiry for the nearly

two-year duration of the project. By the time the project published its report, *The Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects*, several members of Condon's team had become dissatisfied with the direction imposed on their work by the physicist, and some even quit. The tension between Condon and this team was reflected in the report, with Condon's own introduction declaring that "nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past twenty-one years" and that "further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced" even as the body of the report offered that some reports, including that of the 1956 Lakenheath event, were unexplainable if not of likely genuine UAP.
Such a report could have been produced in good faith, but outside observers had reason to regard it as a cover-up. When regarded in light of the Air Force's nearly inevitable awareness of reports of UAP incursions into US airspace and over defense installations, it is reasonable to wonder whether the Condon committee was convened by the service and [Yet] The CIA so that science could effectively issue a denial that would have lacked credibility had it come from government. There is certainly some evidence for that, including the fact that a former CIA officer in the University of Colorado, Boulder's administration, Robert Low, led the panel with Condon and communicated in writing to a supervising dean that it should project an image of objectivity even as it disparaged the subject. Moreover, the National Photographic Interpretation Center—a large, CIA-led interagency center that analyzed images from aerial reconnaissance vehicles and NRO satellites—provided technical support to Condon that declassified records flatly state the physicist was instructed to not acknowledge.[47]

Regardless of whether the Condon report was surreptitiously arranged to deny UAP, the events of the 1950s are more likely than not to indicate a policy of secrecy and denial. A declassified 1971 Australian Department of Defense intelligence assessment titled "Scientific and Intelligence Aspects of the UFO Problem" drew that conclusion in no uncertain terms, stating outright that the CIA began studying UAP reporting data in earnest in the 1940s with a view toward understanding the propulsion methods of the vehicles and used the Robertson Panel to conceal this.

"The early analysis of UFO reports by USAF intelligence," the author writes, "indicated that real phenomena were being reported which had flight characteristics so far in advance of US aircraft that only an extraterrestrial origin could be envisaged":

> A government agency—which later events indicated to be the CIA Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI)—studied the UFO reports with the intention of determining [sic] UFO propulsion methods. At the time, OSI was responsible for intelligence on foreign research and development in nuclear and missile matters. [Yet] the CIA became alarmed at the overloading of military communications during the mass sightings of 1952 and considered the possibility that the USSR may take advantage of such a situation. As a result, OSI, acting through the Robertson-panel meeting of mid-January 1953, persuaded the USAF to use Project Blue Book as a means of publicly "debunking" UFO's.[48]

The assessment's author goes on to evaluate open-source intelligence indicating that this ostensible policy of denial had the additional purpose of concealing a well-funded Air Force effort to study and emulate the performance characteristics of UAP vehicles.

As signs of US government interest in UAP did not magically stop in 1970, the Australian analyst's conclusions about government secrecy and denial eventually were drawn again by at least one other allied government. A French quasi-governmental UAP study group, the Comité d'Études Approfondie (COMETA), produced a report on UAP in the late 1990s that made one of the most incisive existing cases for the reality of nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles. Toward the report's end, the committee argued that the US government has made advances in UAP research and maintains secrecy over these. "We are currently not aware of the extent of the knowledge," the authors write, "that U.S. military personnel have gleaned from all of the studies that they have conducted on this subject either based on sightings or, as has sometimes been written, based on materials that have allegedly been recovered. Whatever the case, it is clear that the Pentagon has had, and probably still has the greatest interest in concealing, [. . .] this research, which may, over time, cause the United States to hold a position of great supremacy over adversaries."[49]

General UAP Secrecy II: Corroboration from CIA and DoD Officials and Records

Such explicit claims about secrecy not only came from foreign government officials but were expressed in different ways from the 1960s through the 1980s by retired CIA officials. As we will see, they also are significantly attested to by Agency and parallel DoD records.

The most significant such testimony came from the Agency's first director, Rear Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, who called in the early 1960s for a congressional investigation concerning UAP. "The unknown objects are operated under intelligent control," he avowed at the time. "I know that neither Russia nor this country had [in the postwar years] anything even approaching such high speeds and maneuvers."[50] And in a written statement provided to Congress in 1960, Hillenkoetter also went so far as to say that UAP secrecy exists: "It is time for the truth to be brought out in open congressional hearings. [. . .] Behind the scenes, many high-ranking Air Force officers are soberly concerned about the UFOs. But through official secrecy and ridicule, many citizens are led to believe that the unknown objects are nonsense."[51] The admiral went on to blame the service rather than the CIA for that secrecy, but it is reasonable to infer that his own apparent knowledge stemmed from clandestine Agency involvement.

During the 1970s, two retired and lower-ranked but nonetheless significant officials made far more revelatory statements about the Agency. Herbert "Pete" Scoville, head of the CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence from 1955 to 1961 (and, before that, an official with the Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee, an interagency unit tasked with assessing Soviet nuclear capabilities), affirmed in a 1979 *New York Times* article on declassified UAP records that the Agency had taken UAP reports seriously.[52] (The records that article concerned include a 1976 memo indicating that the Domestic Collection Division received information from Agency-affiliated scientists engaged in UAP-related research.) More direct acknowledgment came from Victor Marchetti, a special assistant to the CIA's deputy director turned dissident who quit the Agency in protest to publish his indictment of it, *The CIA and the Cult of*

Intelligence. In a 1981 article titled "How the CIA Views the UFO Phenomenon," Marchetti admitted to knowing that "the CIA and the US Government have been concerned over the UFO phenomenon for many years and that their attempts, both past and recent, to discount the significance of the phenomenon and explain away all interest in it have all the earmarkings of a classic intelligence coverup." As evidence, he offered that UAP had not been treated with derision in his professional circles, but rather "not talked about [. . .] they seemed to fall under sensitive activities, e.g., drug and mind-control operations, domestic spying, and other illegal actions." Marchetti additionally remarked that the Agency records declassified in 1979 largely came from its nonclandestine intelligence collecting components, and therefore seemed to not express any systematic interest in UAP on its part. Yet he added, curiously, that the records "disclose by inference a standing requirement of the Directorate of Science and Technology for gathering UFO data," which "in turn, indicates [that] other collection components, namely the Clandestine Services, the CIA's main directorate, [were] tasked with providing information from all over the world on the UFO phenomenon."[53] As Marchetti's reasoning in that comment is twisted to the point of being unfollowable, it may be wise to take it as an avowal of fact.

There is no need to rely on such testimony, however, to see that there has been some degree of secrecy about UAP that were considered nonanthropogenic. In the CIA's case, some of the declassified records that Scoville and Marchetti commented on demonstrate that the Agency definitely collected intelligence on UAP events in the 1950s and 1960s and was even cognizant of some of the most significant of them from those decades, from a UAP landing in France for which there was strong corroborating evidence to New Mexico police officer Lonnie Zamora's 1964 pursuit of an egg-shaped UAP vehicle that he witnessed land near the town of Socorro. And one such CIA record by itself provides ample reason to believe that reports were collected on the understanding that some UAP are nonanthropogenic vehicles. A 1956 policy memorandum written by the assistant director of the applied sciences division of the CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence (a precursor, again, to the Directorate of Science and Technology) is titled, unambiguously, "Responsibility for Unidentified Flying Objects" and states that the division will manage information concerning "non-conventional types of air vehicles." After laying out that only high-quality UAP reports beneficial to understanding "foreign weapons research and development" will be retained for its records, it adds that "a chronological file of all OSI correspondence and actions taken in connection with the United States UFO program will be maintained."[54] As there is no known "United States UFO program" per se, this could be a reference to a broader and still unacknowledged classified interagency effort that was dedicated to collecting intelligence on and perhaps also retrieving UAP materials and vehicles.[55]

While documents from after the 1970s that were later declassified do not conclusively show strong Agency interest, they nonetheless indicate that light collection of intelligence on UAP continued into the 1990s.[56] The CIA also took the remarkable step in the late 2000s of effectively denying the legitimacy of UAP reports during the Cold War by attributing an astonishing number of them to its own and the Air Force's aerospace assets. In a 1992 CIA report on the Agency's development and operation of the U-2 and A-12 spy planes that was declassified in 2013, the authors declare that upwards of half the UAP reported from 1954 through 1974 were observations of these and other reconnaissance vehicles making test or operational flights at high altitudes.[57]

Any ambiguity left by the CIA records is not there with their DoD counterparts, several of which indicate that UAP are a serious matter, establish clear policies for reporting them, define the legal penalties for releasing relevant classified information, and additionally appear to have remained in force until at least the 2000s. In 1949, a Joint Chiefs of Staff memo known as "JANAP-146" (for Joint Army-Navy Air Publication) laid down the department's policy for UAP reporting. Apart from mandating that each branch of the armed services collect reports, the directive states that they are to be shared not only with the intelligence component of the Air Force that housed Project Blue Book and its predecessors, but also the Secretary of Defense, the CIA, and other relevant agencies. Subsequent events indicate that JANAP-146 was not an inconsequential document, as it was revised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1953 to make the unauthorized release of UAP reports a federal crime under the Espionage Act, punishable by one to ten years imprisonment or a fine of $10,000 (equivalent to over $110,000 today).[58] Such a severe penalty is unlikely to indicate a lack of concern with UAP on the Joint Chiefs' part, and a policy directive issued on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force the same year indicates as much, stating the service's reasons for interest in UAP and directing intelligence personnel to collect reports and forward them to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The directive defines a UFO as "any airborne object which by performance, aerodynamic characteristics, or unusual features, does not conform to any presently known aircraft or missile type," and a 1954 update clarifies the reasons for the Air Force's concerns: "Air Force interest in UFOs is twofold: first as a possible threat to the security of the US and its forces and secondly to determine [the] technical aspects involved."[59]

Such records would provide little evidence for continued DoD secrecy about UAP it knows to be nonanthropogenic vehicles were it not for the fact that records declassified in the 2000s show that some of JANAP-146's reporting guidelines remained in force as late as 2002 and related Air Force guidelines for UAP reporting still existed in 2008. Last revised in 1966, JANAP-146(E) introduces a new term for UAP and related reports, "Communication Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings" (CIRVIS), and stipulates that these will be reviewed by both US and Canadian personnel of the binational aerospace warning and control center NORAD and disseminated by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Besides explicitly naming "unidentified flying objects" as phenomena falling under the CIRVIS rubric, JANAP-146(E) thus reveals continued DoD concern with UAP vehicles as of the mid-1960s and relevant intelligence collection and sharing between the United States and one of its Five Eyes partners through NORAD. More recent documents confirm this, especially a 2008 Air Force manual, "Air Force Instruction 10-206," which outlines updated CIRVIS procedures and again applies them to UAP reports while directing them to NORAD for analysis. Curiously enough, the DoD also published in 2002 instructions for the handling of sensitive and classified UAP imagery.

Avowals of UAP secrecy from DoD and armed services officials are rarer than those made by their CIA counterparts, but they have come at times in unambiguously official form. In an overlooked 1960 memorandum, for instance, the Air Force's secretary states that it "maintains a continuous surveillance of the atmosphere for unidentified flying objects" and that "there is a relationship between the air force's interest in space surveillance and its continuous surveillance of the atmosphere near Earth for unidentified flying objects—UFOs."[60]

Evidence for UAP Crash Retrieval Secrecy: The Clinton Cabinet and Harry Reid

It is more difficult to claim the empirical high ground for the possibility that any existing UAP secrecy may cover successful efforts by DoD, IC, and DoE components to locate, retrieve/recover, and reverse engineer crashed and landed nonanthropogenic vehicles. Yet even though this prospect has been the stuff of fiction and conspiracy theory, it has been treated as both highly likely and even certain by many White House officials, senators, and senior intelligence officials.

The most significant such endorsements of the possibility were made by Bill Clinton in conjunction with members of his administration, as well as former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. Clinton has several times made brief statements about actions taken by his administration to review federal records concerning the legendary alleged crash of one or two UAP vehicles near Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. "I had all the Roswell papers reviewed, everything," he stated in an interview in 2014 regarding the process that led to one of two reports on the alleged event produced by the Air Force in the 1990s, and "had people go look at the records on Area 51 to make sure there was no alien down there" (his National Security Advisor Sandy Berger was apparently dispatched for the purpose).[61] Although little else is publicly known about either effort, two members of his cabinet later affirmed the reality of UAP secrecy. White House Chief of Staff John Podesta did so by publicly calling for transparency about government UAP history in 2002, supporting that decade a lawsuit against NASA seeking records concerning a possible UAP crash retrieval in Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, in 1965; and tweeting, in 2015, "my biggest failure of 2014: Once again not securing the #disclosure of the UFO files." Concurrently, Clinton's Secretary of Energy, former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, surprised NBC's Chris Matthews during an interview after a 2008 Democratic primary debate by declaring that "the government never came clean about what happened there [in Roswell]."[63]

While those statements may reveal Clinton and some of his administration's belief in the probability or reality of government efforts to retrieve and reverse engineer UAP materials and vehicles, they are too minimal to constitute proof of anything more. By contrast, Harry Reid's public avowals about those very subjects are difficult to construe as unverified conjecture and strongly suggest that a United States program or programs devoted to those activities exists.

It has by now been widely reported and rereported that Reid was persuaded enough by 2007 that UAP vehicles are not only real but retrieved and held by the US government to secure, with the help of then-Senators Daniel Inouye and Ted Stevens, a $22 million classified congressional appropriation for a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) program on UAP (the aforementioned AAWSAP). Although declassified records about this program indicate that it funded cutting-edge-to-speculative scientific research on a range of problems raised by UAP, both Reid and several scientists and intelligence officers who worked for the program have stated in no uncertain terms that its primary purpose was to secure the transfer of UAP

materials and/or components—and perhaps a whole UAP vehicle—from a major government aerospace and defense contractor, like Lockheed Martin, to Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Sciences, the Nevada company that executed the contract. As unlikely as it may seem, Reid established and played patron to a government program with the ambition to study retrieved UAP components and/or vehicles.

"It is extremely important that information about the discovery of physical materials or retrieved craft come out," Reid affirmed on this point in the 2020 *New York Times* story concerning this program and the UAP Task Force.[64] Although the Senator's further comments there are carefully hedged—"after studying [this], I came to the conclusion that there were reports—some were substantive, some not so substantive—that there were actual materials that the government and the private sector had in their possession"—the original version of the story finds him making the assertion, which the *Times* retracted and corrected, that UAP crashes have occurred and that materials retrieved from them have been studied in secret for decades.

Reid's subsequent actions certainly bear out that he either knew or strongly suspected this. He attempted two years into the operation of AAWSAP to secure for it both additional funds and the status of a Special Access Program through a written request to the DoD, and he there argues in only barely veiled terms that the program was needed to prevent the United States from falling behind the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation in the development of UAP-derived technology.[65] Yet there is even stronger evidence for the veracity of his convictions, which is the testimony of several scientists and intelligence officers associated with AAWSAP, including that of a DIA missile intelligence analyst at the origin of the project, James Lacatski. In a recent book, Lacatski states that AAWSAP personnel were granted access to classified information concerning a retrieved aerospace vehicle of foreign origin that lacked wings, any obvious means of propulsion, and a visible energy system. Eric Davis, the theoretical physicist who briefed the SASC and the SSCI on "recovered objects," also worked on AAWSAP and presumably received access to the same and/or parallel information. Finally, the authors of the *New York Times* story reported in a previous article in the paper that Bigelow Aerospace Systems renovated facilities in order to house the UAP materials that AAWSAP was to study: "The company modified buildings in Las Vegas for the storage of metal alloys and other materials that [. . .] program contractors said had been recovered from unidentified aerial phenomena."[66]

Neither all of this nor Reid's final words on the program—he indicated publicly that it was his most significant achievement during decades in government—are enough to prove that he, Clinton, and others were in fact correct to think that the United States had recovered technologies of likely nonhuman origin. More recent events, however, corroborate their views to the point that they should be taken seriously.

More Evidence for UAP Crash Retrieval Secrecy: Testimony from the Intelligence Community

In the summer of 2023, news broke of an Intelligence Community whistleblower alleging that a decades-old UAP crash retrieval and reverse engineering program indeed exists and has not been reported to Congress. According to reporting from early that June, an Air Force major and intelligence officer with the National Reconnaissance Office and National Geospatial Intelligence Agency named David Grusch filed a complaint through the Office of the Intelligence Community Inspector General (IC IG) about reprisals he received while carrying out his duties for the UAP Task Force as the NRO's representative. By late July, Grusch was testifying under oath about his case at the House Oversight and Government Accountability Committee hearing on UAP, where he explained that he was made aware of a multidecade crash retrieval and reverse engineering program in the course of his official duties—a likely euphemistic acknowledgment that he was legally given access to compartmented information pertaining to or from that program—and that his knowledge of this led to retaliation.

Grusch aroused as much skepticism as he did credence, and several merits of his case were obscured in the ensuing controversy. First, despite periodic waves of similar claims about unreported and possibly unauthorized UAP programs from military, intelligence, and contractor personnel from the 1990s forward, no whistleblower had previously emerged to make the existence of such programs known through the federal government's legal avenue for whistleblowing. This sharply contrasts with the arguably high number of whistleblowers who revealed previously unknown intelligence programs (e.g., bulk data collection by the NSA and the CIA's use of torture in the interrogation of detainees at Guantánamo Bay), and a whistleblower exactly like Grusch could have been expected to do the same about government UAP activities if they actually exist. Second, Grusch filed his complaint with the IC IG through the "Urgent Concern" process for reporting waste, fraud, and abuse that was established by the Obama administration in 2009, and the IC IG reviewed and judged the complaint to be "urgent and credible" and referred it to Congress. In and of itself, it is not remarkable for a whistleblower complaint to earn that status—those deemed to have a reasonable amount of evidentiary support tend to be sent to Congress—but Grusch's concerned UAP and therefore is extremely unlikely to not have been thoroughly evaluated by the office of the IC IG. Third, one likely reason the complaint passed muster is that it contains, according to Grusch, classified information about the names, purposes, leadership, and budgets of compartmented UAP intelligence programs to which he became privy during his tenure on the UAP Task Force.[67] Fourth, Grusch's counsel for his reprisal complaint was I. Charles McCullough, a former NSA investigator and FBI special agent who held the IC IG position from 2011 to 2017 after Congress established it and Barack Obama appointed him. Although Compass Rose, the law firm specializing in whistleblower and security clearance law where McCullough practices, dissociated themselves from Grusch shortly after June 2023 media coverage of him began, McCullough himself continued to work with the whistleblower, publicly accompanying Grusch to the July congressional hearing and interviewing with him for the BBC. The tacit endorsement of a retired intelligence and executive branch official of McCullough's stature lends additionally credibility to Grusch's

case: The IC IG sits on the same plane as the CIA director in some organizational chart of the IC, has almost unlimited jurisdiction to investigate matters falling under Title 50 of the United States Code, and (like all IGs) reports directly to the President.

All these aspects of Grusch's whistleblowing arguably show it to be deserving of more credence than it is sometimes granted. Yet there is a further dimension to his allegations—one about which this author can provide rare insight—that attests to its likely veracity. This is Grusch's assertion that his claims are based on testimony provided to him (often, again, in an "official capacity") by dozens of other intelligence officers and government officials.

It is likely that while serving on the DoD UAP Task Force, Grusch worked alongside several intelligence officers and scientists from AAWSAP who may have been granted access then or at other points in their careers to compartmented information concerning UAP and government activities and programs concerning them. As Grusch is known to have been a "superuser" of classified information systems and, by his own account, cleared for programs under the direct authority of presidents, he is likely to have had the requisite clearance and "tickets" to be read into any UAP-specific programs to which the task force had access. Both the intelligence officer's congressional testimony and several of his statements to the media strongly suggest that this is exactly what happened, and his careful language about how he knows what he claims points to legal access to information provided in briefings and records as the source. In other words, Grusch blew the whistle not after hearing rumors and insinuations from wild-eyed colleagues, but because he received information in a sanctioned professional capacity.

For the present author, it is not conjecture that such a scenario is both possible and highly likely, as several retired government officials have conveyed to him that they directly participated in or at least acquired sure knowledge of classified UAP programs. These include a retired government official who held an extremely high position in the executive branch; a former senior intelligence official who retired at the high Senior Executive Service (SES) level and confirmed working on UAP for the US government prior to 2008, when no relevant activities or programs are supposed to have existed (an acknowledgment later unwittingly confirmed by one of their colleagues); a retired scientist who contracted for decades with the IC acknowledged the reality of UAP retrieval and reverse engineering programs and engaging private sector executives on UAP materials and technologies under their supervision; a second senior retired official at a high tier of the SES who held significant leadership positions in an intelligence agency and stated that he declined requests to participate in a highly classified UAP program distinct from any definitively known to the public; a third retired SES-level official who confirmed the reality of classified UAP programs and was given briefings on and access to information from some of their compartments; a fourth retired SES-level military/intelligence official who obliquely acknowledged having worked for one such program and did so directly to a colleague of the author; a fifth retired SES-level official who acknowledged working for years on a UAP intelligence analysis project; a contractor with the Intelligence Community who examined foreign intelligence on UAP of a US adversary; a former near-SES-level intelligence officer who was legally given access to extensive information on retrieval and reverse engineering efforts occurring in government and private industry; and, finally, a retired Air Force employee who provided security for the above sort of activities and programs. Additionally, a non-US Five Eyes government official shared with the author that he had managed to solicit an affirmative acknowledgment

from a defense component in his government that it maintains a UAP materials analysis program that is the counterpart to a US program with which it has long-standing memoranda of understanding and information exchange.

