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What has the U.S. government been hiding about UFOs?

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On Dec. 16, three experienced journalists posted [a bombshell story on the New York Times website](#): The Pentagon had authorized a secret research project (2007-2012) to study unidentified flying objects.

Even more importantly, Luis Elizondo, the Pentagon project coordinator and a career intelligence officer, later asserted that in his opinion some UFOs were real objects and appeared to demonstrate a technology that the U.S. did not have and did not understand. To highlight that point, the Pentagon also released [“gun camera” film of a Navy pilot’s 2004 close encounter with an object](#) that displayed wildly unconventional flight characteristics.

The mainstream media was caught completely off guard by the sensational Pentagon revelations, although they should not have been. Some breathlessly opined that never before had a U.S. intelligence agency acknowledged UFOs were solid objects that defied conventional explanation. Well, not exactly. While that assertion is true in some narrow sense, the belief that the U.S. intelligence community had been unaware of the exotic nature of UFOs until the recent Pentagon study is just totally bogus.

In point of fact, they have known about the unconventional nature of the phenomenon for decades and have chosen to hide the bulk of that information (dozens of military gun camera films, for example) from Congress and especially from the American people.

Contrary to the media coverage of the Pentagon story, the U.S. defense and intelligence communities actually have known about the exotic nature of UFOs since at least 1947. There exists, for example, a once-secret document (dated Sept. 23, 1947) written by Gen. Nathan Twining (Air Material Command) that acknowledges reported flying discs “are real and not visionary or fictitious” and that the discs “must be considered evasive when sighted ... which lends belief to the possibility that some of the objects are (intelligently) controlled.”

And since the U.S. military had dozens of reports from experienced military pilots and FAA controllers and ground personnel that the discs could hover, turn on a dime and then accelerate at incredible speeds — unlike any technology that existed then or now — it was implicit even in 1947 that these flying objects were not ours.

In short, the deep intelligence state has known for at least 70 years that some UFOs were real; yet it has chosen to keep the information in support of that conclusion either confidential or simply denied that it even existed. But a decades-long public policy of secrecy and denial on a subject as important and mind-bending as UFOs is foolish and dangerous in the extreme and puts our entire democratic process at risk.

If any of this commentary sounds familiar, it should since I first raised these issues in a series of articles published by TCPalm in 2008. In those articles, I pointed out there was substantial evidence gathered over many decades that some UFOs were likely extraterrestrial; the intelligence community was withholding that information; and the reasons for the secrecy likely related to fears of a public panic or to national security concerns since many important UFO sightings had occurred in the vicinity of U.S. defense installations and nuclear weapon storage facilities.

Despite any possible national security concerns, several prominent public figures, most notably Hillary Clinton, have called for more increased transparency on the subject of UFOs. Curiously, my call for disclosure in 2008 went over like a lead balloon. Most of my professional colleagues in law and economics thought I had lost my mind (even though I had studied the phenomenon for almost 40 years); and the Cato Institute abruptly ended its 20 year affiliation with me (as an adjunct scholar) one day after my first UFO article appeared. So much for courage and open inquiry in the academy.

The good news is these perverse attitudes are changing somewhat. The New York Times' Pentagon project revelations have created an important opportunity for more serious media coverage of past and current government UFO research. We must take advantage of that opportunity now and push for open Congressional hearings and full disclosure.