64/4

****

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

****

MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PQ REFERENCE:1989H
PQ TYPE:Ordinary Written

SUPPLEMENTARIES ARE REQUIRED? NO

DATE FOR RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH: 12:00 ON TUESDAY 23 JULY 1996

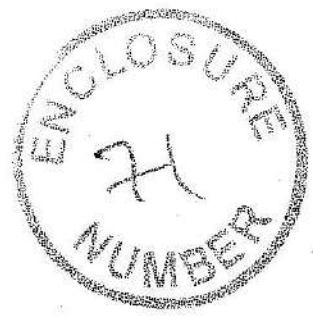
LEAD BRANCH:SEC(AS)
COPY ADDRESSEE(S):

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE DESK OFFICER WHO DRAFTS THE ANSWER AND THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE GRADE 5/ONE STAR WHO APPROVES THE ANSWER MUST BE QUOTED.

MP'S DETAILS:**MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR)(DON VALLEY)**

41|To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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 31st March 1993. [39246]

64/4



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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

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MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PQ REFERENCE:1988H
PQ TYPE:Ordinary Written

SUPPLEMENTARIES ARE REQUIRED? NO

DATE FOR RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH: 12:00 ON TUESDAY 23 JULY 1996

LEAD BRANCH:SEC(AS)
COPY ADDRESSEE(S):

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE DESK OFFICER WHO DRAFTS THE ANSWER AND THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE GRADE 5/ONE STAR WHO APPROVES THE ANSWER MUST BE QUOTED.

MP'S DETAILS:**MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR)(DON VALLEY)**

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

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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

****

MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PQ REFERENCE:1987H
PQ TYPE:Ordinary Written

SUPPLEMENTARIES ARE REQUIRED? NO

DATE FOR RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH: 12:00 ON TUESDAY 23 JULY 1996

LEAD BRANCH:SEC(AS)
COPY ADDRESSEE(S):

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE DESK OFFICER WHO DRAFTS THE ANSWER AND THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE GRADE 5/ONE STAR WHO APPROVES THE ANSWER MUST BE QUOTED.

MP'S DETAILS:**MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR)(DON VALLEY)**

37|To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department made of the photograph of an unidentified craft at Calvine on 4th August 1990; who removed it from an office in Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a; for what reasons; and if he will make a statement. [39248]

SEC(AS)2a

644

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

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DEFENCE

D/US of S/FH 2468/96/M

17th July 1996

Dear Roger,

Thank you for your letter of 1 July enclosing one from your constituent, Section 40 Minchinhampton, about "unidentified flying objects".

My Department does look into reports of "unidentified flying objects" that are sent to us, but only to establish if what was seen may have some defence significance. My Department has no direct interest or role with respect to "UFO/flying saucer" matters or the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms. We believe that down-to-earth explanations are available for most reported sightings, such as aircraft seen from unusual angles, or natural phenomena.

If there is no evidence in a sighting to suggest a matter of defence concern and to date no "UFO sighting" reported to us has revealed such evidence, we do not investigate further or seek to provide an explanation for what was observed. Since there was no evidence of this description associated with Section 40 observation of 15 March 1994, it would have been outside my Department's remit to devote resources towards further investigations into the sighting. I apologise that my Department's earlier letter to Section 40 did not make this clear.

Finally, I should like to assure Section 40 that there is no question that my Department would attempt to cover-up information on the subject of so-called "unidentified flying objects".

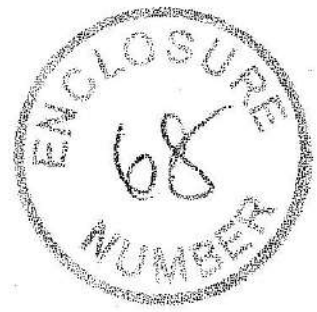
Roger Knapman Esq MP

I hope this helps to clarify our role and responsibilities in this matter.

Yours ever,

Section 40

THE EARL HOWE



Tue 23 Jul, 1996 12:21 mailbox log Page 1

DATE	TO	SUBJECT	CODES
23/07/96	Parliamentary Ques	PQs 1985H and 1986H	[ ]

Sent: 23/07/96 at 12:20
To: Parliamentary Questions
CC: PSO/ACAS,DPR(RAF)

Ref: 738
Subject: PQs 1985H and 1986H

Text: The attached has been seen and signed off by Section 40 and Section 40

The attachments referred to in the background note have been walked down separately under a compliments slip.

Priority: Urgent
Reply Request [ ]
View Acknowledge [*]
Delivery Acknowledge [*]
Attachments [1]
Codes [ ]

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

MP:	MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR) DON VALLEY
PQ REFERENCE:	1985H & 1986H
PQ TYPE:	ORDINARY WRITTEN
DRAFT ANSWER REQUIRED BY:	12:00 TUESDAY 23 JULY 1996

QUESTION: [1985H] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

QUESTION: [1986H] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what response his Department made to the report submitted by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt detailing events in Rendlesham Forest in December 1980; what interviews were held; and if he will make a statement.

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

APPROVED BY:

Head of Sec(AS) **original signed** Section 40 Tel: Section 40 Date 23.7.96

Sec(AS)2ab **original signed** Section 40 Tel: Section 40 Date 23.7.96

COPIED TO:

PSO/ACAS
DPR(RAF)
DI55c
GE3

BACKGROUND - PQs 1985H & 1986H

1. Mr Redmond has asked a large number of questions about military aviation issues over the years. He recently tabled four PQs about unidentified flying objects prompted, we believe, by the recent publication of a book on the subject by a former member of Sec(AS). The MP has tabled a further six questions on the subject of "UFOs" for answer before the Parliamentary recess, two of which follow up earlier answers he received about an alleged "UFO" incident which occurred outside RAF Woodbridge in Rendlesham Forest in December 1980 (Hansard extracts attached).

2. The alleged incidents to which Mr Redmond refers occurred between 27-29 December 1980 when unusual lights were seen by USAF personnel, including the Deputy Base Commander, outside RAF Woodbridge. A report of the sighting (copy attached) was forwarded to the MOD by the RAF Liaison Officer at RAF Bentwaters. The report was examined by the Department at the time and no other evidence of any matter of defence significance was found. This is of course the Department's only interest in such sightings.

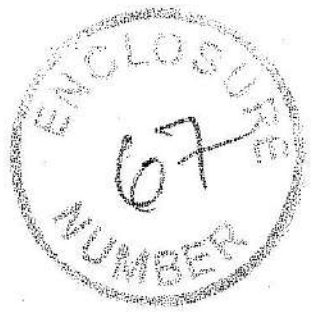
3. Our line regarding this alleged incident is that all available evidence was examined at the time and we are satisfied that nothing of defence concern occurred in the location on the nights in question. No additional information has come to light over the last 15 years which calls the original judgement into question.

4. The only documents on the subject held by the Department are the report itself, limited official comments on the report, and correspondence from members of the public enquiring about the alleged events. The wording of the draft reply is in line with that used in responses to previous Parliamentary Enquiries on the subject (see attached).

5. There is no requirement for the Department to contact or reply to a witness following receipt of a "UFO" report. It would only have

been necessary to contact Lt Col Halt had there been any indication that the sighting was of defence relevance and it was necessary to interview him further. As this was not the case no response was appropriate or necessary.

644



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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

****

MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PQ REFERENCE:1985H
PQ TYPE:Ordinary Written

SUPPLEMENTARIES ARE REQUIRED? NO

DATE FOR RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH: 12:00 ON TUESDAY 23 JULY 1996

LEAD BRANCH:SEC(AS)
COPY ADDRESSEE(S):

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MP'S DETAILS:**MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR)(DON VALLEY)**

36|To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, who assessed that the events around RAF Woodbridge and RAF Bentwaters in December 1980, which were reported to his Department by Lieutentant 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]

****

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

****

MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PQ REFERENCE:1986H
PQ TYPE:Ordinary Written

SUPPLEMENTARIES ARE REQUIRED? NO

DATE FOR RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH: 12:00 ON TUESDAY 23 JULY 1996

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MP'S DETAILS:**MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR)(DON VALLEY)**

31|To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what response his Department made to the report submitted by Lieutentant Colonel Charles Halt detailing events in Rendlesham Forest in December 1980; what interviews were held; and if he will make a statement. [39247]

LOOSE MINUTE

D/Sec(AS)/64/4

17 Jul 96

Parliamentary Branch

LETTER FROM ROY HUGHES, DL, MP - US 2569/96

1. Mr Hughes' constituent, Section 40 has written to my staff seeking information on the MOD's policy on "UFO" sightings on three recent occasions. Our first reply is attached to Section 40 Section 40 letter, our second which further clarified our responsibilities and role was despatched on 20 June 1996 (and would have arrived after Section 40 sent this letter to his MP), and there is another letter awaiting our response.