Additionally, the author also has high to complete confidence about the veracity of the similar avowals of career military and intelligence officers to colleagues of his in academia, government, and media. Among these officials are a scientist who was recently still actively working in a program to study retrieved UAP vehicles; a Navy official provided extensive information concerning government UAP crash retrievals and so-called nonhuman intelligences upon beginning service in a special DoD component in the 2000s; a now deceased Navy scientist who averred his knowledge of government UAP materials analysis and reverse engineering activity to a colleague in media; an employee of an aerospace company who confirmed its holdings of UAP vehicles to yet another colleague in media; an executive branch official's participation in an effort to monitor UAP in space; a former member of a UAP crash retrieval team; and a recently deceased aerospace company executive and engineer who was known to work on UAP study and reverse engineering efforts.

None of this testimony can be further elaborated on here and should not be regarded as conclusive. Yet readers are asked to consider that credible, intelligent career government officials—many of whom held positions just below the uppermost tiers of their agencies and depatments—are unlikely to be confused or delusional about the purpose of government programs on which they worked or to which they became privy. Should that be kept in mind, even highly skeptical readers can grant consideration to extraordinary whistleblower testimony such as Grusch's and the parallel public statements and actions of political figures like Bill Clinton and Harry Reid.

Confidence from the Senators

At present, the question of whether there has been long-standing UAP secrecy owes what public legitimacy it enjoys to Congress and will continue to rely on it for credit. Any consideration of the likely answer therefore would be incomplete without an examination of the publicly expressed views of certain current members.

For the time being, the members of the Senate who played leading roles in the crafting and passage of the UAP legislation appear to be inclined toward if not convinced of the reality of UAP secrecy. Their favorable disposition applies at least to the possibility of general secret knowledge and activities concerning the UAP presence dating back to the early postwar era, and usually appears to extend to the more incredible possibility of a hyperclassified crash retrieval program.

Senator Rubio has made consistent legislative moves indicative of a strong suspicion and perhaps positive knowledge that the stronger version of secrecy is true, and his recent comments on this demonstrate precisely confidence in witness testimony tempered by reasonable doubt. "I will say that there are people that have come forward to share information with our committee [the SSCI] over the last couple of years," he said to a journalist inquiring about Grusch's whistleblower testimony.

I would imagine some of them are potentially some of the same people that perhaps he is referring to. I want to be very protective of these people. A lot of these people came to us even before these protections were in the law, for whistleblowers to come forward. And a lot of them [. . .] have firsthand claims of certain things. Some are public figures you've heard from them in the past. Others have not shared publicly. So we're trying to gather as much of that information as we can. [. . .] Some of these people still work in the government. And frankly a lot of them are very fearful. Fearful of their jobs, fearful of their clearances, fearful of their career. And some frankly are fearful of harm coming to them. And so I want to be very respectful of that because I don't want to discourage others from coming forward.[68]

Yet for all that, he adds, "There are one of two things here that are true. Either what the whistleblower is saying is partially true or entirely true, or we have some really smart, educated people with high clearances and very important positions in our government who are crazy and are leading us on a goose chase."[69]

Should other senators be as well-informed as their public comments suggest, then Rubio may simply be hedging to maintain credibility. That is a reasonable inference to draw from a colloquy that Schumer and Rounds engaged in on December 2023, after the original draft language of the UAP Disclosure Act was modified in conference to remove a review panel just prior to the vote on the 2024 fiscal year NDAA of which it was part. The two senators stated in no uncertain terms that federal government UAP secrecy exists, in the context of a bill by which they sought, among other things, to establish a process for the declassification of records that ostensibly concern recovered UAP material and vehicles (and even possible "biological remains" found in them).

In their speeches, Schumer and Rounds argued that the virtues of the stricken provision for the review board were that it would have not only increased government transparency but established congressional oversight over UAP matters not in place due to unlawful nonreporting. "The most significant shortcomings [. . .] of the conference committee agreement that are [sic] now being voted on," Rounds stated "were the rejection, first of all, of a government-wide review board composed of expert citizens, presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed, to control the process of reviewing the records and recommending to the President what records should be released immediately or postponed, and a requirement as a transparency measure for the government to obtain any recovered UAP material or biological remains that may have been provided to private entities in the past and thereby hidden from Congress and the American people. We are lacking oversight opportunities, and we are not fulfilling our responsibilities."[70]

Schumer's remarks were equally direct yet far more forceful about the facts and the questions they raise for Congress and democracy. After characterizing unnamed members of the House's rejection of the provision for a records review panel as "an outrage," the Majority Leader stated that "this means that declassification of UAP records will be largely up to the same entities that have blocked and obfuscated their disclosure for decades." And as though to preempt assertions that the existence of UAP intelligence, records, and secrecy are only conjecture and without basis, Schumer made this possibly historic statement:

The United States government has gathered a great deal of information about UAPs over many

decades but has refused to share it with the American people. That is wrong and additionally breeds mistrust.

We have also been notified by multiple credible sources that information on UAPs has also been withheld from Congress, which if true is a violation of laws requiring full notification to the legislative branch—especially as it relates to the four congressional leaders, the defense committees, and the intelligence committee.[71]

> Given that these are the words of the current Senate Majority Leader, they will be taken here (as no one else's have been) at face value, as direct and official acknowledgment of government UAP secrecy.

3. Introduction to the Problem of UAP Secrecy

It takes little reflection to recognize that the absolute secrecy about UAP activities that the Senate has imputed to the executive branch would be illegal. More careful examination reveals that it also would be injurious to the legislative branch and, arguably, unconstitutional.

Since the late 1970s, Congress has had the same power and responsibility to conduct oversight of the Intelligence Community that it already had over the Department of Defense and all other areas of federal government, and it is additionally entitled to receive notification of all classified programs and actions conducted by the DoD, the IC, the NSC, and the President. Any failure by those elements to provide such notification to at least the chairs of the congressional armed services and appropriations committees and Senate and House majority and minority leaders (as well as to the SSCI in the case of intelligence programs) is unambiguously illegal, short of a decision by a president to conduct programs under his or her direct supervision that then could be argued to be exempt.[72] Any deliberate and persistent such failure may be, additionally, unconstitutional due to the long-standing understanding on Congress's part that its oversight of the executive branch is a power implied by the Constitution.

Yet the problem UAP secrecy poses for Congress extends well beyond this possible infringement. Should the DoD, IC, DoE, or any other element of the executive branch have withheld from Congress the fact that it has knowledge, activities, and programs concerning UAP, then the legislative branch is likely to have significantly undermined its capacity to execute certain of its constitutionally prescribed powers and responsibilities.

This initially becomes evident if we consider the numerous instances when executive branch elements appear to have withheld information from Congress in the face of both ad hoc and formal inquiries about UAP. Largely unnoticed by even the fiercest opponents of government UAP secrecy, those inquiries began in July 1947, when then-Congressman and future President Lyndon B. Johnson requested information from the DoD about the wave of observations of flying discs and saucers that had begun just months before. The inquires resumed in 1950 with discussions on UAP in both the Senate and the House that saw a major senator and SASC member, Georgia's Richard Russell, openly challenging the Air Force's reserved position on the phenomena and raising the possibility of a congressional investigation. Although Russell subsequently confined himself to making informal inquiries after observing two UAP during a diplomatic visit to the Soviet Union in 1955, a member of the House's Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration promised in 1957 a public UAP hearings and demanded that the Air Force's chief science advisor attend. When the congressman, future Speaker of the House John McCormack, instead accepted a closed-door briefing from service officials and afterward announced himself satisfied by their explanations, the long era of Air Force denials of the reality of UAP to Congress began: 1960 service briefings to the Senate and House instigated by NICAP reportedly produced dissatisfaction and skepticism

among members; the 1961 visit to Wright-Patterson AFB of a staff member of the House's astronautics and space committee reportedly yielded convincing assurances that the Air Force was earnestly working on UAP; 1966 hearings convened by then-Congressman Gerald Ford following widely publicized UAP events in his home state of Michigan led to the Condon Committee and its report; inquiries made in the mid-1960s by Senator Barry Goldwater to an Air Force general at Wright-Patterson AFB were met, according to him, with an angry rebuke to never raise the matter again; a 1978 request from Rep. Samuel Stratton to the Air Force for information on a series of well-documented 1975 incursions over nuclear weapons installations received a curt reply that the department not only lacked official information on them, but "that some of the incidents may not have happened at all"; and, as we will see, the 1977 investigation into intelligence activities conducted by the Church Committee did not yield the least acknowledgment of UAP engagements from the agencies.[73] When congressional interest resumed in the 1990s with New Mexico Rep. Steven Schiff's request to the GAO to examine records on the alleged UAP crash near Roswell, New Mexico, the Air Force issued the first of its two reports attributing the event to failed weather balloon tests involving crash dummies.[74] The pattern has arguably continued, as Harry Reid's 2011 attempt to gain the special (SAP) DoD status his UAP program needed for its work met with failure, and Senators Rubio and Gillibrand's establishment of the AARO in 2022 and 2023 legislation has so far largely resulted in broad denials from the office of the reality of nonanthropogenic vehicles.

Now it should go without saying that an eight-decade, systematic extension of secrecy to Congress about an entire domain of government activities and the broad facts that they concern would severely impair the legislative branch's ability to exercise its powers and thereby effectively serve the American people. Yet apart from the obliviousness that would have been induced in Congress, the reasons that this would entail such serious harm are not necessarily obvious and should be spelled out.

It is, again, not just that the failure of federal departments, agencies, and components to comply with federal statutes requiring them to notify members and committees of Congress of classified programs and actions would harm Congress's ability to conduct oversight over the executive branch. To fail to do that so repeatedly, consistently, and deliberately (including under the authority of classified executive directives) about all instances of a genre of government activity would be to treat these as though they were of such exceptional importance that their leadership, objectives, budgets, operations, and everything else about them should be protected from congressional scrutiny, deliberation, and legislation—in other words, from Congress itself. The Constitution establishes, of course, separate federal powers and checks and balances between them to ensure that any one branch does not arrogate excessive and undemocratic levels of power to itself, including by giving itself exclusive jurisdiction over a peculiar object of government activity at the expense of the others branches—indeed, the Constitution has yielded a system of government in which this would be aberrant. Were the executive branch to have attained sole authority over UAP affairs at some point in the past and largely maintained this to the present, it would have effectively excluded the legislative branch from them and granted itself precisely this sort of exclusive and excessive power.

Such a situation would entail an unparalleled case of dangerously runaway executive branch power if it concerned any other urgent matter, but it is far worse in the case of UAP because

of their potentially grave implications for the US and every other government. Certain performance characteristics long ascribed to the vehicles and presented in standardized form in congressional legislation almost certainly indicate that UAP vehicles are based on science and technology well or entirely beyond the known or possible state of the art and thus constitute a national and global security challenge of possibly existential proportions.[75] Should the UAP presence indeed constitute such a threat, then any persistent and deliberate executive branch policy to not inform Congress of UAP would have prevented it from carrying out certain of its recognized, constitutionally prescribed responsibilities and thereby also undermined the separation of powers in American government. However invisible it might be, the damage done to the United States would be severe and curable only with powerful remedies.

In the next sections, we will examine the specific harms that UAP secrecy may have inflicted on the legislative branch's ability to exercise its power over defense, intelligence, budgetary, and other matters and then propose measures by which these might be redressed. In addition to passage of the Senate's current proposal, the UAP Disclosure Act, these measures are an Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum review, a Senate-led congressional investigation, and legislation—the "Congressional UAP Governance Act"—that clearly establishes Congress's right to govern UAP issues. The aim in each case would be not just to strengthen Congress but to restore the balance between federal powers and enable government to contend effectively with the vexing and, as we will now see, existentially consequential problem of UAP.

4. The UAP Presence: Existential Threat, Existential Gain

It may seem hyperbolic to say that blanket executive branch secrecy about UAP would harm the legislative branch and the US system of separate powers, but the UAP presence raises a challenge to national security and socioeconomic stability so profound that it jeopardizes the very existence of the federal government as well as that of the American people. Nothing that raises such an existential threat (for that is what the term means) should be outside the awareness of two whole branches of the government, most of the executive, and the nation's citizens and residents. Instead of serving Congress and the American people, any existing government UAP secrecy infantilizes them.

To understand why nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles constitute, in principle, a dire existential threat about which the entire government must be informed, some basic but typically discounted facts about UAP vehicles found in publicly available government and civil UAP data must be considered. As not all readers may know, the release of information on UAP vehicles by both the executive and legislative branches has not only amounted to an acknowledgment of their nonanthropogenic status but provided clear information on their performance characteristics. When this information is coupled with well-known descriptions of UAP from the scientific and amateur literatures, a picture of UAP vehicles emerges that should be anything but reassuring. In brief, the following capabilities, sizes, activities, and actions resulting in human harm displayed by UAP vehicles reveal science, technology, and effectively military prowess well exceeding those of the United States and its peers and, on occasion, possibly hostile intent by their designers or operators.

UAP Observables and Underlying Advanced Technology. Several former personnel from the publicly acknowledged, Harry Reid–backed DoD UAP program (AAWSAP/AATIP) have shared publicly their understanding that presumably nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles share six performance characteristics, which are represented in the 2022 NDAA as follows: "(i) instantaneous acceleration absent apparent inertia; (ii) hypersonic velocity absent a thermal signature and sonic shockwave; (iii) transmedium (such as space-to-ground and air-to-undersea) travel; (iv) positive lift contrary to known aerodynamic principles; (v) multispectral signature control; (vi) physical or invasive biological effects to close observers and the environment."[76] The first four traits cannot be plausibly ascribed to even hyperadvanced conventional aircraft utilizing airfoils, jet engines, or liquid fuel and thus must be based on a technology that overcomes the effects of gravity and likely affects space-time. Regardless of whether such technology is within human reach in the next decades, anyone else possessing it would hold an absolute military advantage over the current great powers.

Massive and Carrier UAP Vehicles. Since the 1950s, governments and civil society organizations have received sporadic reports of aerial UAP of massive proportions, some of which seem to be carriers. The most well-known of these was made by a Japan Airlines 747 pilot and his crew in 1985, when an apparently gigantic, aircraft-sized carrier kept pace with

his cargo plane over Alaska and performed several times the seemingly impossible maneuver of displacing itself fifteen miles in a few seconds.[77] The pilot, Kenju Terauchi, described the vehicle as being a round and accompanied by smaller illuminated objects to the FAA, and radar data confirmed its size as well as its maneuvers. (An FAA official who took the report later claimed that he was asked to share data about it by two officers from the CIA.) More recently, disclosure advocate Luis Elizondo recently claimed to be aware of government imagery of an underwater UAP as large as an oil platform moving at more than 400 knots. Reports also exist of large UAP vehicles that appear to serve as carriers for smaller vehicles, and this author has conducted an interview with a witness to a UAP event in the 1950s in which four apparent disc-shaped vehicles flew simultaneously at high speeds into a larger, top-like UAP that then shot upward at tremendous speed. Such reports suggest that UAP may be present in relatively high numbers and immediately originate from infrastructures on or near Earth.

UAP Interference with Military Assets, Including Nuclear Weapons. This author is aware of only a handful of reports of hostile actions taken by UAP vehicles against the US and other governments. However, many military aviators have reported encounters, such as the 1976 Tehran event, in which UAP interfered with their communications, radar, and weapons systems. More gravely, reported events in which UAP have remotely disabled or enabled the launch capabilities at nuclear sites are credible and sometimes supported by government records. It goes without saying that a single vehicle carrying technology capable of preventing or forcing the use of nuclear weapons could initiate or favor one side of a global war and thus jeopardize human existence.

UAP-Induced Injuries. There are numerous reports of individuals suffering from anomalous physical symptoms and injuries when in proximity to UAP vehicles, although many of these reports remain uncorroborated. Some of these injuries may have been intentionally caused. A young American logger named Travis Walton, for instance, made credible claims in the 1970s about being severely incapacitated when a landed UAP he approached discharged a burst of energy at him. More gravely, residents of the northeastern Brazilian town of Corales were reportedly plagued in the 1980s by ongoing incidents in which UAP vehicles targeted and harmed them with apparent directed-energy weapons. While such reports are rare, they may indicate hostility.[78]

Unless all publicly available data attesting to the above UAP capabilities and effects is rejected wholesale, the UAP presence constitutes, in principle, a threat to the security and sovereignty of the United States as well as those of other states and peoples. Moreover, the threat is presently indeterminate in nature and immeasurable in extent. Absent new data by which precise estimates of UAP capabilities and the intent of their designers can be made, it is impossible to know if the threat stems from a vast technological asymmetry, one that seems so but is actually minor; a potential in-between scenario; a sheer incommensurability of capacities; or any combination of these possibilities (depending on whether there is only a single NHI group). This inability to determine the nature and magnitude of the threat requires that we assume the worst, which is that it calls into question the continued existence of some if not all human life and governments—including, of course, that of the United States.

Still worse, it is not just the existence as such of human beings and governments that is threatened, but the quality of that existence, a characteristic arguably determined by the relative health and generativity of national and global economic and technological infrastructures as well as the cultural, religious, civil, and political institutions that shape so much human endeavor. Sudden mass public awareness of the UAP presence would stand a considerable chance of inducing uncertainty if not outright fear within those aspects of society, which could lead to their sudden destabilization and perhaps eventual degradation.

This is particularly so because the UAP presence raises challenges to the peculiar anthropocentric and "anthropo-exceptionalist" cosmology that shapes thinking in most institutions. This goes beyond the cliché that the reality of UAP vehicles means that "we are not alone," a belief that only contradicts the views of the few societies that manage to demean as unrespectable all recognition of the agency and sentience of other living beings. A single event in which a UAP vehicle exhibits extraordinary capabilities, like the 2004 USS Nimitz incident, alone reveals that the most prosperous swath of humanity is not at the apex of all economic, scientific, and technological achievement, but instead well behind (if not somewhat "primitive" in relation to) other beings and thus without the existential security and illusion of perpetuity that they imagine being guaranteed them. Such events also show that our almost limitless tendency to be self-referential in our thoughts and endeavors—our cosmological narcissism—is both myopically impractical and theoretically incorrect. The realization that the UAP presence is real by the portion of humanity still convinced of its greatness and exceptionality therefore could be traumatic, leaving not just populations anxious but decision-makers paralyzed with newfound uncertainty about the adequacy of their analytic schemata and vision of the future. Recent public claims that news of the UAP presence will induce "ontological shock"—shock about the very nature of reality—must be heeded.

The immediate and midterm effect of such broad public cognizance on domestic and international politics, financial markets, and technology development would be difficult and should not be underestimated. Within the United States, the already intense mistrust in government, science, media, and other institutions would likely be rightly exacerbated by the realization that the executive branch lied and maintained extreme secrecy about a matter as significant and dangerous as the UAP presence, with a basic scenario being that the President would have to acknowledge some facts about it and the history of US engagements while suddenly lacking the credibility to be trusted. International politics might be even more severely affected, as peer and other adversary states would inevitably interpret increased awareness and government acknowledgment as a possible indication that the United States intends to use the UAP presence to gain advantage in geopolitics, or even that it has achieved a related technological breakthrough but is misdirecting its adversaries by portraying new aerospace assets with genuine UAP vehicles. The already tense and mutually mistrustful relation between the United States and the People's Republic of China would almost certainly be exacerbated, as any attempt to address or assure the public about the UAP presence by the President would read like a cipher and raise not only the above possibilities but also that of whether the United States is acknowledging the UAP presence because it has managed to achieve technological parity and/or an insight into the intentions of NHI that assures it of safety. But trouble with allies might ensue as well, as EU and other allied governments might enter into a zone of distrust about whether the United States has ever acted in sufficient good faith toward them. Last, financial markets could be temporar-

ily roiled by any sudden leap in mass public awareness and US government frankness, and they might veer toward a crash were the President unable to offer a convincing word of assurance. Social instability and a possible decline in the quality of human existence is thus a very real prospect.

