

**UNCLASSIFIED****5. BACKGROUND NOTE**

- a. Ministers need a short note explaining the facts and thinking behind the suggested reply if it is not completely obvious from the reply itself.
- b. If the answer varies from a previous answer or statement explain fully why this is so.
- c. If new information comes to light in your research which might affect this or previous answers or statements you must ring the Minister's Private Office **AT ONCE** as well as stating this clearly in the background note.

**6. GROUPED PQs**

Related PQs, tabled by an individual Lord for answer on the same day may be grouped together and given a single answer. This Branch can give advice on grouping.

**7. PARTIAL REPLIES**

If a full reply is not possible you should give what information is available and make it clear in the answer what you are doing.

**8. COST OF GIVING A REPLY**

If the cost of giving a reply will exceed £500 you can recommend to Ministers that the reply should be along the lines of "This information [is not held centrally] and could only be provided at disproportionate cost". You must explain in the background note how these costs - usually staff costs - would arise. The decision whether or not then to give an answer depends on the merits of the case. As a rough guide use these hourly rates: AO-£8, EO-£13, HEO-£15, SEO-£18, G7-£22, G5-£31. Capitation rates can be increased by 50% for Service equivalents.

**9. LONG REPLIES**

If the reply is long (ie will fill more than a page

of Hansard) it may, exceptionally, be better to give the information in a letter to the Lord or put information in the Library of the House. In these cases the reply is "I will write to the noble Lord (or "my noble Friend") and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House" or "I am placing the information requested in the Library of the House". This Branch is responsible for placing material in the Library. We need 6 copies of any document placed in the Library.

**10. INFORMATION ALREADY AVAILABLE FROM PUBLIC SOURCES**

PQs are expensive in terms of Ministers' and officials' time. Lords should be encouraged to get information from published sources where it is already available in the Library of the House. In such cases the reply is along these lines "The information requested is contained in para X of the Statement on Defence Estimates 1996 (Cm 3223), a copy of which is in the Library of the House".

**11. PQs ASKING FOR STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

- a. PQs which ask for statistical information will be sent normally to the Chief Executive of DASA and copied to the relevant policy branch.
- b. If such a question has not been sent to DASA please let us know. In any event you should liaise with DASA about the reply in case there are policy implications of which they are unaware.

**12. TRANSFER OF PQs**

- a. To another Government Department  
If you think this PQ is not primarily a matter for MOD tell this Branch **AT ONCE**. We will need the name and Branch of an official in the more appropriate Department who has agreed to take the PQ. Parliamentary Branches in other Government Departments will usually only agree to transfers on this basis.
- b. To another Branch  
If a PQ has been sent to you incorrectly, please let this Branch know **AT ONCE**. If you know who is responsible for the subject please pass it to them as well.

**GOVERNMENT POLICY ON ANSWERING PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS**

1. Never forget Ministers' obligations to Parliament which are set out in the Cabinet Office publication "Ministerial Code: A code of conduct and guidance on procedure for Ministers". It states that:

**UNCLASSIFIED**

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**"It is of paramount importance that Ministers give accurate and truthful information to Parliament, correcting any inadvertent error at the earliest opportunity. Ministers who knowingly mislead Parliament will be expected to offer their resignation to the Prime Minister. Ministers should be as open as possible with Parliament and the public, refusing to provide information only when disclosure would not be in the public interest, which should be decided in accordance with relevant statute and the Government's Code of Practice on Access to Government Information"(Second Edition, Jan 1997)**

2. It is a civil servant's responsibility to Ministers to help them fulfil those obligations. It is the Minister's right and responsibility to decide how to do so. Ministers want to explain and present Government policy and actions in a positive light. They will rightly expect a draft answer that does full justice to the Government's position.

3. Approach every question predisposed to give relevant information fully, as concisely as possible and in accordance with guidance on disproportionate cost. If there appears to be a conflict between the requirement to be as open as possible and the requirement to protect information whose disclosure would not be in the public interest, you should check to see whether it should be omitted in accordance with statute (which takes precedence) or the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, about which you should consult your departmental openness liaison officer if necessary.

5. Do not omit information sought merely because disclosure could lead to political embarrassment or administrative inconvenience.

6. Where there is a particularly fine balance between openness and non-disclosure, and when the draft answer takes the latter course, this should be explicitly drawn to the Minister's attention. Similarly, if it is proposed to reveal information of a sort which is not normally disclosed, this should be explicitly drawn to Ministers' attention.

7. If you conclude that material information must be withheld and the PQ cannot be fully answered as a result, draft an answer which **makes this clear and which explains the reasons in equivalent terms to those in the Code of Practice, or because of disproportionate cost or the information not being available.** Take care to avoid draft answers which are literally true but likely to give rise to misleading inferences.

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REFERENCE	TITLE	PART	STATUS
D/Sec(AS)/12/1	'UFOs' - Policy	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	B	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	C	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	D	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	E	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	F	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	G	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	H	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	I	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	J	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	K	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	L	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	M	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	N	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	O	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/2/1	'UFOs' - Report of Sighting, Rendlesham Forest, Dec 1980	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	B	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	C	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	D	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	E	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	F	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	G	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	H	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	I	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	J	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	K	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	L	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	M	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	N	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	O	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	P	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	Q	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	R	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	S	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/4	'UFOs' - PQs & PEs	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/4	'UFOs' - PQs & PEs	B	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/5	'UFOs' - Close Encounter Reports, Alien Entities, Abductions, etc.	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/6	'UFOs' - Alleged UFO Incident - Crash of Lightning F6 - 8 Sept 70	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/12/7	'UFOs' - Alleged UFO Incident - 31 March 1993	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	B	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	C	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	D	Open
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	B	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	C	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	D	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	E	Closed

D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	F	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	G	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	H	Open
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	B	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	C	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	D	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	E	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	F	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	G	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	H	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	I	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	J	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	K	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	L	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	M	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	N	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	O	Open
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - PQs/PEs	A	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - PQs/PEs	B	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - PQs/PEs	C	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - PQs/PEs	D	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - PQs/PEs	E	Closed
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - PQs/PEs	F	Open
D/Sec(AS)/64/5	'UFOs' - Press Cuttings	A	Open
D/Sec(AS)/64/6	'UFOs' - Answerphone Messages	A	Open

**LORDS WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION - URGENT ACTION REQUIRED**

DATE FOR RETURN : 12:00 ON 18 November 1998  
 PQ REFERENCE : PQ 41451  
 PQ TYPE : LORDS WRITTEN  
 MINISTER REPLYING : -NOTFOUND-  
 LEAD BRANCH: : SEC (AS)  
 COPY ADDRESSEE(S) : APS/USofS  
 CS(RM)

Peer's DETAIL: Admiral of The Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB

**QUESTION**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will list the references and titles of all open and closed files currently held by the Ministry of Defence which contain information about unidentified flying objects. (3910)

DRAFTED BY : Section 40  
 GRADE/RANK: Grade 7 [signed] TEL: Section 40

AUTHORISED BY: Section 40 [signed] TEL: Section 40  
 GRADE/RANK: SCS

**DECLARATION:** I have satisfied myself that the following answer and background note are in accordance with the Government's policy on answering PQs, Departmental instructions (DCI GEN 150/97), and the Open Government Code (DCI GEN 54/98).

**ANSWER**

The absence of a central database of files created by MOD Headquarters and Establishments, precludes identification of all files that might contain information on this topic. A full list could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Within Sec(AS)2, the Ministry of Defence focal point for all matters relating to 'UFOs', a number of files dating from 1985 are held. These files contain public correspondence, sighting reports and associated papers and are referenced as follows (those annotated 'open' are currently in use):

REFERENCE	TITLE	PART
D/Sec(AS)/12/1	'UFOs' - Policy	A
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	A
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	B
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	C
D/Sec(AS)/64/1	'UFOs' - Policy	D Open
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	A

D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	B
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	C
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	D
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	E
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	F
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	G
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	H
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	I
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	J
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	K
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	L
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	M
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	N
D/Sec(AS)/12/2	'UFOs' - Reports	O
<i>W</i> D/Sec(AS)/12/2/1	'UFOs' - Reports	A
D/Sec(AS)/12/5	'UFOs' - Reports	A
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	A
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	B
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	C
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	D
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	E
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	F
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	G
D/Sec(AS)/64/2	'UFOs' - Sighting Reports	H
D/Sec(AS)/12/6	'UFOs' - Alleged 'UFO' Incident 8 Sept 1970	A
D/Sec(AS)/12/7	'UFOs' - Alleged 'UFO' Incident 31 March 1993	A
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	A
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	B
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	C
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	D
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	E
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	F
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	G
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	H
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	I
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	J
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	K
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	L
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	M
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	N
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	O
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	P
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	Q
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	R
D/Sec(AS)/12/3	'UFOs' - Correspondence	S
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	A
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	B
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	C
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	D
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	E
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	F
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	G
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	H
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	I
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	J
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	K
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	L

Open

D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	M	
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	N	
D/Sec(AS)/64/3	'UFOs' - Public Correspondence	O	Open
D/Sec(AS)/12/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries	A	
D/Sec(AS)/12/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries	B	
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries	A	
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries	B	
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries C		
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries	D	
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries	E	
D/Sec(AS)/64/4	'UFOs' - Parliamentary Questions & Parliamentary Enquiries	F	Open
D/Sec(AS)/64/5	'UFOs' - Press Cuttings	A	Open
D/Sec(AS)/64/6	'UFOs' - Answerphone Messages	A	Open

76.

6414

WA 141

Written Answers

[20 OCTOBER 1998]

Written Answers

WA 142

3

attacks on unarmed individuals in public places, with the resultant deaths of passers-by, can hardly be considered as "military" actions. Her Majesty's Government condemned both attacks unreservedly.

The MKO remains on the US State Department list of terrorist organisations despite the recent statement by the House of Representatives.

### Gibraltar

**Viscount Exmouth** asked Her Majesty's Government:

In light of the unanimous opposition demonstrated by the Government and opposition parties of Gibraltar, how they intend to reply to the proposals presented by the Spanish Foreign Minister, Senor Matutes, during the last round of the Brussels agreement talks on 10 December 1997. [HL3363]

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:** Her Majesty's Government have said that we will study the proposals and reply in due course. We have also said that we stand by the commitment enshrined in the preamble to the 1969 Constitution. There can be no change in sovereignty over Gibraltar without the consent of its people. That remains the position.

### International Criminal Court

**Lord Goodhart** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What plans they have to ratify the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction over war crimes. [HL3383]

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:** It is our hope that we shall be among the first 60 states to ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court. We will bring forward the necessary legislation as soon as the parliamentary timetable allows.

### Kosovo

**Lord Russell-Johnston** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What discussions the "Contact Group" has had with President Rugova about the future of Kosovo. [HL3386]

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:** Representatives of the Contact Group have been in regular contact with Dr. Rugova at which they have underlined that the Contact Group's position on the status of Kosovo is clear: we support an enhanced status with a large degree of autonomy for Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This must include meaningful self-administration. Dr. Rugova's negotiating team is engaged in talks on a Contact Group-endorsed interim settlement based on these principles.

### \*Strategic Defence Review White Paper: Leak\*

**Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What has been the outcome of his inquiry into the leak of the Strategic Defence Review White Paper. [HL3490]

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Gilbert):** A copy of the Strategic Defence Review White Paper was leaked to the Opposition Front Bench and to the press on the afternoon and early evening of Tuesday 7 July. As soon as my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Defence learned about the leak, he asked the Cabinet Secretary to authorise an immediate and thorough investigation into how it came about. This inquiry has been conducted by two independent investigators. It has now been completed.

We regret that after extensive enquiries, the investigators were not able to identify the person responsible for the leak. They have, however, established the course of events on the afternoon and evening of 7 July with a high degree of probability.