2. Section 40 challenges our line that if we do not know what has been observed by a witness, how can we say that it is not of defence significance. As US of S is aware unless there is corroborating evidence to suggest that the UK Air Defence Region may have been compromised, and to date no "UFO" sighting has revealed such evidence, we do not make any attempt to establish the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. It is outside the MOD's remit to devote defence resources towards providing an aerial identification service for the public.

3. As we do not make an attempt to provide an explanation for each "UFO" sighting reported to us, we could not categorically state that all sightings reported to us have been attributed to aircraft or natural phenomena. However, from the descriptions given they are the most likely explanation for them.

4. The attached draft seeks to explain this policy once more to Section 40

Section 40

Sec(AS)2
MB8247 Section 40

Enc.

DRAFT

D/USofS/2569/96 July 1996

Thank you for your letter of 8 July 1996 addressed to Michael Portillo enclosing one from your constituent [redacted] Newport, Gwent, [redacted] on the subject of "unidentified flying objects". I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility.

As you are aware [redacted] has recently been in contact with my officials and has been advised of the MOD's role and responsibilities in respect of reports of unidentified flying objects. Following my official's letter of 28 May which [redacted] copied to you, he wrote again on 8 June. He will by now have received a reply, dated 20 June, providing further clarification of the MOD interest in this subject. Nevertheless, it would perhaps be helpful if I took this opportunity to explain MOD's role concerning "UFO" sightings.

I can assure [redacted] that my Department takes its responsibilities for ensuring the effective defence of this country very seriously indeed. The MOD examines any reports of "UFO" sightings sent to us solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; ie. is there evidence that the UK Air Defence Region might have been

Roy Hughes, Esq, DL, MP

compromised by a hostile foreign military aircraft? However, as has been explained to [redacted] unless there are defence implications we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. We could not justify expenditure of public funds on investigations which go beyond our specific defence remit.

As we make no attempt to investigate sightings for which there is no defence interest, we are not in a position to provide a precise explanation for the hundreds of reports we receive each year. We believe that rational explanations could be found if resources were devoted to so doing. However, it is not the function of the MOD to provide a general aerial identification service and would be an inappropriate use of defence resources if we were to do so. From the types of descriptions we receive aircraft or natural phenomena probably account for most of the observations.

Finally, there is no question that the MOD would seek to cover-up any information on the subject of so-called "unidentified flying objects". The MOD remains open-minded about the existence of extraterrestrial life, but to date we know of no evidence which proves that this phenomenon exists.

I hope this explains our specific role and responsibilities in this matter.

THE EARL HOWE

PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

TO: Sec(AS)2a **PE REF NUMBER:** US 2569/96

MINISTER REPLYING: USofS **DRAFT REQUIRED BY:** 22/7/96

DATE: 11/7/96 **FROM:** Section 40, PE Unit **TEL:** Section 40

GUIDANCE NOTE

Ministers reply to some 8,000 such letters a year. They 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. Do not be unduly defensive.

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.

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 ... addressed to Michael Portillo/ Nicholas Soames/James Arbuthnot/Frederick Howe on behalf etc"
Mr Soames and Earl Howe add "I have been asked to reply" and "I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility." respectively.

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."

Deadlines 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.

ALL DRAFTS MUST BE CLEARED BY A NAMED OFFICIAL AT GRADE 7 LEVEL AND ANNOTATED TO CONFIRM THIS.

WHEREVER POSSIBLE DRAFTS SHOULD BE SENT ON CHOTS E-MAIL TO: Parliamentary Enquiries other wise send drafts by fax to Section 40
PLEASE USE ONLY ONE METHOD

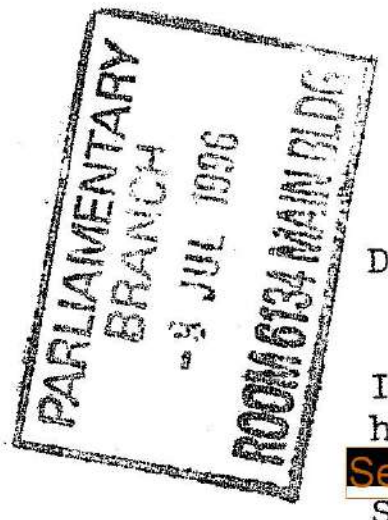
From: ROY HUGHES, D.L., M.P.

Tel: Home Office Section 40

Fax: Home Office Section 40

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

USQS SEC (AS) UFO's.



8 July 1996

Dear Minister,

I enclose some correspondence I have received from Section 40 Section 40 South Wales, concerning UFO's.

Would you kindly look into the matter and let me have a reply for my constituent?

Please return the enclosures to me.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

Member for Newport East

The Rt Hon Michael Portillo MP
Secretary of State for Defence.

AeIC Card
27.6.96

21/06/96

Section 40 [redacted]
Newport
Gwent Section 40

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you about my concern regarding the topic of "unidentified flying objects" that seem to be operating in our airspace. I have numerous videos with what I would class as tangible evidence showing such "UFO's" in daylight and at night taken at various locations around the country but specifically in areas around Wiltshire. One of these video clips has been seen on national television late last year on a program called "The Fortean Review". It shows a "UFO" in broad daylight hovering over Swindon. I would be happy to send you a video of these clips to enable you to make up your own mind if you wish to take my concern seriously.

I have previously written to Section 40 [redacted] at the M.o.D. on this subject and have enclosed a copy of her reply. I realise that you are a very busy man but would appreciate it if you could read the letter as it clearly states that **most** of these sightings can be explained as aircraft seen from unusual angles and natural phenomena but it does not explain what the rest of these sightings could be. It worries me a great deal to think that the M.o.D. are not interested in finding out what this percentage of unexplained sightings could be and that they can simply say that they do not acknowledge the existence of "UFO's". This in itself is a strange thing to say as the M.o.D. in the past have denied any involvement in the study of this subject yet surely some form of research must have taken place for this decision to have been made. It is a disturbing thought that defence of our country is being handled with guess work and lack of knowledge.

Once again, I am aware that you are a busy man but would appreciate your time on this matter. I am just one person in a growing minority of people who believe that something is going on in our skies and that is on the increase and believe we have the right to know.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40 [redacted]

From: Section 40 Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a1
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 2140
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000
(Fax) Section 40

Section 40

Newport
Gwent
Section 40

Your reference

Our reference
D/Sec(AS)/64/3
Date
28 May 1996

Dear Section 40

1. Thank you for your recent letter regarding the subject of "unidentified flying objects".

2. The Ministry of Defence does look into reports of "UFO" sightings that are sent to us, many of which are very vague, but only to establish if what was seen may have some defence significance. We believe that down-to-earth explanations are available for most of these reported sightings, such as aircraft seen from unusual angles, or natural phenomena.

3. The Royal Air Force is responsible for ensuring that the integrity of the United Kingdom Air Defence Region is maintained and that no hostile or unauthorized military aircraft enters UK airspace. Before a foreign military aircraft may enter UK airspace it is necessary for Diplomatic Clearance to be sought from the UK Government which grants permission for the flight to proceed. Foreign aircraft operate in UK airspace frequently with such authority; some transiting, some participating in joint exercises etc. Our air traffic controllers would question the pilots of any military aircraft intending to enter UK airspace without the requisite diplomatic clearance and if necessary measures would be taken to turn the aircraft away from our airspace.

4. To date the Ministry of Defence knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of the alleged phenomena of "UFO/ flying saucers" and therefore no threat to the UK has been discerned which has been attributed to a so-called "UFO/flying saucer".

5. You enclose an article from *The Observer* which reports comments apparently made by my predecessor in Secretariat(Air Staff)2 on the subject of "UFO/flying saucers". As the article clearly states the views expressed by Section 40 represent his personal opinions and do not represent or reflect the MOD's views.

6. I hope this explains the position.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

LOOSE MINUTE

D/Sec(AS)/64/4

17 Jul 96

Parliamentary Branch

LETTER FROM RT HON KENNETH BAKER, CH, MP - US 2530/96

1. I enclose a draft reply to Mr Baker's letter, covering one from his constituent, Section 40 about Government research into unidentified flying objects.

2. As US of S is aware, the Department's only interest in "UFO" sightings is to ascertain if what was seen may have had some defence significance, ie. is there evidence to indicate that the UK air defence region may have been compromised? If there is no evidence to suggest a matter of military concern, Departmental interest in the sighting ceases. Neither Sec(AS) nor the Cabinet Office, with whom my staff have spoken, are aware of any other Government interest in "UFOs" or indeed of any research into "UFO" phenomenon. The draft reply reflects this.