If such scenarios have to be mentioned, it is because the increasing awareness of the UAP presence that may lead to them is highly likely if not inevitable at this point due to the recently steady pace of executive and legislative branch acknowledgments It is now next to impossible to prevent or indefinitely delay disclosure, so the doubly existential threat raised by UAP—to life and social cohesion—should be both prepared for and factored into how the US government contends with the enigma of UAP in policy and practice. If the government intends to maintain its existing commitments to democracy, then it must reckon with the obvious security and social issues by bringing them just as much under the authority of the legislative branch as the executive branch and granting the American people significant if not ultimate say in contending with UAP. More important, the legislative branch may have to initiate this policy shift itself due to the likelihood of continued resistance to including it on the part of the executive.

Before turning to how this can be done, a further reason why it must be discussed. The UAP presence arguably entails not only an existential threat but potential existential benefits, and it is in the interest of the legislative branch and the American people to be aware of and participating in decisions about these. The little reliable, publicly available information about the capabilities of UAP requires that we do more than just assume that they involve a threat whose character and extent cannot presently be determined and about which we must assume the worst. Our inability to make a solid determination in that regard just as much as requires that we consider best case scenarios about the possible impact on humanity and the Earth of so-called nonhuman intelligences. Given the paucity of insightful, publicly available analysis of the reliable UAP data, the possibility that the designers and perhaps operators of the vehicles have good if not the very best of intentions cannot be ruled out. For instance, they may want only to observe and interact in a responsible fashion with human and other living beings, and they could even intend to provide assistance without inducing significant social and political disruption. UAP secrecy would make it impossible for Congress and the American people to deliberate about how to learn more about the intentions of nonhuman intelligences and whether to communicate and interact with them (if attempts at that have not already occurred or even succeeded).

Unless and until any actual UAP secrecy is lifted or lessened, Congress is unable even to begin to contemplate such possibilities and how the federal government could help bring them about. As with the existential threat raised by the UAP presence, its potential to enhance human existence cannot be given serious consideration due to the extremely limited access Congress has to the apparent knowledge and understanding of UAP of some executive branch components and their private industry partners. The situation for Americans is of course worse, as they remain almost completely unaware that their very existence may be not only jeopardized but also could be improved by the UAP presence. Short of a president and their national security advisor tak- ing the improbable step of confirming possible government UAP knowledge and opening it to legislative branch and popular scrutiny, it falls to Congress to initiate and secure sweeping reform.

5. The Harm to Congress

It should go without saying that it would be unacceptable for any element or component of the executive branch to actively prevent nearly the entire legislative branch from knowing anything about federal government UAP activities and intervening in them. According even to the most vehement proponents of strong executive power, the Constitution's separation of powers distributes to each of the three branch of government distinct responsibilities with respect to the law (its establishment, execution, and interpretation) rather than exclusive jurisdiction over specific matters governed by it, including defense and intelligence and extending, in principle, to others of a novel and unusual nature like UAP. Thus, at least by this understanding of law and government—which is held by most members of Congress—there are no a priori limits on the kinds of matters over which it can enact legislation and exercise its other powers. Moreover, the UAP presence is of such consequence that the legislative branch should be as informed of and engaged with it is as it is with other matters, especially because there is a public presumption that Congress will take special care to attend to those that most affect the lives of US citizens and residents. Given both this imperative and the absence of any reason that Congress may not fulfill it through legislation, it would be absurd for executive branch elements or components to assert that they have the "right" to prohibit Congress from knowing anything about a special set of facts, however grave their implications, and executing its responsibilities in relation to them.

It is thus safe to say that Congress and the US system of separate powers would have been harmed if the executive branch concealed its knowledge of and engagements with UAP with blanket or extreme secrecy. To appreciate better why, one need only recall that there is no known precedent for the classification of the mere existence of entire classes of things and events. To make clear how outrageously inappropriate that would be, one need only imagine that the DoD and IC components and perhaps presidents had succeeded at rendering secret the very existence of climate change or artificial intelligence, rather than specific information pertaining to them and related programs that might be essential to the national security and interest. But even this barely conveys the egregiousness of such secrecy were it to conceal the reality of UAP. It would be as though the United States had carried out the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and then proceeded with all subsequent nuclear weapons development and proliferation but managed to keep the existence of the weapons themselves so secret that Congress was left ignorant—and anyone who managed to see through and decry the deception was ridiculed as deranged. Common sense alone tells us that the United States would have had functional and democratic separation of powers in name alone if the legislative branch had been ignorant of nuclear weapons and unable to make the least decision concerning them or review of relevant executive branch actions. The damage done to Congress and government as a whole would be profound.

Yet to determine the nature of that damage, we must go beyond analogies to consider how any actual UAP secrecy could have disempowered the legislative branch. The problem is not just that the executive branch would have acted in a way that is completely out of order; it is also that secrecy would have subverted the legislative branch by unduly and dangerously limiting its

ability to exercise some of its specific constitutional powers. Simply put, the artificial ignorance about UAP that may have been induced in Congress by executive branch elements and perhaps presidencies would have prevented it from legislating, advising and consenting to the executive on cabinet-level and other nominations, and conducting oversight.

The resultant deficit in Congress's power would be unseen, but it becomes evident upon consideration of the limitations that secrecy would put on its capacity to execute such actions in the areas of defense, intelligence, science, and technology, particularly in cases where the Constitution clearly stipulates its responsibilities. If assertions in the congressional legislation that significant executive branch cognizance of UAP begins in the 1940s are correct, then Congress has operated for close to eighty years without the minimum of knowledge it needed to execute some of its most important responsibilities.

This is most obvious with respect to Congress's annual legislative authorization of ongoing and new defense, intelligence, and energy programs, including those that concern the most sensitive and classified matters. The congressional armed services, energy, and intelligences committees drive this process in their areas of jurisdiction and carry it out in light of the information on classified activities and programs to which they are entitled. It should be obvious that it would have been and still is strictly impossible for those committees and thus for Congress as a whole to do that work effectively if the entire body has been and remains unaware of any UAP intelligence, retrieval, and reverse engineering programs within the DoD, DoE, and IC and information pertinent to understanding their purposes. The implications for national security and existential implications of UAP vehicles absolutely entitle Congress to be cognizant of and thus able to decline to authorize such programs.

Extending the classification of UAP knowledge to the whole of Congress also would have significantly damaged the Senate's ability to advise and consent on presidential nominations for cabinet-level and like positions in departments and agencies imputed to conduct UAP activities. If such activities indeed have been conducted without the entire Senate's knowledge by such entities as the CIA, the DoD, the DoE (and, before it, the Atomic Energy Commission), the NRO, and the NSA, then the upper chamber's ability to determine the fitness of individuals for roles such as CIA Director, Director of National Intelligence (and, before it, Director of Central Intelligence), Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Energy would have been profoundly compromised. Any knowledge and activities concerning UAP in such federal elements would be of enormous significance and call for Congress's awareness and input concerning their management.

Less dramatic but just as consequential, Congress's ability to conduct intelligence, armed services, and energy oversight would have been undermined to a similarly consequential degree. The Senate and House intelligence and armed services committees have the authority to request and receive virtually all information that might help them determine if activities and programs under their jurisdiction are being conducted lawfully, ethically, effectively, and in the national interest. And while the committees run up against a rare exception to this authority in the case of "unacknowledged special access programs" and "waived unacknowledged special access programs"—programs the DoD need not report to Congress through normal procedures—statutes in place since the 1980s nonetheless require the DoD to ensure

that the cochairs of the Senate and House appropriations and armed services committees and the majority and minority leaders of both chambers (the "Gang of Eight") are cognizant of them.[79] It would be absurd to say that there has been anything resembling effective oversight of any existing UAP activities or programs if the committees or the Gang of Eight have not been regularly and consistently notified of them and Congress as a whole remains broadly unaware that any such programs may exist. Apart from being clearly illegal short of an executive order placing a program under the direct supervision of the President, such a deliberate evasion of oversight statutes and norms would have further undermined Congress by giving senior agency officials witting of any actual UAP programs the impression that the body was deservedly uninformed about some of the most significant activity in the federal government and thus weak, inconsequential, and undeserving of respect.[80]

Finally, it should be added that UAP secrecy is likely to have set Congress back by decades in its work to determine federal science, technology, and energy policy. The understanding of physics, material science, and energy necessary to account for the performance characteristics of UAP vehicles would be revolutionary (perhaps several times over) if achieved by human beings. The classification of any efforts to study and reverse engineer the vehicles would have prevented Congress from becoming apprised of this possibility and taking action to make it reality through the creation of adequately resourced federal programs. Although Congress's power to shape science and technology policy through legislation may be less clearly stipulated by the Constitution than its other powers, there is no confusion in executive agencies such as NASA and NOAA about whether it holds the purse strings or has the right to do so, and it would strain credulity were an executive agency to suggest that separation of powers had been respected to the benefit of the people by keeping knowledge of UAP and perhaps scientific knowledge and technology derived from them from Congress. On this point, too, UAP secrecy would subvert Congress.

As though all the above infringements on the legislative branch were not enough, there is yet one more of such significance that it should be discussed separately. Unless it can be proven that genuine UAP vehicles do not raise an existential threat to the US government and the nation's population, then Congress has been operating for at least eighty years without the least awareness that it very well could someday face the scenario of having to authorize war against the designers and perhaps operators of UAP. That possibility may sound absurd, but the complete absence of reliable public knowledge of their intentions requires us, again, to assume the worst, including that they already have engaged in or may yet make shows of force or take unambiguously hostile actions that could require defensive and even counteroffensive military responses, which, if prolonged, could require a declaration of war. (Readers who regard such a scenario as improbable would do well to consider that any transit of a UAP vehicle through US airspace or over its territorial waters is, in principle, a violation of its sovereignty and thus by definition a national security threat.) Conversely, there is no reason to be confident that the crash retrieval operations that are all but attributed to defense and intelligence elements in the UAP legislation would be regarded as innocuous by the vehicles' makers: were they aware of them, they might—and this statement should be taken only as speculation—interpret the appropriation of an intact UAP vehicle by the US government as a provocative or hostile act, and there would be almost no way of knowing in that case if some UAP are oblique communications concerning such retrievals. Given that the Constitution assigns war authorization

power to Congress, the fact that the body is not broadly informed about not only the presence of UAP but of anything that may be known about their capabilities, incidence, and areas of operation constitutes a disregard of legislative branch power so profound that it could have engendered a latent constitutional crisis.[81]

Be that as it may, executive branch secrecy extreme enough to occlude an entire subject from the legislative branch is profoundly at odds with both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution's definition and separation of federal powers and the system of checks and balances it institutes. The ignorance of government engagements with the UAP presence that may have been induced in Congress by certain executive agencies and perhaps presidents would profoundly undermine its ability to legislate in relation to and perform oversight over related defense, intelligence, and energy activities and spending, and the net result would be a significant deficit in power in those areas in comparison with the executive branch. This is egregiously so with respect to its war authorization powers, as it is both currently unprepared for the possibility (however remote) of having to affirm or refuse sustained military actions against UAP and additionally not engaged by the DoD and IC as though it someday might have to make such decisions. Yet even if this disturbing issue is left to the side, the absolute dearth of awareness in Congress about the UAP presence is detrimental to the US system of government if some executive branch components indeed have a working knowledge of UAP vehicles and even their designers/operators but fail to share it.

6. Proposal for a Congressional Response: A Senate Inquiry and Other Measures

It takes no special expertise in the workings of the federal government to realize that any components in the executive responsible for excluding the most directly democratic branch of government from world-changing knowledge are highly unlikely to themselves avow responsibility for the error and attempt to correct it. Once again, Congress will have to initiate that process and see it to term.

It will be far from easy for Congress to reassert and take back its rightful powers in collaboration with the executive branch, short of an improbable situation in which it attains the full support of the President, the National Security Advisor, and key NSC members such as the Director of National Intelligence, the Secretary of Defense, and the Director of the CIA. It thus should resort to several measures: (1) passage of the UAP Disclosure Act; (2) a review of possible federal UAP activities and programs by the Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum, a body by which the inspector coordinates the activities of the agency-specific inspectors general; (3) a deep congressional inquiry, modeled on the Church Committee, into any such activities and programs, their predecessors, and their general history; the nature and extent of federal government knowledge of UAP; the rationales for any actual UAP secrecy; and any specific harm done by it to the legislative branch, the federal government as a whole, and the American people; and (4) legislation—perhaps titled the "Congressional UAP Governance Act"—that would formally establish Congress's right to legislate and exercise oversight over government UAP affairs and its sense that the Constitution clearly gives it as much power over them as it enjoys over virtually all other matters.

The rest of the present text primarily concerns the congressional inquiry, but readers should not underestimate the need for such a law and the benefits of an Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum review.

The UAP Disclosure Act

Before discussing these measures, the primary one—the UAP Disclosure Act—should be examined. Sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Michael Rounds, the legislation's original 2023 draft version will again be voted on this year (2024) by Congress following its only partial passage that year and would establish a panel composed of retired federal government official and academics to review and declassify UAP records. The Disclosure Act verges on being revolutionary in its acknowledgment of the reality of government UAP activities and demand for transparency, and its passage should be supported.

Yet unless significant modifications are made to the current Disclosure Act, it serves Congress and the American people far less than might be expected. This is primarily because the legislation tasks the proposed review board with an objective requiring fulsome and only difficultly secured cooperation from executive branch elements and places the board under the authority of the President rather than Congress. Recent decades have not seen the CIA, the NSA, and other agencies volunteering to cooperate with congressional inquiries or always complying when legally required to do so (for instance, the Agency destroyed evidence of the torture of detainees at Guantánamo Bay when the SSCI begin investigating this), and they may become recalcitrant when faced with a UAP inquiry due to the likelihood that congressional investigators might view undisclosed activities as illegal and unconstitutional. Impediments as significant as these to DoD and IC cooperation could be surmounted if the President were to order their leadership to gather and provide to the review board without delay relevant witnesses and records. Yet such support cannot be presumed by Congress, due not only to the political risks a president would face for supporting a federal UAP measure but also to the opacity surrounding the reasons for UAP secrecy. It could be that presidents, select NSC members, and deputy directors and undersecretaries within their agencies are aware of the reasons for UAP secrecy and believe that official acknowledgment of the UAP presence would spark a political and economic crisis. Be that as it may, Congress can neither count on any president to force compliance from agencies as autonomous as the CIA nor presume it is in their interest to empower the legislative branch over the executive.

The Disclosure Act comes with an additional problem, which is that it requires the review board to work for five years before presenting its final declassification recommendation to the President for consideration. As a presumed author of the legislation explained in a public talk, this schedule would allow the board time to make careful decisions about which records to release and thus avoid the social destabilization that might ensue from an uncontrolled process.[82] There are nonetheless two serious drawbacks to this timeline, one of which is that it delays bringing to a close possibly illegal and unconstitutional secrecy and the ongoing harm it would do to Congress and the American people. A more expedient measure is needed for that purpose, such as a congressional inquiry executed within one or two years. The other shortcoming concerns the legislation's objective of significant declassification, which might not be attained within a five-year period for the simple reason that the review board could find itself working under a new and unsupportive president if its previous patron is voted out of office while it is still undertaking its work. In short, the changing fates of presidents alone could prevent the Disclosure Act from succeeding, and Congress could be left waiting in suspense for urgently needed information and change.

Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum Review

It should be remembered that we are contending with a possibility so murky to even the most interested members of Congress that it needs strong verification. No one knows what and how much certain senators and representatives know to be true about allegedly unreported classified UAP activities, and it is furthermore unclear whether this knowledge is enough to leave them willing or able to persuade other representatives that such programs exist. For Congress to achieve knowledge about UAP secrecy and some consensus about its reality, objective verification

of some kind is needed. This could be attained by a little-known executive branch oversight component, the Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum, at the request of Congress.

To date, Congress has officially relied on the AARO to gather and verify information about unreported UAP programs. The section of the 2023 NDAA that clarifies the AARO's responsibilities established a process by which individuals within the DoD and the IC can disclose to the office classified information on UAP activities and programs without violating their security oaths and relevant nondisclosure agreements. This process did result in several scientists and officials from the IC providing testimony, but the AARO summarily dismissed it in its historical report. Regardless of whether the office's director and staff ever gave it the consideration it was due, the AARO is largely a quasiscientific study office rather than a law enforcement component capable of assessing and investigating allegations of violations of law by executive branch agencies and components. More importantly, the AARO is nested in the DoD under the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense and reports to it as well as the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. As with any office or component of any other federal department or agency, the AARO is not in a position to objectively review, let alone investigate, the office managing it or the department encompassing it. It falls to the inspector generals of departments and agencies to conduct such reviews due to their independence from management.

Thus, in contrast with the AARO, the Offices of the Inspectors General of the IC agencies and the DoD have the expertise to conduct reviews and the independence from management to succeed at them. As congressional activity, public testimony, and historical scholarship all indicate that secret government UAP programs reside not only in the DoD but in the Intelligence Community, too (that is, they are carried out not just under the authority of Title 10 of the United States Code but also and perhaps foremost Title 50), the Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum (hereafter the IC IG Forum) would be the best vehicle for a review. The Forum comprises each of the Offices of Inspector General (OIGs) of the seventeen agencies in the IC as well as the Department of Defense OIG and is led by the Intelligence Community Inspector General, which uses the Forum to coordinate and loosely integrate the activities of all the IC OIGs, for instance by sharing information about individual OIG's annual work plans, ongoing reviews at the OIGs' respective agencies, and professional know-how. Because the DoD OIG is a member, the Forum has the jurisdiction to review nearly all the possible defense and intelligence components that may execute UAP programs and activities, including the DoD; "hybrid" defense/intelligence agencies, such as the DIA, the NSA, the NRO, and the Office of Naval Intelligence, which fall under both Title 10 and Title 50 (and can thus avoid intelligence oversight by invoking their defense status); the "pure" Title 50 agency of the CIA; and the intelligence components of federal government elements governed by other sections of the United States Code: the Department of Energy's Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and the Department of the Treasury's Office of Intelligence and Analysis. In addition, the Forum also seeks opportunities for joint reviews of topics that cut across the entire IC, as undertaking them ensures that all the OIGs share uniform review criteria and methodologies.

To begin the process, Congress should legislatively task the IC IG Forum to conduct a review that would seek to ascertain if there indeed are classified efforts to detect, track, retrieve, study, and reverse engineer UAP vehicles, by examining whether programs in aerospace intelligence,

foreign technology acquisition, et cetera involve such activities. This could be achieved by performing financial audits of such programs, reviewing whether they are in compliance with congressional notification requirements for SAPs and CAPs, and interviewing personnel about their purposes and activities. The tasking could be done through the Intelligence Authorization Act, including its classified annex, or a letter to the IC IG from the cochairs of the SSCI. Any discovery of unreported or underreported UAP-related activities or programs would allow all members of the SSCI to know with certainty if there are UAP programs and whether they have been kept outside congressional oversight.

Short of the vastly improbable scenario of a set of coordinated UAP activities conducted entirely outside any normative chain of command, supported only with privately raised and disbursed funds, and without any records as to their purpose, an IC IG Forum review should be able to verify some or all of the UAP activities and programs alleged to exist by the UAP legislation.

There is, however, a drawback to the IC IG Forum review that necessitates treating it as an intermediate step. Its findings would be for the consumption only of the SSCI and HPSCI and some of their staff, but not Congress as a whole and certainly not the American people. If the legislative branch is to exercise power over a matter of which it has been made ignorant, it will ultimately need a transparent and open procedure by which to enlighten every congressperson and their constituents.

The Congressional Inquiry: "Church 2.0"

The most crucial and decisive course of action available to Congress is therefore a broad, public inquiry aimed at ascertaining the historical and contemporary facts about any UAP-related activities and programs within the DoD, the DOE, the IC, and related government contractors. Of course, a UAP-focused inquiry would be a risky undertaking due to the time, energy, human resources, and political capital that would have to be expended for it to succeed, but investigation nonetheless stands as the single most important measure that Congress has at its disposal when faced with deliberate neglect or disempowerment by executive agencies. To restore balance, Congress must draw on all its strength and pull the scales of power back to its side.

The best model and precedent Congress has for investigation is the Church Committee, the broad, yearlong Senate inquiry into US intelligence activities that was convened in 1975 by Senator Frank Church of Idaho in the wake of the revelation in the New York Times that the CIA was engaged in domestic intelligence collection efforts targeting US citizens—an activity in clear violation of the prohibition on domestic operations found in its charter, the 1947 National Security Act.[83]

In contrast with other, more recent and memorable congressional inquiries into intelligence matters such as the Iran-Contra hearings and the SSCI's investigation of the CIA's use of torture at US black sites, the Church Committee largely confined itself to fact-finding rather than public hearings and produced reforms so enduring that they are largely taken for granted today. The most important of these were the conversion of the Church Committee into the SSCI, the establishment of robust congressional intelligence oversight, and the crafting and passage

by committee alumni of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the law that provides to this day crucial privacy and free speech protections to US citizens and residents by requiring intelligence and federal law enforcement agencies to obtain a warrant before subjecting them to electronic surveillance. Congress's lack of power and knowledge about alleged government UAP activities arguably calls for a similarly effective inquiry and comprehensive legislative reforms, including the creation of UAP-specific Senate and House select committees or subcommittees and oversight mechanisms.

