



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721

INSTITUTE OF ATMOSPHERIC PHYSICS

March 8, 1971

Hon. Silvio O. Conte  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C., 20515

Dear Mr. Conte:

The accompanying letter is my formal response to your invitation to add further comments to my remarks made last week, when you asked me about my work on the UFO problem. This note is an informal letter of transmittal.

As you may have guessed, I was taken entirely by surprise by your bringing up the UFO problem, and failed to grasp the essential purpose of your question. For that reason, I probably did not give you very satisfactory answers; I was put too much on the defensive by my misinterpretation of your objectives.

Hence, against the possibility that you still might be able to use a somewhat formal letter in response to your invitation to elaborate on those points, I send you the enclosed letter. It is probably too late to insert it into the published version of last week's hearings, but conceivably it might be of some use to you if you do discuss any of these points on the House floor.

In any event, even if this is of no real use to you in connection with clarifying or evaluating my SST testimony, I am delighted to have this opportunity to underscore to any member of Congress the point that there are responsible scientists who have taken a good look at the UFO problem and conclude that, far from being a lot of nonsense, it is a matter of potentially highest scientific significance. The latter is very much my view, after more than four years of rather detailed studies in that area.

I might note that your own state of Massachusetts, particularly in the spring of 1966 and continuing on into 1967, has been the site of many outstanding UFO reports. I have investigated, in quite a bit of detail, for example, one that occurred in the middle of Beverly, Mass., involving a number of witnesses, including two police officers, and represented a sighting at extremely close range of an object fitting no known technological description. It's a fascinating problem, and one that has been allowed to slip into a most regrettable state. Perhaps at some future time, we might have an opportunity to pursue these matters further.

Sincerely yours,

James E. McDonald  
Professor

JEM/msr  
Enclosures



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Hon. Silvio O. Conte  
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Dear Mr. Conte:

In the March 2 hearings before the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, you queried me regarding my past work on the long-puzzling UFO problem. At the end of our brief exchange on that topic, you extended to me an invitation to elaborate somewhat on the questions you had raised. As I now understand it, you were attempting to get on record at least a few indications of my serious scientific concern for the UFO problem.

Because I have devoted so much effort in recent years to clarifying the nature of the UFO problem, it would be quite easy to cite a large number of such indications. Should any of your Congressional colleagues raise questions along these general lines, in connection with the probity of my views on SST environmental hazards, perhaps the best source to which they might be referred would be the *Proceedings* of hearings before the House Committee on Science and Astronautics, 90th Congress, 2d session, July 29, 1968, "Symposium on Unidentified Flying Objects." In the 247-page *Proceedings* of those hearings, my testimony and submitted statement will be found to be the most extensive single contribution. It includes a discussion of over 40 selected UFO cases of scientific significance. My material will be found on pages 18-85 of the *Proceedings*. And, with respect to the particular question that you asked me about the curious correlation between power failures and UFO sightings (an interesting, albeit inconclusive, correlation), see pages 31-32 and 79-80. You will find there essentially the answer that I gave you last week, in my reference to Congressman Ryan's queries on the New York blackout of 1965. Incidentally, far more numerous instances of ignition-disturbances in automobiles are on record, in conjunction with close-range UFO sightings of an extremely intriguing type.

As another meaningful indication of the serious nature of my scientific approach to the UFO problem, I enclose a list of the quite extensive number of scientific, technical, and military groups and organizations before which I spoke during the 1966-69 period. You will find many Air Force and Navy groups represented there, many professional societies, and a wide range of university groups. In particular, during the 1968-69 academic year, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics selected me as one of a half-dozen Distinguished Lecturers for that year. This is why so many AIAA sections appear on the list for that particular period.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors, at their 1966 spring meeting in Washington, asked me to be one of their speakers. I enclose, for your information, a copy of the material that I presented there, which also contains a number of selected UFO case-discussions.

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I selected five Air Force radar UFO cases for analysis before a UFO Symposium at the December 1969 meetings in Boston of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Enclosed is a copy of that material, some of which has since been published elsewhere.

As another of many available examples of the approach I have employed in considering the UFO question, I enclose a copy of material recently published in the *Proceedings* of the 14th Weather Radar Conference. As you will note, I discuss therein three other military-radar UFO cases of significance.

The Condon Report is often cited as having settled the UFO problem, yet I am one of a number of scientists who are entirely unsatisfied with that report and its scientific content. I shall not enclose a copy of an extensive review of the Condon Report which I have written, but it can be found in the November 1969 issue of *Icarus*, a leading publication in the planetary sciences field. However, I do enclose a couple of other summaries of talks that I have given to scientific and technical groups, wherein I have pinpointed some of my many objections to the level of analysis that went into the Condon Report.

As I said above, an extremely large list of indices of my serious scientific consideration of the UFO problem could be assembled, if there really were a point in so doing. It is extremely unfortunate that the entire UFO problem was downgraded to a level where only a very small number of untrained personnel within the Air Force were routinely assigned to handling reports that fed into the Wright Patterson Air Force Base, where Project Blue Book was headquartered. As I said to you in the March 2 hearings, I have recently spent a good deal of time working on the now declassified files that are stored at the Air Historical Division, Maxwell Air Force Base. The implications of the long-filed military reports that I have studied down there would be impossible to describe in a mere paragraph or two. Suffice it to say that those files strongly bear out the conclusion that I reached several years ago, that the UFO problem is one of potentially enormous scientific significance. Yet, despite that, many persons (including the colleagues whose queries you felt obliged to prepare to fend off) are under the misimpression that the UFO problem is all a lot of nonsense. If they had talked to as many airline pilots, military pilots, law-enforcement officers, and other witnesses of high credibility as I have interviewed in the past few years, they would have a markedly different notion of this whole question. However, the ridicule that has been focused on that problem has made it exceedingly difficult to get scientists to take a look at the scattered but impressive evidence that argues its scientific importance. That objective is still one of my major scientific concerns, I might say in closing.

Sincerely yours,

JEM/msr  
Enclosures

James E. McDonald  
Professor