Section 40 [redacted]

Sec(AS)2
MB8247 Section 40 [redacted]

Enc.

DRAFT

D/USofS/2530/96 July 1996

Thank you for your letter of 5 July 1996 enclosing one from your constituent Section 40 Leatherhead, Surrey, Section 40 on the subject of Government interest in the "UFO" phenomenon.

As Section 40 is aware, my Department looks into reports of "UFO" sightings that are sent to us, many of which are very vague, but only to establish if what was seen may have some defence significance, ie. is there evidence to indicate that the UK Air Defence Region may have been compromised? If there is no evidence in a sighting to suggest a matter of defence concern, and to date no "UFO sighting" reported to us has revealed such evidence, we do not investigate further or seek to provide an explanation for what was observed. We believe, however, that down-to-earth explanations are available for most of these reported sightings, such as aircraft seen from unusual angles, or natural phenomena.

My Department does not carry out research into "UFO/flying saucers". We have no direct interest, expertise or role with respect to such matters or the question of the existence or

Rt Hon Kenneth Baker, CH, MP

otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which we remain open-minded. To date, however, we know of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena. To the best of our knowledge, no other Government Department is conducting research into the "UFO" phenomenon.

I hope this explains the position.

THE EARL HOWE

PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

TO: SEC(AS)2a **PE REF NUMBER:** US 2530/96

MINISTER REPLYING: USofS **DRAFT REQUIRED BY:** 19/7/96

DATE: 10/7/96 **FROM:** Section 40 PE Unit **TEL:** Section 40

GUIDANCE NOTE

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PLEASE USE ONLY ONE METHOD

PE : SecCAS 2a

8 JUL 1996

MV22849

From: The Rt. Hon. KENNETH BAKER, C.H., M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON, SW1A 0AA

UES of S
SEC (AS)
UFOs.

The Earl Howe
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

5th July 1996

Dear Minister

UFOs

I have received the attached letter from my constituent, Section 40 Section 40 Leatherhead, Surrey.

Section 40 would be grateful to know: "What the British Government is doing to discover and research the truth about UFOs?".

I would be grateful for your comments to pass on to my constituent!

Yours sincerely

Section 40

pp KENNETH BAKER

Enc.

(Signed in Mr Baker's absence)

Section 40

Leatherhead,
Surrey.
Section 40

1st July '96

Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London

Dear Mr Baker,

The UFO Phenomenon

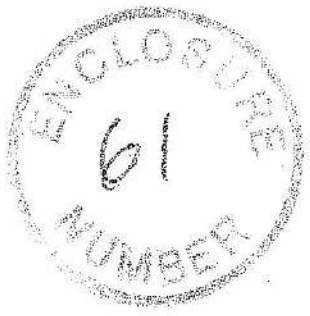
I know that the MOD's policy on UFO's is: "unless it effects National Security we're not interested", but there are many serious scientific and philosophic aspects to Ufology.

Could you tell me what the British Government is doing to discover and research the truth about UFO's ?

There is much more importance to this than just that of National Security and I would be grateful for any fuller infomation you can provide me with.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40



LOOSE MINUTE

D/Sec(AS)/64/4

12 Jul 96

Parliamentary Branch

LETTER FROM ROGER KNAPMAN MP - US 2468/96

1. The correspondent, Section 40 wrote to Geoffrey-Clifton Brown MP following sight of an article in the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard. In accordance with normal practice Mr Clifton-Brown has passed this letter to Section 40 own MP, Mr Knapman, for action.

2. The article in the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard apparently made reference to Mr Clifton-Brown's exchange of correspondence with USofS in April 1996 following a letter from his constituent calling for the release all the information he believes the MOD is withholding which proves the existence of alien lifeforms. USofS' response to Mr Clifton-Brown reflected the standard line on MOD interest in "unexplained" aerial sighting reports and assured his constituent that there was no question that the MOD would attempt to cover up information relating to so-called "UFOs".

3. Section 40 expresses his dismay that when he reported an "unexplained" sighting to Sec(AS) in March 1994, in his opinion he received an unsatisfactory response from us. This belief may stem from a misunderstanding of the MOD's role in relation to "unexplained" aerial sightings. As USofS is aware, our line is that if there is no evidence to suggest a matter of military concern, official interest in the sighting ceases. We do not attempt to establish the precise nature of every "unexplained" sighting reported to us, as it is outside our remit to devote public funds on investigations which go beyond our defence interests. However, this may not have been made clear to Section 40 when he telephoned Sec(AS).

4. It was thought at the time that Section 40 may have witnessed two unconnected events, and one of them could have been a natural phenomenon. In order to be helpful my staff suggested that he might care to contact the British Fireball Survey who would be able to corroborate the presence of a meteor or fireball at the time of his sighting. There was no intent to give an obfuscating reply.

5. I attach a draft response for Lord Howe's consideration, which clarifies the Department's role in "unexplained" sightings and apologising for any misunderstanding our earlier response may have caused.

Section 40 [redacted]

Sec(AS)2
MB8247 Section 40 [redacted]

Enc.

DRAFT

D/USofS/2468/96 July 1996

Thank you for your letter of 1 July 1996 enclosing one from your constituent Section 40 [redacted] Section 40 [redacted] Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, Section 40 [redacted] on the subject of "unidentified flying objects".

My Department does look into reports of "unidentified flying objects" that are sent to us, but only to establish if what was seen may have some defence significance. My Department has no direct interest or role with respect to "UFO/flying saucer" matters or the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which we remain open-minded. We believe that down-to-earth explanations are available for most reported sightings, such as aircraft seen from unusual angles, or natural phenomena.

If there is no evidence in a sighting to suggest a matter of defence concern and to date no "UFO sighting" reported to us has revealed such evidence, we do not investigate further or seek to provide an explanation for what was observed. Since there was no evidence of this description associated with Section 40 [redacted] Section 40 [redacted] observation of 15th March 1994, it would have been outside the Department's remit to devote resources towards further investigations into the sighting. I apologise that the

Roger Knapman, Esq, MP

Department's earlier letter to Section 40 [redacted] did not make this clear.

Finally, I should like to assure Section 40 [redacted] that there is no question that the MOD would attempt to cover-up information on the subject of so-called "unidentified flying objects".

I hope this explains our role and responsibilities in this matter.

THE EARL HOWE

PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

TO: SEC(AS)2a **PE REF NUMBER:** US 2468/96

MINISTER REPLYING: USofS **DRAFT REQUIRED BY:** 16/7/96

DATE: 5/7/96 **FROM:** Section 40 PE Unit **TEL:** Section 40

GUIDANCE NOTE

Ministers reply to some 8,000 such letters a year. They 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. Do not be unduly defensive.

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.

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 ... addressed to Michael Portillo/ Nicholas Soames/James Arbuthnot/Frederick Howe on behalf etc"
Mr Soames and Earl Howe add "I have been asked to reply" and "I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility." respectively.

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."

Deadlines 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.

ALL DRAFTS MUST BE CLEARED BY A NAMED OFFICIAL AT GRADE 7 LEVEL AND ANNOTATED TO CONFIRM THIS.

WHEREVER POSSIBLE DRAFTS SHOULD BE SENT ON CHOTS E-MAIL TO: Parliamentary Enquiries other wise send drafts by fax to Section 40

PLEASE USE ONLY ONE METHOD

PE: Sec(AS)2a
USOEs.
UFOs.

From: Roger Knapman, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1st July, 1996.

Dear Fredrick

I enclose this letter I have received from my constituent, Section 40 Section 40 Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire and would be grateful if you could let me have your comments on the points he makes.

Yours ever.

Section 40

The Earl Howe,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Ministry of Defence,
Whitehall,
London, SW1

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Section 40

Minchinhampton,
Gloucestershire.
Section 40

5 June 1996

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, MP,
House of Commons,
London SW1.

Dear Mr. Clifton-Brown,

I was very much taken by an article I read in the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard on 30th May, 1996, which touched on a reply you had received from the Ministry of Defence regarding a question you raised about the possible cover up on their part of evidence pertaining to unidentified flying objects. I note the comments made in the same article by one of your constituents and for the record would like to add the following experience I had within the bounds of your constituency, which lead to a discourse I had with the Ministry of Defence.