To better appreciate why the Church Committee provides such a point of reference, the parallel between Congress's weak epistemic and political position with respect to the Intelligence Community circa 1975 and its situation vis-à-vis potential UAP secrecy must be understood. At that time, no strenuous oversight mechanism existed by which Congress could expect or demand fulsome briefings from the CIA, the NSA, and other agencies on their work, let alone their most sensitive activities and programs (the NSA and NRO were not even publicly acknowledged and remained largely unknown to Congress at the time), and what oversight did exist was relaxed to the point of complacency.[84] Then, in late 1973, a series of events revealed the previously unknown extent of US intelligence activities and how little cognizance Congress had of them. In the wake of public discovery that CIA personnel had participated in the Watergate burglaries and other espionage against Richard Nixon's perceived enemies, the New York Times set off a firestorm of controversy over the Agency by reporting on its domestic intelligence activities against the civil rights, antiwar, and left student groups, which soon led to Congress's discovery that post-Watergate CIA Director James Schlesinger had issued an agency-wide request for reports of unethical and possibly illegal operations that resulted in a list, known colloquially as "the family jewels," of such actions that included domestic electronic surveillance, mail inspection, collaboration with the Italian Mafia, and even human experimentation. Discovering that such activities were even possible caused some members of Congress to realize just how little they understood about other recent CIA actions, such as its support of the 1973 coup against Chilean Prime Minister Salvador Allende and execution of covert paramilitary actions in Laos at a scale that effectively made them an undeclared war. As it became increasingly clear to even hawkish observers that such activities may not have at all served US interests and lacked in some cases clear presidential authorization, several reform-minded Senate and House members formed the Church Committee and its counterpart in the House, the Pike Committee, to put an end to Congress's ignorance about intelligence operations.

Viewed in this light, Congress in the 1970s was in largely the same situation of ignorance about intelligence activities as it is today with the narrower but just as significant band of them that are likely to concern UAP. Moreover, the parallel extends even further, as the Church Committee, too, faced the question of whether some defense and intelligence officials are engaged in unsanctioned activities similar to those that the UAP legislation suggests their present-day counterparts currently are. More precisely, the committee had serious concerns about whether many of the ethically and legally dubious activities turned up by its inquiries were ever explicitly ordered by presidents or simply initiated by leadership within the agencies. That concern was so paramount to Church that it almost haunted the inquiry, leading some of its most influential members to wonder whether they were ultimately investigating then-recent presidents and cabinet officials rather than the intelligence agencies themselves.

That question would recur about not only those presidents but also their successors should something akin to a UAP-focused "Church 2.0" occur, and the pursuit of answers would be a primary raison d'être of the inquiry.

That said, another reason the Church Committee provides a model investigation is that it showed remarkable success at obtaining facts about illegal intelligence activities, yet it refrained from producing culprits to blame.[85] Although the committee is sometimes imagined to have done undue harm to the efficacy and morale of the agencies, it managed a difficult balancing act by delving into some of their most protected secrets while not putting them on (actual or mock) trial. So much of what is understood about Cold War US intelligence activities first emerged because the committee decided that a reckoning was overdue and owed to Americans if the federal government's prerogative to secrecy was not to overwhelm citizens' right to openness and transparency. From the manipulation of media through liaisons with journalists and editors to the warrantless electronic surveillance of writers, actors, congresspeople, and executive branch officials to the grotesque and sometimes violent medical and psychiatric experiments conducted under the auspices of Project MK-ULTRA, Church uncovered in the mere space of a year a range of activities that only intelligence professionals with the coldest instrumental mentality could believe to be consistent with professed American principles—and the inquiry did, in that respect, an immense service to an electorate that has a right to a say in even the most fraught of government affairs. At the same time, Church from the outset defined its task as fact-finding and constrained itself accordingly, rather than attempting a pseudo-prosecutorial mission, even when faced with crimes as obvious as the CIA's violation of its charter's prohibition against domestic intelligence collection. By limiting its ambit in that way and not threatening federal officials with prosecution, it succeeded at obtaining partners in the executive branch, including DCI William Colby, who significantly cooperated with its requests for testimony and records.[86] Thus contrary to the views of some today, Church succeeded not despite but because it abstained from trying to bring government officials to justice for actions taken in the line of duty.[87]

Given the unlikelihood that the sorts of UAP-related activities described in the UAP legislation could have occurred and been kept secret without the authorization of presidents and authorities just beneath them, "Church 2.0" would stand a chance of garnering cooperation from relevant departments and agencies only if it emulated its predecessor by similarly eschewing prosecutorial ambitions and restricting itself to fact-finding. That also would be necessary to deal with the exceptional character of UAP secrecy, which may very well have been instituted and maintained in part for unique and unprecedented reasons.

Last and most important, the Church Committee should serve as the model for a UAP investigation due to the legislative reforms and fulsome regime of intelligence oversight it produced.[88] The SSCI is undoubtedly one of the most powerful and consequential committees within either chamber of Congress due to its capacity both to shape the priorities and budgets of the intelligence agencies and to hold them to account for unethical and illegal activities. The SSCI came into being only because Church members parlayed their success into the passage of a Senate resolution to create a permanent committee with the power to legislatively order and approve intelligence activities and exercise oversight.[89] Church 2.0 would be advised to pursue similar legislative objectives, as the absurdly long historical period in which the

legislative branch may have been afflicted by UAP secrecy arguably warrants the formation of permanent Senate and House UAP affairs committees (as several members of the House Committee Oversight and Government Accountability Committee currently recognize). Moreover, such committees might prove uniquely important to the health of the federal government should the inquiry ascertain that UAP secrecy involved abuses of the Constitution, rule of law, and democratic principles. (Should any such abuses have been severe, the legislative branch may need to take temporary control over any current UAP activities through legislation and by exercising stringent oversight over them.)

In sum, unless and until it is certain that relevant executive branch elements and components have apprised the legislative branch of the entirety of any past and present UAP activities they undertake and the significance of these, Congress will in some way have to force this. Although the Church Committee never had to contemplate as radical a course of action, it nonetheless exemplified the audacity and decisiveness that will be required of Congress to redress the injuries to itself and democracy that may have been wrought by UAP secrecy.

7. Lines of Inquiry

Congress will have to complete a thorough inquiry, however, before even beginning to consider such courses of action. The questions it will need to answer are threefold. First and foremost, the investigating committee must inquire into government and government contractor UAP activities and programs until it is certain it has a broad yet accurate, complete, and unredacted history of them from World War II to the present. Short of that, there will be too many questions about the facts—and thus too much conjecture and unwarranted extrapolation—for anyone to gain clarity about the exact nature of any harm that may have been done to the legislative branch and the US system of separate powers.

Second—and just as important—the committee must gather and examine all records of executive branch decisions that resulted in policy and, effectively, law. It could seem that nothing more needs to be done than gather facts, as though Congress knowing the full arc of US government UAP history would suffice for it to determine what to do. This is a widespread assumption among advocates of UAP disclosure and stems from the notion that a single, grand communication from a president that confirms the UAP presence will move society forward and right the wrongs of secrecy. It takes only the slightest understanding of politics, however, to realize the absurdity of this, as an acknowledgment of any actual government UAP secrecy would likely bring to light not only events kept veiled and the reasons that they have been, but also which individuals, offices, and agencies conducted UAP activities and kept them under wraps. Should Congress make any headway here, it may very well uncover the disturbing truth that certain presidents were well-informed about UAP and decided in favor of secrecy, while others were kept in relative or complete ignorance. The general history therefore will need to be supplemented with a precise account of whether and when such actions as presidential briefings and decisions, executive orders and directives, cabinet-level deliberations, and NSC, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and DCI directives were taken and resulted in law and policy, about which the legislative branch has lacked awareness. In brief, all major executive branch decisions and actions must be reconstructed and reviewed, and their legal and policy implications evaluated.

Last, Congress must pursue a third line of inquiry that goes beyond the above historical and legal issues and asks whether and to what extent UAP secrecy has been beneficial to the nation. The obsession of disclosure advocates with the potentially outrageous nature of said secrecy has left some of them seemingly unconcerned with whether it has enabled the US government to make significant gains in its understanding of and approach toward UAP. Provided the UAP legislation is largely correct, pockets of the IC and DoD may have had upward of eighty years to acquire reliable knowledge about the UAP presence and thus could have developed not just detection, tracking, and recovery capabilities but an understanding of the motives and intent of possible NHI, defensive and perhaps counteroffensive strategies and capabilities, related innovations in aerospace and maritime technology, biosecurity measures, and so forth. It will be important for Congress to determine if extreme secrecy allowed for and was worth such gains, or simply prevented them. In brief, Congress must ask whether UAP secrecy resulted in a massive intelligence failure and harm to national security.

As making that determination will depend on having as many verified facts in hand as possible, the inquiry should begin with the historical and legal issues and then move to consideration of their implications for government. The challenge, of course, is that the dearth of knowledge about UAP programs makes it difficult to know how to proceed. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to make exhaustive recommendations about which known unknowns and possible unknown unknowns should be of concern, certain questions must be pursued if the big picture is to come into focus. Presuming that the federal government has maintained secret government UAP activities, these questions include: When and under what circumstances and authorities did US government action concerning the UAP presence begin? How did it transform as the US military and IC grew and changed? And when and to what extent has it been under presidential authority?

Initial Presidential Decisions, a Presidential Study Group, and the Atomic Energy Commission

The inquiry's starting point should be a search for any cabinet-level discussions and presidential decisions concerning UAP during WWII and its immediate aftermath. The war saw the beginning of UAP reporting in the contemporary sense, and the late 1940s its intensification in the United States following a wave of well-publicized incidents in 1947, the most well-known of which is aviator Kenneth Arnold's encounter with a group of discs flying in formation over Washington state. Wartime reporting may have led to some initial and still classified military intelligence on the vehicles, and it may have contributed to the US Air Force's decision to establish the first known UAP study program, Project Sign, in 1948. But there is presently very little evidence to indicate that UAP reports were of any concern to Roosevelt, Truman, and the War Department prior to that year.[90]

The opposite may very well be the case if the UAP retrieval events evoked in the congressional legislation indeed occurred. Should it be true that at least one crashed UAP vehicle was recovered by the US government in the 1940s, then that would have made Roosevelt or Truman aware of the reality of UAP and compelled them to establish relevant policies, plans, and authorities. Investigators should focus, of course, on whether Truman first became cognizant of UAP following the alleged crash of one or two UAP vehicles in Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947, as the testimony of witnesses to the aftermath, Clinton administration officials, and retired intelligence officials alike suggests that it occurred. Yet there is good reason to believe that such a foundational event may have happened earlier in the 1940s and perhaps during the 1930s. Credible testimony about alleged UAP crashes and recoveries in the Italian city of Magenta in 1936 and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in 1939 would, if correct, have led to Roosevelt and his closest cabinet advisors becoming cognizant of UAP vehicles and perhaps, too, requesting that his national science advisor and Manhattan Project instigator Vannevar Bush develop a plan to study them.[91] Regardless of the initial date of any presidential engagement, a remarkable event or series of such events during the late 1930s and 1940s may mark the inception point of executive branch UAP activity, and care should be taken to reconstruct from archived records and contemporary witness testimony the relevant history and locate any initial executive orders, directives, and decision memoranda that might have established policy and carried the force of law.

Locating such records will be difficult. Until recently, most claims about foundational presidential decisions came from uncredentialed researchers, supported only by a handful of government witnesses and dubious records, and were centered on the now legendary story that a secret presidential UAP/NHI advisory and study group comprising, among others, the first Director of Central Intelligence, the first Secretary of Defense, and Roosevelt's national science advisor and Manhattan Project instigator Vannevar Bush—and known, supposedly, by the code name "MJ-12"—was established just after the alleged Roswell event to study technology and materials acquired from it and any threat posed by the presence of UAP.[92] Recent testimony from retired government officials to which this author is privy indicates, strangely enough, that such a group indeed existed and may have been established by Truman through a classified 1947 directive and its authority subsequently bolstered by Eisenhower through a 1953 directive that delegated to it extraordinary decision-making powers akin to those once effectively held by the Joints Chiefs and SAC leadership over nuclear war.[93] The public evidence for such an executive branch group and its presidential sanction, however, has been too sparse to allow past investigators to verify such claims.

Yet the advent of strong congressional interest in UAP enables us to inquire anew into this history, particularly because the Schumer Disclosure Act offers a significant clue about it. In the initial pages of both its original 2023 and current, 2024 draft, its authors lay out several rationales for the law. Among these, they write, is the following: "[L]egislation is necessary because credible evidence and testimony indicates that Federal Government unidentified anomalous phenomena records exist that have not been declassified or subject to mandatory declassification review [. . .] due in part to exemptions under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 as well as an overbroad interpretation of 'transclassified foreign nuclear information,' which is also exempt from mandatory declassification, thereby preventing public disclosure under existing provisions of law."

This is an intriguing statement. There is to date almost no other credible, publicly available evidence to indicate that UAP information was classified as a nuclear secret under the Atomic Energy Act, let alone that it still is under the rubric of "transclassified foreign nuclear information," a type of classified information specific to the DoE by which decades-old intelligence on the nuclear weapons and energy programs of foreign governments continues to be classified.[94] This passage in the legislation offers insight as to the possible origins of UAP activities in executive directives and the bureaucratic auspice under which they have been conducted and concealed in the executive branch.

Should any recovered UAP materials, components, and vehicles have been classified as nuclear secrets in the 1940s and 1950s, that would have given the Atomic Energy Commission some degree of involvement in and even partial jurisdiction over them until its demise in 1973 and eventual replacement by the DoE. It is often forgotten today that Congress put control of nuclear weapons and energy under civilian rather than military authority in its first, 1946 Atomic Energy Act (also known as the McMahon Act) and again through its 1954 counterpart (often simply referred to as the Atomic Energy Act). It may be that the commission had significant authority over the study of UAP materials and vehicles into the 1970s, and thereby bypassed both notice and scrutiny from Congress. That is consistent with the still unverified assertions that Truman and Eisenhower established a partly civilian body to play

an advisory or even controlling role over government UAP activities, and it furthermore provides a possible explanation for how these could have been concealed from Congress and the media. Apart from whispers that such Manhattan Project luminaries as Bush, Robert J. Oppenheimer, John von Neumann, and Edward Teller played a role in UAP activities and the "MJ-12" group, there was virtually no association of the project or the Atomic Energy Commission with UAP in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s or even after (the Air Force, of course, was the public face for the US government when it addressed UAP at all during that period).[95] The commission also was oddly placed in the architecture of federal government, as it was an autonomous agency with its own classification system and reported directly to the President, yet its intelligence and counterintelligence components were under the authority of the Director of Central Intelligence. All this makes the AEC a plausible locus for interagency UAP activities in the high Cold War and an authority under which they were classified, functions that could have been transferred to the Department of Energy upon its establishment in 1977. At the same time, it also could be that a UAP/NHI-specific presidential advisory and study group consisting of leading lights from the Manhattan Project, the nascent Intelligence Community, and the military indeed was constituted by Truman in the late 1940s but that it was distinct from the Atomic Energy Commission. In that case, it would have been natural for the likely leadership of this group—it will be called "MJ-12," with scare quotes, for convenience—to establish a hybrid civilian-military authority akin to the Atomic Energy Commission and to utilize the latter's classification powers and framework to protect its data and operations.[96] Should "MJ-12" have existed and been constituted this way, it also would be natural for it to occupy an administrative residence nearby the AEC and utilize some of its infrastructure, resources, security apparatus, and personnel, including those of the Los Alamos, Sandia, and other national laboratories. Despite the likely high profiles of the AEC's members and the significance of its work, the extreme secrecy and security it maintained over nuclear energy and weapons could have been extended to the "MJ-12" group, thereby prevented it from arousing the curiosity of unwitting senior leadership in the AEC, DoD, CIA, and Congress.

Regardless of whether there was ever such an "MJ-12" group directing UAP activities, it is inconceivable that it could have been brought into being without a president issuing a classified executive directive. Given the clue in the Disclosure Act about the potential relationship between nuclear secrecy and UAP activities, any congressional inquiry into the origins of any actual UAP secrecy should make it an absolute priority to determine the truth about "MJ-12" and initial presidential awareness and decisions about UAP. If the inquiry's findings are accurate, it will obtain a clear picture of the origins and legal foundation of UAP secrecy and its implications for the legislative branch. Any executive orders or directives turned up through the investigation—including any of those concerning urgent situations ostensibly requiring emergency powers and known today as Presidential Emergency Action Directives (PEADs)—would enlighten Congress as to the rationales for such secrecy, why it was imposed at the expense of the legislative branch, and the extent to which it is legal and constitutional.[97] Given the potentially grave implications for separation of powers of any such presidential emergency actions taken by the president to the detriment of Congress, we will discuss them later in this paper.

For now, there are other historical and legal issues entailed by the alleged classification of UAP as an atomic/nuclear secret that should be explored. The problem of how to reconcile the

congressional UAP legislation's assertion of hidden government UAP activities with known historical reality is partly resolved if these were significantly housed within Cold War and subsequent bureaucratic architectures for the development, testing, management, and use of nuclear weapons. Contemporary amnesia about the history of nuclear weapons development, management, and command extends to the fact that those activities were long subject to unique legislative oversight arrangements that might have been favorable to UAP secrecy. From its establishment with the McMahon Act to its demise in the early 1970s, the AEC was overseen by the congressional Joint Atomic Energy Committee (JAEC), a Senate-House committee that possessed unusually strong, sometimes executive branch–specific powers, including access to relevant classified information, the ability to classify information, the use of JAEC facilities and personnel, and the power to veto legislation.[98] Although one might assume that holding such powers would have made the JAEC a formidable legislative branch oversight body, the committee tended to function more collaboratively than oppositionally in relation to the AEC and to withhold the secrets to which it was privy from the armed services committees and the rest of Congress. It could be that congressional awareness of any UAP activities resided with the JAEC, with a few of its members aware of these and quietly consenting to the use of part of the atomic/nuclear budget for them. The absence of a broader congressional window onto such diverted monies certainly would have helped prevent discovery of their allocation to UAP activity, and their use as a significant source of funding for it would have greatly lessened or entirely erased its fingerprint in annual federal budgets. More crucially, the classification of UAP information under this rubric might have provided not only the AEC but DoD and IC components justification for circumventing or altogether bypassing the congressional defense and intelligence oversight mechanisms of the 1950s through the mid-1970s. If UAP activities were conducted through programs directed by the CIA and/or under the authority of "MJ-12" and executed by or jointly codirected by a component of the AEC and later DoE, particularly through certain national laboratories, then they might not have been officially intelligence activities per se or represented in CIA budgets, with the same applying to any defense programs undertaken jointly or by way of the AEC/DoE and national laboratories. This, too, could explain how a secret of such exceptional magnitude could have been maintained for so long.

Such a relationship between the CIA and the DoE may prevail today and account for the assertions of unwarranted ignorance within Congress about UAP programs. Were it the case that UAP-related activities and programs conducted by the Department of Energy autonomously or in conjunction with or on behalf of IC and/or DoD components, then it might not be mandatory for them to report this work to the congressional armed services and intelligence committees—or, in the case of waived Special Access Programs, the Gang of Eight. Similarly, it is unclear whether any UAP endeavors entirely specific to the DoE would need in that case to be reported at all to those same committees or congressional leadership, as classified energy research and nuclear weapons programs are not under the purview of the intelligence committees or only partly so. This could particularly be the case if UAP activities are today carried out by the semiautonomous nuclear weapons agency within the department, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which is primarily overseen by not the armed services committees but an independent civilian review board whose members are appointed by Congress.[99] Given such ambiguities about whether and from which committee Congress has oversight over classified nuclear weapons and research activities, the investi-

gating committee would need to probe deeply and widely within the DoE and the national laboratories, with a view toward determining if UAP activities may have been placed within them precisely in order to evade the scrutiny of Congress as well as certain executive branch components.[100]

In the event that UAP programs indeed were and are conducted from within the DoE (and before it the AEC) and funded with its budget, investigators will need to determine whether this was legal and constitutional sans cognizance on the part of the legislative branch.

Central Intelligence Agency Activity and the Cold War

Discovery of any role that the DoE and national laboratories may play in alleged UAP activities would lead right to the question of whether and to what extent the Intelligence Community—and the CIA in particular—has been involved in them and the implications for the separation and balance of powers between the legislative and executive branches. Due to the Agency's birth during the 1947 UAP reporting wave, the mandate given it that year in the National Security Act to prevent another Pearl Harbor–level intelligence failure, and the possibility that it may have been tasked with dealing with UAP under emergency conditions, it would be imperative that any inquiry into the CIA and UAP begin with its birth and follow the tracks originating there all the way to the present. The concern should be with determining the exact role that the CIA and related intelligence agencies and components may have played in government UAP activities from 1947 to the present, whether specific presidential and NSC directives established them, and the implications for the legislative branch and all Americans, especially after the current regime of intelligence oversight was established in 1976–77.