The investigators concluded that on 7 July a photocopy of the White Paper was sent by an authorised recipient within government to the Opposition Front Bench; and that subsequently four copies were made within the House and made available to selected journalists. The first newspaper to receive a copy was the *Daily Telegraph*. Further copies went to *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Daily Mail*, apparently in phased distribution because of the bulk of the document being copied. The investigators found no evidence to suggest that, in addition to the copy sent to the Opposition, a second authorised recipient sent copies to the newspapers.

The investigation revealed some small weaknesses in the generally very successful procedures for the distribution of the White Paper. None of them was a likely cause of the leak. The necessary steps will be taken to ensure that these small errors are not repeated. In itself the leak was of no significance to national security. But we are naturally most concerned that someone working for the government breached security in this way. Ten thousand copies of the White Paper were circulated under embargo in advance of its publication. It appears that only one of the authorised recipients did not respect its confidentiality.

The leak was a gross discourtesy to Parliament; and I once again express my anger and my apologies that it occurred.

### \*RAF Feltwell Deep Space Tracking Facility\*

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether the deep space tracking facility at RAF Feltwell has a role in tracking or searching for satellites, space debris, ballistic missiles and space probes. [HL3312]



**Lord Gilbert:** RAF Feltwell is responsible for searching for man-made objects in deep space and as such does have a role in searching for and tracking satellites, space debris, and space probes. However, it has no role in ballistic missile detection and tracking.

### **XGreece and Turkey: Defence Expenditure X**

**Lord Judd** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What is their estimate of the level of defence expenditure by Greece and Turkey for the next five years and the number of tanks already possessed by each of these two countries; what they perceive as the implications for NATO and stability in Europe; and what action they are taking to deal with those implications. [HL3351]

**Lord Gilbert:** The defence expenditure and military forces of Greece and Turkey are the responsibilities of the countries concerned. We support both countries in their commitment to resolve any bilateral disagreements through dialogue, and welcome the NATO Secretary-General's announcement on 4 June 1998 that the 1988 Memorandum of Understanding on Confidence Building Measures in the Aegean is to be implemented in full.

### **Interest Liabilities**

**Lord Sudeley** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What further measures they are taking to protect consumers and firms from having to pay not only interest on national debt but also interest on corporate and private credits. [HL3405]

**Lord McIntosh of Haringey:** None. Individuals and firms are responsible for paying the interest on debts they take out, but interest on the national debt is borne by the taxpayer.

### **Housing Renovation and Conversion: VAT**

**Viscount Brentford** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they are considering reducing the 17.5 per cent. VAT currently placed upon the refurbishment or conversion of homes which have been empty for long periods. [HL3372]

**Lord McIntosh of Haringey:** The Government's aim is that within 10 years 60 per cent. of new housing, including conversions, will be built on previously developed sites. Although land use planning is, and will remain, the main instrument of achieving this objective, the Government will also be considering a wide range of economic instruments which could play a complementary part in achieving housing policy aims.

### **Electronic Publishing: VAT**

**Lord Walton of Detchant** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Why it is that, while printed published books and journals are zero-rated for VAT, electronically published material is subject to VAT at the standard rate; and whether they have any intention of correcting this situation by zero-rating electronically published material. [HL3453]

**Lord McIntosh of Haringey:** Under EU agreements, while the UK may retain those zero rates it already has, it is not possible to extend their scope nor to create new ones.

### **Taxation of Savings and Tax Evasion**

**Lord Higgins** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Answers by the Lord McIntosh of Haringey on 5 October regarding the taxation of savings (H.L. Deb., cols. 162-164), to what extent they consider the draft European Union directive on that subject will deal with the problem of tax evasion rather than tax avoidance. [HL3434]

**Lord McIntosh of Haringey:** The draft directive is intended to help prevent illegal tax evasion—that is, failure by individuals to declare interest income received from a foreign source. It is not aimed at legal tax avoidance. My remarks during the debate on 5 October were entirely concerned with tax evasion, not avoidance.

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Answer given by Lord McIntosh of Haringey to Lord Higgins on 5 October (H.L. Deb., col. 163), whether they consider that the European Commission consulted adequately with interested bodies in the City of London and elsewhere before proposing its draft directive on the taxation of savings. [HL3438]

**Lord McIntosh of Haringey:** The precise extent of prior consultation undertaken by the Commission is not clear. However, it is our view that adequate consultation of the financial sector is essential and we have urged the Commission to extend the range and scope of their external discussions. As I said in the debate on 5 October, the Government have already undertaken extensive consultation with the City on the draft directive.

### **GDP and GNP**

**Lord Kennet** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will take steps to replace measurements of gross domestic product and gross national product, both within the United Kingdom and in international bodies, with measurements that are being developed by the Office for National Statistics which are able to take into account

64/4

WA 99

Written Answers

[14 OCTOBER 1998]

Written Answers

WA 100

## Written Answers

Wednesday, 14th October 1998.

### \* Unidentified Flying Objects \*

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will list the document references and titles of all open files at the Public Record Office that contain information about unidentified flying objects.

[HL3314]

**The Lord Chancellor (Lord Irvine of Lairg):** I list below the document references and titles of all open files at the Public Record Office known to staff to contain information about unidentified flying objects. There may be information in other open files but this could be discovered only at disproportionate cost.

#### AIR 2 Air Ministry Registered Files

**AIR 2/16918** 1961-1963, alleged sightings of UFO's. Letters from members of the public on alleged sightings. Magazine entitled *Cosmic Voice "Mars and Venus Speak to Earth"*, dated November-December 1961/Article entitled *Men from Outer Space: Are they visiting Britain?*

**AIR 2/17318** 1963 UFO reports

**AIR 2/17526** 1964 UFO reports

**AIR 2/17527** 1964-1965 UFO reports

**AIR 2/17982** 1965-1966 UFO reports

**AIR 2/17983** 1966 UFO reports (with photographs)

**AIR 2/17984** 1966-67 UFO reports (with photographs)

#### AIR 14 Bomber Command

**AIR 14/2800** 1943 December No. 115 Squadron: News Sheet *Bang On* No. 1. Aerial phenomena—reports of UFOs on RAF bombing raids.

#### AIR 16 Fighter Command

**AIR 16/1199** 1952 September Flying saucers: occurrence reports by service personnel at Topcliffe station, Thirsk, and local public.

#### AIR 20 Unregistered Papers

**AIR 20/7390** 1952 Reported sightings of UFOs: memorandum prepared for the War Office.

**AIR 20/9320** 1957 Parliamentary Question from 17 April 1957 by Mr. Stan Awbery MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Air, what recent investigations have been made into unidentified flying objects; what photographs have been taken; and what reports have been made on this subject. Reply by the Secretary of State (Mr. Ward). Notes on UFOs provided for the Minister's use. Also: UFO incident at West Freugh in Wigtownshire in 1957; incidents and signals at RAF Church Lawford, RAF Bempton and RAF Lakenheath; newspaper clippings 6 April 1957 from the *News Chronicle* and the *Evening Standard*; photographs of object over the Channel Islands from the *Daily Sketch* of 6 April 1957.

**AIR 20/9321** 1957 Parliamentary Question 15 May 1957 from Major Patrick Wall MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Air, how many unidentified flying objects have been detected over Great Britain this year as

compared with previous years; and whether the object picked up on radar over the Dover Straits on 29 April has yet been identified. Further questions to the Minister from Mr. Frank Beswick MP. Notes for Minister on reported sightings. Replies by Mr. Ward. Newspaper clippings April-May 1957: *The Times*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Worker*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Sketch*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Express* and the *Evening News*.

**AIR 20/9322** 1957 Parliamentary Question 15 May 1957 from Mr. Frank Beswick MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Air, what was the nature of the aircraft or other aircraft sighted on the radar defence screens on Monday night and which occasioned the despatch of Fighter Command. Reply by Mr. Ward. Notes for Ministers.

**AIR 20/9994** Headquarters Southern Section Intelligence. Reports on Aerial Phenomena, including "observation of unusual aerial phenomena at Royal Air Force Ventor on 29 July 1957". Two Copies of "Track Tracing" Sheets.

Description of UFOs, for example, RAF Lyneham 9 December 1957: "December 1957: Description large bright crescent shaped object or could be a sphere with trails from edges. Travelling on a course of 290 degrees at a moderate speed. Seemed to be descending and not at a very great height".

**AIR 20/11887** 1967 August (with maps)

**AIR 20/11888** 1967 September

**AIR 20/11889** 1967 October (with photographs)

**AIR 20/11890** 1967 October (with maps)

**AIR 20/11891** 1967 November (with maps)

**AIR 20/11892** 1967 November

**AIR 20/11893** 1967 December

#### AIR 22 Periodical Returns, Summaries and Bulletins

**AIR 22/93** 1955 Air Ministry Secret Intelligence Summary March 1955. Volume 10, Article No. 3 on Flying Saucers "An object was reported . . .".

#### PREM 11 Prime Minister's Office: Correspondence and Papers, 1951-1964.

**PREM 11/855** 1952 Personal Minute from the Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill to the Secretary of State for Air, Lord Cheswell, dated 28 July 1952. "What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth? Let me have a report at your convenience." Minute from the Secretary of State, dated 9 August 1952, dismissing stories about flying saucers.

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will list the document references and titles of all closed files at the Public Record Office that contain information about unidentified flying objects.

[HL3315]

**The Lord Chancellor:** I list below the document references and titles of all closed files in the Public Record Office known to its staff to contain information about unidentified flying objects. There may be information in other closed files but this could be discovered only at disproportionate cost.

**AIR 2 Air Ministry: Registered Files****AIR 2/18183** 1968–1969 Unidentified Flying Objects\***AIR 20 Unregistered Papers****AIR 20/11612** 1967–1968 Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs)\***AIR 20/11895** 1968 April UFOs\***AIR 20/11896** 1968 May UFOs\***AIR 20/11897** 1968 June UFOs\***AIR 20/11898** 1968 July UFOs\***AIR 20/11899** 1968 August UFOs\***AIR 20/11900** 1968 September UFOs\***AIR 20/11901** 1968 October UFOs\***AIR 20/11902** 1968 November UFOs\***AIR 20/12055** 1969 January UFOs\***AIR 20/12056** 1969 February UFOs\***AIR 20/12057** 1969 March UFOs\***AIR 20/12058** 1969 April UFOs\***AIR 20/12059** 1969 May UFOs\***AIR 20/12060** 1969 June UFOs\***AIR 20/12061** 1969 July UFOs\***AIR 20/12062** 1969 August UFOs\***AIR 20/12063** 1969 September UFOs\***AIR 20/12064** 1969 October UFOs\***AIR 20/12065** 1969 November UFOs\***AIR 20/12066** 1969 December UFOs\***AIR 20/12067** 1970 January UFOs\***AIR 20/12297** 1970 February UFOs\***AIR 20/12298** 1970 March UFOs\***AIR 20/12299** 1970 April UFOs\***AIR 20/12300** 1970 May UFOs\***AIR 20/12301** 1970 June UFOs\***AIR 20/12302** 1970 July UFOs\***AIR 20/12303** 1970 August UFOs\***AIR 20/12304** 1970 September UFOs\***AIR 20/12305** 1970 October UFOs\***AIR 20/12306** 1970 November UFOs\*

\* = Thirty year closure rule applies.

**Surrogacy: Review Report****Baroness Gould of Potternewton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will publish the report of the review of aspects of surrogacy arrangements announced in June 1997. [HL3414]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Baroness Hayman):** The Government have received the report of the review team, chaired by Professor Margaret Brazier, OBE, and this is being published today as Cm 4068. Copies will be placed in the Library. We intend to consult formally on the recommendations in the report and an

announcement about that will be made in due course. We are very grateful to Professor Brazier and her colleagues, Professors Alastair Campbell and Susan Golombok, for their work.