At approximately 10.00pm on a clear, bright night on 15th March, 1994, my wife and I were approaching Chapman's Cross (crossroads between the road to Sapperton and road to Cirencester) on our way from our home in Minchinhampton to London. Suddenly we noticed what looked at first to be a very large, bright star plunge almost vertically into the field adjacent to the road we were driving along. The actual landing was obscured by a clump of trees as the car sped past, but when these cleared, a white vertical shaped light was visible in the left hand corner of the field. It appeared to be about one foot in height. Simultaneously an oval shaped object about thirty feet in circumference was visible in a more or less horizontal position to the white light, a good distance further on in approximately the middle of the same field. The oval shaped object had double tiered whirling green lights (rather like floodlights) which were propelling round and round at a rapid pace.

There was then a cessation of these green lights and an inner oval of red lights started flashing much closer to the ground. All lights then ceased abruptly, but in the brightness of the moonlit night it was just possible to observe something that looked like black dust arising from the then darkened oval object. There was a short period of complete darkness before the same procedure repeated itself and this same sequence went on for at least five minutes, as I had by this time parked the car by the roadside and got out to watch. The white light at the far left hand side of the field remained constant throughout. Never having experienced anything quite like this before and feeling rather nervous, yet at the same time curious, I drove on and took the nearby turning to Sapperton and skirted the field on this road. The drive took about seven minutes and on our return to the main road the object was still in the field with green lights still swirling, then red lights and then darkness, and then repeating as before.

We again took the side road to Sapperton and drove round the field but this time on our return to the main road there was nothing to be seen in the field at all. Interesting to note, too, was the sky which had been so bright even though the moon was not full, and was now obscured by what appeared to be a veiled dark milky substance, turning what had been a very bright night into a strangely dark one. In all the object had been in the field approximately twenty to twenty five minutes. We continued our journey stopping first at The Police Station in Cirencester to report the incident.

The following morning, 16th March, I rang the MOD to further report the incident and I was put through to a person at a secretariat who stated that he was 'the responsible officer dealing with UFOs'. He suggested that it might have been a meteorite or 'fireballs'!

In response to my offer of a written report, I was invited to send one in, which I did, and in a later reply it was suggested that I might care to write to an individual who was investigating fireballs!

I think it does not reflect well on the MOD to give obfuscating replies such as the one I received. It would have been better, in my view, for the MOD to have been either more informative and detailed in their reply or to have honestly said that they did not know or would not tell for specific reasons.

Yours sincerely,

This helpful recommendation, which reflects the local opinions that have been voiced over many months by my hon. Friends and others, will be considered by Barnet health authority at its next meeting.

Read Codes

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 1 July, *Official Report*, column *334*, if he will specify the organisation or person carrying out the study of the licensing arrangements between Computer Aided Medical Systems plc and the NHS; if that organisation was chosen by competitive tenders; when the study was started; when he expected it to be completed; and if he will place a copy in the Library of the completed report. [35768]

Mr. Horam: The review of current licensing and support arrangements for Read codes will be carried out by Silicon Bridge Research. Since it was chosen for its particular skills and experience, at a cost below the single tender limit, there was no competitive tender. The review started an 4 July 1996 and is expected to be completed by the end of October 1996. A report of its findings will be placed in the Library.

Trust and Health Authorities (Debts)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 23 May, *Official Report*, column *93*, if he will show the amount of bad debts and claims abandoned for each health authority in each region broken down by category for the last three years. [33097]

Mr. Horam *[holding answer 17 June 1996]:* The information will be placed in the Library.

Child Abuse Inquires

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total cost to public funds of *(a)* the independent review of residential care conducted by Lady Wagner and *(b)* its report, "Residential Care-A Positive Choice". [35146]

Mr. Bowis *[holding answer 1 July 1996]:* The information is not available.

DEFENCE

Land Mines

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many JP233 mines were left by United Kingdom forces at bomb dump M3 in Bahrain after the Gulf war; and how many of them are currently owned by the United Kingdom Government. [35360]

Mr. Soames: All JP 233 munitions in Bahrain were returned to the UK after the Gulf war.

Hawk Trainer Crash, Portugal

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 18 June, *Official Report*, column *416*, in respect of the crash of a Hawk trainer, when the NATO standardisation agreement came into operation. [35691]

Mr. Soames: NATO standardisation agreement 3531 first came into operation in 1964.

Official Secrets (Military Accidents)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has to alter the provisions contained in official secrets legislation in relation to military incidents resulting in *(a)* injuries and *(b)* fatalities; and if he will make a statement. [35703]

Mr. Soames: There are no provisions in official secrets legislation relating specifically to such incidents. Service board of inquiry reports on military incidents resulting in fatalities are released to the next of kin of deceased service personnel, on request, subject to the minimum of security requirements.

Armed Forces

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) of 16 May, *Official Report*, column *559*, if he will break down the figures for armed forces by *(a)* year and *(b)* service for each year since 1991. [35751]

Mr. Soames: The strength of the Regular armed forces by service, on 1 April for each year since 1991, was as follows:

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*
RN/RM	62,100	62,100	54,400	55,800	50,900	48,300
Army	154,600	152,400	140,900	128,600	115,900	113,400
RAF	88,400	86,000	80,900	75,700	70,800	64,700
Total	305,100	300,500	281,200	260,100	237,600	226,400
Others[1]	2,100	2,000	1,900	1,600	1,000	1,000

[1]Locally Engaged Service Personnel. Army figures include Gurkha strengths.
All figures contain an element for personnel undergoing training.

Unidentified Flying Objects

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which office within his Department deals with sightings of unidentified flying objects. [35845]

Mr. Soames: The focal point within my Department for reports of sightings of unidentified flying objects is Secretariat(Air Staff)2a.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by *(a)* date and *(b)* location for the last 10 years unexplainable sightings of unidentified flying objects received by his Department; and what action was subsequently taken. [35844]

Mr. Soames: My Department evaluates reports of "unexplained" aerial phenomena solely in order to establish whether they may have any defence significance. Unless there is evidence to indicate that the UK air defence region may have been compromised, and to date no sighting has provided such evidence, my Department does not investigate or seek to provide an explanation for what was observed. The question of unexplainable sightings has not therefore arisen.

Thu 4 Jul, 1996 17:35 mailbox log Page 1

DATE	TO	SUBJECT	CODES
04/07/96	Parliamentary Ques	PQs 1755H and 1767H	[ ]

Sent: 04/07/96 at 17:35
To: Parliamentary Questions
CC:

Ref: 689
Subject: PQs 1755H and 1767H

Text: The attached PQs have a linked background note. They have been seen and signed off by Section 40 and Section 40 The attachment (Official Report extract) will be walked down to you during the course of tomorrow morning.

Priority: Normal
Reply Request [ ]
View Acknowledge [*]
Delivery Acknowledge [*]
Attachments [2]
Codes [ ]

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

MP: MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR) DON VALLEY

PQ REFERENCE: 1755H

PQ TYPE: ORDINARY WRITTEN

DRAFT ANSWER REQUIRED BY: 12:00 FRIDAY 5 JULY 1996

QUESTION: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which office within his Department deals with sightings of unidentified flying objects.

DRAFT ANSWER:

The focal point within my Department for reports of sightings of unidentified flying objects is Secretariat(Air Staff)2a.

APPROVED BY:

Head of Sec(AS) **original signed** [redacted] Tel [redacted] Date 4/7/96

Sec(AS)2 **original signed** [redacted] Tel: [redacted] Date 4/7/96

COPIED TO:

PSO/ACAS
DPR(RAF) } Sent by CHOTS
DI55c
GE3 } By hand copy.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

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PQ REFERENCE: 1767H

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DRAFT ANSWER:

My Department evaluates reports of "unexplained" aerial phenomena solely in order to establish whether they may have any defence significance. Unless there is evidence to indicate that the UK Air Defence Region may have been compromised, and to date no sighting has provided such evidence, my Department does not investigate or seek to provide an explanation for what was observed. The question of unexplainable sightings has not therefore arisen.

APPROVED BY:

Head of Sec(AS) **original signed** Section 40 Tel: Section 40 Date 4/7/96

Sec(AS)2 **original signed** Section 40 Tel: Section 40 Date 4/7/96

COPIED TO:

PSO/ACAS
DPR(RAF)
DI55c
GE3

BACKGROUND - PQs 1755H & 1767H

1. These PQs follow two recent PQs tabled by Mr Redmond about an alleged "unidentified flying object" incident which occurred outside RAF Woodbridge in Rendlesham Forest in December 1980. It is not clear why Mr Redmond has become interested in unidentified flying objects. There has been an increase in media attention on the subject of "UFOs" of late, partially as a result of the recent publication of a book on the subject by a former member of Sec(AS), and this may account for his interest.

