

UFO Study Program In Making

UA's McDonald Backs Project

A national program for investigating and evaluating sightings of UFOs was reported in the making today and the proposal met enthusiastic endorsement from Tucson's James E. McDonald.

The Denver Post, in a copyrighted story, said it has learned that the University of Colorado will head the program. The Post said the official announcement is expected tomorrow from Dr. Harold Brown, Air Force secretary.

THE STORY said the new approach to UFOs appeared to be in response to criticism from Congress and the public regarding the handling of reports of strange objects in the sky.

The Post story came a day after McDonald, a University of Arizona physicist, criticized the Air Force for "superficial and frequently absurd" reports on UFO investigations.

McDonald said the Air Force program has been in the planning stage for many months and its disclosure is "quite unrelated" to his criticisms of the Air Force UFO probes.

THE POST said: It is expected the new project, financed by a special appropriation, will be headed by Dr. Edward U. Condon, internationally known theoretical physicist at the University of Colorado. He will direct a team authorized to provide quick, in-depth investigation of selected UFO sightings. The team will provide unencumbered evaluation of the incidents.

Universities, scientific organizations and scientists throughout the United States are expected to be recruited for the program designed to quiet public fears regarding strange ob-

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BY UA PHYSICIST

Study Indicates UFOs From Outer Space

By JOHN RIDDICK
Citizen Staff Writer

There is a serious possibility that visitors from outer space are on reconnaissance of the earth with "flying saucers," Dr. James E. McDonald, University of Arizona physicist, believes after intensive research on the highly controversial issue.

One of the world's leading atmospheric physicists, McDonald spent the past six months exploring the Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) reports. He previously had investigated incidents here for a decade.

"There is quite strong evidence supporting the hypothesis that UFO's are extra-terrestrial vehicles," McDonald said today.

"FURTHERMORE, there are certain patterns that suggest they are engaged in something of the nature of reconnaissance. I regard this as the No. 1 problem before science."

The official explanations simply do not fit thousands of creditably reported UFOs, said McDonald. He is convinced that dozens of reliable, sane people with whom he talked really saw something and these most probably were space ships on probes from elsewhere.

McDonald first presented his findings yesterday before his scientific colleagues at a physics colloquium on the UA campus.

He said that the fact that scientists had not given the UFO data "any appreciable attention" was a "scandal" and that "we are collectively delinquent for taking argument from authority."

HE GAVE more severe criticism to the authority — the U.S. Air Force which has had the official investigatory organization for two decades. This is Project Bluebook at Wright-Patterson AFB.

After looking through the Bluebook records and investigating 150 reports in detail, McDonald decided the reports are "almost invariably superficial and frequently absurd."

Although there are creditable reports of UFOs going back to the 1880s, the subject of flying saucers burst upon public consciousness on June 24, 1947, when a pilot saw nine discs "skimming along like saucers over water."

A PRIMARY Air Force concern at first was whether the UFOs were something hostile. To resolve this, a blue ribbon



—Citizen Photo
Dr. James McDonald
"Scientists are delinquent . . ."

panel of scientists led by Cal Tech physicist H. P. Robertson was formed in 1953 and it decided they were not.

Thereafter, the official policy of the government became to "debunk" the UFO issue, said McDonald. And Air Force personnel were restricted from releasing information on pain of fine and imprisonment.

Project Bluebook is in the Foreign Technology division at Wright Patterson. The Air Force says that of its 10,000 cases, 4 to 5 percent are not explained. McDonald said that he believes the percentage is closer to half.

After studying the records, McDonald said, he found explanations given that are meteorologically impossible—such as results of lightning on clear nights.

THE EFFECT of the debunking is that the UFO issue is in ridicule and people are afraid either to study it or report on them.

"Many people told me that they have been subject to such ridicule and pestering that they will never report another UFO," said McDonald.

To a great extent, McDonald was left with the extra-terrestrial theory by a process of eliminating the other hypotheses given.

He said that the five official

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explanations are that the UFO's are hoaxes, hallucinations, misunderstood natural phenomena, advanced aerial technology not known to the public and still unknown natural phenomena.

While he has been a victim of hoaxes, it is not reasonable that this is the general cause, he said.

"But frequently the UFOs are seen by several persons at one time which would not follow the hallucination explanation," said McDonald.

"FREQUENTLY, the person suddenly observes the UFO and his first tentative explanation is not extreme or bizarre but some everyday explanation that seems best to fit like an airplane or balloon.

"And the tension, anxiety and emotional stress that psychologists find common ingredients in the genesis of hallucinations are involved in but a small fraction of UFO observations."

The misunderstanding of natural phenomena covers a tremendous number of reported UFOs such as misinterpreting satellites or stars. But this doesn't fit thousands of cases such as where UFOs follow trucks down the road and then rise in the air.