**National Blood Authority****Lord Clement-Jones** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether a new management plan has been received from the new Chairman of the National Blood Authority and when it will be published. [HL3390]

**Baroness Hayman:** We have received the operational plan for 1998–99. Copies are available from the National Blood Authority and copies will be placed in the Library.

**Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Strategy****Lord Clement-Jones** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Following the recent consultation, when it is anticipated that the Department of Health will publish its Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Strategy. [HL3391]

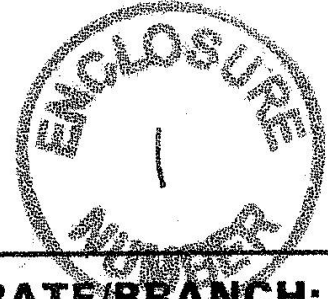
**Baroness Hayman:** The Department of Health plans to publish a new Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Strategy in the new year.

**CIREA: Asylum Information Exchange****Lord Lester of Herne Hill** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Written Answer by the Lord Williams of Mostyn on 3 September (WA 12), whether they will publish the proceedings of the Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on Asylum (CIREA). [HL3303]

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Lord Williams of Mostyn):** The outcome of proceedings of the CIREA group are contained in Council documents which can be applied for under the Council's Decision 93/731 on Access to Documents. Applications should be made in writing to the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, 175 Rue de la Loi, 1048 Brussels. The Council Secretariat will decide whether the documents may be disclosed, in accordance with the criteria laid down in the Decision. In the event of a refusal, applicants may make a confirmatory application for the document to the Council. The official journal of the European Union published a report of CIREA activities on 23 June 1997 C.191 concerning the period 1994 to 1996. The Government favour disclosure of as great a number of documents as possible.

**RESTRICTED/UNCLASSIFIED**  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
TEMPORARY ENCLOSURE JACKET



<b>REGISTERED FILE No.</b> <b>D/SEC(AS)64/4</b>		<b>DIVISION/DIRECTORATE/BRANCH:</b>  <b>SEC(AS)2A</b>	
Enclosure Jacket No. <u>1</u>			
DATE OPENED <u>26 OCT 98</u>			
<b>SUBJECT:</b> <b>PE: US3909/98</b> <b>LORD HILL-NORTON</b>			
Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date

**NOTES**

1. A Temporary Jacket will only be used when the Registered File is not available.
2. The contents of a Temporary Jacket must be incorporated in the Registered File at the earliest opportunity, and this incorporation recorded on a transit slip or file record sheet.
3. The movements of Temporary Jackets are recorded by the Registry. Transit is to be recorded on transit slips as for Registered Files.

**DOWNGRADING**

*(to be completed when the jacket is incorporated in the Registered File)*

This jacket may be downgraded to:—

**RESTRICTED** on.....  
**UNCLASSIFIED** (insert date)

Certifying Officer.....

Date..... Appointment and Branch.....

**RESTRICTED/UNCLASSIFIED**

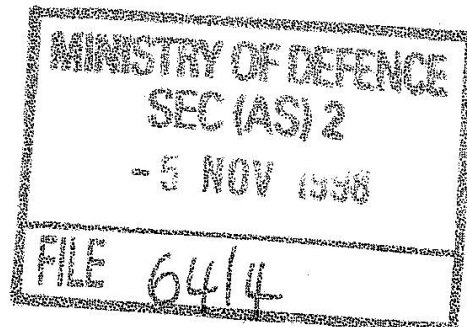


PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR DEFENCE

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB  
Telephone 0171-21.....(Direct Dialling)  
0171-21 89000 (Switchboard)



D/US of S/JS 3909/98/P



4 November 1998

*Dear Lord Hill-Norton,*

Thank you for your letters of 7 October to George Robertson and myself about 'unidentified flying objects'.

I hope you will be reassured when I say that when dealing with letters and questions from Parliamentary colleagues, Defence Ministers receive written briefing, supplemented as necessary with oral advice, on the facts of the case. It is only having satisfied ourselves that it is pertinent to the matter in hand, that we respond to our colleagues.

You ask a number of questions in your latest letters; where these have not previously been dealt with insofar as my Department's interest is concerned in correspondence or Parliamentary answer, I can add the following information.

Military Task 9 requires the integrity of UK airspace to be maintained and this is fulfilled by the continuous air picture and air policing capability. There is therefore no requirement for 'UFO' reports to be forwarded to my Department, but any that are sent will of course be read. Where the contents justify it, our air defence and other experts as necessary are consulted. As you are now aware from Lord Gilbert's answer on 21 October (Official Report col 158), an answering machine is left permanently on to receive any reports.

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB



Recycled Paper



You say that sighting reports have increased significantly each year but this is not the case. The figures for the last ten years are as follows:

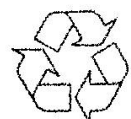
1988 (397); 1989 (258); 1990 (209); 1991 (117); 1992 (147);  
1993 (258); 1994 (250); 1995 (373); 1996 (609); 1997 (425);  
1998 to end September (163).

I recognise of course that you remain dissatisfied with the responses you have received to Parliamentary Questions and letters in recent months. I can only repeat that there is no defence requirement for research or investigation into allegations of 'UFO' activity where there is no perceived threat to the integrity of UK airspace.

I hope this explains the position.

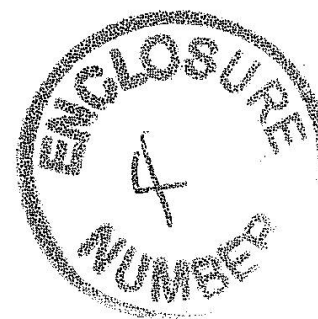
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Section 40

JOHN SPELLAR MP



Recycled Paper

COVERING UNCLASSIFIED - POLICY



Loose Minute

D/Sec(AS)/64/4

23rd October 1998

PE Unit

Copy to:

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PSO/ACAS  
ADGE1  
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DI Sec  
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'UFOs': LORD HILL-NORTON

Reference: PE US3909/98 dated 13 October 1998

ISSUE

1. Lord Hill-Norton's dissatisfaction with the Department's limited interest in 'UFO' phenomena.

RECOMMENDATION

2. USofs to write; Sofs has asked to see the draft.

TIMING

3. Routine

BACKGROUND

4. Lord Hill-Norton believes in 'UFOs' and has taken on himself the mission of persuading Government to take seriously the notion that we are being visited by craft of extra-terrestrial origin. He pursues this with evangelical fervour through numerous PQs and PEs, and is something of a champion of the cause of 'ufologists' in this country.

MOD Interest in 'UFOs'

5. Military Task 9 is to maintain the integrity of the UK's airspace. This requirement is met by the continuous recognised air picture and an air policing capability. From that perspective we read reports sent to us of 'UFO' sightings but consultation with air defence staff and others as necessary is considered only where there is sufficient evidence to suggest a breach of UK air space: such as reports from credible witnesses (pilots, air traffic controllers etc); those supported by photographic, video or documentary evidence; corroboration by a number of witnesses; or are of a phenomenon currently being observed and might,

therefore, be capable of detection. Only a handful of reports have been received in recent years in these categories and further investigation of them has found no evidence of a threat.

6. The most recent full investigation by the Department, in October 1996, was prompted by reports of lights in the sky over the sea in the Wash at the same time as Claxby radar was reporting an unidentified plot over Boston. The investigation, carried out by MOD Air Defence Staff, included discussions with civil and military observers and operators, examination of duty radar logs and advice from the Royal Greenwich Observatory. It concluded the radar plot to be a permanent echo from a church spire appearing only in certain weather conditions, and the lights in the sky to be in all probability the planet Venus, particularly bright at that time of the year.

#### Re-investigation of Alleged Sightings

7. Lord Hill-Norton continues to question decisions made years ago. He does not accept that the 'Rendlesham Forest' incident (involving the then Deputy Base Commander of RAF Bentwaters/RAF Woodbridge) was investigated satisfactorily in 1980-81. We have tried to explain on numerous occasions that decisions made in the past were reached by those responsible for considering the relevant material available at the time. It would not be possible to recreate the circumstances of what was seen, and witness recollections would have blurred with the passage of time. All of the available information about decisions made more than 30 years ago is available for public scrutiny at the Public Record Office.

#### US Position

8. US DOD interest in 'UFOs' has been limited for some years to a statement on their Internet web site of their 1950s and 1960s research into the phenomenon ('Project Blue Book'), which concludes that they no longer have any interest in 'UFO' reports and related matters. Those seeking to report a 'sighting' are invited to contact a local law enforcement agency.

#### SUMMARY

9. The root of Lord Hill-Norton's dissatisfaction is that Government policy relating to 'UFOs' is narrower than he considers appropriate and there are no plans to widen it. He is unwilling to accept this policy. There is no evidence to support Lord Hill-Norton's claims that 'UFO' sighting reports are of defence significance, and his suspicion that the Department actively discourages or ignores reports is unfounded. Very few reports are worthy of departmental action, but that is a different point.

Section 40

Sec(AS)2

MB8247 Section 40

CHOTS: SEC(AS)2

FAX : Section 40



~~RESTRICTED POLICY~~  
UNCLASSIFIED

D/USofs/JS

Thank you for your letter of 7 October about 'unidentified flying objects'. I am also replying to the similar letter of the same date to George Robertson.

I hope you will be reassured when I say that when dealing with letters and questions from Parliamentary colleagues, Defence Ministers receive written briefing, supplemented as necessary with oral advice, on the facts of the case. It is only having satisfied ourselves that it is pertinent to the matter in hand, that we respond to our colleagues.

You ask a number of questions in your latest letters; where these have not previously been dealt with insofar as my Department's interest is concerned in correspondence or Parliamentary answer, I can add the following information.

Military Task 9 requires the integrity of UK airspace to be maintained and this is fulfilled by the continuous air picture and air policing capability. There ~~is~~ therefore no requirement for 'UFO' reports to be forwarded to my Department, but any that are sent will of course be read. Where the contents justify it, our air defence and other experts as necessary are consulted. As you now know from Lord Gilbert's answer on 21 October (Official Report col 158), an answering machine is left permanently on to receive any reports.

You say that sighting reports have increased significantly

~~RESTRICTED POLICY~~  
UNCLASSIFIED

each year but this is not the case. The figures for the last ten years are as follows:

1988 (397); 1989 (258); 1990 (209); 1991 (117); 1992 (147);  
1993 (258); 1994 (250); 1995 (373); 1996 (609); 1997 (425);  
1998 to end September (163).

I recognise of course that you remain dissatisfied with the responses you have received to Parliamentary Questions and letters in recent months. I can only repeat that there is no defence requirement for research or investigation into allegations of 'UFO' activity where there is no perceived threat to the integrity of UK airspace.

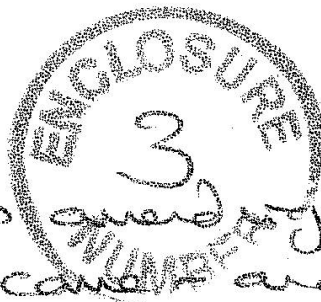
JOHN SPELLAR

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton

Section 40

Would you like to try this? I think we can probably stick to the main points.

Head of Sec (AS)



Help! I can keep querying this for weeks to come and still feel it's too long. As I mentioned to you, SofS wants to clear the draft USofS seeds, but hasn't seen any of the PPs/PEs etc of recent times, hence the overall summary in the background note.

I should appreciate your thoughts/comments

Loose Minute

Section 40

D/Sec(AS)/64/4

October 1998

PE Unit

Copy to:

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- APS/USofS PSO/ACAS
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Section 40

22/10

'UFOS': LORD HILL NORTON

Reference: PE US3909/98 dated 13 October 1998

ISSUE

Lord Hill-Norton's dissatisfaction with the Department's limited interest in 'UFO' phenomena.