2. There are commonly held misconceptions surrounding the MOD's role and responsibilities with respect to "unexplained" aerial phenomena. The Department has a very limited interest - our only concern is to establish whether there is any evidence of a matter which is of defence significance.

3. One of the functions of Sec(AS)2a is to act as the MOD focal point for reports and correspondence relating to "UFO" sightings. The task falls to Sec(AS) because the official interest in "UFO sightings" is an air defence one: is there any evidence in a sighting of a breach of UK air defences? Our role in relation to reports is therefore to examine them, with the assistance of the appropriate experts, as required, to ascertain whether the sighting represents anything of defence interest. If we judge that it does not, and this has been the case in respect of all "UFO" sightings reported to the MOD to date, we do not seek to investigate further or to provide an explanation of what might have been seen. There are no MOD staff who work on this subject full-time, and the work represents a small part of the overall secretariat function performed by Sec(AS)2a. Unfortunately, however, Sec(AS)2a is often erroneously referred to by the media as the MOD's "UFO" office.

4. Since we do not seek to establish the precise nature of each sighting reported to us by implication it is quite normal for a sighting to remain "unexplained" but not require further official

action. We are therefore unable to provide the details requested in Mr Redmond's question (PQ 1767H). We have chosen instead to clarify our official role in relation to "UFO" sightings. The draft answer follows the wording used in a previous PQ answer on the subject (House of Lords, Official Report, 7 Dec 94 WA 90) (attached).

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APPROVED BY:

Head of Sec(AS) Section 40 [redacted] Tel: Section 40 [redacted] Date 4.7.96

Sec(AS)2 Section 40 [redacted] Tel: Section 40 [redacted] Date 4/7/96

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GE3

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APPROVED BY:

Head of Sec(AS) Section 40 Tel: Section 40 Date 4.7.96

Sec(AS)2 Section 40 Tel: Section 40 Date 4/7/96

COPIED TO:

PSO/ACAS
DPR(RAF)
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of the sentence and before we have formed a view as to the appropriate period in question.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE: 4TH PERIODIC REPORT

Lord Lester of Herne Hill asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether the 4th Periodic Report to the Human Rights Committee under Article 40 to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights will be subject to parliamentary debate, and if not, why not.

Baroness Blatch: We have no plans for such a debate.

Lord Lester of Herne Hill asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will make their 4th Periodic Report to the Human Rights Committee under Article 40 to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights widely available to members of the public, and if so how.

Baroness Blatch: The report is already freely available from the Home Office publications unit, and in the British Library and the other legal deposit libraries.

SALMON REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPLEMENTATION

Lord Harris of Greenwich asked Her Majesty's Government:

Which recommendations of the Salmon Commission on standards in public life have been implemented and which have not.

Baroness Blatch: Of the 29 recommendations identified as requiring action by central and local government, 19 are known to have been implemented, fully or in part, although not necessarily in direct response to the Salmon report. They are recommendations 4, 6, 8, 11–14, 16–21, 24–25, 27 and 33–35. Recommendations 1–3, 7, 9 and 10 have not been implemented. Information about the status of recommendations 31, 32 and 26 is not yet available. The organisation which was the subject of recommendation 26 has now been abolished. Of the remaining nine recommendations, six required no action and three were addressed to national political parties. I shall write to the noble Lord with further details of implementation, or the reasons for not implementing the recommendations, as soon as the information is complete.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT BORROWING REQUIREMENT: ESTIMATES

Lord Barnett asked Her Majesty's Government:

What is their latest estimate of the general government borrowing requirement for the next three financial years; and what are the main reasons why this differs from the public sector borrowing requirement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Henley): The latest estimates of the general government borrowing requirement (GGBR) for the next three years were published in table 4.1 of the *Financial Statement and Budget Report 1995–96* and are given in the table below. The difference between the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) and the GGBR is accounted for by public corporations market and overseas borrowing (PCMOB), which has been a repayment of debt for the past 3 years and is projected to continue as such.

£ billion	GGBR	PCMOB	PSBR
1995–96	23.1	–1.6	21.5
1996–97	15	–2	13
1997–98	7	–2	5

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS: SIGHTINGS RECORDS

Lord Mason of Barnsley asked Her Majesty's Government:

To what extent official records are kept of sightings of unidentified flying objects, especially those sightings that may have a bearing on the air defence of this country; whether units of the Ministry of Defence, especially RAF units, have standing instructions to report sightings of unusual flying objects; whether reports are logged; and whether these can now be made public.

Lord Henley: My department evaluates reports of unexplained aerial phenomena solely in order to establish whether they may have any defence significance. Reports are received from a wide range of sources, including the police and general public, as well as the RAF, which in the context of its air defence responsibilities has standing instructions to report all sightings of unexplained aerial phenomena. Reports are placed on departmental files in the normal way and are therefore subject to the Public Records Act; several files on this subject are available for viewing at the Public Record Office.

NAIAD AND CAM: TRIGGERS

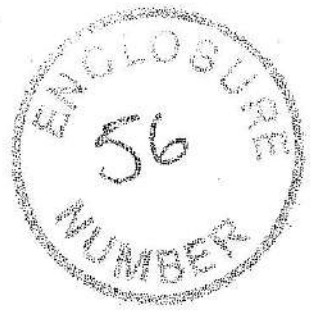
The Countess of Mar asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether NAIAD (Nerve Agent Immobilised Enzyme Alarm and Detector) alarms and CAM (Computer-Aided Measurement and Control) monitors are commonly triggered by compounds emitted by jet engines.

Lord Henley: NAIAD (Nerve Agent Immobilised Enzyme Alarm and Detector) and CAM (Chemical Agent Monitor) are designed to be used in conditions where they would not normally be in close proximity to jet engines. Nevertheless NAIAD was extensively evaluated against a wide range of aircraft engine effluent during its acceptance testing for military use. Out of 18 aircraft types, in only one case was alarm condition

END

6474



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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

****

MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PQ REFERENCE:1755H
PQ TYPE:Ordinary Written

SUPPLEMENTARIES ARE REQUIRED? NO

DATE FOR RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH: 12:00 ON FRIDAY 5 JULY 1996

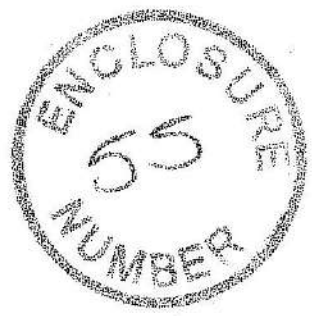
LEAD BRANCH:SEC(AS)
COPY ADDRESSEE(S):

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE DESK OFFICER WHO DRAFTS THE ANSWER AND THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE GRADE 5/ONE STAR WHO APPROVES THE ANSWER MUST BE QUOTED.

MP'S DETAILS:**MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR)(DON VALLEY)**

22|To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which office within his Department deals with sightings of unidentified flying objects. [35845]

64/4



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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

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MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

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18|To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list by (a) date and (b) location for the last 10 years unexplainable sightings of unidentified flying objects received by his Department; and what action was subsequently taken. [35844]

Unidentified Objects (Rendlesham Forest)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 7 May, *Official Report*, columns *19–20*, if he will list the titles of the papers held by his Department in respect of unidentified objects seen in Rendlesham forest, Suffolk; and if he will make a statement. [31490]

Mr. Soames: Apart from a report of the events written at the time by the United States Air Force deputy base commander at RAF Woodbridge, which has been in the public domain for a number of years, the documents held by my Department are internal staffing papers and correspondence from members of the public relating to the alleged events.

Bourlon Barracks, Catterick

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cost of the structure and fixed equipment of building 36 at Bourlon barracks, Catterick, for the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers light aid detachment; and if the final payment for that building has been made by his Department. [31612]

Mr. Soames: The total cost of the structure and fixed equipment of building 36, Bourlon barracks, REME lad, was £524,179. The final payment for this building—that is, the release of retention—has not been made.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the cost of modifications to the crane, doors and exhaust ventilation system in the LAD building (No. 36) at Bourlon barracks, Catterick, to facilitate maintenance work on Warrior armoured personnel carriers. [31614]

Mr. Soames: The estimated cost for the modification of the crane from a single to a two-speed motor is £5,500. There are no plans to modify any of the doors in building 36. The exhaust extraction system was modified in January 1996 at an approximate cost of £2,500.

Sea Training

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which operational sea training facilities the United Kingdom will make available to the Western European Union, following the Birmingham declaration of 7 May. [31746]

Mr. Soames: We will make available, for national or collective participation by WEU nations, the Royal Navy's operational sea training facility at Plymouth, and the joint maritime courses which are run off the coast of Scotland.