Although it may strike some readers as preposterous that the CIA would have business with anything as strange as UAP, nothing is more certain if the US government has had any positive knowledge and sustained interest in the vehicles. From its postwar birth until the present, the Agency has been not only the primary intelligence arm of the US government and the only pure Title 50, standalone department-equivalent agency among the existing eighteen in the "community," but also has always directed and executed the brunt of the US government's most sensitive secret activities, or "covert actions." Additionally, the Director of Central Intelligence, as the CIA's director was known until the creation of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) in 2004, had considerable authority over the entire Intelligence Community, including the NSA and the NRO. Given the CIA's and especially the DCI's primacy, it is unthinkable that the Agency and its director played anything but leading roles in any actual government UAP activities until at least the 2004 establishment of the ODNI (which would be unlikely to have assumed control over them). This would have been especially true of the CIA in the 1950s, when it had no real institutional rival—the NSA was established only in 1952 and restricted to cryptography and signals intelligence—and nearly free rein to enact covert actions as serious as coups d'états on behalf of the President. Just as important, it was the Agency rather than the Air Force that was primarily responsible for the planning, development, and eventual operation of such US aerial and space-based reconnaissance assets as the U-2 spy plane and Corona satellite program and thus a likely home of the

alleged UAP retrieval, study, and reverse engineering programs evoked in the UAP legislation. Perhaps a thorough review of classified records would reveal that the CIA was not at the absolute center of any heretofore unknown government UAP activities, but such evidence as that examined in previous sections suggests otherwise.

The congressional investigation therefore should seek to determine if the CIA had and still has jurisdiction over UAP-related programs, what (if any) authority the Director of Central Intelligence held over other government UAP activities, how the DCI might have worked jointly with the AEC and the "MJ-12" committee (if it existed), and whether alleged UAP intelligence analysis, recovery, and reverse engineering activities occurred, as many retired government officials currently allege, within the agency's Directorate of Science and Technology (and its precursors, the 1962–63 Deputy Directorate of Research and the 1963–65 Deputy Directorate of Science and Technology as well as, before them, the Office of Scientific Intelligence), a likely location for those operations due to its long history planning and developing aerial and space-based reconnaissance platforms, acquiring and studying foreign technology, and conducting scientific research. Were Congress to obtain a clear and accurate understanding of these issues, it likely would be able to expand this into a comprehensive understanding of government UAP activities as a whole until at least shortly after the Cold War.

To proceed, investigators will have to cope with extremely scant public record information by resorting to a review of classified records from the National Archives as well as interviews with current and retired government officials who possess accurate institutional memory. The inquiry should take as its point of departure the 1947 UAP wave and alleged Roswell crash event from that same year, as it may very well be that the CIA was tasked specifically with collecting and analyzing intelligence on UAP and partly executed its mission in collaboration with the Air Force. It may be that a pointed demand to a current CIA director to clarify the issue would yield verbal acknowledgment of this, original and subsequent records confirming it, and, possibly, a briefing on the timeline of the Agency's history of activities concerning UAP vehicles and their authorization by the NSC and presidents. In the view of this author, obtaining all that would be the single most important objective of any congressional inquiry, as it could reveal presidential knowledge and decisions taken in coordination with or through the NSC.

After that, the committee should turn to the CIA's major known intervention in government UAP activities, the 1953 scientific panel it convened through a NSC directive to review government UAP data and recommend a national policy. As discussed previously, the Robertson Panel, as it is known, concluded after a notoriously superficial examination of relevant evidence that UAP are neither of nonhuman provenance nor a genuine national security concern, and it made the policy recommendation of a psychological or information operation that was to "debunk" and thereby achieve "a reduction of interest in 'flying saucers.'"[101] As the UAP historian Richard Dolan points out, the timing of the Robertson Panel—it met and produced its report just days before Eisenhower's inauguration—indicates that its task was to furnish formal justification for a secret policy decision ahead of the beginning of his administration (and, perhaps, it could be added, in anticipation of Allen Dulles's accession to the role of DCI).[102] Moreover, the panel was convened following years of serious internal CIA discussion of UAP that intensified when its assistant scientific intelligence director expressed

concern that UAP were a matter of national security, regardless of their provenance. The sequence of events—particularly the NSC's request for the Robertson Panel—strongly suggests that the CIA was implementing council policy in which it would play the primary role.

Reviewing records from just before and after 1951–53 therefore would enable investigators to attain a clear picture of the nature and extent of CIA and DCI involvement and the policy and legally binding decisions surrounding it. Pertinent documents from the pre–Robertson Panel years should reveal whether the CIA not only was vested with some de facto or formal jurisdictional authority over UAP by the Truman administration in 1947 but involved in allegedly subsequent recoveries of UAP materials and vehicles near Aztec, New Mexico, Del Rio, Texas, and Kingman, Arizona, in 1948, 1951, and 1952 (and perhaps, too, in a theater of US war at the time) and unknown maritime areas. Decision records from 1953 through around 1955 should clarify if Eisenhower and/or his NSC assigned the DCI and CIA relevant authorities or reinforced any previously given as well as whether (as some relevant witnesses claim) significant powers were again granted to the DCI, the "MJ-12" group, and/or the AEC. More significantly, the texts of any such decisions may reveal if the President effectively holds unambiguous command over UAP activities or whether it was instead delegated to the mentioned entities to the President's detriment. Regardless of how far back such executive decisions fall in the timeline, they may form the legal foundation of all subsequent government UAP activities and programs.

With this picture of any wartime and postwar executive orders in hand, the inquiry can be moved forward in time and into any activities and policies the DCI, CIA, and new intelligence agencies may have had during subsequent presidential administrations. Given the vast period to be covered, the inquiry should be divided into two periods: the subsequent Cold War years until Watergate, and the post-Watergate 1970s until just after the end of the Cold War in 1991.

Decisions from the initial period will reveal whether any codified policies and enduring programs instituted under Eisenhower were affected and perhaps supplemented by changes brought by John F. Kennedy to the Intelligence Community, such as the President's removal of Dulles from the DCI position and his attempt to bring the Agency under stricter supervision, the consolidation of certain branch-specific military intelligence activities in the new Defense Intelligence Agency, and the establishment of the NRO to coordinate the CIA's, Air Force's and Navy's respective aerial and space-based reconnaissance operations.[103] The declassified and other public record evidence showing that reports of UAP events were solicited and analyzed by both military intelligence and the CIA and shared up their chains of command makes it likely that various agencies each had collection policies and that the CIA, the DCI, and perhaps the "MJ-12" group received and analyzed UAP reports. Determining whether and where further alleged crash retrieval and reverse engineering efforts might have occurred would take a penetrating examination of still-classified CIA and AEC records as well as those concerning relevant defense contractors like Hughes Aircraft, TRW, the Lockheed Corporation, and the Aerospace Corporation. Last and most important, special attention should be given to even allusive classified presidential and NSC directives and memoranda that may indicate whether Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon were briefed by the CIA on government UAP activities and actively directing them. It is, here again, in such records that the legal basis for executive policies from circa 1955 to 1973 and after will be found, including any pertaining to secrecy.

The inquiry should pay special attention in this regard to an apparent directive issued around 1962 by Kennedy's CIA director, former AEC Chairman John McCone, to the Agency's Office of Science and Intelligence to assess UAP data following discussions of the social implications of the discovery of extraterrestrial life that took place at the cabinet level. The only known mention of this event is found in a recent CIA publication outlining the Agency's history with UAP, and the author provides no citation to a record, other primary historical source, or academic research to prove that McCone ever gave such an order. It thus may be that the directive is classified and refers to meetings between Kennedy, his NSC, and other cabinet officials concerning UAP and NHI. This or a similar record as well as others that might have been created around the same discussions would shed light on whether Kennedy engaged the topic and sought a policy change. This in turn would provide necessary background to understanding actions that may have been taken regarding UAP by Richard Nixon and his NSC, a likelihood (if UAP secrecy exists) due to his membership on Eisenhower's NSC and possible exposure at that time to relevant government activities.

The investigation should significantly change its approach and focus for the period after Watergate, looking for new and not necessarily enduring decisions. This is foremost because the Watergate scandal and Nixon's impeachment affected the DCI and CIA so negatively that they might have sought clear sanction from subsequent presidents for any ongoing or new UAP activities and programs. That is no fanciful scenario, due not only to Ford's and Carter's role in the establishment of congressional intelligence oversight but also to something stranger and, here, more important: Their administrations mark the beginning of a period in which many presidents have publicly expressed interest in UAP, with Carter acknowledging during his 1975 campaign that he witnessed a UAP event some years prior and Ford initiating as a member of the House the first open congressional hearing on UAP (in response to a widely reported UAP event in his Michigan district that the Air Force infamously denied). These two presidents' interest might have led them to request intelligence briefings, issue new executive orders and PEADs, arrange for relevant NSC directives, retask the CIA and agencies such as the NSA with UAP mandates, and bolster extant programs with possible discretionary appropriations.[104] Any inquiry into such executive actions and responses from the DCI and CIA will also have to reckon with a third factor from this period, which is that the AEC was dissolved in 1973 and its functions eventually transferred in 1977 to the newly established DoE. Any CIA scientific and engineering programs occurring in the national laboratories would have been affected by this reorganization and required directives to be continued.

Any success here should be followed by an exhaustive search for relevant executive orders, NSC directives, CIA and DoE records, and classified statements to Congress concerning UAP from 1977 until 1992 or so. As congressional intelligence oversight begins in the former year and covert action notification in 1974, the Intelligence Community either provided sporadic or periodic briefings and reporting to the SSCI and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence at that time or completely evaded its requirements to do so. Regardless of whether the intelligence committees received briefings, there should be extant classified executive orders and other presidential directives, NSC directives, and corresponding memos and CIA-specific directives if the executive branch undertook UAP-specific activities in this period. The Reagan and Bush administrations may have been particularly engaged at the cabinet level and through

the NSC due to the cognizance of government UAP activities that George Bush would have likely obtained while DCI under Ford and perhaps again as vice president to Reagan. Presuming that the UAP legislation is accurate, it would be surprising if Reagan and Bush went uninformed about UAP and made no decisions at all concerning related secrecy and programs. The 1980s may yield some particularly important discoveries about pertinent government activities and the surest information about the organization and purpose of possible CIA activities, NSC supervision and direction, and presidential awareness.

The Department of Defense, the US Air Force, and the National Reconnaissance Office

A parallel inquiry into the DoD over the entire Cold War period also should be undertaken. This should especially concern any decisions or actions taken by the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, undisclosed US Air Force UAP activities and programs (including in the Strategic Air Command and NORAD), and the possibility that the NRO was tasked with utilizing satellite and other reconnaissance platforms to detect and track UAP from some point after its 1961 establishment past the fall of the Soviet Union. Just as with potential CIA and AEC/DoE activities, the committee should seek to determine whether those of the DoD and the Air Force complied with legal and normative congressional oversight processes and when and whether their activities were ordered or authorized by presidents and their NSC.

As we saw in the discussion of Project Blue Book, its predecessors, and records such as the Twinning Memo, the question of whether the US Air Force has had undisclosed UAP programs depends on whether its senior leadership understood some UAP to be nonanthropogenic vehicles or dismissed that possibility altogether. If the first of those alternatives is the case, then the Air Force would have developed by the mid-1950s policies and procedures for collecting data on and engaging UAP much more extensive than those expressed in the series of JANAP-146 documents. More significantly, the service also would have necessarily constituted and maintained programs and at least informal cadres dedicated to those tasks, and some portion of senior executive Air Force leadership would have been continually apprised of their results. Inquiries should be made about all this as well as how much the well-documented work of the service's security arm, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), to obtain information from witnesses to domestic UAP events reflected systematic interest in UAP.[105] Additionally, serious consideration should be given to Cold War reports of Air Force activities—for instance, briefings in which groups of pilots were exposed to films of unambiguously nonanthropogenic vehicles in flight, and reconnaissance sorties designed to capture such footage—that indicate a policy to monitor incursions of UAP vehicles into US airspace, acquire data on their capabilities, and even assess their designers' and operators' intent.[106] As recent critics of the Air Force's lack of participation in recent interagency efforts to analyze UAP data have suggested, the service may hold a wealth of information.

With respect to alleged crash retrieval and reverse engineering actions, credible defense and intelligence sources from the 1970s to the present have consistently attested that the Air Force undertakes recovery operations and holds UAP materials, components, and whole vehicles in secure facilities at such sites as Ohio's Wright-Patterson AFB (which housed the Air Technical

Intelligence Center, which undertook Project Blue Book, and its successors, the Foreign Technology Division and the National Air and Space Intelligence Center). At the same time, retired executive branch officials known to the author assert that it is the CIA that "owns" and directs a recovery program and that the Air Force largely executed and possibly still executes it (perhaps under the direction of Agency personnel detailed to the service and the auspice of joint defense/intelligence special operations).[107] Such claims raise the possibility that the Cold War collaboration between the CIA and the Air Force on the development and operation of reconnaissance aircraft such as the U-2 and A-12 may have extended into UAP recovery and reverse engineering efforts and involved, once again, Agency personnel detailed to the service. Were the CIA and the Air Force to have indeed consistently conducted such joint efforts, this would have resulted in a stable group of intersecting leadership and personnel with UAP expertise, dedicated resources and infrastructure, and data and knowledge of the phenomena.[108] Apart from corresponding assets entirely specific to the CIA, Congress would likely find that the bulk of any real deliberate, continuous, and efficacious executive branch UAP endeavors occurred in a collaborative zone at the intersection of the CIA and the Air Force.

This would in turn make the prospect of NRO detection activities quite probable, as the still-enigmatic agency was established in 1961 by Congress to ensure that the space-based reconnaissance activities of the CIA, the Air Force, and the Navy were coordinated and nonredundant. Save for a scenario in which there was little concerted effort by the IC and DoD to monitor UAP activity, the satellite- and other space-based surveillance platforms developed and operated by the NRO would have been occasionally (even if unintentionally) utilized to capture still and moving images of UAP and perhaps designed for that purpose. Given, too, that the existence of the NRO was not acknowledged by the federal government or in any unclassified federal budget until 1989, the CIA and the Air Force could have channeled federal funds appropriated for the agency into UAP activities without much concern for their exposure. (To convey how strong this relationship is, the NRO's director was for over two decades often secretly the Under Secretary of the Air Force.) Regardless, the NRO would be likely to have a history of intelligence collection and knowledge of UAP, and this should be sought out and examined.

Potential CIA–Air Force collaboration and NRO efforts notwithstanding, such DoD leadership as the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretaries of Defense for Intelligence and for Technology, Acquisitions, and Logistics, the directors of the DIA and their deputies, and other agency leadership likely would have been variously apprised of the reality of UAP; the activities of the Air Force, other branches of the armed services, and the DIA; and study efforts within futures centers such as the Office of Net Assessment as well as force and technology modernization programs. What Congress must foremost determine is how integral a priority UAP may have been to the department's leadership over the decades, if and when defense funding was allocated to UAP activities and programs, whether in that case Congress was ever informed or became aware of them in the course of exercising oversight, and when and to what extent communications about UAP were maintained with presidential administrations, particularly through the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to the National Security Advisor, the NSC, and the President.

Ultimately, this last question would the most important for the committee's examination of

the DoD. Any serious or extensive CIA and AEC/DoE UAP activities across the decades would have required not only the collaboration with the Air Force that the historical record suggests occurred, but some degree of coordination with the Secretary of Defense and the Joints Chiefs of Staff. As the secretary has always been a member of the NSC, and the Joint Chiefs' chairman and vice chairman were nonstatutory presences on it, any cognizance and direction of UAP activities on their part likely would be reflected in records of NSC deliberation and decisions. By determining the extent to which these officials and their offices have been historically aware of potential UAP activities, clarity could be gained about whether the NSC often has been and may remain the quiet administrative locus in the executive branch by which a few informed special staff members manage UAP activities.

Defense Contractors and the Post–Cold War Period Until 2008

The end of the Cold War brought with it reductions to federal defense and intelligence budgets that would have affected the management, funding, and administrative location of any actual government UAP activities, possibly by displacing them to private industry and requiring that they be partly supported with private monies. That change as well as a few other events—President Clinton's attempt to obtain and review federal government UAP information, the reorganization of the Intelligence Community following the September 11 attacks, and the further privatization of many defense and intelligence activities under the George W. Bush administration—demand that inquiry concerning the end of the Cold War until 2008 be focused on the role of private industry in government UAP activities and secrecy.

To be clear, defense contractors are unlikely to have played a role in UAP activities and secrecy only after the Cold War. The kind of highly sensitive UAP study and reverse engineering activities evoked in the congressional UAP legislation would be impossible to execute without some participation from government contractors responsible for developing defense and intelligence assets and managing the DoE labs. More importantly, retired executive branch officials and government contractor personnel have made consistent yet still publicly unverified claims that major aerospace-defense companies contracted with the government from the 1960s through the 1980s to work with special operations forces to recover downed UAP vehicles and study them, beginning with the Hughes Aircraft Company, the Lockheed Company (as Lockheed was known prior to merging with the Martin Marietta Corporation), TRW, and the Aerospace Corporation (a TRW spinoff), after its establishment as a federally funded research and development center by Congress in 1960—claims, moreover, that are easily reconciled with historical reality on account of the specific roles these companies played in highly classified CIA and Air Force air and space programs. These and other such claims significantly inform the congressional UAP legislation and thus should be followed up on, particularly because they raise the question of whether prolonged UAP secrecy has been possible because some related activities have been conducted on behalf of the US government by private sector entities that would not be subject to congressional oversight.

This question attains even greater importance in regard to the immediate post–Cold War years due to testimony that reached the Senate's armed services and intelligence committees

by 2019 and then the House's intelligence committee during a subcommittee hearing on UAP in April 2022. Eric Davis, a theoretical physicist formerly employed by the Aerospace Corporation and the Harry Reid-initiated UAP program (AAWSAP), claims to have interviewed former DIA Director and then–Vice Admiral Thomas Wilson in 2002 about his alleged attempt to search in the DoD for a hidden government UAP program while serving as the agency's deputy director in 1997. By Davis's account, Wilson acknowledged that he was advised by colleagues to review a set of records for waived-unacknowledged Special Access Programs that were kept under stricter controlled access than acknowledged SAPs, and that discovery of records on an unusual program led him to make inquiries about it with the managers of several SAP-level defense contractors, who in turn referred him to a program manager at a major US defense contractor. Davis claims that Wilson conveyed that he soon met with and obtained from the program's managers the explanation that its purpose is to reverse engineer recovered vehicles of nonhuman provenance, and that the program maintains its secrecy through a unique, contractor-controlled access protocol that superseded ordinary authorities in the US government, including Wilson's (who should have had at the time direct oversight authority over this SAP's budget allocation). Wilson was then denied access to further information, which led him to request discussion of the issue with the DoD oversight committees for SAPs (known as the SAPOC and Senior Review Group), only to be told by them to drop his investigation or face demotion and possible loss of his retirement benefits. Although Davis's testimony has become almost apocryphal due to Wilson's public denials of its veracity, it demands to be taken seriously because of the former's report that this "special Special Access Program," so to speak, apparently controlled access to itself more than the US government did and somehow lay outside the normal chain of command.

Several questions are raised by Davis's testimony that should be of interest to Congress. The first is whether broad changes made by the DoD in the mid-1990s to its acquisitions policies in anticipation of smaller military budgets led to the relocation of a significant portion of any actual government UAP activity to contractors capable of privately funding research on behalf of the department and the IC. It is well-known that then–Secretary of Defense William Perry effectively set off a spate of mergers and acquisitions among defense contractors after warning them of imminent dips in defense spending, and it may be that this decline affected UAP-specific monies. This would have given to companies undertaking UAP-related work a motive to shore it up with their own funds, and to their government patrons the gift of a potential loophole by which to evade congressional and perhaps executive branch oversight. Such a contractor-driven endeavor additionally would fall under the rubric of DoD "independent research and development," defense research that contractors fund with their own monies (and that the DoD fully reimburses), rather than through congressional appropriations, and that therefore may not have to be reported to Congress.[109] Whether legal and normative or not, IC and/or DoD components could plausibly argue that Congress has little to no right to information about such intelligence- and defense-related UAP work in private industry.

Should government UAP activities and secrecy indeed have been partly sustained in this way from the 1990s forward, then investigators should consider the possibility that this was intensified under the Bush administration due to the government's increased use of private military contractors for defense and intelligence projects. That trend may have begun during the Clinton administration, but the government relied on the services of such contractors to

an unparalleled degree during the second US war with Iraq and even delegated command over significant operations to notoriously autonomous entities such as Blackwater, in part to increase their deniability. It could be that government UAP activities, too, were displaced even further into the realm of private contractors for that same reason, as well as to avoid both congressional and executive branch oversight. Regardless of whether such a maneuver would have been legal, it would have negatively affected the legislative branch and separation of powers and thus bears investigation.