RECOMMENDATION

2. USofS to write; SofS has asked to see the draft.

TIMING

3. Routine.

BACKGROUND

4. Lord Hill-Norton believes in UFOs and has taken on himself the mission of persuading Government to take seriously the notion that we are being visited by craft of extra-terrestrial origin. He pursues this with evangelized fervour through numerous PQs and PEs, and is something of a champion of the cause of 'ufologists' in his country.

11. The number of 'UFO'-related letters and telephone calls from the public to Sec(AS)2 also rose significantly during 1996. At that time callers had direct access to Sec(AS)2 desk officers and callers they became more frequent in their efforts to pass on details of their personal concerns outwith the Department's remit (alien abductions, crop circles, extraterrestrial lifeforms, ghosts, animal mutilations etc). Callers did not accept that there was no defence interest in their concerns and staff effort became increasingly diverted from core tasks. In February 1997 the answerphone was installed: it sets out clearly the Department's interest in the subject, invites callers to leave a message within this remit, and makes clear that we will only respond when more defence-related information is required. That said, it is our policy to send a written response to all callers who leave their name and address.

12. It is not the case that installing the answerphone was directly responsible for the reduction in the number of reports received as the total for 1997 shows. It is rather the case that the lack of media interest in the subject this year has had this effect. Lord Hill Norton draws attention to the answerphone being switched off outside normal working hours suggesting the public has no way of reporting what they might have seen, but overlooks the fact that it was never the case that the Sec(AS)2 number was manned out of hours.

#### Re-investigation of Alleged Sightings

7 13. Lord Hill Norton continues to question decisions made some years ago. He does not accept that the 'Rendlesham Forest' incident (involving the then Deputy Base Commander of RAF Bentwaters/RAF Woodbridge) was investigated satisfactorily in 1980-81 (~~Hansard extracts and background notes attached for ease of reference~~). We have tried to explain on numerous occasions that decisions made in the past were reached by those responsible for considering the relevant material available at the time. It ~~must be the case that even with unlimited defence resources it~~ would not possible to recreate the circumstances of what was seen, and witness recollections would have blurred with the passage of

time. ~~It is also the case that~~ all of the available information about decisions made more than 30 years ago is available for public scrutiny at the Public Record Office.

#### US Position

*1950s and 1960s*

- 8 14. ~~In the United States,~~ US DOD interest in 'UFOs' has been limited for some years to a statement on their Internet web site of their research into the phenomena<sup>on</sup> ('Project Blue Book'), ~~and~~ <sup>which</sup> concludes that they no longer have any interest in 'UFO' reports and related matters. Those seeking to report a 'sighting' are invited to contact ~~the~~ local law enforcement agencies<sup>y</sup>.

#### SUMMARY

- 9 15. The root of Lord Hill Norton's dissatisfaction is that ~~current~~ Government policy relating to 'UFOs' is narrower than he considers appropriate and there are no plans to widen this interest. He ~~has made clear his unwillingness~~ to accept this policy. There is no evidence to support Lord Hill Norton's claims that 'UFO' sighting reports are of defence significance, and ~~no substance to his allegation of a deliberate attempt to play down and reduce the number of sighting reports passed on to the Department.~~ *his suspicion that the Department actively discourages or ignores reports is unfounded. Very few reports are worthy of departmental action, but*
16. I apologise for the length of this background note but I ~~that is a~~ considered SoFS would wish to note that we have gone to some ~~lengths~~ <sup>different point</sup> in recent months to deal with Lord Hill Norton's personal views on this subject.

PEs\3909HillNo

D/USofs/JS

Thank you for your letter of 7 October about 'unidentified flying objects'. I am also replying to the similar letter of the same date to George Robertson.

I am sorry that you remain dissatisfied with the responses to the Parliamentary Questions and letters you have received in recent months. However, this is inevitable when an issue is looked at from two different perspectives. You know the extent of my Department's interest in these matters and have clearly stated your own. They do not coincide. I can only repeat that there is no defence requirement for research or investigation into allegations of 'unidentified flying objects' where there is no perceived military threat to the integrity of United Kingdom airspace.

I hope you will be reassured when I say that when dealing with letters <sup>and questions</sup> from Parliamentary colleagues, ~~and Parliamentary Questions,~~ all Defence Ministers receive written briefing, supplemented as necessary with oral advice, on the facts of the case. It is only having received such information and satisfied ourselves ~~that it is pertinent to the matter in hand,~~ that we respond to our colleagues.

You ask a number of questions in your <sup>latest</sup> letters; where these have not previously been dealt with insofar as my Department's interest is concerned in correspondence or Parliamentary answer, I can add the following information.

~~Under~~ Military Task 9 requires the integrity of UK airspace to be maintained and this is fulfilled by the continuous air picture and air policing capability. There is therefore no requirement for 'UFO' reports to be forwarded to my Department, but any that are sent will of course be read. Where the contents justify it, air defence and other experts as necessary are consulted. As you now know, from Lord Gilbert's answer in [ Oct 84], an answering machine is left permanently on to receive any reports.

and the process for handling of 'UFO'-related issues is part of this. Air Defence experts and others as necessary are fully consulted about 'UFO' policy related issues.

You say that sighting reports have increased significantly each year but this is not the case. The figures for the last ten years are as follows:

1988 (397); 1989 (258); 1990 (209); 1991 (117); 1992 (147);  
1993 (258); 1994 (250); 1995 (373); 1996 (609); 1997 (425);  
1998 to end September (163).

We do believe that media interest in the books about the 'UFO' phenomenon published in 1996, and the 50th anniversary of the alleged sighting of the first 'flying saucer' at Roswell, USA, in 1997 influenced the number of sighting reports in those years.

I can assure you that all sighting reports are looked at with a rational and objective eye. It is, however, the case that the vast majority contain insufficient information to suggest an event of any nature has occurred. Where there is sufficient evidence to warrant further investigation, this is done as a matter of course.

It is also not the case that the installation of an answerphone in Sec(AS)2 was a deliberate act to restrict members of the public from making reports. The machine was installed early in 1997 so that desk officers in the Branch could carry out their core tasks without interruption from members of the public wishing to discuss 'UFO'-related issues outwith my Department's interest. I do not understand your point about out of hours access (ie evenings and weekends) as the Sec(AS)2 desk has never been manned at these times and any calls were have gone unanswered. The answerphone is now left on continuously and, therefore, provides an additional reporting facility. All callers leaving their name and address on the answerphone receive a written reply.

You question our confidence in the adequate defence of this country. As recently as the Strategic Defence Review, my Ministerial colleagues and I satisfied ourselves that our forces

I recognise of course that you remain dissatisfied with the responses you have received to Parliamentary Questions and letters in recent months. This is, however, inevitable when ~~my Department's responsibilities~~ <sup>and interest</sup> in this area do not coincide with I can only repeat that there is no defence requirement for research or investigation into allegations of 'UFO' activity where there is no perceived threat to the integrity of UK airspace.

JOHN SPELLAR

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill Norton



WA 131

Written Answers

[19 OCTOBER 1998]

Written Answers

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes are published in the Annual Report. A list of the current membership is also attached to the press releases announcing meetings of the committee. Copies of all these documents are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

### Salmon Fishing

**The Earl of Shrewsbury** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether, in the light of the recommendations of the Environment Agency that a 10-year ban on the fishing for salmon with rod and line be imposed on rivers in England and Wales, they will take immediate steps to close down the North East coast drift net fisheries. [HL3344]

**Lord Donoughue:** The Environment Agency has not recommended a 10-year ban on fishing for salmon by rod in England and Wales. The agency is however considering a range of measures to reduce exploitation of spring salmon: these include postponing the start of the salmon netting season and requiring the release of all salmon caught by rod in the first half of the year. It is currently consulting its statutory advisory committees, and, in the light of the advice it receives, will decide whether to proceed with formal proposals.

### Sand Eel Population: Protection

**The Earl of Shrewsbury** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What steps they intend to take to protect the sand eel population around the coasts of the United Kingdom. [HL3345]

**Lord Donoughue:** The Government set annual restrictions on sand eel fishing in the inshore fisheries around the Shetland Islands and Western Isles. In addition, they have proposed to the European Commission the introduction of a seasonal ban on sand eel fishing off the North Sea coast from the Orkneys to Humberside. This would be an international closure introduced through European Community rules.

### Unidentified Flying Objects

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Written Answer by the Lord Gilbert on 3 September (WA 60), whether airports, observatories, RAF bases and police stations are still required to forward details of any report they receive of an unidentified flying object to the Ministry of Defence, or whether such action is now only discretionary, following the April 1997 review of procedures. [HL3313]

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Gilbert):** There is no requirement for anyone to submit 'UFO' sighting reports to the MoD, other than for

military air defence purposes. However, any reports sent to the department will be given the attention they deserve, commensurate with the quality of information provided.

### Defence Diversification

**Lord Judd** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they have studied the paper by Ian S. Goudie on Defence Diversification published by the International Security Information Service; what conclusions they have drawn; and what action they are proposing to take. [HL3319]

**Lord Gilbert:** The Government have considered the paper submitted by Mr. Goudie as part of the consultation process following publication of the Green Paper "Defence Diversification: Getting the most out of defence technology", Cm 3861.

A wide range of comments were received and the Government are grateful to all those who commented. The views received have, as far as possible, been taken into account in reaching conclusions. These will be published in the form of a White Paper later in the autumn.

### Military Attachments: Estonia and Latvia

**The Earl of Carlisle** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they intend to attach, as military advisers, an officer of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel to the Ministries of Defence of Estonia and Latvia as they have done to the Ministry of Defence of Lithuania. [HL3334]

**Lord Gilbert:** We attach great importance to defence co-operation with the Baltic States and continue to provide military-related assistance to them in accordance with their priorities. The attachment of a military officer to the Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence (MoD) was to meet a specific Lithuanian requirement for advice on military training. Although we have no specific plans for military attachments elsewhere in the region at the moment, we keep our defence assistance programmes under review, considering all requests for assistance as they arise.

### Northern Ireland: Abortion Laws

**Lord Alton of Liverpool** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the answer made by Lord Dubs on 5 October (H.L. Deb., Col. 228), whether government time will be made available in the House of Commons for a Private Member's Bill seeking to extend the abortion laws to Northern Ireland; and whether they accept the principle established by John Major MP that the existing laws will not be changed either by a government initiative or by the

22 Oct '98 12:43 P.02

WA 157

Written Answers

[21 OCTOBER 1998]

Written Answers

WA 158

aim of bringing it into effect at the earliest available opportunity. This will require primary legislation.

### National Air Traffic Services Ltd.

**Lord Gladwin of Clee** asked Her Majesty's Government:

When they expect to announce proposals for a public/private partnership for National Air Traffic Services Ltd. [HL3503]

**Lord Whitty:** We have today published a consultation paper on the Government's preferred option for a public/private partnership (PPP) for National Air Traffic Services Ltd.

The safe and efficient provision of air traffic control services is rightly a matter of great public interest and, since the PPP was announced, a debate has begun on key issues such as safety, the national interest and public accountability. The Government now want to launch a structured, full and open consultation on these issues. The consultation document therefore sets out a wide range of matters on which we are looking for views. Safety remains our top priority and we believe that the proposed PPP offers the opportunity to establish a structure which will strengthen safety, satisfy the public interest and the needs of aviation users while providing for the sound future of National Air Traffic Services Ltd. and its employees.

We hope that all those with an interest in this subject, whatever their views on the Government's preferred option, will take the opportunity to respond to the consultation document.

### Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997

**Viscount Simon** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What plans they have to implement the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997. [HL3496]

**Lord Whitty:** It is clear that the setting of road traffic reduction targets will be an integral part of the process of drawing up local transport strategies. Local transport plans are a centrepiece of the Government's transport proposals and it is vital that we get implementation right. We have listened to the Local Government Association and local authority concerns about the difficulty of producing robust local transport plans by July 1999. We will therefore invite local highway authorities to produce "provisional" five year plans by July 1999, covering the period 2000/01-2004/05. These would be the basis for allocating resources for 2000/01 only. Authorities would then roll their plans on by one year and submit "full" plans for 2001/02-2005/06 in July 2000, when resources would be allocated across the plan period.

Statutory reports produced under the provisions of the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 will therefore be submitted in July 2000, as part of the first round of full local transport plans. We will expect authorities to

submit non-statutory "interim" road traffic reduction reports in July 1999, as part of the provisional plans.

The London boroughs are not covered by the White Paper requirement to produce local transport plans, but will be separately required to produce *local implementation plans* which are in keeping with the Mayor's integrated transport strategy for London. We are taking this forward separately.

The Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act 1998 requires the Government to consider the setting of national targets. We will therefore require a greater degree of standardisation from local authorities in the measurement of existing traffic levels and forecasts—in order that we can assess the national implications. We believe this can be done by building on the data already collected for national surveys. It will take some time to get an assessment framework in place. This is something we would like to take forward jointly with local authorities under the auspices of the Transport Statistics Liaison Group. The existing draft guidance on the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 will be revised in the light of this work. The Government have also undertaken that they will produce a first report to Parliament on the issue of national traffic targets by the end of 1999 (which will also need to reflect the views of the Commission for Integrated Transport, when appointed). To achieve this, they will need to draw on existing sources of information together with any useful inputs from local authorities from their 1999 plans, accepting that at this stage the material will not be in a standardised format.

### UFOs: MoD Answering Machine

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will ensure that the answering machine which the Ministry of Defence uses both to explain its policy on unidentified flying objects and to provide a facility for the public to report sightings is turned on at all times and not switched off outside working hours. [HL3407]

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Gilbert):** Yes.

### Medical Negligence Claims

**Lord Clement-Jones** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What activity the Department of Health is currently engaged in to review its exposure to medical negligence claims and its processes and procedures for dealing with them. [HL3460]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Baroness Hayman):** On 29 April 1998 my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Health wrote to a number of organisations representing professional, legal, National Health Service and patient interests seeking their views on what can be done to reduce the number of incidents which give rise

T A B A
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WA 59

Written Answers

[3 SEPTEMBER 1998]

Written Answers

WA 60

either police or military personnel; and whether they will place copies of any such agreements in the Library of the House. [HL2808]

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Gilbert):** No formal arrangements to provide training for police or military personnel have been conducted with the Turkish authorities since 1 May 1997. The UK Government have, however, a programme of practical assistance to help the Turkish civil authorities in the field of human rights. This programme was announced in October 1997 and includes police training in the areas of public order policy, detainee rights, domestic violence and the role of an independent police complaints authority. Details of the military training given to Turkish personnel was set out in the reply I gave the noble Lord, Lord Hylton on 22 April, (*Official Report*, WA 212) and in the reply given by my right honourable friend the then Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Dr. Reid, to the honourable Member for Tooting, Mr. Cox, on 14 July 1998 (*Official Report*, col. 173).

### NATO Members: Defence Expenditure

**Lord Kennet** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether the need to increase defence expenditure is generally discussed within NATO; and whether the statement of the Turkish Minister of National Defence, Mr. Ismet Sezgin, that the Turkish armed forces need an investment of 150 billion United States dollars is agreed within NATO. [HL2955]

**Lord Gilbert:** At their meeting on 11 June 1998, NATO Defence Ministers noted that the armed forces needed in the new strategic environment, while smaller than before, still require significant funding levels. However, the setting of the overall level of defence expenditure of an individual NATO member is not a matter for the Alliance as a whole.

### RAF Feltwell: Units and Roles

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will list those units based at RAF Feltwell, and what functions each of these units carries out. [HL3237]

**Lord Gilbert:** The units based at RAF Feltwell and their roles are:

UNIT: USAF 5th Space Surveillance Squadron  
ROLE: Tracking of man-made objects in space.

UNIT: US Department of Defence Schools  
ROLE: Educational establishments for dependants of USVF personnel.

UNIT: US Mathes Airmen's Leadership School  
ROLE: Training for Junior NCOs.

UNIT: US Contracting Squadron  
ROLE: US Visiting Forces contracting authority.

UNIT: US Army Veterinary Detachment  
ROLE: Provision of veterinary services.

UNIT: US Army Air Force Exchange Services (AAFES)  
ROLE: Furniture and retail warehouse.

UNIT: US Defence Audit Agency  
ROLE: Provision of audit services.

### RAF Feltwell: Space Tracking System

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What is the role of RAF Feltwell in relation to the tracking of unidentified objects in space; how many objects detected by the Deep Space Tracking System at RAF Feltwell remain unidentified; and how many of these were transmitting a signal. [HL3238]

**Lord Gilbert:** RAF Feltwell is responsible for tracking man-made objects in deep space. I am withholding the further information requested under exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

### X Unidentified Flying Objects X

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Written Answer by the Lord Gilbert on 15 July (WA 25), what changes in procedures were implemented following the April 1997 review of the system to disseminate reports of unidentified flying objects; and whether airports, observatories, RAF bases and police stations receiving reports of UFOs are required to send them to the Ministry of Defence. [HL3239]

**Lord Gilbert:** Procedures were clarified to ensure that reports received by the department would have the attention they deserved. The department's responsibilities for maintaining the integrity of UK airspace, as set out in the Strategic Defence Review, are well known. Anybody may send in reports for assessment in that context.

### Medical and Dental Officers: Pay Awards

**Lord Vivian** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Why the recent pay award to medical and dental officers in the Armed Forces is being awarded in two stages, with 2 per cent. being paid from 1 April and the remainder payable from 1 December. [HL3240]

**Lord Gilbert:** In line with government policy on public sector pay, the award for medical and dental officers has been staged in the same way as the pay

COVERING UNCLASSIFIED POLICY



Sec (A)  
UFD

Section 40

26/8

TABB

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB

The Lord Gilbert  
Ministry of Defence  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB

RECEIVED

21 August, 1998

Dear Lord Gilbert,

Perhaps you would read again your reply dated 19 August 1998 to my Question about the reporting of unidentified flying objects. It does not answer my question, which was "..... whether airports, observatories, RAF bases and police stations receiving reports of UFOs are required (my emphasis) to send them to the MOD".

Of course "anybody may send in .....". but that was not the question. I should be grateful if you would now answer it. In short, are the people listed REQUIRED (by you) to send them to the MOD?

Yours sincerely,  
The Lord Norton

## \* NATO: New Members and Command Structure

Lord Kennet asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether the new members of NATO will fill senior NATO commands; and, if so, which. [HL2479]

Lord Gilbert: It is planned that the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland will fill posts in the new NATO command structure. The exact number, seniority and location of these has not yet been determined.

## \* Unidentified Flying Objects \*

Lord Hill-Norton asked Her Majesty's Government:

When arrangements for disseminating reports of unidentified flying objects within the Ministry of Defence were put in place and last reviewed; and whether they will ensure that all airports, observatories, RAF bases and police stations have accurate and up-to-date instructions about how to record details of unidentified aerial phenomena reported to them, together with instructions to pass them to the appropriate authorities within the Ministry of Defence; and [HL2607]

What follow-up action is taken by the Ministry of Defence when it receives a report of an unidentified flying object; and whether checks are routinely made to see whether such reports can be correlated by radar. [HL2609]

Lord Gilbert: The Ministry of Defence's interest in reports of unidentified flying objects is limited to establishing whether there is any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace has been penetrated by hostile or unauthorised foreign military activity and whether reporting procedures are adequate for this purpose. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat, no attempt is made to identify the precise nature of each reported incident. Arrangements within the MoD have been in place for a number of years for disseminating reports; they were last reviewed in April 1997. Where necessary, reports of unidentified flying objects are examined with the assistance of relevant MoD experts, and this may include radar correlation.

Lord Hill-Norton asked Her Majesty's Government:

How many reports of unidentified flying objects were notified to the Ministry of Defence in 1996, 1997 and the first six months of 1998; and how many of these sightings remain unexplained. [HL2608]

Lord Gilbert: The number of reports received by the Ministry of Defence of aerial activity not identifiable to the witness is as follows:

1996: 609

1997: 425

1998: 88 (January-June)

Unless there is evidence to suggest that the United Kingdom's airspace has been compromised by unauthorised foreign military activity, we do not seek to

provide an explanation for what might have been seen as the MoD is not resourced to provide an identification service.

Lord Hill-Norton asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether, in evaluating reports of unidentified flying objects, the Ministry of Defence will routinely consult staff at the Royal Greenwich Observatory, the Ballistic Missile Early Warning Centre at RAF Fylingdales and the Deep Space Tracing Facility at RAF Feltwell. [HL2610]

Lord Gilbert: These or other staff may be consulted, depending on the circumstances.

Lord Hill-Norton asked Her Majesty's Government:

Why the Ministry of Defence has installed an answering machine on the line used by members of the public to report unidentified flying objects; and whether those people who leave contact details on the machine receive a formal reply. [HL2611]

Lord Gilbert: An answering machine enables members of the public to leave details about aerial activity or seek further information about our policy in respect of unidentified flying objects. The machine carries a message that sets out the MoD's limited interest in the subject and explains that, in the case of reported sightings, callers will be contacted only in the event that follow-up action is deemed appropriate.

Lord Hill-Norton asked Her Majesty's Government:

How many military personnel witnessed the unidentified craft that overflew RAF Cosford and RAF Shawbury on 31 March 1993; and whether, when the craft has not been identified, such an event ought to be classified as being of no defence significance. [HL2612]

Lord Gilbert: The Ministry of Defence is aware of a single report from two military personnel of an alleged sighting in the West Midlands on 31 March 1993. The facts reported were fully examined at the time. No firm conclusions were drawn then about the nature of what had been seen, but the events were not judged to be of defence significance. The MoD has no reason to doubt the judgments made at the time.

## European Parliament, House of Commons and House of Lords: Comparative Costs

Viscount Tenby asked Her Majesty's Government:

What are the costs of maintaining the European Parliament, the House of Commons and the House of Lords, including:

(a) salaries, pensions, travelling allowances, secretarial expenses and other expenses for Members;



PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR DEFENCE

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB  
Telephone 0171-21.....(Direct Dialling)  
0171-21 89000 (Switchboard)

TAB *GA*

D/US of S/JS 3354/98/P

15 September 1998

*Dear Lord Hill-Norton,*

Thank you for your letter of 21 August to Lord Gilbert in which you seek further clarification of the Ministry of Defence's interest in the reporting of 'unidentified flying objects'. I am responding as Lord Gilbert is currently away

As you will know, the Ministry of Defence's interest in the subject of unidentified flying objects is limited to ensuring that the integrity of UK airspace is maintained. This is achieved by using a combination of civil and military radar installations, which provide a continuous real-time "picture" of the UK airspace, and an airborne military Air Defence capability.

There is, therefore, no requirement for anyone to submit 'UFO' sighting reports to the MOD. If any such reports are submitted, the Department will give them the attention they deserve commensurate with the quality of information provided.

Section 40

JOHN SPELLAR MP

Admiral of The Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
SEC (AS) 2  
16 SEP 1998  
FILE



**NUMBERS OF UNEXPLAINED AERIAL SIGHTINGS REPORTED  
TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**

1959 - 22	1981 - 600
1960 - 31	1982 - 250
1961 - 71	1983 - 390
1962 - 46	1984 - 214
1963 - 51	1985 - 177
1964 - 74	1986 - 120
1965 - 56	1987 - 150
1966 - 95	1988 - 397
1967 - 362	1989 - 258
1968 - 280	1990 - 209
1969 - 228	1991 - 117
1970 - 181	1992 - 147
1971 - 379	1993 - 258
1972 - 201	1994 - 250
1973 - 233	1995 - 373
1974 - 177	1996 - 609
1975 - 208	1997 - 425
1976 - 200	1998 -
1977 - 435	
1978 - 750	
1979 - 550	
1980 - 350	

Figures from before 1959 are not available.