Western European Union

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to develop further the Western European Union's intelligence section. [31750]

Mr. Soames: The intelligence section agreed by Ministers in 1995 is not operational. Any further development of its capabilities would be undertaken by WEU in the light of experience.

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with the Western European Union mobility study following the Western European Union Ministerial Council meeting in Birmingham and the meeting of Western European Union Chiefs of Defence Staff in London. [31752]

Mr. Soames: Following endorsement of the strategic mobility concept by Chiefs of Defence Staff and by Ministers, a special WEU working group has begun examining the most effective means by which the concept might be implemented.

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made as to when the Western European Union will be in a position to conduct a full-scale Petersberg-type operation. [31747]

Mr. Soames: Our target is for WEU to be capable of conducting a small-scale crisis management mission by the end of 1996. Achievement of this goal depends on WEU making further progress on the operational improvements we have initiated during our presidency.

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which countries have not to date offered to provide intelligence data to the Western European Union's intelligence section. [31751]

Mr. Soames: This is a matter for the nations concerned.

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures will be taken to increase the involvement of the associate partner members in Western European Union's work on operational development with particular reference to Africa peacekeeping, exercise policy and humanitarian task force operations. [31749]

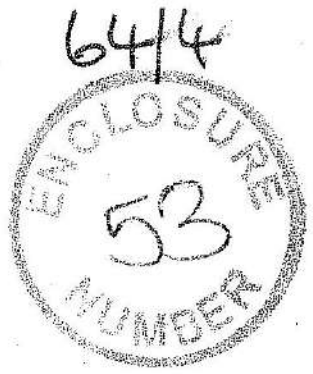
Mr. Soames: WEU associate partners have already taken part in discussions on the specific issues referred to by the hon. Member. They have also been invited to provide information on the forces that they might make available for WEU operations. We look forward to their further involvement in discussions on other operational matters.

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will encourage the Western European Union to add a public relations element to its current crisis exercises, Crisex 96. [31753]

Mr. Soames: WEU intends to use this exercise to promote its operational role to the media, and plans a press visit to the exercise. WEU will also be testing internally new procedures for operational public information policy, developed as a UK initiative.

Sea Harrier Aircraft

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Sea Harrier aircraft have been lost in the last year; how many new aircraft from the attrition batch whose procurement was announced in January 1994 have now been deployed in squadron service as replacements; and what navigation system was fitted to those replacement aircraft when they were delivered by British Aerospace. [31758]



PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

MP: MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR) DON VALLEY

PQ REFERENCE: 1492H

PQ TYPE: ORDINARY WRITTEN

DRAFT ANSWER REQUIRED BY: 12:00 THURSDAY 6 JUNE 1996

QUESTION: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his Answer of 7th May, Official Report, columns 19-20, if he will list the titles of the papers held by his Department in respect of the unidentified objects seen in Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk, and if he will make a statement.

DRAFT ANSWER: Apart from a report of the events written at the time by the USAF Deputy Base Commander at RAF Woodbridge, which has been in the public domain for a number of years, the documents held by my Department are internal staffing papers and correspondence from members of the public relating to the alleged events.

APPROVED BY:

Head of Sec(AS) [redacted] Tel [redacted] Date 6.6.96

Sec(AS)2 [redacted] Tel [redacted] Date 5/6/96

COPIED TO:

PSO/ACAS)
DPR(RAF))
DI55c) without attachments
DD GE/AEW)
Sec(AS)1)

BACKGROUND - 1492H

1. This PQ is a follow on to PQ 1220H (Official Report 7 May 96 columns 19-20 attached), which sought the classification of the documents held by the MOD in respect of the alleged events at Rendlesham Forest in December 1980.

2. Mr Redmond has asked a large number of PQs on military low flying over the years and it is our understanding that he tables many of these questions on behalf of Section 40 a researcher into low flying and other military aviation issues, rather than as a result of any direct personal interest. It is not clear why Mr Redmond is specifically interested in the alleged events at Rendlesham Forest, but it is a subject which continues to fascinate "UFO" enthusiasts, and is a topic about which Sec(AS) continues to receive regular correspondence.

3. The alleged incidents occurred between 27-29 December 1980 when unusual lights were seen by USAF personnel, including the Deputy Base Commander, outside RAF Woodbridge. A report of the sighting (copy attached) was forwarded to the MOD by the RAF Liaison Officer at RAF Bentwaters. The report was examined by the Department at the time and no other evidence of any matter of defence significance was found. This is of course the Department's only interest in such sightings.

4. Our line regarding this alleged incident is that all available evidence was examined at the time and we are satisfied that nothing of defence concern occurred in the location on the nights in question. No additional information has come to light over the last 15 years which calls the original judgement into question.

5. The only documents on the subject held by the Department are the report itself, limited official comments on the report, and correspondence from members of the public enquiring about the alleged events.

Official Report - Written Answers
7th May Columns 19-20.

Unidentified Objects, (Rendlesham Forest)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current security classification on the documents his Department holds on the unidentified objects seen by members of the United States Armed Forces in Rendlesham forest, Suffolk in 1980; and if he will make a statement. [27644]

Mr. Soames: The papers held by my Department relating to the alleged events at Rendlesham forest, Suffolk in 1980 are unclassified.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 81ST COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (USAFE)
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 metalic 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^{0} 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

64/4

****

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

****

MINISTER REPLYING:MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PQ REFERENCE:1492H
PQ TYPE:Ordinary Written

SUPPLEMENTARIES ARE REQUIRED? NO

DATE FOR RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH: 12:00 ON THURSDAY 6 JUNE 1996

LEAD BRANCH:SEC(AS)
COPY ADDRESSEE(S):

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE DESK OFFICER WHO DRAFTS THE ANSWER AND THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE GRADE 5/ONE STAR WHO APPROVES THE ANSWER MUST BE QUOTED.

MP'S DETAILS:**MR MARTIN REDMOND (LABOUR)(DON VALLEY)**

15|To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his Answer of 7th May, Official Report, columns 19-20, if he will list the titles of the papers held by his Department in respect of unidentified objects seen in Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk; and if he will make a statement. [31490]

SEC (AS) 2

ENCLOSURE NUMBER 51

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

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DEFENCE

CT: Hd CS(RM) 1

D/US of S/FH 1199/96/M

24th May 1996

Dear Mr. Fraser

In my letter of 14 May, I promised to write to you again once enquiries to the Public Record Office about Blue Streak missile test film footage had been completed.

First you will wish to know that all official military film footage which has been selected for preservation is transferred to the Imperial War Museum (the official repository for such material as approved by the Lord Chancellor). The Blue Streak test film mentioned in the BBC2 programme *'Tales of the Paranormal'* last month is not held by the Ministry of Defence, nor the Public Record Office, but enquiries have revealed that copies of the 14 minute footage, which was sponsored by the Central Office of Information and produced by The Rank Organisation, are held by the Imperial War Museum and the Central Office of Information.

You may be interested to know that in response to a similar query about the film from a member of the public in June 1964 MOD staff obtained a few 'clippings' of the aborted Blue Streak launch from Pathe Ltd which revealed that the 'object' observed in the film was in fact believed to be an internal camera reflection which is an apparently well-known phenomenon amongst photographic specialists. Contemporary papers are in the public domain and are available at the PRO under reference AIR 2/17526. I should add that it remains the case that to date the MOD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of lifeforms of extraterrestrial origin.

Until 2014 access to the original Blue Streak test film held by the Imperial War Museum is only possible with the specific

John Fraser Esq MP

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
SEC (AS) 2
-8 JUN 1996
FILE 64/4

Recycled Pape

permission of the Central Office of Information as they own the Copyright to the film. Should anyone wish to view the footage they should contact in the first instance:

Section 40
Head of Footage Film
Central Office of Information
Hercules House
London SE1 7DU

Tel no: Section 40

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

THE EARL HOWE

Recycled Paper

met these by the end of 1994 as required. A Council Decision, based on further results from the study is now under discussion in Brussels.

The Government do not believe that culpable errors have been made and the question of seeking compensation does not arise.

BSE: Government-funded Research Projects

Lord Kennet asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether those scientists who were not convinced of the officially accepted accounts of BSE were prevented from participating in government-funded research on the subject.

Lord Lucas: No. We are prepared to consider applications from anyone but all applications do of course have to be subject to the normal scrutiny procedures to demonstrate that a particular proposal is scientifically valid and that the potential contractors have the expertise and the technical resources to undertake the proposal. One of the Ministry's known critics, Dr. Narang, has been involved as a consultant in a MAFF and BBSRC-financed research project specifically to look at his ideas.