McDonald said it isn't reasonable to believe that advanced Air Force test vehicles can explain UFO's seen 20 years ago.

And of the theory of unknown natural phenomena, McDonald said: "The present gaps in our knowledge of meteorology and astronomy are too small to crowd all of the UFO evidence into them."

THE VARIETY and multiplicity of UFO reports is bewildering and at first tends to make the investigator doubt the evi-

dence on psychological grounds, said McDonald. The shapes range from disc, cigar and saucer to hoop.

"There are cloud phenomena galore," said McDonald. "There are numbers of reports in which they envelop themselves in clouds and quite a number in which they emerge from unnaturally dark, small cloud masses.

The pattern suggesting reconnaissance is the large number of incidents of buzzing automobiles and aircraft. Frequently, there are electromagnetic ef-

UFO Plan Suggested By AF

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jects reported in the skies over many parts of the country.

The program was suggested this year by the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board.

It grew from a request last year by Maj. Gen. E. N. LeBailly, Air Force director of information. He was aware of widespread charges by UFO enthusiasts that the Air Force was concealing the truth about UFO episodes.

McDonald said he was "delighted to hear that a scientist of Dr. Condon's caliber has agreed to take a good hard look at the UFO problem.

"A program of this type is long overdue. Having been studying the same problem intensively for the past six months, I predict that quite apart from simply allaying public fears they will learn that the UFO problem is of first order scientific importance."

fects such as car ignition failure.

"There is no evidence of hostility except for the slight suspicion of a more than random coincidence of power plant outages at times of UFO overflights," said McDonald. "This is probably coincidence but probably warrants study."

McDONALD CALLED for a radical change in attitude toward the UFO data and asked for other scientists to come look at the data. He said there is some change in this direction and suggested that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration would be a proper center for study.

Somewhat similarly, McDonald last year made the first scientific study of evidence on cloud seeding. He played a central role in swinging the National Academy of Science's Committee on Weather Modification to a positive report.

There is one UFO case that stands out particularly in Tucson, McDonald said.

In the spring of 1952, a disc shaped object was seen by the crew of a B36 bomber to fly between the propellers and the tail for several minutes. This was also observed on the ground by military persons at Davis-Monthan AFB.

In the Bluebook record, there is the case this April at Ravenna, Ohio, in which highway officers chased a luminous shaped disc about 40 feet wide for 90 miles from Ohio to Pennsylvania.

"THE DISC led them down the highway at speeds up to 100 miles an hour as it veered and dived ahead before they saw it take off" upwards and disappear," said McDonald.

"The Air Force claimed these men had seen the Echo satellite pass overhead and when it got

near Venus their attention was then transferred to it. The idea of Venus careening down the highway is preposterous."

Another case is the much publicized Dextra, Mich., episode on March 20 in which a luminous object descended at an angle into a swampy area illuminating the trees for hundreds of yards, then hovered and passed over a number of law enforcement officers.

"This is officially explained as swamp gas," said McDonald. "This is meteorologically, chemically and optically absurd. No case has brought the Air Force more ridicule."

On Nov. 2, ten different observers at Levelland, Tex., saw a reddish and blue egg shaped object estimated at 100 to 200 feet long hovering over roadways and fields during a three-hour period.

Electromagnetic disturbance of the auto ignition systems occurred in eight or nine cases.

"The official explanation is ball lightning and that the engines stopped because of wet ignitions," said McDonald. "The weather data shows no thunderstorm in the area."

In July of 1952, there were buzzing incidences on two different nights detected by radar, ground and aircraft observers which checked against each other.

"The Air Force explanation to this day is that the entire phenomena was caused by an extreme inversion layer," said McDonald. "I recently examined the weather data and found that such an explanation defies all the laws of atmospheric physics."

One case that the Air Force does still call unidentified occurred in Socorro, N.M., on April 24, 1964, said McDonald.

On this occasion, a white egg-shaped object was seen to land and take off by a Socorro policeman whose "complete credibility not even the Air Force has been willing to doubt," he said.

McDonald said he had no theories as to the sources of the UFOs — if they are extra-terrestrial — or to their occupants.

"As in many other cases of science, one has to be ready to admit ignorance," McDonald said.

UA Urged To Resume Housing List

The Arizona Daily Wildcat campus newspaper today asked the school administration to resume the service of offering listings of off campus housing.

A volunteer organization called Student Off-Campus Housing Service provided the listings during the past two months after the university dropped it.

The service recently said it could not continue past Oct. 30, though it has served 2,000 students. And it suggested the service be carried on in some area of the university, perhaps by student government.

The Wildcat editorially today said that student government does not have the resources to provide the service.

"We would like to see the university step in and operate the service for the benefit of the students, possibly staffed with secretaries attending college under a work-study program," said the Wildcat. "We do not want to see this vital program die out."