## Written Answers

Tuesday, 28th October 1997.

### Mr. Reginald Buckland: Court Documents

**Lord Burton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will place in the Library of the House a copy of the judgment delivered at Cambridge Crown Court on 11 September 1997, and all other papers and documents submitted to the court, in case A970014, the appeal of *Reginald Buckland v. The Chief Constable of Cambridge* before His Honour Judge Haworth heard on 15 August 1997 against the refusal of the Chief Constable to vary the conditions of a firearms certificate, and in particular all other papers, documents, disclosures and submissions which Mr. Robert Gardiner, Clerk to the Court, has failed to provide upon request by Lord Burton.

**The Lord Chancellor (Lord Irvine of Lairg):** The Question concerns a matter which has been assigned to the Court Service under the terms of its Framework Document. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to respond.

*Letter to Lord Burton from the Chief Executive of the Court Service, Mr. M. D. Huebner, dated 28 October 1997.*

#### RELEASE OF COURT DOCUMENTS

The Lord Chancellor has asked me to reply to your Question about the release of papers and documents submitted to the court in the case of *Reginald Buckland v. The Chief Constable of Cambridge*.

A copy of the judgment was placed in the Library of the House on 7 October. As the remaining documents are the property of the party who filed them, there is no obligation or authority for the court to disclose them. With Mr. Buckland's consent, copies of correspondence between himself and the respondent were provided to you on 15 October, and will today be placed in the Library.

### Central and Eastern Europe: Military Training Assistance

**The Earl of Carlisle** asked Her Majesty's Government:

How many individual service personnel and military training teams from the United Kingdom Armed Forces will be deployed throughout 1998, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which were formerly occupied by the Soviet Union, to assist with the training of their Armed Forces.

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Gilbert):** The Ministry of Defence currently expects to deploy six individual Service personnel and 10 military Short Term Training Teams to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 1998. All are deployed at the specific request of the countries concerned, who

seek to benefit from the expertise of the United Kingdom's Armed Forces. The aim of the training teams is to advise on the conduct of either officer or non-commissioned officer training. The individual Service personnel, all officers, are deployed to provide expertise in specific areas of defence management.

### RAF Bentwaters and Woodbridge: Nuclear Weapons Allegations

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether the allegations contained in the recently published book *Left at East Gate*, to the effect that nuclear weapons were stored at RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge in violation of UK/US treaty obligations are true.

**Lord Gilbert:** It has always been the policy of this and previous governments neither to confirm nor to deny where nuclear weapons are located either in the UK or elsewhere, in the past or at the present time. Such information would be withheld under exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they are aware of reports from the United States Air Force personnel that nuclear weapons stored in the Weapons Storage Area at RAF Woodbridge were struck by light beams fired from an unidentified craft seen over the base in the period 25-30 December 1980, and if so, what action was subsequently taken.

**Lord Gilbert:** There is no evidence to suggest that the Ministry of Defence received any such reports.

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What information they have on the suicide of the United States security policeman from the 81st Security Police Squadron who took his life at RAF Bentwaters in January 1981, and whether they will detail the involvement of the British police, Coroner's Office, and any other authorities concerned.

**Lord Gilbert:** MoD has no information concerning the alleged suicide. Investigations into such occurrences are carried out by the US Forces.

**Lord Hill-Norton** asked Her Majesty's Government:

What information they have on the medical problems experienced by various United States Air Force personnel based at RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge, which stemmed from their involvement in the so-called Rendlesham Forest incident, in December 1980.

**Lord Gilbert:** Information on medical matters relating to US personnel is a matter for the US authorities.





**BACKGROUND NOTE:**

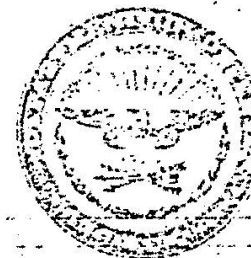
1. Lord Hill-Norton has a long-standing interest in "UFOs". He was a member of the (now defunct) House of Lords All-Party "UFO" Study Group, and has written forewords for two books on the subject. He has previously written to Ministers supporting individual "ufologists" causes.
2. All four PQs are linked to the alleged incident at Rendlesham Forest in Dec 80. In summary, on the nights of 27-29 Dec unusual lights were seen by USAF personnel, including the Deputy Base Commander of RAF Bentwaters, Lt Col Charles Halt, outside RAF Woodbridge in Rendlesham Forest. Lt Col Halt raised a memo to the RAF Liaison Officer at Bentwaters (copy attached at ANNEX A) some two weeks later which simply recorded events as he saw them and made no recommendation for further action. Nearly 17 years on, we can only conclude that no follow-up action was deemed necessary in view of the seeming lack of evidence that the UK Air Defence Region had been compromised by unauthorized foreign military activity. This is the Department's only interest in reports of "unexplained" aerial sightings.
3. The Rendlesham Forest incident is regularly quoted by the media and 'ufologists' as evidence of "UFOs" penetrating the UK Air Defence Region. However, as far as can be determined from the files at the time in question, nothing of defence concern was judged to have occurred. No additional information has come to light over the last 16½ years which casts doubt over the conclusions drawn by the Department at the time.
4. Lord Hill-Norton tabled two PQs on this subject in August (Official Report 14 Oct 97, WA 169 - copy at ANNEX B). He was unhappy with the replies given and wrote to say so in September (DP3842/97 - copy attached at ANNEX C). Lord Hill-Norton's letter said that he was putting together a dossier on this subject and these questions are likely to be part of that work.
5. PQs 0876i/0877i. We believe Lord Hill-Norton may be trying to establish whether USAF personnel serving at the bases at the time suffered any mental or physical side-effects following the alleged events.

(a) 0876i - MOD has no detailed information concerning this alleged suicide. Under the Visiting Forces Act, the US Authorities have the right to investigate such occurrences and a UK coroner cannot undertake an inquest in relation to a member of the US visiting force unless directed by a Secretary of State. There is no record of any such action being taken in this case.

(b) 0877i - MOD has no information on medical matters relating to US personnel. The US Air Force is unable to release medical information relating to its personnel without their specific authority or that of their next of kin.

6. PO 0878i. Whether or not nuclear weapons were stored at RAF Bentwaters and/or RAF Woodbridge at the time in question is not a matter for public discussion. D Nuc Pol advise that the various Government to Government agreements governing the presence of US nuclear weapons in the UK do not generally specify exact locations; this would have been subject to separate operational agreements at the time. It is the Department's policy neither to confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at any site either in the past or present under exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (ANNEX D). In the time available it has not been possible to establish whether nuclear weapons (British or American) were in fact stored at either base. We understand that the book mentioned by Lord Hill-Norton was written by Larry Warren (who was  at the time serving with the USAF and allegedly witnessed the  incident).

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
 HEADQUARTERS 81ST COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (USAF)  
 APO NEW YORK 09755



REPLY TO  
 ATTN OF: CD

13 Jan 81

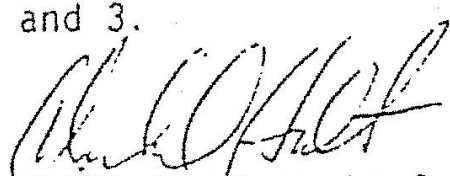
SUBJECT: Unexplained Lights

TO: RAF/CC

1. Early in the morning of 27 Dec 80 (approximately 0300L), two USAF security police patrolmen saw unusual lights outside the back gate at RAF Woodbridge. Thinking an aircraft might have crashed or been forced down, they called for permission to go outside the gate to investigate. The on-duty flight chief responded and allowed three patrolmen to proceed on foot. The individuals reported seeing a strange glowing object in the forest. The object was described as being metallic in appearance and triangular in shape, approximately two to three meters across the base and approximately two meters high. It illuminated the entire forest with a white light. The object itself had a pulsing red light on top and a bank(s) of blue lights underneath. The object was hovering or on legs. As the patrolmen approached the object, it maneuvered through the trees and disappeared. At this time the animals on a nearby farm went into a frenzy. The object was briefly sighted approximately an hour later near the back gate.

2. The next day, three depressions 1 1/2" deep and 7" in diameter were found where the object had been sighted on the ground. The following night (29 Dec 80) the area was checked for radiation. Beta/gamma readings of 0.1 milliroentgens were recorded with peak readings in the three depressions and near the center of the triangle formed by the depressions. A nearby tree had moderate (.05-.07) readings on the side of the tree toward the depressions.

3. Later in the night a red sun-like light was seen through the trees. It moved about and pulsed. At one point it appeared to throw off glowing particles and then broke into five separate white objects and then disappeared. Immediately thereafter, three star-like objects were noticed in the sky, two objects to the north and one to the south, all of which were about 10° off the horizon. The objects moved rapidly in sharp angular movements and displayed red, green and blue lights. The objects to the north appeared to be elliptical through an 8-12 power lens. They then turned to full circles. The objects to the north remained in the sky for an hour or more. The object to the south was visible for two or three hours and beamed down a stream of light from time to time. Numerous individuals, including the undersigned, witnessed the activities in paragraphs 2 and 3.

  
 CHARLES I. HALT, Lt Col, USAF  
 Deputy Base Commander

\* **Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt:**  
**Memorandum**

Lord Hill-Norton asked Her Majesty's Government:

① Whether the Ministry of Defence replied to the 1981 memorandum from Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt, which reported the presence of an unidentified craft that had landed in close proximity to RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge, witnessed by United States Air Force personnel; and if not, why not; and

② How the radiation readings reported to the Ministry of Defence by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt in his memorandum dated 13 January 1981 compare to the normal levels of background radiation in Rendelsham Forest.

Lord Gilbert: The memorandum, which reported observations of unusual lights in the sky, was assessed by staff in the MoD responsible for air defence matters. Since the judgment was that it contained nothing of defence significance, no further action was taken.

There is no record of any official assessment of the radiation readings reported by Lieutenant Colonel Halt. From a Defence perspective some 16½ years after the alleged events, there is no requirement to carry out such an assessment now.

### Joint Services Command and Staff College

Lord Kennet asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether the site at Camberley, in favour of which the Greenwich site was rejected for the JSCSC, is to be cleared of asbestos, and, if so, at what cost; why was the presence of asbestos not ascertained before plans to move the JSCSC there were finalised and then changed; and what plans do the Ministry of Defence have for the Camberley site once it has been cleared of asbestos; and

Why, given that the consultation document on the future location of the JSCSC that was issued in January 1995 did not address the possibility of setting the college up on a greenfield site, there has been no consultation on the Shrivenham option; and

What is the anticipated total cost of the interim accommodation for the JSCSC until the work on Shrivenham is completed, and what date is being required for completion; and

Whether the anticipated overall cost to the taxpayer of the PFI scheme currently being considered for the new site of the JSCSC will be declared to Parliament; and

Further to the Written Answers by Lord Gilbert on 21 July (WA 147-148) on the future of the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC), whether apart from the provision of married accommodation, the Greenwich site would be at least £200 million cheaper than accommodation at the proposed greenfield site at Shrivenham; and whether the cost of the Shrivenham site is expected to be around £500 million.