Pesticides Safety Directorate: Targets

Lord Kennet asked Her Majesty's Government:

Why the first target Mr. Douglas Hogg has set for the Pesticides Safety Directorate is "to achieve 100 per cent. recovery of [its own] costs"? (House of Commons, Written Answers, col. 615, 18th April 1996.)

Lord Lucas: Full recovery of costs is one of a set of targets relating to the Pesticides Safety Directorate's financial performance, efficiency and delivery of pesticides approval services and policy advice in 1996–97. They are all equally important and the sequence simply follows the pattern of previous years.

Releases to the Environment: Advisory Committee's Reports

Lord Kennet asked Her Majesty's Government:

Why there is no requirement on the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment to produce an annual report, and whether they will now require it to do so in a readily understandable form.

Lord Lucas: There is no need for such a statutory requirement. The Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment has published annual reports since 1994 and will continue to do so. These reports are available in the Library.

Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease

Lord Burnham asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to their reply to Lord Marlesford (*WA 141*) what was the number of cases of CJD over the same period.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Baroness Cumberlege): The information requested is published in the Fourth Annual Report of the National Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease Surveillance Unit (August 1995), copies of which are available in the Library. In 1995, 43 cases from probable and definite CJD have been reported, of which 36 were sporadic CJD. In 1996 to date, 14 cases have been reported, of which 13 were sporadic CJD.

RAF Menwith Hill

Lord Jenkins of Putney asked Her Majesty's Government:

What activity takes place at Menwith Hill and which Minister is responsible and whether the RAF or the United States National Security Agency are involved; and what was the outcome of proceedings against women of the Peace Camp there at Ripon Magistrate's Court on 4th April.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Earl Howe): Menwith Hill operates as a field station of the US National Security Agency and is an integral part of the worldwide US Department of Defense communications network which supports UK, US and NATO interests. There is an RAF presence at the site, which has now been retitled RAF Menwith Hill to bring it into line with other RAF sites made available by the Ministry of Defence to the United States Government. The Minister of State for the Armed Forces is responsible for RAF Menwith Hill.

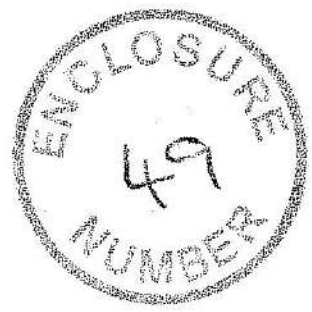
We are not aware of any proceedings taken against the peace protestors at RAF Menwith Hill on 4th April 1996. A number of cases were brought before Ripon Magistrates Court on 3rd April 1996 for criminal damage and by-laws offences, but these were adjourned for trial at a later date.

Armed Forces Medical and Dental Officers: Pay Award

Lord Westbury asked Her Majesty's Government:

What recommendations the Armed Forces Pay Review Body has made on the pay of medical and dental officers in the Armed Forces.

The Lord Privy Seal (Viscount Cranborne): The Armed Forces Pay Review Body has made recommendations on the pay of medical and dental officers in the Armed Forces in a supplementary report being published today. Copies are available in the Printed Paper Office and the Library of the House.



LOOSE MINUTE

D/Sec(AS)/64/4

16 May 96

Parliamentary Branch

LETTER FROM JOHN FRASER MP - US 1199/96 - BLUE STREAK MISSILE TEST FILM FOOTAGE

1. Following Lord Howe's interim reply sent on 14 May, we are now in a position to provide a substantive response to the query from Mr Fraser.

2. Mr Fraser is seeking information on behalf of a constituent whose enquiry was prompted by last month's BBC2 *"Tales of the Paranormal"* programme about "UFOs". The programme, which was made by Ms Jenny Randles, a prominent member of the "UFO" lobby, featured footage filmed inside the Public Record Office (PRO) at Kew.

3. Ms Randles stated that during testing of the Blue Streak missile at Woomera South Australia in 1964, one of the launches was aborted because a 'spaceman' was seen in the vicinity of the launch site. She also stated that although most of the film of the Blue Streak tests is available to the public, one reel which contains the aborted launch footage has been withheld from the public domain. The implication was that all the Blue Streak missile test film is held by the PRO for public viewing *except* the footage of the aborted launch. Examination of the files has shown that Ms Randles' use of the material at the PRO was to say the least selective.

4. The Imperial War Museum (IWM) is the official repository of official military film selected for preservation, as approved by the Lord Chancellor. The National Film and Television Archive holds official non-military film selected for preservation. The PRO does not hold archived official film footage. There is documented evidence in the PRO that in 1964, following an enquiry from a member of the public, MOD branch S4(Air) went to a great deal of trouble to identify the source of the film of the aborted launch. They approached The Rank Organisation, the Central Office of Information (COI) and Associated British-Pathe Ltd. Pathe Ltd were able to provide them with relevant 'clippings' from the film and expressed their judgement that the object seen on the film was an internal camera reflection.

5. The 'clippings' sent to the MOD did not survive on the files, but further approaches to the IWM and the COI reveal that both hold a copy of the 14 minute Blue Streak test film, which was sponsored by the COI and produced by The Rank

Organisation. The IWM also holds a few reels of "off-cuts". Therefore, contrary to the results of initial enquiries, "official" footage of the aborted Blue Streak launch does in fact exist and is held by the IWM and the COI. However, the footage can only be viewed by members of the public with the permission of the COI, which owns the Copyright to the film until 2014. The film itself is not sensitive.

6. Additional information uncovered reveals that the Blue Streak film footage also featured in the COI catalogue "Films from Britain", 1968/69 which is an indication that there are probably numerous copies of the film in circulation throughout the world. It is possible that Ms Randles viewed the other Blue Streak test material from a "commercial" film archive.

7. Neither the MOD nor the PRO hold Blue Streak test film footage. Anyone wishing to view the film would need to contact the IWM or the COI. I attach a draft explaining the above for Lord Howe's consideration.

Section 40 [redacted]

Section 40 [redacted]

Sec(AS)2
MB8245 Section 40 [redacted]

Enc.

D R A F T

D/USofS/1199/96 May 1996

Further to my letter of 14 May, and following enquiries which have been made with the Public Record Office, I am now in a position to offer you a substantive reply to your letter to Michael Portillo of 22 April 1996 regarding Blue Streak missile test film footage.

First you will wish to know that all official military film footage which has been selected for preservation is transferred to the Imperial War Museum (the official repository for such material as approved by the Lord Chancellor). The Blue Streak test film mentioned in the BBC2 programme *'Tales of the Paranormal'* last month is not held by the Ministry of Defence, nor the Public Record Office, but enquiries have revealed that copies of the 14 minute footage, which was sponsored by the Central Office of Information and produced by The Rank Organisation, are held by the Imperial War Museum and the Central Office of Information.

You may be interested to know that in response to a similar

John Fraser, MP

query about the film from a member of the public in June 1964 MOD staff obtained a few 'clippings' of the aborted Blue Streak launch from Pathe Ltd which revealed that the 'object' observed in the film was in fact believed to be an internal camera reflection which is an apparently well-known phenomenon amongst photographic specialists, and was not a so-called "space-man". Contemporary papers are in the public domain and are available at the PRO under reference AIR 2/17526. I should add that it remains the case that to date the MOD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of lifeforms of extraterrestrial origin.

Until 2014 access to the original Blue Streak test film held by the Imperial War Museum is only possible with the specific permission of the Central Office of Information as they own the Copyright to the film. Should anyone wish to view the footage they should contact in the first instance:

Section 40

Head of Footage Film
Central Office of Information
Hercules House
London SE1 7DU

Tel no: Section 40

I hope this is helpful.

THE EARL HOWE

644

PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY
FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

TO: Sec (AS) 2b [redacted] PE REF NUMBER: 1199 /96

MINISTER REPLYING: USofS DRAFT REQUIRED BY: 8 May 96

DATE: 29 Apr 96 FROM: [redacted] PE Unit TEL: [redacted]

GUIDANCE NOTE

Ministers reply to some 8,000 such letters a year. They 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. Do not be unduly defensive.

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.

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 ... addressed to Michael Portillo/ Nicholas Soames/James Arbuthnot/Frederick Howe on behalf etc"
Mr Soames and Earl Howe add "I have been asked to reply" and "I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility." respectively.

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."

Deadlines 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.

ALL DRAFTS MUST BE CLEARED BY A NAMED OFFICIAL AT GRADE 7 LEVEL AND ANNOTATED TO SHOW THIS HAS BEEN DONE.