The stakes of inquiry into private contractor UAP activities on behalf of the government in the 1990s and 2000s are enormously raised by Bill Clinton's concurrent attempt while president to gain access to the classified information on UAP and the Roswell event, which he apparently believed the CIA to possess at the time of his inauguration in 1993. That Clinton tried at this but failed is only in dispute if he himself is not to be believed—he has said this several times and as recently as 2022—and if his success at ordering the Air Force to produce a public report on the Roswell event is ignored. As there is thus little question about the historical record, the possibility should be considered that a sitting US president's requests for information not only about government UAP activities, but some conducted semiautonomously by defense contractors, were denied by agencies having contracts with them. Investigation into this may, more than anything else, determine the extent to which presidents have been fully apprised and in command of government activities concerning the UAP presence.

It would be difficult to imagine, on the other hand, that an administration as invested in and successful at wielding strong if not "unitary" executive power as George W. Bush's would not have been entirely informed of and in control of any actual UAP activities corresponding to those described in the congressional legislation. The opposite question may have to be asked of Bush's presidency than should be of Clinton's: What did certain principal members of the NSC and cabinet know about UAP, and did any decisions taken by them improve or exacerbate the damage that may already have been done to the legislative branch and separation of powers by UAP secrecy?

Congressional Efforts at Reform: 2008—Present

Obtaining an accurate understanding of the reasons for and arc of likely government UAP secrecy will depend on examining events from as far back as the 1930s and 1940s, but that should not be done to the neglect of the recent past. Beginning with Senator Harry Reid's use of discretionary congressional funds to establish a UAP study program in 2007, members of Congress have taken steps to intervene in and reform existing executive branch policies and practices that they all but claim to know (and at the very least believe) concern the science of UAP, materials, technology, and vehicles obtained from retrievals, and the classification of relevant activities and programs both in and outside federal government. From Reid's subsequent effort with Senator Joseph Lieberman to help reestablish the program within the Department of Homeland Security to Senator Marco Rubio tasking the ODNI to produce the June 2021 "UAP: Preliminary Assessment" report for Congress to his and Kirsten Gillibrand's sponsorship of legislation that established the AARO, the Senate has set in motion a process in that may ultimately determine whether social consensus about the UAP presence is

achieved. Given the high stakes of these actions, the congressional inquiry should probe into or reveal whether and when senators from the Gang of Eight and/or the SSCI requested and received relevant classified briefings and thus if and to what extent the IC and DoD may have attempted to be in compliance with Congress.

Much can be learned about any past and extant UAP secrecy from scrutiny of Reid's UAP program alone. As previously discussed, it should be well-known by now that the senator was unequivocal just prior to his 2021 death about the purpose and importance of the $22 million program, and both public record testimony and declassified records from it indicates that its primary objective was to transfer a UAP vehicle to the company holding the program's contract, Bigelow Aerospace Systems, so that the physics, energy system, and material science of UAP could be studied by cleared scientists.[110] Unless all parties involved were indulging adolescent fantasies about UAP to the point that they stubbornly mistook a recovered Russian satellite for a nonanthropogenic craft, the program managers, chief scientific personnel, security and support staff, and congressional points of contact for AAWSAP should be interviewed with an open mind regarding the matter. Beyond the possible verification of UAP secrecy that could be obtained, those interviews may reveal what Senators Reid, Inouye, and Stevens learned about executive branch UAP activities as well as their understanding of how much and to what extent the legislative branch was ever previously informed of them. Just as important, examination of the project could reveal that government UAP endeavors have a historically partisan nature. It may be that Reid instigated the project partly from awareness that Bill Clinton indeed found himself during his presidency with less access to classified information than he was legally entitled to, and that this in turn was largely attributable to partisan interference from allies and members of the first Bush and Reagan administrations. This possibility remains entirely speculative, but it should be considered for the simple reason that the pre-Trump Republican Party did not produce a roster of politicians making favorable statements about UAP as powerful as the Democrats', which includes former Presidents Clinton and Obama, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (whose advocacy is on record with the *New York Times*), Senate Majority Leaders Reid and Schumer, former Clinton Chief of Staff John Podesta, former Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson, and two former directors of the CIA from Democratic administrations, James Woolsey and John Brennan. While partisanship should be rejected in congressional UAP efforts (the topic is one of the few that has enjoyed cooperation between the parties during the last eight years), inquiring into whether Republican administrations largely drove any actual government UAP activities (and/or were regarded as the only safe partners by de facto authorities and program managers within the IC and DoD) may reveal as much about possible UAP secrecy as a more extensive unearthing of the past.

It could be just as consequential to interview and attain public testimony from personnel from the Reid-sponsored program (AAWSAP) who continued to work together in the DoD/ODNI UAP Task Force. It is highly unlikely that scientists and other personnel with the requisite clearances to participate in these programs would have lacked access to some of the possibly extant compartmented information on UAP within the IC and DoD. Testimony from these personnel delivered under oath and in an open hearing could put an end to the question of whether there is anything at all to Congress's interest in UAP qua nonanthropogenic vehicles.

8. Potential Findings and Their Implications

It bears repeating that the congressional inquiry proposed here would by no means be over upon completion of its fact-finding work (and even then, there may be still more facts to find). Once the basics and details about any actual government UAP engagements from just prior to the onset of the Cold War forward have been established, the investigating committee will need to turn to some of the issues that necessitated the inquiry in the first place: (1) whether and to what extent Congress and the US system of separate powers were harmed by UAP secrecy; (2) whether and in what ways the security of the United States was improved or weakened; and (3) whether secrecy resulted in lost opportunities for international cooperation, the advancement of science and technology, and human self-understanding. The answers hinge, of course, on facts that remain to be discovered or confirmed, but some of them are likely enough that their significance can be assessed in advance. Let us consider some of these likelihoods and their bearing on the above questions.

Likely Findings

Unless any actual government activities concerning the UAP presence were established and maintained by presidents and intelligence and defense leadership in a manner inconsistent with the respect for rule of law typical of most federal institutions during and in the decades after WWII, it is likely that a series of classified executive orders, department- and agency-specific policy directives, legal opinions, and decision memos form a loose but nonetheless functionally valid legal foundation for UAP secrecy. If the investigating committee manages to obtain the majority of any such existing records, it should be able to ascertain the rationales for the secrecy about the UAP presence and government responses to it at different points from the 1940s forward. Knowing the reasoning behind any decision for "hyperclassification" will greatly help Congress identify the exact harms done to it, the rest of the federal government, and the American people, and determine how to respond.

The likely secret history may very well reveal that there were good if not excellent rationales for any presidential and executive branch decisions for blanket or extreme secrecy, including that allegedly retrieved UAP materials, components, and whole vehicles were deemed treasures from which the US might develop the ultimate military technologies and accordingly subjected to an extreme level classification and compartmentalization (as some testimony from that period claims).[111] It also could be that witting executive branch leadership from the 1950s through the 2000s rightly saw US sovereignty to be diminished by UAP events and wished to avoid exacerbating this with classification and security standards relaxed enough to allow for leaks of significant government UAP knowledge. Finally, US defense and intelligence leadership could have become certain in those decades or after that some or all of whatever known NHI there may be effectively or even intentionally pose an existential threat to humanity, against which it is powerless to defend. Such reasons as these for secrecy do not

justify maintaining it into perpetuity, but they are understandable and might lead Congress to distinguish between any initial and subsequent presidential and executive branch decisions to place and maintain the blanket of secrecy over UAP from any dubiously legal efforts by its guardians to patch holes in it. Some presidential decisions of this kind could have been made without any negative intent toward the legislative branch and the Constitution.

Alternatively, UAP secrecy may turn out to be primarily or significantly due to failures of leadership and political considerations, like the inability of some presidents and cabinet-level officials to comprehend the gravity of the UAP presence and address it; the foreign relations and publicity storm that presidents would have had to navigate to communicate the reality of the presence within the span of a four-year term; the reluctance of presidents from the 1970s or 1980s forward to solicit blame for government secrecy and deceptiveness that they did not initiate; and, finally, avoidance or paralysis in the face of a problem of such complexity and magnitude. Reasons such as these are unlikely to have taken into serious consideration the other branches of government and the constitutionality of UAP secrecy.

Finally, poor and unjustifiable rationales for secrecy would probably emerge, including the fear of department and agency senior executive leadership, program managers, key personnel, and witting corporate executives of being prosecuted for withholding information from Congress and even some presidents as well as other acts in clear violation of the law, such as disinformation operations directed against the American public; domestic intelligence collection on witnesses to UAP events and investigators, including through warrantless surveillance; the unauthorized reprogramming of federal funds for UAP activities; and reprisals and other measures taken against real and perceived security threats to compartmented programs. As improbable as it may seem, largely unsanctioned and unlawful UAP activities also might have been undertaken by reputable yet nonetheless rogue operators within government agencies and defense contractors, and they might have assuaged their cognizance of guilt by invoking pertinent executive orders and department/agency–level directives. In all the above scenarios, the harm done to the legislative branch would be intentional.

Given the long period of time in question, there is a decent to strong likelihood that most or all the above reasons informed any decisions that may have been taken for UAP secrecy. Should the inquiry be able to determine which (if any) of these rationales held sway, it can assess whether the global harm that would have been done to the legislative branch, separation of powers, and US democracy by the secrecy has been compounded by more acute injuries.

Questions Concerning the Implications of Secrecy

The question of questions for the legislative branch in this regard is whether any existing executive orders, department- or agency-specific policy directives, decision memoranda, and office of legal counsel recommendations explicitly bar Congress from receiving information about UAP and pertinent government activities or categorically exempt any programs conducting these from legislative oversight.

This possibility might seem even more improbable than some others already discussed, but there are reasons to consider that it may have occurred. It is quite possible that whatever events may have forced some military and intelligence leadership and then a president to accept the UAP presence also would have led them to see it as a state of emergency requiring the President to exercise special powers. As nothing approaching this happened in any publicly known or traceable way, it could be that a president granted themselves a secret exception to provisions in the Constitution and relevant statutes that would have required consultation or authorization from Congress on the new UAP matter. Roosevelt and Truman arguably did precisely this with the Manhattan Project by not properly informing Congress of it, and the President was and is to this day vested with the extraordinary power to order a nuclear strike and thus declare war without consulting Congress. Any original decision for the classification of UAP information likely would have similarly excluded both the Senate and the House in order to grant presidents and select executive branch leadership the power to take quick and decisive action. Yet the possibility also then looms that any original and subsequent executive decisions restrict UAP information to such a narrow band of components and individuals in the executive branch for the express purpose of excluding the legislative branch from all participation in deliberation and decision-making. It therefore would be disturbing but not entirely unsurprising if the texts of such decisions explicitly prohibit the sharing of information about UAP activities and programs with Congress.

Related to and just as significant as the question of whether the legislative branch was deliberately cut out is determining which sorts of UAP events and knowledge may have led to any such decisions. In other words, the inquiring committee should ascertain if the reality of UAP was kept secret from Congress on the grounds that presidents and their staff might have needed extraordinary powers only because observational data on UAP indicated a threat to national security and perhaps human existence; or, alternatively, if such powers also may have been deemed necessary because retrievals of crashed UAP vehicles and perhaps, too, their apparently biological occupants indeed occurred and indelibly seared into the minds of cognizant authorities the impression that extraordinary actions, powers, and secrecy would be needed (and extraordinary security to prevent Soviet and, later, the Chinese awareness). As disputable as such reasoning would be if repeated for decades or even within a much briefer period, knowing the conditions under which it occurred would make clear whether there was an intent to withhold information from Congress, rather than solely to expedite decision-making and institute broad operational security.

An even greater question—a question for all of government—is whether or which presidents were made aware during their terms of all that may have been known about the UAP presence. It should be recalled that the inquiry would face a similar quandary about the extent of presidential authorization and cognizance of government UAP activities as the Church Committee did about the intelligence activities that concerned it. The committee could end up unclear about if and when presidents were informed of and explicitly authorized UAP-related activities that would or should have required their knowledge and consent, as the Senate members and staff of the 1970s investigation never did overcome their ignorance about whether Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon ordered the CIA to execute certain covert actions (just as happened with other congressional investigations of similar matters, such as the Iran-Contra committees about Ronald Reagan's degree of knowledge). It seems unlikely

that most presidents would not have been briefed about any actual government UAP activities and programs, but it could be that the extent of their knowledge was largely determined by the level of interest that they managed to give to these while attending to more immediately pressing matters (if there is any urgency at all associated with UAP for presidents and select principals or staff from their NSCs). If the knowledge and decisional power of presidents indeed were proportionate to their interest, that could have led relevant authorities to protect their own power, autonomy, and perhaps illegal activities by providing enough information to comply with White House requests for it, but too little for it to be meaningful. Were certain things known to be true of UAP and NHI—for instance, that UAP vehicles the size of aircraft carriers are regularly observed and tracked, or that apparently biological beings occupy some of the vehicles—any failure to disclose such facts and the gravity of their significance would have been a failure to respect chain of command. Of course, that crime would be far worse were some presidents not informed about UAP for significant parts of their terms or at all. In both this and the prior case, the harm to Congress and the separation of powers would be even worse, as it would have been inflicted by executive components lacking the least authority to bypass the legislative branch on matters over which the Constitution clearly gives it responsibility.

This leads back to a last question, which is whether any existing government UAP activities were undertaken without other appropriate executive branch authorization and perhaps even by defense contractors. If a group composed of directors, deputy directors, undersecretaries, and special staff from relevant federal elements supervised significant UAP-related programs and activities yet failed to notify relevant executive oversight components or, alternatively, actively concealed with those components illegal activities, then the legislative branch would have been indirectly undermined by willful disregard of chain of command. Were such a group also to significantly consist of executives and managers within aerospace and other defense contractors, then government activities concerning a matter of existential consequence may have been under the control of private entities and individuals with little to no accountability to government. In that case, the legislative branch, the US system of separate powers, and democracy itself would have been directly subverted by private companies lacking any legal or normative justification to do so. In brief, some of Congress's powers would have been limited and subverted by private industries illegitimately claiming to act for government.

Assessing the Harm to the Legislative Branch

Determining if any specific harms were done to the legislative branch requires knowing which, if any, of the above scenarios occurred, in what combinations, and during which periods of time. Given the range of possibilities and the difficulty in determining which of them are most probable, it would behoove the inquiry to consider several of them in advance. To do this, it could assess how the legislative would have been affected by any actual UAP secrecy were it static or dynamic; moderate, blanket, or extreme in nature; and driven by government knowledge and activity of slight, moderate, or extensive degrees. Some scenarios involving combinations of these variables and assessments of their implications follow.

(1) Static Moderate Secrecy, Little Knowledge and Activity, Small Harm. The possibility exists that a presidential administration learned of the reality of UAP in the 1940s and 1950s or even later, classified the matter and any activities concerning it, did not become aware of more UAP activity than is publicly known, determined that no threat was raised by the vehicles, and then learned little more about them. Such a scenario is extremely difficult to reconcile with even the most conservative interpretation of the history of government UAP activity, but were it to be the case, the consequences for Congress of the secrecy might be insignificant (although, as we will see below, the same would not go for humanity).

(2) Static Blanket Secrecy, Modest Knowledge and Activity, Moderate Harm. It is possible but improbable that the executive branch became cognizant of the UAP presence in the 1940s and 1950s and subjected it to blanket classification, but then failed in subsequent decades to gain much more knowledge and understanding. UAP in that case might have been become a neglected issue within the CIA, the DoD, and the NSC, ignored by cognizant authorities with more urgent priorities and dismissed by largely unbriefed officials when confronted with proposals to make it a priority. The legislative branch still would have suffered an injury to its ability to exercise its powers, but this would be due less to the intent of any executive branch authority than institutional inertia about a problem that never received the attention and resources it deserved. Should certain alleged retrievals of UAP vehicles have occurred in the 1940s and 1950s, it is possible but again unlikely that they would have been given enormous attention and resources by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, but then largely neglected by their counterparts in the 1960s and after. Congresses in that post-1960 period would have had an unnoticed yet significant loss in power due to a decision taken well before their tenure and maintained without intent to harm them.

(3) Dynamic Blanket Secrecy, Moderate Activity and Knowledge, Significant Harm. Given that UAP events have occurred without interruption since the 1940s, it is highly likely that the CIA, the Air Force, and other executive branch components progressively accumulated knowledge about UAP following their initial engagements, developing intelligence collection and analysis programs concerning the vehicles and any operators that they may have.

It would not necessarily then be the case that such programs would have continued to the present unabated and at full intensity, but it can be assumed of this scenario that UAP were always more or less a matter of serious concern within certain intelligence and defense offices and only endured shifting fortunes with respect to the resources devoted to them. The President, the National Security Council, and the Director of Central Intelligence (and perhaps later the Director of National Intelligence) would have been directly engaged with such programs and made decisions concerning their purpose, leadership, funding, and continuation, with the same applying to DoD, DoE, and IC agencies and directorates with authority over them. Said engagement would have involved formal deliberation, decisions, orders and directives, and communication with managing authorities, particularly if these programs undertook covert actions, received discretionary executive branch funds requiring approval and oversight, or, by the 1980s and 1990s, had to be

converted into compartmented and/or Special Access Programs. UAP secrecy in this case would be dynamic in nature, its legal, policy, and administrative dimensions changing as the offices and programs undertaking UAP intelligence did. The protected secret might have been only that nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles are real and of serious concern, but repeated decisions not to share this information with the legislative branch would have nonetheless been intended to do it harm—particularly following the establishment of strong congressional intelligence oversight in 1976–77. Moreover, the harm would be significant due to Congress's inability to execute its constitutional responsibilities to legislate in such areas as defense, intelligence, and spending and to advise and consent on nominees to significant executive branch leadership positions.

(4) Dynamic Excess Secrecy, Extensive Activity and Knowledge, Massive Harm. As outlandish as the prospect of long-standing crash retrieval and reverse engineering activities may be, the possibility that they occur and are a primary reason for UAP secrecy should be considered due to the interest in them expressly shown by Congress in the Schumer Disclosure Act and most other federal UAP legislation as well as credible public evidence. It may very well be that the interest of Bill Clinton and some of his cabinet officials in the alleged Roswell recovery was based on solid classified information, and that the evidentiary trail for this and other UAP crash retrievals are as sound as they sometimes seem to be. In that case, the reality of UAP vehicles and possibly, too, their occupants would have been verified in or around 1947, and the CIA, DoD intelligence components, and the NSC could have had long-standing and continuous knowledge of them. There would be a high probability in this case that such agencies acquired formidable working knowledge of UAP and the intention of their designers or operators and did so largely through programs that not only collect and analyze observational intelligence data but acquire and study any UAP materials and whole vehicles that may have been obtained over the decades. The same kinds of executive branch decisions sketched above (in scenario 3) would have been made repeatedly over time, the secrecy would concern the tangible reality of UAP in the possession of the government rather than just observational data of elusive craft, and the security surrounding such potentially game-changing defense technology would have been high enough to require long-standing secrecy. Presidential and other executive branch decisions for secrecy would have been recurrent, and its extension to Congress necessarily intentional, whatever the reasoning for this. *The legislative branch would have been in this scenario fundamentally undermined by being deprived of the knowledge requisite to exercise its power to govern a matter of enormous, world-changing significance. Beyond being unable to exercise its constitutional prescribed responsibilities, the legislative branch would have been entirely excluded from US government decision-making for a prolonged period of time.*

(5) Nongovernmental, Private Industry Secrecy and Harm to the US Government as a Whole. The previous scenario would likely be impossible unless defense aerospace corporations were indeed given government contracts to study recovered UAP, attempt their reverse engineering, and develop derivative technologies from them. In that case, such companies would have naturally attempted to claim any resulting scientific and technical knowledge as intellectual property and may also have come to regard some UAP materials, components, and perhaps whole vehicles that they retrieved or held for the federal govern-

ment under poorly defined or ad hoc arrangements to be their material property. The federal government would treat any such property as classified and thus require contractors to provide security for it, but company executives and their legal counsel might have chosen to place additional security and trade secrecy measures over it in order to gain an advantage over competitors. Access to knowledge of a matter of existential consequence would have been in that case partly under the control of private entities rather than government alone.

Moreover, if recent public testimony is correct that one or more defense contractors have more authority than DoD and IC components to determine access to information concerning the program or programs under which their UAP work is administratively housed, then the executive branch components that should have jurisdiction over their activities; and thus, too, the federal government as a whole would have had their awareness and reach into activities with extraordinary implications for national security, the economy, and foreign relations blocked. It could even be that executives within aerospace and other defense contractors have usurped a managerial role from government and are acting with little to no accountability to any (even executive branch) element in it.