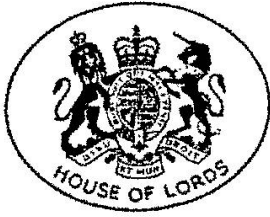
Lord Gilbert: I am advised that the asbestos identified at the Camberley site presents no threat to health if left undisturbed. Its removal would be required if buildings were to be demolished, which was the case when the JSCSC was to have been based at Camberley. At that stage it was estimated that survey and removal together would cost no more than £87K. The presence of asbestos was not the reason for exploring a PFI solution for the JSCSC. Until a decision is reached on the future use of the Camberley site, it is not clear whether action will be needed to deal with the asbestos. It remains our intention to identify a fitting and appropriate military use for the historic Staff College building at Camberley and work is currently under way to this end.

Although the January 1995 Consultative Document did not consider greenfield sites for the permanent JSCSC, for the reasons given in paragraph 9 of the Document, the two further Consultative Documents of March 1996 and July 1996 indicated, inter alia, that interim arrangements would last for two years, that proposals for the permanent site would be dealt with separately, and that work in hand "to determine the best way of providing (a permanent JSCSC), on a site yet to be identified, includes a development under Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangements". Since then, the trades unions have been informed of the choice of a PFI Preferred Bidder and provided with extracts from the Invitation To Negotiate which are currently under discussion. In accordance with normal procedures, staff will be consulted again, after a contract has been placed, about the possible transfer arrangements for civilian staff working at interim sites.

The anticipated total cost of the JSCSC in its interim accommodation is approximately £70 million over the period 1996-97 to 1999-2000. The required completion date for the permanent JSCSC, as given in the published Statement of Requirement, is September 1999.

The estimated total, undiscounted and VAT inclusive, cost of the PFI contract over a 30-year period is approximately £500 million at current prices. This information was widely reported at the time of the announcement of the Preferred Bidder, and given out in another place on 26 February in response to a specific question. This estimate excludes the ongoing costs of MoD-provided teaching and directing staff of around £10 million per annum.

The last time that Greenwich costs were subjected to formal assessment was around the end of 1994. The results of this assessment were published in the Consultative Document of January 1995. These showed the Greenwich option, leaving aside the cost of providing the necessary married accommodation, to be more than 25 per cent. more expensive than the Camberley option. There is no evidence to suggest that, if the costs of the Greenwich option were revisited, they would prove anything other than significantly more expensive than both the Camberley option and the Preferred Shrivenham Bid submitted in the course of the PFI competition.



Deal us a re please  
TJ MINDY  
SecAS  
UFOs

→ Sec A E

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB

The Lord Gilbert  
House of Lords  
Westminster  
London SW1A

22 September, 1997

Dear Lord Gilbert,

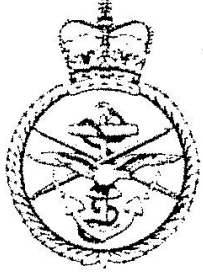
I have just received your reply (I presume that the illegible squiggle is your signature) to my Question for Written Answer of 31 July, about Colonel Halt's report on an incident at RAF Woodbridge, in 1981.

You have not answered my question, which was "..... Did the MOD reply to the Memo from Lt Col Halt .....", so I shall have to put it down again in a different form. The answer must be, simply, Yes or No. I need the formal reply for the dossier which is being prepared.

You may wish to know that his Memo, which has been in the public domain for 15 years, covers a great deal more than "lights in the sky". Five books have been written about the incident, of which the latest, published two months ago, is "Left at East Gate" by one Larry Warren, who was one of the enlisted men sent to investigate the violation of British Air Space.

Yours sincerely,

Hill-Norton



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone **Section 40** (Direct Dialling)  
071-21 89000 (Switchboard)

5  
MDE

Minister of State  
for Defence Procurement

From: THE RT HON DR THE LORD GILBERT

D/Min(DP)/JWG/MP/3842/97/M

16 October 1997

*Dear Lord Hill-Norton*

Thank you for your letter of 22 September concerning the alleged events at Rendlesham Forest of December 1980.

From Departmental records available from that period we have found no evidence to suggest that this Department contacted Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt following receipt of his memo of January 1981 recording "Unexplained Lights" in the area in December 1980. Some 16 years after the event we can only conclude, therefore, that it was not considered necessary to make further enquiries in the light of the lack of any evidence to suggest that the UK's Air Defence Region had been compromised by unauthorized foreign military activity.

It was then, and is still, the case, that MOD does not routinely contact witnesses who submit reports of "unexplained" aerial sightings. Follow-up action is only deemed necessary if there is corroborating evidence to suggest an unauthorized incursion of the UK Air Defence Region or other evidence of a matter of defence concern.

I hope this clarifies the position.

*[Handwritten signature]*

**Section 40**

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB

dppsMb39.pe/3842hillno/an/es



*181*



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone **Section 40** (Direct Dialling)  
071-21 89000 (Switchboard)

Minister of State  
for Defence Procurement

From: THE RT HON DR THE LORD GILBERT

D/Min(DP)/JWG/MP/4290/97/M

*14* November 1997

*Dear Lord Hill-Norton,*

Thank you for your further letter of 22 October about the alleged events at Rendlesham Forest of the nights of 27-29 December 1980.

Officials here had previously drawn my attention to the memo written by Colonel Halt. I am afraid, however, that there is nothing further I can add. From surviving Departmental records we remain satisfied that nothing of defence significance occurred on the nights in question.

*Yours sincerely*

**Section 40**

*Private Secretary  
approved by Lord Gilbert and  
signed in his absence on duty*

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB

MINIS. SEC 5/2  
7 NOV 1997  
-JLE



Recycled P

	All persons ILO unemployed of working age (thousands) of which (percentage) with highest qualification <sup>1</sup>	Degree or other higher education	'A' level and equivalent (excluding trade apprenticeships)	Trade apprenticeship	GCSE or equivalent	Other	No Qualification
United Kingdom	2,344	11.6	12.3	10.6	18.1	20.0	27.4
Great Britain	2,274	11.7	12.3	10.4	18.2	20.4	27.0
England	1,942	11.8	12.2	9.7	18.1	20.8	27.4
South East	742	14.1	12.8	8.7	16.7	22.1	25.5
Greater London	379	15.6	11.2	7.1	15.8	23.7	26.5
Rest of South East	362	12.6	14.4	10.5	17.7	20.3	24.5
East Anglia	72	<sup>2</sup> —	<sup>2</sup> —	<sup>2</sup> —	21.1	23.6	23.0
South West	169	12.7	14.9	10.1	22.1	18.4	22.0
West Midlands	219	9.0	12.1	6.6	16.9	19.5	35.9
East Midlands	152	9.9	13.4	11.5	18.5	18.7	28.0
Yorkshire and Humberside	189	11.0	11.9	8.2	18.3	20.2	30.4
North west	248	11.9	9.4	10.7	19.9	20.0	28.2
North	151	7.1	11.3	16.5	16.8	22.1	26.3
Wales	114	9.3	9.7	10.8	19.2	20.2	30.8
Scotland	218	12.0	14.6	16.0	19.1	16.6	21.6
Northern Ireland	69	<sup>2</sup> —	<sup>2</sup> —	19.4	14.1	<sup>2</sup> —	41.0

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup>Working age is men aged 16-64 and women aged 16-59. Includes those who did not answer, but percentages are based on totals excluding them.

<sup>2</sup>Sample size too small for reliable estimate.

**Source:**

Labour Force Survey (winter 1995-96), Office for National Statistics.

**Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative**

**Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the recently agreed highly indebted poor countries initiative; and if he will make a statement. [1329]

**Mrs. Angela Knight:** I refer to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Timms) on 14 October, *Official Report*, columns 705-706.

**DEFENCE****Nuclear Weapons**

**Mr. Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the report of the Canberra Commission on the elimination of nuclear weapons. [2931]

**Mr. Soames:** We have noted the conclusions of the Canberra Commission. We remain committed to the pursuit of negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament, as set out in article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. But nuclear disarmament cannot realistically be pursued independently of the broader security context. We and NATO continue to judge that nuclear deterrence plays an essential role in maintaining peace and stability in Europe.

**Unidentified Flying Objects**

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the circumstances of the two occasions referred to in his answer of 24 July, *Official Report*, column 424, when RAF aircraft were scrambled or diverted from task to investigate uncorrelated radar targets; if the objects were identified;

if it was judged that breaches of United Kingdom airspace had occurred; and if he will list all similar incidents which have occurred since 1979. [2932]

**Mr. Soames:** The targets were identified as Russian maritime patrol aircraft and were in the northern portion of the UK air defence region. They did not penetrate UK airspace. Information covering the period from 1979 is not held in a readily available form and could be provided only at disproportionate cost and effort.

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when United Kingdom military personnel were briefed about the scrambling of Belgian F-16 aircraft on 30 and 31 March 1990; when the unidentified flying object concerned was detected on United Kingdom radar systems; and if RAF aircraft were scrambled. [3185]

**Mr. Soames:** The Belgian authorities did not notify adjacent countries because no threat was perceived. There is no evidence of radar contacts within the UK air defence system.

**Radiation**

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the radiation readings, reported to his Department by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt on 13 January 1981, were judged to have posed any threat to Lieutenant Colonel Halt and his team; who assessed the readings; how the radiation compared with background radiation in the area; and if he will make a statement. [2934]

**Mr. Soames:** There is no record of any official assessment of the radiation readings reported by Lieutenant Colonel Halt.



**DEFENCE****Plutonium**

**Mr. Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the United States Government have since 1966 requested the United Kingdom to provide reactor grade plutonium for the purpose of conducting a nuclear test explosion under the provisions of the US-UK mutual defence agreement on atomic energy co-operation. [38500]

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** No such requests have been made by the United States.

**Small Businesses**

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the impact of (a) his policies and (b) the work of his Department in helping small businesses in the last 12 months as against the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors the impact and the statistical results of such monitoring. [39141]

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** The Government recognise the crucial role played by small firms in the UK economy and aim to help them by providing sound economic conditions—keeping inflation and interest rates low; reducing legislative administrative and taxation burdens; and where appropriate provide direct assistance in the form of specialist advice and support and easing access to finance.

My Department supports the DTI's small business measures and initiatives. I am the Minister within this Department for small businesses and I attend or am represented at the DTI's regular meetings.

The Defence Suppliers Service assists companies, including small businesses, in making contact with appropriate contracts branches. It also arranges for details of many forthcoming tenders to be published in the fortnightly *MOD Contracts Bulletin* which is available to any interested party on subscription. This enables small businesses either to seek to tender directly for specific requirements or, more commonly, to become sub-contractors to larger companies.

Since the Procurement Executive of the Ministry of Defence moved to the new procurement headquarters at Abbey Wood near Bristol earlier this year, the Defence Suppliers Service is in contact with the Bristol chamber of commerce and DTI's business links, whose South-west regional supply network office has become their national focal point for the defence industry. Other areas of the country can reach my Department, and be reached by us, through the business links network.

As much of the assistance provided by my Department to small businesses tends to be in the sub-contractor sector, it is not possible to establish suitable performance parameters and therefore no statistics are available.

**Rendlesham Forest (Incident)**

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what response his Department made to the report submitted by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt

relating to events in Rendlesham forest in December 1980; what interviews were held; and if he will make a statement; [39247]

(2) who assessed that the events around RAF Woodbridge and RAF Bentwaters in December 1980, which were reported to his Department by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt were of no defence significance; on what evidence the assessment was made; what analysis of events was carried out; and if he will make a statement. [39249]

**Mr. Soames:** The report was assessed by the staff in my Department responsible for air defence matters. Since the judgment was that it contained nothing of defence significance no further action was taken.

**Uncorrelated Radar Tracks (Investigations)**

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions RAF aircraft have been (a) scrambled and (b) diverted from task to investigate uncorrelated targets picked up on radar; and if he will make a statement. [39218]

**Mr. Soames:** In the past five years RAF aircraft have been scrambled or diverted from task on two occasions to intercept and identify uncorrelated radar tracks entering the United Kingdom air defence region.