WHEREVER POSSIBLE DRAFTS SHOULD BE SENT ON CHOTS E-MAIL TO:
Parliamentary Enquiries
other wise send drafts by fax to [redacted] PLEASE USE ONLY ONE METHOD

Sec(AS)2
Uses.
1199

JOHN FRASER M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Michael Portillo M.P.
Secretary of State
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON S.W.1A 2HB

22nd April 1996

Dear Michael

Following an enquiry I have received, is it possible to have available to the public now the Aborted Blue Streak Missile Launch which took place in May 1964 at Woomera South, Australia?

I understand that the Blue Streak Missile test film can now be reviewed having been released by the Records Office with the exception of the Aborted Blue Streak Missile Launch.

I am told that the Aborted Launch is a piece of film referred to in the BBC 2 documentary on Thursday 11th April 1996 in which the 'Cumberland Spaceman' makes an appearance.

I understand there are references to this Aborted Launch in the Public Records Office and is there any reason why the archive film is not now publicly available?

Yours sincerely

Section 40

John Fraser M.P.

644

ENCLOSURE 48

Wed 15 May, 1996 13:45 mailbox standard Page 1

DATE	FROM	SUBJECT	CODES
15/05/96	Hd of CS(RM)1	PE: BLUE STREAK MISSILE LAUNCH	[ ]

Intended:
Sent: 15/05/96 at 12:39 Delivered: 15/05/96 at 13:29
To: SEC(AS)2A (2)
CC:
Ref: 32
From: Hd of CS(RM)1 Auth by:
Subject: PE: BLUE STREAK MISSILE LAUNCH

Text: Section 40

Find attached, one suggested addition, a number of minor corrections and a contact for permission to obtain access to the film.
Regards Section 40

Priority: Normal SEE PAGE Attachments [1]
Reply Request [ ] View Acknowledge [*] Codes [ ]

LOOSE MINUTE

CS(RM)/4/6/37

15 May 1996

SEC(AS)2a

PE: BLUE STREAK MISSILE LAUNCH FILM

Reference: D/Sec(AS)/64/4 dated 13 May 1996

1. Thank you for sight of your initial drafts.

2. Your background note covers all the salient points and from my point of view requires only one very minor change, the PRO is the Public **Record** Office.

3. I would suggest the addition of the following in the draft letter to the MP "... and was not the so-called "spaceman". **Contemporary papers are in the public domain and are available at the PRO under reference AIR 2/17526.**" Additionally, the "**s**" to be deleted from **Records** in paras 1 and 2, and a minor spelling error, also in para 1, "**enquiries**".

4. Finally, a contact should anyone wish to view the film held by the Imperial War Museum "... **contact in the first instance** Section 40 Section 40 **Head of Footage Film, Central Office of Information, Hercules House, London SE1 7DU (telephone no.** Section 40 **facsimile no.** Section 40

[signed]
Section 40
Hd CS(RM)1
AA07 Section 40

Sec(AS)2

644

ENCLOSURE 47

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB
Telephone Section 40

SECRETARY OF STATE

D/S of S/MP 1323/96/M

15 May 1996

Dear Alf

Thank you for your letter of 29 April enclosing one from Section 40 Wythenshawe, about "unidentified flying objects".

My Department does look into reports of "UFO" sightings that are sent to us, many of which are very vague, but only to establish if what was seen may have some defence significance. We believe that down-to-earth explanations are available for most of these reported sightings, such as aircraft seen from unusual angles, or natural phenomena.

Section 40 asks about files containing reports of "UFOs" made to the Ministry of Defence. He will wish to be aware that in common with all government files, MOD files are subject to the provisions of the Public Records Act of 1958 and 1967, which states that official files generally remain closed from public viewing for 30 years after the last action has been taken. It was generally the case that before 1967 all "UFO" files were destroyed after five years, as at the time there was insufficient public interest in the subject to merit their permanent retention. Since

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
SEC(AS)2
16 MAY 1996
RE

The Rt Hon Alfred Morris AO QSO MP

1967, following an increase in public interest in this subject, it has been our policy that such files are to be routinely preserved. A few files from the Fifties and early Sixties did, however, survive and are available for examination by members of the public. They may be viewed at the Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU. The references of these files are as follows:

AIR 16/1199	AIR 20/9994
AIR 20/7390	AIR 2/16918
AIR 20/9320	AIR 2/17318
AIR 20/9321	AIR 2/17526
AIR 20/9322	AIR 2/17527
PREM 11/855	

My Department does not carry out research into "UFO/flying saucers". We have no direct interest, expertise or role with respect to "UFO/flying saucers" or the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which we remain open-minded. However, to date we know of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena.

I should like to assure Section 40 that there is no question that the MOD would attempt to withhold information on the subject of so-called "unidentified flying objects".

Yours sincerely

Section 40

MICHAEL PORTILLO

Sec(AS)2B

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

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DEFENCE

D/US of S/FH 1199/96/S

14th May 1996

Dear Mr. Fraser

Thank you for your letter of 22 April 1996 to Michael Portillo about the film of the aborted Blue Streak Missile Launch in May 1964. I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility.

In order to answer your query it will be necessary for enquiries to be made with the Public Records Office. I shall write to you again when these enquiries are completed.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

THE EARL HOWE

John Fraser Esq MP

Sec(AS)2a

644

ENCLOSURE 45

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

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DEFENCE

D/US of S FH 1002/96/A

14th May 1996

Dear Geoffrey.

Thank you for your letter of 15 April, enclosing one from Section 40 Section 40 Woodmancote, about "unidentified flying objects" and "alien artefacts".

My Department does look into reports of "UFO" sightings that are sent to us, many of which are very vague, but only to establish if what was seen may have some defence significance. We believe that down-to-earth explanations are available for most of these reported sightings, such as aircraft seen from unusual angles, or natural phenomena.

The Department has no direct interest, expertise or role with respect to "UFO/flying saucer" matters or the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which we remain open-minded. However, to date we know of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena.

Section 40 may wish to be aware that in common with all government files, MOD files are subject to the provisions of the Public Records Act of 1958 and 1967, which states that official files generally remain closed from public viewing for 30 years after the last action has been taken. It was generally the case that before 1967 all "UFO" files were destroyed after five years, as at the time there was insufficient public interest in the subject to merit their permanent retention. Since 1967, following an increase in public interest in this subject, it has been our policy that such files are to be routinely preserved. A few files from the Fifties and early Sixties did, however, survive and are available for examination by members of the public. They may be viewed at the Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU. The references of these files are as follows:

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown Esq MP

AIR 16/1199
AIR 20/7390
AIR 20/9320
AIR 20/9321
AIR 20/9322
PREM 11/855

AIR 20/9994
AIR 2/16918
AIR 2/17318
AIR 2/17526
AIR 2/17527

All surviving paperwork from over 30 years ago on the subject of "UFOs" previously held by the MOD has now been transferred to the Public Records Office. I should like to assure Section 40 that there is no question that the MOD would attempt to cover-up information on the subject of so-called "unidentified flying objects".

I hope this explains the position.

Yours ever.

Section 40

THE EARL HOWE

Recycled Paper

Mon 13 May, 1996 18:14 mailbox log Page 1

DATE	TO	SUBJECT	CODES
13/05/96	Hd of CS(RM)1	PE 1199/96 - BLUE STREAK MISSILE	[ ]

Sent: 13/05/96 at 18:14
To: Hd of CS(RM)1
CC:

Ref: 605
Subject: PE 1199/96 - BLUE STREAK MISSILE TEST FILM

Text: Section 40

Hopefully this will be the last time I bother you with this one.

Section 40

Priority: Urgent
Reply Request [ ]

View Acknowledge [*]
Delivery Acknowledge [*]

Attachments [1]
Codes [ ]

LOOSE MINUTE

D/Sec(AS)/64/4

13 May 96

Head of CS(RM)1

PE: BLUE STREAK MISSILE LAUNCH FOOTAGE

1. Thank you for the additional information which you were able to provide to assist with the response to PE US 1199/96.

2. The difficulty with this one is that there is so much information which I have had to distil down. Attached you will see that I have put together a proposed first draft. It still requires some finessing, but I should be grateful if you would look it over and advise me whether I have misunderstood anything which you have told me, or whether there are any other points which the Minister might usefully make in his reply.

3. I should also be grateful if you would let me know how a member of the public might be able to request a viewing of the Blue Streak footage held by the IWM, ie. an enquiries number at IWM etc.

4. Thank once more for your help with this time consuming enquiry.

Section 40
Sec(AS)2a1
MB8245 Section 40
CHOTS: SEC(AS)2A (2)

Enc.