In sum, should private industry UAP endeavors have gradually attained partial autonomy from government, harm would have been done not just to the legislative branch but the executive branch and the government as a whole. By enforcing security over UAP knowledge and materials not only on behalf of the government but also to advance their own financial interests, private companies would have driven UAP secrecy alongside and even perhaps as much as the executive branch (which would particularly apply if presidential engagement with UAP affairs declined toward the end of the Cold War). Even worse, the decision-making and management of federal government UAP programs might be undertaken more by industry than government itself. *In this scenario, which is an extension and amplification of scenario 4, private industry would have contributed to the harm to Congress and extended it to the executive branch and possibly up to any presidents not properly informed of UAP activities and their history. Knowledge of and decisions about what to do with a matter that ultimately should rest with elected officials would be under the power of a small group of individuals in the private sector. Given the obvious existential and national security issues raised, this would fundamentally subvert the US government.*

As injurious to democracy as excess and nongovernmental secrecy would be, it is important to understand that all but the first of these five scenarios would involve significant to severe damage to the legislative branch's capacity to execute its constitutional responsibilities and its power relative to the executive branch.

The harm would not be grave if defense and intelligence UAP engagements, as outlined in scenario 2, were limited to a period of about fifteen years immediately following WWII and then neglected or even forgotten by relevant authorities, as Congress would be in the dark about matters deemed so insignificant by the executive branch that no one would have bothered to hoard information. Nevertheless, Congress would have been prevented from exercising legislative and other responsibilities, subverting the principle of separation of powers.

In scenarios 3 and 4, the damage would be severe due to Congress's lack of knowledge about defense, intelligence, and scientific activities of enormous stakes and over which it should have legislative and oversight responsibilities. Lacking the cognizance held by certain executive branch components would have prevented Congress from acting and preparing to act in matters over which the Constitution clearly gives it legislative, oversight, and advise and consent powers. Most crucially, the secrecy would have required in that case continual updating through decision, adjustment and, especially after 1974, nonreporting actions that would require intent to deprive Congress of knowledge and perhaps even deceive it. The injury in scenario 4 would be particularly egregious, as Congress would have been made ignorant of events of unfathomably great significance and an entire area of government activity concerning them. Even if decisions to leave Congress out were made only for reasons of expediency, the executive branch would have made itself the sole branch of government with authority and power over UAP affairs. This would not only violate the Constitution but run against the document's very spirit and the system of government it established. Despite being a constituent aspect of that system, the legislative branch simply would have been rendered inoperative on a key issue.

The quasigovernmental and rogue activity sketched in scenario 5 would be illegal to the point that this author has difficulty contemplating it. If it occurred, Congress's injury would have been inflicted by the executive branch before the latter, too, was barraged by disabling blows from partners to and former officials from the federal government illegitimately acting on its behalf. The problem faced by the inquiry would extend well beyond how secrecy affected separation of powers to the even graver matter of whether the government as a whole has lost its ability to exercise some of those powers to a self-constituted, quasi- or nonstate organization.

Damage to National Security and Potential Intelligence Failure

Any injury to Congress would invariably affect, of course, the rest of government, the democratic process, and the American people. Whether static or dynamic, blanket or excessive, UAP secrecy would have been imposed at the very least to enhance the national security, military power, and economic standing of the United States. But whether any actual such secrecy accomplished any of that or will continue to is a different matter, and the inquiry will have to reflect on this before deciding a course of action.

The first question that it should ask to that end is whether UAP secrecy in fact served national and international security. It may very well be that cognizant planners, feeling impotent in the face of a threat to human existence, rationalized away the obvious need to deal with it. It would be easy to infer from a survey of public literature on the history of UAP events that the vehicles' designers do not pose any immediate threat to human existence, but this is not necessarily the case and would by no means exclude all possibility of potential or actual hostility. It nonetheless could be that any military and intelligence leadership cognizant of UAP chose to view them as nonhostile and discounted the need to develop defensive measures against them. Or, alternatively, it could be that the threat potential was rightly judged to be indeterminate, and planners simply opted to do nothing but implement a long-term and likely so far unsuccessful plan to attain knowledge about and defense capabilities against NHI to thwart them. In both of those scenarios, it would be questionable whether blanket or excess secrecy served

its purpose, as a potential enemy that is not supposed to exist is obviously nothing against which a state and its citizens can prepare.

Any kind of UAP secrecy, even of a moderate kind, is therefore likely to have undermined national security to some or even a significant degree. Moreover, should it ever be learned that the designers or operators of UAP present a significant threat to the United States, the agencies responsible for as-yet publicly unknown efforts to monitor and study the vehicles will likely be blamed for the greatest intelligence failure in the nation's history (with the AARO taking the brunt of the criticism beforehand). This will also be the case if the publicly reported study programs of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China have achieved greater scientific understanding of UAP vehicles than have those of the United States.[112] Such consequences of blanket, excessive, and even moderate secrecy should be in the forefront of the committee's considerations as it reflects on the results of its inquiry.

Lost and Neglected Opportunities

Some of the potential damage to national security and US standing would stem, as has often been noted, from the possibilities for the advancement of science and technology that UAP secrecy would have prevented. But such lost opportunities extend well past those domains, into economics, international politics, culture and collective ethics, and, most crucially, human self-understanding.

Where science and technology are concerned, myriad and perhaps inconceivable discoveries and advancement in disciplines ranging from theoretical physics, astronomy, and material science to aerospace and nuclear engineering could emerge were there to be a concerted and adequately resourced study of the observed and reported behaviors, morphologies, and performance characteristics of UAP vehicles and technology. It is undoubtedly the case that secrecy about the mere existence of the vehicles would prevent any such research from enjoying even a modicum of interest from academia, public funding institutions, and private foundations, let alone the social prestige and capital that would incentivize talented and ambitious researchers to pursue it. This is not to say that alleged government efforts to study recovered UAP vehicles would be incapable of making significant gains due to their clandestine character—rumors that some stealth technology resulted from the study of UAP could be correct—but it is obvious that the outcomes of highly compartmented research projects are most likely to match or exceed those of their public counterparts if the personnel, funding, infrastructure, and political support devoted to them is commensurate with the difficulty and complexity of their problems and objectives. The rapid success of the Manhattan Project was partly due to its vast financing and infrastructure and likely unparalleled recruitment of elite scientists from academia, and there is little in the public record to indicate that programs of the same scale have existed in classified environments and produced technological breakthroughs of similar significance, like quantum computing and cold fusion. Unless a vastly resourced, supersecret CERN-like program has been quietly underway for decades (a possibility this author finds more than dubious), most of the outlined UAP secrecy scenarios (2 or 3 through 5 above) would hinder scientists from learning what they could from the study of UAP data and materials. Should the federal government indeed possess whole UAP vehicles, the damage to science might be worse.[113]

The lost economic opportunities in that case are neither fantastical nor insignificant. Research intended to determine how to emulate UAP vehicles and technology alone could lead to new insights about electromagnetism, gravity, and quantum states, and any related developments in transportation, aerospace, communication, information, and energy technologies could be sources of significant economic growth and prosperity. If the study and reverse engineering efforts discussed in the congressional UAP legislation exist, moderate reductions in the secrecy surrounding them might allow for the establishment of secure public-private partnerships between executive branch components and a wider circle of companies and investors than merely those in aerospace and related areas of defense contracting. Greater investor and industry access to allegedly retrieved materials could very well allow for scientific and technological innovation in the above areas and growth in related industries.

Yet as important as science and commerce are, limiting the discussion to them is to take an extremely limited view of the consequences of UAP secrecy, which extend, of course, to international politics and humanity as a species. It was not a contemporary US political progressive or European social democrat, but none other than Ronald Reagan, who stated in a 1987 address to the United Nations that confirmation of the presence of a hostile nonhuman intelligence could spark sudden and unprecedented international cooperation: "In our obsession with antagonisms of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world. And yet, I ask you, is not an alien force already among us? What could be more alien to the universal aspirations of our peoples than war and the threat of war?"[114]

Reagan has been disparaged as naive for invoking the specter of bellicose NHI, but he was almost certainly correct about one effect that knowledge of such a threat would quickly produce among human beings. Differences would not vanish (those over which social and political conflict play out instead might be exacerbated), but human beings would instantly recognize themselves to be a species with a shared sociocultural disposition upon contrasting themselves with these radically distinct, possibly extraterrestrial Others. Having the slightest knowledge of the physical morphology, cognitive orientation, history, cultural mentality, and politics of those others would expose and cast in a novel light so much of what is particular and therefore common to human beings of all kinds.[115] Such an intensified consciousness of human commonality could lead (more easily than is typically believed) to a global sense of collective purpose and eventually, too, to the sort of legal, governmental, and civil frameworks suited to a genuinely cohesive international polity.

It takes little imagination to realize that any American UAP secrecy that might have been implemented to avoid deepening international competition into global war may have eventually outlived its purpose. The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War may have opened a decadelong window in which a presidential acknowledgment of the UAP presence was possible as never before and could have revealed both the necessity and occasion for planning a cooperative and equitable system of international cooperation. With Eastern Europe forming new countries, South Korea only newly democratic, certain major Latin American governments just exiting dictatorship and authoritarianism (and the United States barely shifting away from a policy of interventionism there), it is likely that most, if not all, states were unprepared for such

cooperation and the aim of peace. Yet it is impossible to predict or retrospectively assess the swerves that unanticipatable and genuinely epoch-defining events introduce into history, and we simply cannot say how things might have unfolded had a president with a vision for disclosure prepared for and actualized it. Another world than the one we know might have been possible were the presence of (so-called) nonhuman intelligences to have been publicly verified by the US government.

Be all that as it may, any actual UAP secrecy—even of the least kind and degree, implemented dismissively and in willful ignorance about the significance of the classified facts—would impoverish and impede human self-understanding. It is undoubtedly true that every individual alive today would have a radically different sense of their own humanity if the universe were definitively known to harbor just one other species or collective with distinct yet commensurate kinds of consciousness, intelligence, sociality, politics, physicality, and technology. Children might mature with new horizons of possibility, adults work to reach potentials previously considered unfeasible, and the aged discover and share latent wisdom. Entire societies, meanwhile, might find in their understanding of this more actualized and developed nonhuman intelligence inspiration to aspire toward levels of collective economic prosperity, social achievement, and ethical commitment now trivialized as utopian, including through affirming human commonality. Those same societies might also soberly recognize that the mere existence of older or at least more technological advanced intelligent beings attests not to the perpetuity of life but its precariousness, and seek for that reason to preserve and better that of humanity by regenerating its environment and laboring to ensure that every individual is educated, healthy, prosperous, and self-aware to the greatest possible degree. Such a picture of social flourishing will undoubtedly seem foolish to many, but even the most cynical among us would feel utter shame at the human condition were they to suddenly discover that it is witnessed by living beings who have managed to part ways with ignorance, suffering, poverty, and violence.

Humankind is not and cannot be the responsibility of the US government alone, but the era in which it was possible to imagine that a viable state fosters the well-being only of its own population is of course already long over. The potential discovery and acceptance of the reality of worlds and peoples beyond our own world reminds us that interdependence is a nonnegotiable condition for not only human beings but states too.

9. Recommended Actions for Congress

Following its assessment of the harms UAP secrecy may have done to Congress and separation of powers, the security of the US and its allies, and science, technology, the economy, international cooperation, and human self-understanding, the investigating committee will need to chart the course for further action. Unless government UAP activities were minor and discontinuous and secrecy and knowledge of the vehicles static and minor (scenario 1 in the previous section), then the harm done to the legislative branch would be alone significant enough to warrant establishing clear congressional authority over UAP affairs in order to rebalance its relationship with the executive branch. Moreover, UAP secrecy of any kind and degree would have inevitably so subverted US national security and foreclosed so many opportunities that it falls to Congress to determine and implement the remedy rather than the President.

That may strike some readers as a liberal or divisive recommendation, but it is consistent with most positions across the American political spectrum, except those of former executive branch authorities who believe that anything but the lightest, authorizing intervention by Congress in defense, intelligence, and other matters of national security is just troublesome meddling with presidential power. Anyone who thinks that the Constitution's separation of powers is a constitutive and just feature of the US system of government can agree that all three of its branches ought to be aware of any basic knowledge of UAP held within the executive branch and participating to the fullest extent possible on such a world-changing and existentially consequential issue. Until the entire membership of the Senate and the House are provided with both that knowledge and official assurances of its veracity by the President and IC and DoD leadership, Congress cannot enact effective and meaningful legislation, perform relevant oversight, or work collaboratively with the executive branch on the UAP issue. As a consequence, the judicial system lacks laws to interpret, and, worse, the American people are effectively unrepresented and disenfranchised with respect to UAP. It is therefore Congress that should put an end to any extant UAP secrecy.

Moreover, the executive branch—some presidents and cabinet officials included—has likely had more than a lifetime to devise a feasible solution to the problem of UAP secrecy. It simply has not done this, and the sheer length of time in which it could have yet failed to do so should leave no one confident that it will suddenly course correct out of goodwill to a few senators. On the contrary, a presidential administration has few incentives to undertake the disclosure of any knowledge of UAP that it may have, as doing so would risk it becoming responsible for any ensuing fallout or crises.

So, both to establish legislative branch jurisdiction over and separate powers with respect to UAP, Congress should end the secrecy. To do this, it has a few expedient courses of action available to it.

Previous Recommendations: Congressional Investigation, IC IG Forum Review, and Assessment of Harm to Congress

For ease of use, readers are reminded of the courses of action recommended to Congress in the prior sections. Due to the likelihood that UAP secrecy has undermined Congress's ability to execute several of its constitutionally prescribed responsibilities, Congress should undertake an inquiry, to be conducted by primarily by the Senate and House intelligence committees with the participation of members from other committees, into any extant government UAP activities and programs and their history. This investigation would best be conducted, however, in conjunction with the work of the records review and declassification process to be established by the UAP Disclosure Act and the passage of that legislation. Prior to both this and the congressional inquiry, Congress or the SSCI should task the Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum with a review of any and all UAP and related programs that may exist within intelligence elements and components of the federal government. This review could provide Congress with objective verification of the reality of UAP secrecy.

Establishing Legislative Branch Power: The Congressional UAP Governance Act

The most direct and expedient remedy is the passage of legislation establishing that Congress has the same responsibility and power to legislate over matters concerning UAP and so-called NHI as it does any other, and that it understands these to be a priority of such urgency and existential consequence as to demand a whole-of-government approach involving all branches of government and all relevant federal departments and agencies, rather than only the DoD, DoE, and agencies within the IC. To clarify and begin to fulfill its responsibilities, Congress also could include a provision in the legislation directing all federal departments and several relevant agencies and offices to form a commission to recommend a broad federal UAP policy that could then be implemented and reinforced with further legislation. Finally, the legislation should declare illegal any official or unofficial executive branch policy of applying wholesale classification to whatever knowledge it may have about the presence of nonanthropogenic UAP vehicles, their local and ultimate origins, the nature and intent of their designers or operators, and events of historical significance such as crashes, retrievals, communications, interactions, and even diplomatic relations and actualized political-economic agreements.

Such a law would be unusual and likely have few precedents. Yet exceptional legislation is warranted and would establish that Congress deems UAP to lie firmly within the scope of its responsibilities and to hold enormous implications for national security, intelligence, foreign affairs, commerce, science, technology, and all other areas of government. The benefits to both the legislative branch and the federal government as a whole would be profound.

By declaring that Congress and the rest of the federal government must play a role in UAP affairs, the legislation would make it untenable for any executive branch element or component to maintain blanket or extreme classification over fundamental facts about UAP and NHI. And for the legislative branch to execute its responsibilities over UAP, Congress and its various committees would have to be entitled to receive far more information on UAP than

they currently are. The legislation should accordingly specify that all members of Congress must be informed immediately of all facts known within any and all executive branch components about the UAP presence and any so-called nonhuman intelligences that design or operate them. Additionally and just as crucially, the legislation's definition of UAP as a priority for the entire federal government would empower Senate and House committees to solicit and receive UAP information from the executive branch as well as stimulate the committees' corresponding federal departments to acquire it as well. The flow of information to Congress would require more openness within the executive branch, particularly from the DoD and IC to departments that are unlikely to have previously had extensive engagements with UAP issues, such as the Departments of Commerce, State, and Transportation. Finally, the legislation would institute conditions under which presidents and cabinet officials would recognize themselves as having a de facto obligation to communicate about UAP with both Congress as a whole and a wider range of members than the Gang of Eight and those serving on the Senate and House intelligence committees.

Interdepartmental Commission to Recommend National Policy

Such a sea change in the federal government could be secured if the law further establishes a commission to determine a comprehensive federal UAP policy. Just as the formal establishment of the DoD UAP Task Force in the 2020 NDAA yielded a congressional report that led to a greater level of unclassified government engagement with UAP, so the commission could produce a set of policy recommendations that would at the very least signal across government the seriousness of the problems raised by UAP and their need to receive comprehensive information about the vehicles. Yet the legislation also could be designed to ensure that the policy recommendations would carry weight in targeted departments, and this could be achieved through a provision requiring that all the commission's representatives receive a comprehensive briefing on the knowledge about UAP accumulated to date in the executive branch. In other words, Congress could guarantee that the commission would begin its work with the requisite knowledge it would need to not forward recommendations that would be inadequate for purpose.

Declassification Provision

It is presently impossible, however, for Congress to direct any executive branch component holding such knowledge to share it with anyone apart from the Gang of Eight and possibly some members of the Senate and House intelligence committees. This is why the congressional UAP affairs legislation would need to include what would undoubtedly be its most controversial and difficultly enforced provision: a declaration that simple, fundamental facts concerning UAP, NHI, and the history of US governments engagements with them are no longer classified. In other words, Congress would itself declassify this information in order to ensure that all its members can legally receive it and ensure its recirculation to and within the executive and judicial branches and among American citizens.

Any legislation that endeavors to declassify information poses, of course, considerable and even grave risks to national security, and this especially holds for UAP information due to its sensitivity and potential value to adversaries. Yet barring this or a similar measure, Congress remains dependent on the cooperation of some of the most powerful and autonomous components in the executive branch to gain information about UAP and to reform extant federal policy. General declassification by law would bring to a quick end the current impasse, releasing information to the legislative branch that would allow it to understand the gravity and complexity of the UAP issue. As controversial and unprecedented as it would be, this may be the only action guaranteed to catalyze an otherwise slow process into rapid, thoroughgoing change.

To ensure that Congress can become properly apprised of the UAP presence without compromising national security, the declassification provision should apply only to simple, fundamental facts about UAP, NHI, and related government activities. The facts covered would be "fundamental" in that they answer basic questions about UAP, such as what they are, where they come from, and who designs, operates, and occupies them. Such facts would thus include known UAP vehicle types and morphologies; their local and ultimate origins; the nature and intent of their designers or operators; events involving them of historical significance, like crashes and retrievals; any communications and interactions with NHI known to have occurred; and perhaps any effectively diplomatic relations and actualized political or economic agreements entered into by any component of the federal government. Such facts additionally would be "simple" in the sense that they would be distilled from much broader constellations of facts that are normally classified and must remain so, including intelligence sources and methods; relevant program names, details, and personnel; and specific or general data giving the US government a strategic advantage over its adversaries. For example, the simple version of the potentially fundamental fact that some UAP vehicles are known by elements of the US government to originate from outer space is no more than that, while the complex version might be that specific space-based reconnaissance platforms in orbit since such and such a date are the source of that information and that analysis of detected and tracked objects is carried out by a program called "X" in a certain three-letter agency in specific facilities.

The immediate objective of this declassification provision would be to release current and retired government employees from any prohibitions on acknowledging information concerning the nonhuman provenance of UAP vehicles and related information to other government personnel, media, and the public. Anyone exposed to, briefed on, or read in to classified UAP programs would be legally able to state that they know certain facts to be true without any risk of penalty or prosecution, and Congress could legally request and receive information from them. The exercise of this "right" could easily lead, of course, to a release of information damaging to the United States, but the legally contestable nature of the provision would safeguard against its excessive use or outright abuse. Anyone with the least awareness of the severity of the penalties for disclosing classified information, sources, and methods would likely restrict their public comments to spare acknowledgments of UAP information, which would leave only secretaries and directors, their deputies, undersecretaries, division and office directors, and other equivalently ranked leadership as the only individuals with the power to be confident about making fulsome disclosures to Congress and the public. So long as the declassification provision is precisely worded, its primary effect would be to bring to light basic

truths about the UAP presence and government activities concerning it while holding back specific and more complex information about these, programs through which they take place, intelligence sources and methods, and other, routinely classified kinds of information. Simple, fundamental facts alone would enjoy the law's secrecy exception, and only they could surface, circulate through the legislative and executive branches, and reach the American people.