**Unidentified Craft**

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is his Department's assessment of the incident that occurred on 5 November 1990 when a patrol of RAF Tornado aircraft flying over the North sea were overtaken at high speed by an unidentified craft; and if he will make a statement; [39245]

(2) if he will make a statement on the unidentified flying object sighting reported to his Department by the meteorological officer at RAF Shawbury in the early hours of 31 March 1993. [39246]

**Mr. Soames:** Reports of sightings on these dates are recorded on file and were examined by staff responsible for air defence matters. No firm conclusions were drawn about the nature of the phenomena reported but the events were not judged to be of defence significance.

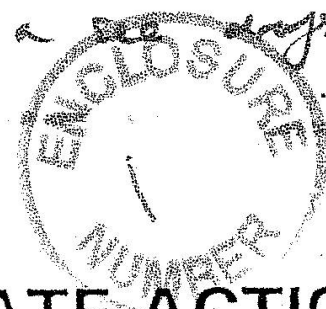
**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department made of the photograph of an unidentified craft at Calvine on 4 August 1990; who removed it from an office in secretariat (air staff) 2a; for what reasons; and if he will make a statement. [39248]

**Mr. Soames:** A number of negatives associated with the sighting were examined by staff responsible for air defence matters. Since it was judged that they contained nothing of defence significance the negatives were not retained and we have no record of any photographs having been taken from them.

**Publicity**

**Ms Hodge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his Department's budget in 1996-97 for consultants to assist with information, publicity, press and media. [39353]

all of S will be replies, however SFS will be a ...



## PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY - FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

### THE GUIDANCE IS NEW: YOU MUST READ IT

TO: SEC (AS) 2

PE REF NUMBER: W 3909 /98

MINISTER REPLYING: W of S

DRAFT REQUIRED BY: 23 / 10 / 98

DATE: 13 / 10 / 98

FROM: **Section 40** PE Unit

TEL: **Section 40**

YOU WILL BE HELD TO ACCOUNT FOR THE DRAFT ANSWER AND ADVICE. THEY MUST BE ACCURATE AND NOT MISLEADING IN ANY WAY

ENSURE THE DEADLINE IS MET. IF IN DOUBT, SEEK ADVICE.

ALL DRAFTS MUST BE CLEARED BY A NAMED OFFICIAL AT GRADE 7 LEVEL OR ABOVE.

\*\*\*\*\* **IMPORTANT UPDATES** \*\*\*\*\*

1. *Ministerial responsibilities changed.*

2. *Opening and Closing All Ministers prefer to start:*

*"Thank you for your letter of ... (MP's ref if given) on behalf of/enclosing one from your constituent, Mr ... of ... Toytown about..."*

*If a Minister is replying on behalf of another Minister start:*

*"Thank you for your letter of ... to George Robertson/Doug Henderson/John Gilbert/John Spellar on behalf etc"*

*Mr Spellar add "I am replying in view of my responsibility for ..."*

*Do not end "I hope this is helpful" when the reply is obviously disappointing. Alternatives are:*

*"I hope this explains the position"*

*"I am sorry I cannot be more helpful"*

*"I am sorry to send what I know will be a disappointing reply."*

3. *Open Government A revised Code of Practice on Access to Government Information came into effect in 1997. It is set out in DCI GEN 54/1998.*

*Replies **MUST** be drafted in accordance with this policy. If you are recommending to Ministers that some or all information is withheld, the answer must specify the law or exception in the Code under which it is being withheld. eg "I am withholding the information requested under exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information." It is **NOT** acceptable to rely on past practice.*

**Deadlines** To concur with the Citizens Charter, we have agreed to send a written reply within **15 working days** to this enquiry. It is very important that your draft is with us by the date quoted at the top of this notice. If, exceptionally, you cannot meet the deadline let me know at once, an interim reply might be needed.

**Departmental action** Action on the same case should be held until the Minister has sent a full reply. Please discuss any questions about the substance of the drafts or other policy aspects direct with the relevant private office.

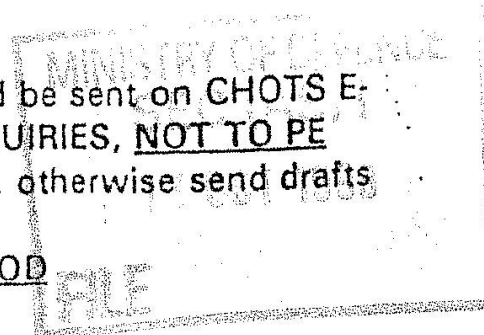
Ministers place great importance on the content style and speed of the replies. Letters should be polite, informal, to the point and in clear, simple language. Avoid acronyms and MOD jargon. Always emphasise the positive aspects of Government policy. No background note is required unless essential to explain the line taken in the draft reply.

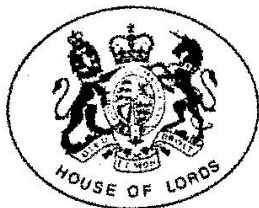
**Layout** Draft replies should be double spaced. Always include the full PE reference number at the top left of the draft.

Put the MP's full title at the bottom left of the first page. Only add the address if the letter is from the Minister direct to a constituent.

Should this not be for your branch, please inform us IMMEDIATELY by telephone.

Wherever possible drafts should be sent on CHOTS E-Mail to: PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRIES, **NOT TO PE CLERKS OR PRIVATE OFFICES**, otherwise send drafts by fax to **Section 40**  
**PLEASE USE ONLY ONE METHOD**





Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB

PERSONAL

The Rt Hon George Robertson MP  
 Secretary of State  
 Ministry of Defence  
 Main Building Whitehall  
 London SW1A 2HB

7 October, 1998

*Dear Secretary of State,*

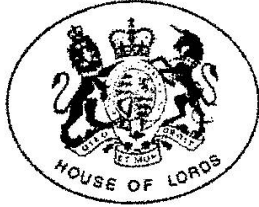
As you know, I take an active interest in the matter of unidentified flying objects, and you will doubtless have seen my recent letters and PQs on this subject. Frankly, I am extremely dissatisfied with the responses I have received, which clearly show that the subject is not being treated with the seriousness I believe it deserves.

Your own files are brimming with reports that should be of extreme concern to your Department. The Deputy Base Commander at RAF Bentwaters/Woodbridge reported the sighting of a craft "metallic in appearance and triangular in shape" in December 1980. All the witnesses were members of the United States Air Force. In March 1992, military personnel at RAF Cosford and RAF Shawbury reported seeing an unidentified craft fly over these bases. Later in 1993, the Station Commander at RAF Donna Nook saw a UFO while driving along a road near Louth.

In all the above cases - and these are just the tip of the iceberg - the MOD's official position seems to be that the events were of no defence significance. This sounds to me like a fancy way of saying that you don't know what happened. Have you or any of your Ministers even been briefed on these incidents? Have you taken the time to talk directly to any of the witnesses, instead of merely listening to advice from officials who weren't present, and often didn't speak to the witnesses themselves? If not, why not?

Your Department's whole attitude to this subject seems to be to regard it as an embarrassing irritation, and indeed one MOD document at the Public Record Office states "Our policy is to play down the subject of UFOs and to avoid attaching undue attention or publicity to it". That was written in 1965, and much has changed since then. For a start, the number of reports you receive from the public each year has increased roughly tenfold. This brings me neatly to my next point.

Continued:



- 2 -

Your Department now appears to be implementing a deliberate policy to attempt to reduce the number of reports it receives, presumably in an attempt to justify ~~later~~ on a total cessation of any work on the subject. This seems to have been done in two ways. Firstly, I understand that it is no longer a requirement for RAF Stations to forward UFO reports they receive. This seems ludicrous in the face of the facts (though I realise you do not know them), and one can have no confidence in the MOD view that UFOs are of no defence significance if you aren't even looking at all the data you have. Secondly, the answering machine now installed on the number used to report UFOs seems to be switched off outside working hours. Presumably we are to hope that nothing of any import occurs outside the hours of 9am to 5pm, or at a weekend? Is it really too much trouble to leave this machine on, or divert calls to a continuously manned number? As a matter of interest may I be told how many people who have left details of a sighting on the answering machine have subsequently been contacted by your officials?

You (or perhaps your people) seem remarkably confident that there is nothing to worry about here, but your confidence seems to be based on nothing more substantial than the advice of civil servants who show no sign of any knowledge of the contents of your own files. The philosophy seems to be that unless something shows up on radar and behaves like a conventional aircraft you'll ignore it. Those in charge of the Iraqi Air Defence network in January 1991 probably had a similar mindset.

I shall doubtless receive similar platitudes to those I have received before, but can assure you that I shall continue to press this issue until such time as I am convinced that this subject is being properly addressed. If anyone allows their own media-fuelled prejudices about UFOs to blind them to a potential threat, then this is a triumph of ignorance over evidence. I would therefore ask that at the very least you get a proper oral briefing on some of the incidents mentioned in this letter, not just from civil servants but from RAF Air Defence experts, and Defence Intelligence Staff specialists. In short, I really do ask you to take a personal interest at least to inform yourself better on this subject. I do not ask you to share my views until or unless you know as much about it all as I do.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Alun - Nuttin*



09 OCT 1998

- Mr (AP)

Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton GCB - Sec (A):

- UFI's

Mr John Spellar MP  
 Ministry of Defence  
 Main Building  
 Whitehall  
 London SW1A 2HB

cc UFI's - For info

7 October, 1998

Section 40

Dear Mr Spellar,

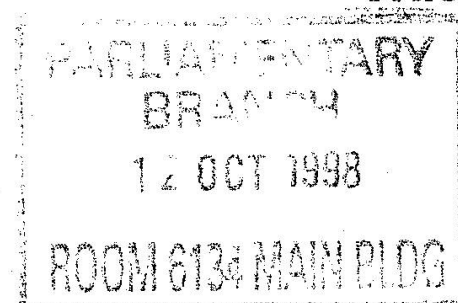
Thank you for your letter of 15th September, concerning the policy of the Ministry of Defence with regard to unidentified flying objects.

I was disturbed to learn that there is no longer a requirement to forward UFO reports to the MOD. Previously, the RAF used to have a formal Standard Operating Procedure, and there was a standard form which was circulated to RAF stations, where those concerned were instructed to forward details of all sightings to the Department, irrespective of whether the witnesses were Service personnel or members of the public. I believe that these forms were also sent to police stations and airports, as these are the sorts of places that tend to receive sighting reports from the public. I have three questions on this, to which I would like specific answers. When was this policy stopped? Who was consulted in making this change of policy? Who took the final decision?

In public statements on this subject, your officials have often said that in examinations of UFO sighting reports, nothing of any defence significance has been found. But it seems to me that if the MOD is not prepared to look at all the available data, no meaningful assessment of the phenomenon can be made. As such, your "no defence significance" statement is invalid, because it is based on an incomplete picture. I presume that you are not being advised to pretend that the radar cover to which you refer is total, all the time.

The pity of the situation is that there is a wealth of interesting data in the public domain, about which I can only assume you and your officials are totally unaware. As an example, a panel of scientists led by Dr Peter Sturrock - a physicist from Stanford University - recently put together an analysis of physical evidence relating to UFO reports. Their examination included looking at cases involving photographic evidence, radar evidence and ground trace evidence. Has anybody in your Department even read the report summarising this work?

Continued:





- 2 -

If you are to continue to assure everyone that reports of UFOs are of no defence significance, then I suggest you would be better advised to do so from an informed position, on the basis of having weighed the evidence and found it wanting. I consider it insulting to people's intelligence to do so solely on the basis of a selective trawl of the few sightings that are still sent to you, despite your best efforts to withdraw from this subject. I would really like to know how you have been persuaded to catch this line.

Yours sincerely,

Herbert Morrison.

**RESTRICTED/UNCLASSIFIED**

**RESTRICTED/UNCLASSIFIED**