Regardless of whether the declassification provision could survive conference to be included within a version of a congressional UAP affairs act, Congress must pass a law establishing its right and responsibility to be aware of and fully involved in government activities concerning UAP. No executive branch department, agency, office, or component—not even the President—will act on behalf of the legislative branch to this end. It falls to Congress to assert, restore, and exercise its power in the face of flagrantly undemocratic and likely unconstitutional secrecy.

Conclusion

The stakes of the recent actions of the US Congress concerning likely executive branch UAP secrecy might be expressed in a single word: democracy.

The undemocratic and even antidemocratic character of the likely extension of UAP secrecy to Congress has been alluded to throughout this text but never directly discussed. It seems too obvious to need elaboration that keeping world-changing knowledge a secret runs against the basic spirit of democracy, but the unreflective spirit of the times necessitates a clear reminder that knowledge is a basis of and guide to power and that any actually democratic government grants significant power to its citizens. The ignorance of the American people about the UAP presence does not serve them in this or any other respect and instead infantilizes and disempowers them.

This disempowerment affects much more than their ability to determine which elected representatives might best represent their desires for the knowledge, security, and international cooperation required by the UAP presence. Ignorance of that presence prevents them from understanding the nature of themselves and the universe, the purpose of existence in it, and the possibilities open to them by virtue of it. In other words, Americans—and the same goes for other peoples of the world—have been deprived of knowledge fundamental to their self-actualization and flourishing. It should go without saying that such knowledge is needed if anyone is to exercise their power to shape government so that it serves them.

Public discourse on disclosure neglects this point despite its obviousness. Advocates rightly say that the truth about UAP should be made known to Americans, but few bother to add that this knowledge is essential if the democratic political ethos and form of government of the United States is to be effective. This may be simply because some of the most visible proponents have emphasized the harm to national security entailed by UAP secrecy. Yet it is sometimes the case that a focus on security does not lend itself to a passion for democracy, and we have as a result so far discussed a matter of enormous import within very narrow parameters. To begin to grasp the implications of the UAP presence for our way of life and existence, the conversation about UAP and government must be broadened to the point that it touches on the very character of political life.

The first step is to ask whether it is national security or democracy that should be the primary framework by which to make decisions about what kind of and how much secrecy should surround US government knowledge of the UAP presence. It is reassuring to begin and end the conversation with national security, as giving precedence to democracy would lead to Congress intervening in decision-making about which facts about the UAP presence should be classified, force open an unprecedented window onto some of the most sensitive activities of the executive branch, and leave a public who would become aware that they had been deceived unsympathetic to the delicacy of the issues. But such difficulties must be faced if we are to do more than pay lip service to democracy and thus pretend to inherit the courage and inventiveness of generations of Americans who struggled to maintain it.

Making democracy paramount, however, involves dangers that UAP secrecy may have been established to forestall. The foremost of these is that social acceptance and integration of the UAP presence requires an intellectual and political maturity that is in short supply today. Unveiling secrets of world-changing significance will matter little if they are received by people unable to distinguish between science and pseudoscience, investigative journalism and conspiracy theories, and populist demagoguery and reasoned political discourse. This will leave the secrets intermixed with fiction and fantasy and prevent them from being given their due in institutions that ought to reflect and act on them. The effect on a government already deemed illegitimate by broad swathes of its citizens could be devastating, as fears of "aliens" and further denial and deception from the United States government could be exploited by authoritarians in search of new resources for manipulation. It will take a balanced approach to disclosure, guided by academia, science, religious and other civil organizations, to avoid this scenario.

Should Americans not succumb to misinformation, they may nevertheless face the worsening of geopolitical tensions and more war following disclosure. Interstate relations are already aflame, and sudden acknowledgment by the US government of knowledge of UAP and recovered technology might send them into conflagration. The prospect that technologies of nonhuman provenance could be successfully emulated or reverse engineered to make beyond next-generation weaponry could set off a new arms race between the United States and China, which would only intensify the existing political and economic competition between the two powers. As unimaginable or strange as it may today seem, such a breakthrough military technology could then become a stake in ongoing low intensity conflicts and wars that are already considered probable. Americans might have to decide for unprecedented kinds of diplomacy and international cooperation in order to circumvent UAP fueling decades of competition and conflict.

In the end, the greatest risk posed by a democratic approach to secrecy is the likely possibility that the reality of UAP and nonhuman intelligence will provoke collective fear and anxiety. Whatever the nature and intentions of the minds of so-called nonhuman intelligences might turn out to be, it is inadvisable to discount the prospect that they jeopardize the existence of human beings just by virtue of their technology. People of all kinds will easily recognize this and could rightly develop and carry within a persistent fear of the unknown. While not as immediately dangerous as panic, such fear would block the creativity needed to devise solutions to the UAP presence and, worse, lead to excessively defensive and even aggressive reactions to it. Worry and fear are not unreasonable responses, but they make poor parents to the audacity and ingenuity that are needed today.

Wonder at the unknown and curiosity about its mysteries are emotions that we would be wise to instead embrace. They in turn depend, however, on discovering confidence and courage in the face of even terrible possibilities, and maintaining serenity amidst our ignorance. No one can predict whether Americans, or anyone else for that matter, are today capable of such strength, but adversity and crisis can evoke the best in human beings. Should we wish to bring, at last, difficult and hidden knowledge into the open so that it can be understood and acted on by everyone, then we must become receptive to disturbing truths and resilient enough to absorb them. Short of that, all the secrets in the world will never benefit our autonomy and power.

Notes

1. US Congress, "NDAA for Fiscal Year 2023 Sec. 1673."
2. By "blanket classification," the author means complete classification of the existence of UAP vehicles and government activities concerning them. "Extreme classification" refers to the same level of classification of UAP activities and programs but then extended to Congress.
3. NASA, "Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena," 32.
4. US Department of Defense All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office, "Report on the Historical Record of US Government Involvement with Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena."
5. See Christopher Mellon, "Pentagon's New UAP Report," for a thorough critique of the report.
6. NDAA 2022.
7. US All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office, "Report on the Historical Record of U.S/ Government Involvement with Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena," 7.
8. US All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office, "Report on the Historical Record of U.S/ Government Involvement with Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena," 10, 14–16.
9. US All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office, "Report on the Historical Record of U.S/ Government Involvement with Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena," 19.
10. Ruppelt, *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, 70–71, 72–73, 91–92.
11. Ruppelt, *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*,
12. Ruppelt, *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, 242.
13. Hynek, Hynek UFO Report, 259.
14. For characterizations of the essential and common traits of each of the six kinds, see Hynek's *The UFO Experience* and *The Hynek UFO Report*.
15. I have refrained from including here Donald Keyhoe, who led the National Investigative Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), due to the often ad hoc nature of his and the organization's investigations and his own overly enthusiastic advocacy. The organization's *The UFO Evidence*, authored by Richard Hall, is nevertheless an invaluable contribution to understanding the history of UAP events in the United States, and NICAP's investigations deserve engagement.
16. See, for instance, the works by her noted in the bibliography.
17. See Lorenzen, *Flying Saucers*, 27–35, for the Korean War and Sturgeon Bay events.
18. See Vallée, *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*. Academic and other kinds of students of UAP may wish to know that while it is perhaps the least read of his many books, *Anatomy* is nonetheless key to understanding Vallée's decades-long claim to be doing science.
19. McDonald, "Science in Default."
20. It may be here only anthropocentrism that renders us resistant to trusting both that people have perceived what they say they have and that investigators who listen to them have succeeded at corroborating their accounts.
21. Air Material Command, "Flying Discs."
22. Air Material Command. "Flying Discs."
23. See Ruppelt, Report on *Unidentified Flying Objects*, 41, 45.
24. Hoover wrote the Air Force Office of Special Investigations about a 1952 incident in which four discs flew low over a secret AEC facility on the Savannah River in South Carolina. See Hoover to the Commander of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, 15 May 1952. The CIA memorandum, "Unidentified Flying Objects," was sent to the agency's director by the Assistant Director

of its Office of Scientific Intelligence. It states that "unexplained objects at great altitudes and traveling at high speeds in the vicinity of US defense installations are of such nature that they are not attributable to [. . .] known types of aerial vehicles." See Chadwell to Smith, 2 Dec. 1952. For the Air Force memo, see US Air Force. "AFR 200-2."

25. Dolan, *UFOs and the National Security State* (1941–1973), 67–68
26. Hastings, *UFOs and Nukes.*
27. Ruppelt, *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, 212.
28. Dolan, *UFOs and the National Security State* (1941–1973), 67–68.
29. Ruppelt, *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, 258
30. For that event, see Hastings, *UFOs and Nukes,* 107–9; see 97–122 for others.
31. Ruppelt, *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, 62, 109
32. Hastings, *UFOs and Nukes.* See also the account of one of the primary witnesses, Sals, *Faded Giant.*
33. Hastings, *UFOs and Nukes.*
34. See Hastings, *UFOs and Nukes*, ###–###. October 24 is a likely, but not certain, date of the second 1967 event.
35. Hastings, *UFOs and Nukes*, 313–17.
36. US Congress, "NDAA for Fiscal Year 2023, Sec. 1673," 135–36.
37. US Congress, "NDAA for Fiscal Year 2023, Sec. 6802.
38. US Senate, "UAP Disclosure Act of 2023, Sec. 07: Establishment and Powers of the Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Review Board," S3012.
39. US Senate, "UAP Disclosure Act of 2023, Sec. 07: Establishment and Powers of the Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Review Board," S3012.
40. S.2103: Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024.
41. Schumer Disclosure Act citation
42. Blumenthal and Kean, "No Longer in Shadows."
43. Blumenthal and Kean, "No Longer in Shadows."
44. Author's research.
45. "Report of Meetings of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects Convened by Office of Scientific Intelligence."
46. Dolan, 240.
47. See Dolan 308, 318. Some contemporary voices believe that Condon was chosen to manage a cover-up because of his work on the Manhattan Project more than two decades prior. They may wish to note that he proved to be something of a dissident then and was likely regarded as a security risk rather than anyone's inside man. He left the Project weeks into arriving at Los Alamos because he found excessive secrecy disagreeable. See Wellerstein, *Restricted Data*. Condon was also near retirement and death at the time of the report and thus unlikely to be seeking to regain his security clearance.
48. COMETA, "UFOs and Defense."
49. Griffin, "Ex-CIA Chief Wants UFO Probe."
50. *New York Times*, "Air Force Order on 'Saucers' Cited."
51. Huyghe, "U.F.O. Files."
52. Marchetti, "How the CIA Views the UFO Phenomenon."
53. See Good, *Above Top Secret*, 338; and Fawcett and Greenwood, *Clear Intent*, 135.
54. It should be noted that some government sources indicate that there always has been a single umbrella program under which all unacknowledged government UAP activities take place, which

they refer to as "*the* legacy program" or simply "*the* program."
55. Greenewald, *Inside the Black Vault,* 113–16.
56. Pedlow and Welzenbach, "Central Intelligence Agency and Overhead Reconnaissance."
57. Joint Chiefs of Staff, "JANAP 146(C): Communication Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings from Airborne and Waterborne Sources (CIRVIS)."
58. US Air Force, "AFR 200-2."
59. "Air Force Keeping Watchful Eye on Aerospace," cited in Dolan, *UFOs and the National Security State (1941–1973)*, 244.
60. Dolan, *UFOs and the National Security State (1973–1991)*, 244
61. Clinton, Bill. The Late Late Show. Interview with James Corden, 16 June 2022
63. Richardson, MSNBC, interview with Chris Matthews.
64. Ralph Blumenthal and Leslie Kean. "No Longer in Shadows, Pentagon's U.F.O. Unit Will Make Some Findings Public." New York Times, 23 July 2020.
65. Lacatski, Kelleher, and Knapp, *Skinwalkers at the Pentagon*.
66. Helene Cooper, Ralph Blumenthal, and Leslie Kean, "Glowing Auras and 'Black Money': The Pentagon's Mysterious U.F.O. Program."
67. *NewsNation*. "We Are Not Alone."
68. *NewsNation*, "Rubio on UFO Whistleblower Claims."
69. *NewsNation*, "Rubio on UFO Whistleblower Claims."
70. US Senate, "Majority Leader Schumer and Republican Senator Mike Rounds Floor Colloquy on Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Provisions in the NDAA and Future Legislation on UAPs."
71. US Senate, "Majority Leader Schumer and Republican Senator Mike Rounds Floor Colloquy on Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Provisions in the NDAA and Future Legislation on UAPs."
72. This is what occurred, for instance, when officials within George W. Bush's administration established and placed under the authority of the President the well-known mass surveillance program Stellar Wind, aka "the President's surveillance program."
73. Powell and Swords, *UFOs and Government*.
74. Powell and Swords, *UFOs and Government*.
75. The extent to which the US aerospace and other defense equities may be decades ahead of the state of the art should never be underestimated, regardless of what critics of US efficacy may assert. The B-2 Stealth Bomber and Lockheed F-117 Nighthawk are decades out from their operational rollouts and have not been publicly displaced by anything more advanced. That leaves much time in which even more efficacious technology might have been developed.
76. US Congress, "Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Disclosure Act of 2023," S3010.
77. Kean, *UFOs*, 222–31.
78. For a cursory and imprecise English-language summary of a complex case, see the brief media summary by Andy Wells, "Operation Saucer."
79. Unlike the exceptional Special Access Programs (SAPs) mentioned, all Controlled Access Programs (CAPs) must be reported by the DNI and IC agencies to not only the Gang of Eight but the SSCI. See US House of Representatives, "50 USC 3091a"; and Devine, "Controlled Access Programs of the Intelligence Community."
80. Not being a law and jurisprudence expert, this author will refrain from commenting on the legality of so-called presidential intelligence or covert action programs, such as the Stellar Wind electronic surveillance program established by George W. Bush in 2001. It does not require any

expertise in law, however, to state that many members of Congress did not regard the exemption to congressional reporting given the program by the president to be acceptable or constitutional.

81. Congress's war powers are covered in Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 of the Constitution.
82. Nell, "Schumer Amendment and Controlled Disclosure."
83. On the Church Committee, see Johnson, *Season of Inquiry.* Before becoming one of the foremost academic experts on the CIA and the Intelligence Community, Johnson was a leading staff member of the committee, appointed by Church himself. Johnson provides in *Season of Inquiry* a detailed chronology of the committee's intense effort to become apprised of both known knowns and unknown unknowns despite its minimal knowledge.
84. See Johnson, *Season of Inquiry,* 1–6.
85. See Light, *Government by Investigation*, which provides précises on dozens of congressional and executive branch investigations and rates their efficacy. The Church Committee is given particularly high marks because it managed to produce enduring reforms.
86. A massive caveat should nonetheless be added to that statement: it has long been speculated that Colby's cooperation was partly a feint, as he may have deliberately provided the Church Committee with more (and often low stakes) records than it would ever be capable of reviewing.
87. The congressional Iran-Contra investigation is often considered to have been less successful due to its trial-like atmosphere.
88. For all the criticisms from both sides of Congress's supposed acquiescence to the Intelligence Community, the United States has a strong intelligence oversight process that certain less defense-focused countries are learning from and even emulating. For a brief survey of intelligence oversight in the Five Eyes alliance countries, see Dawson and Godec, "Oversight of the Intelligence Agencies." It may interest some readers that a Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council was established in 2017 and has been in operation since. See "Charter of the Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council."
89. The legislation is Senate Resolution 400. See Kaiser, "Legislative History of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence."
90. The evidence for the supposed wartime US Army "Interplanetary Phenomena Unit" is too scant for this author to take it as evidence for presidential concern with UAP.
91. Several credible and likely unconnected former US and Italian government sources known to the author, including former NRO official David Grusch and Italian foreign service officer Paolo Guizzardi, claim that a UAP vehicle was retrieved in Italy in 1936 by the Fascist government and that the US government took possession of it during the occupation of Italy after having been apprised of its existence years earlier. While the author is in no position to evaluate the provenance of records supposedly attesting to the crash and retrieval, he has surmised that these and several other sources have been exposed to classified information concerning the event that they understand to be accurate. The Cape Girardeau event is also attested to by retired government officials; extant public record testimony from witnesses should leave one with much less doubt that it happened.
92. Some testimony indicates that one alleged record concerning MJ-12 is authentic.
93. According to one source for this paper, managers of a hyperclassified retrieval / reverse engineering program regard this alleged 1953 presidential directive as the legal basis for their autonomy and exemption from all congressional oversight. It should be noted that the NSA was established through a 1952 presidential directive that remained classified until the early 1980s and was even denied to Congress. See *The Puzzle Palace*.
94. On the definition, classification, and management of transclassified foreign nuclear information,

see US Department of Energy, "Information Security" (DoE O 471.6), and "Identifying Classified Information" (DOE O 475.2B). See also US Department of Energy, "Transclassified Foreign Nuclear Information Training for Non-DOE Agency Personnel." Apart from the legislation, the other credible evidence for classification of UAP materials, components, and vehicles as an atomic/nuclear secret is whistleblower David Grusch's congressional testimony and public statements.

95. While it is reasonable to suppose that Vannevar Bush was tasked with organizing and directing an effort for the federal government to understand UAP, the evidence comes from a few pieces of testimony, including that of a federal Canadian government official Wilbert Smith, who asserted to his government in 1950 that he was told this by an American counterpart. In the 1980s, a Canadian UAP researcher found the name of this US official, a scientist named Richard Sarbacher, in Smith's papers following the latter's death, and another researcher managed to find and interview Sarbacher. Sarbacher acknowledged that he had participated in meetings at Wright-Patterson AFB concerning a recovered UAP vehicle and said that Bush, von Neumann, and former Penn State University President Eric Walker were all involved in the study of such retrievals. Walker was later interviewed and confirmed that a dedicated UAP study project called MJ-12 existed. Arguably the best evidence to date for UAP research by Manhattan Project luminaries is von Neumann's public lecture on UAP,
96. The name "MJ-12" is used here, again, largely for convenience, as it is almost irreparability tainted by its appearance in several obviously fake documents given over the years to UFO researchers. That said, credible sources known to this author suggest that this was indeed the name of a program dealing with UAP.
97. On Presidential Emergency Action Directives, see Brennan Center for Justice, "Presidential Emergency Action Documents."
98. Davis, "9/11 Commission Recommendations."
99. In 2022, federal government employees provided this author with an anonymously authored text alleging that the National Nuclear Security Administration conducts and/or maintains security and counterintelligence for UAP programs.
100. Given the ambiguities as to whether government UAP data and activities classified as transclassified foreign nuclear information would be primarily defense, intelligence, or energy in nature and under what circumstances, the investigating committee would need either to be a joint effort between the Senate and House committees with respective jurisdiction or composed of members and staff from them while being undertaken primarily by only one (likely the SSCI).
101. "Report of Meetings of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects Convened by Office of Scientific Intelligence."
102. Dolan, *UFOs and the National Security State (1941–1973)*.
103. For the origins of the NRO, see Berkowitz and Suk, "National Reconnaissance Office at 50 Years."
104. This author currently considers testimony about Jimmy Carter's alleged 1978–79 briefing on UAP/NHI to be credible. These allege, among other things, that he tasked the directors of the CIA and NSA to deal with the matter.
105. It may be that the AFOSI was employed to collect domestic UAP intelligence from civilian witnesses in order to circumvent the prohibition on domestic intelligence collection.
106. For a reported reconnaissance effort, see Timothy Good, Above Top Secret, 266-270, where the author recounts the testimony of an Air Force pilot concerning one.
107. British journalists recently claimed in a *Daily Mail* story to have verified testimony from sources indicating that the CIA's Office of Global Awareness is responsible for at least the identi-

fication of vehicles to be recovered. See Boswell et al., "CIA's Secret Office Has Conducted UFO Retrieval Missions." Despite the reputation of the *Mail*, this author considers reporting credible, while being unable to attest to its complete accuracy.

108. For relevant material on the history of the relationship between the CIA and the Air Force, see, among other sources, Jacobsen, *Area 51*; Richelson, *Wizards of Langley*; and Weiner, B*lank Check*.
109. In his appearance before the House Oversight and Government Accountability Committee in July 2023, whistleblower David Grusch testified that crash retrieval and reverse engineering activities occur under the rubric of independent research and development.
110. Lacatski et al., *Inside the U.S. Government Covert UFO Program*.
111. The real but now seemingly apocryphal public testimony of one Wilfred Smith (the Canadian federal official who claimed to have been informed in the 1950s of UAP retrievals by one of his US counterparts) was that UAP information is considered more secret than any pertaining to nuclear weapons.
112. For information on Soviet UAP study projects that may have resumed later in Russia, see Vallée, *UFO Chronicles of the Soviet Union*. On the PRC's recent military intelligence efforts, see Chen, "China Military Uses AI to Track Rapidly Increasing UFOs."
113. This applies even if the scientific knowledge and technology that make UAP vehicles possible immeasurably exceeds the state of the art,
114. Reagan, "Address to the 42nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York.

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