

Radio Broadcast regarding Michigan UFO sightings

A Statement by House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich. On the Air 2 P.M., March 25, 1966

I believe Congress should thoroughly investigate the rash of reported sightings of unidentified flying objects in Southern Michigan and other parts of the country.

I feel a congressional inquiry would be most worthwhile because the American people are intensely interested in the UFO stories, and some people are alarmed by them.

Air Force investigators have been checking on such reports for years but have come up with nothing very conclusive.

In the light of these new sightings and incidents near Ann Arbor, Michigan, and elsewhere, it would be a very wholesome thing for a committee of the Congress to conduct hearings and to call responsible witnesses from the executive branch of the government and other witnesses who say they have sighted these objects.

I think the American people would feel better if there was a full-blown investigation of these mysterious flying objects, which some persons honestly believe that they have seen.

Press Secretary and Speech File, Ford Congressional Papers 1947-1973 Box D37

Ford News Release Regarding 1966 Michigan UFO Sightings

Gerald Ford UFO Talk

Written by Grant Cameron

Saturday, 01 August 2009 16:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 01 August 2009 17:08

Congressman Gerald R. Ford
House Republican Leader
News Release
For Release Tuesday, P.M.
March 28, 1966

NOTE TO ALL NEWS MEDIA: House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford, R-Michigan, today sent the attached letter to the chairman and the ranking Republican members of the House Committee on the Armed Services and Science and Astronautics, urging that one committee or the other investigate the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects. (UFO's)
Ford is not satisfied with the Air Force explanation of the recent sightings in Michigan and describes the "swamp gas" version given by J. Allen Hynek as "flippant."
Ford has recently received a number of telegrams and letters from individuals anxious to see a congressional investigation of UFO's.

March 28, 1966

George P. Millar, Chairman Rep. L. Mendel Rivers, Chairman
Science and Astronautics Committee Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairman Millar and Rivers:

No doubt you have noticed the recent flurry of newspaper stories about unidentified flying objects (UFO's). I have taken special interest in these accounts because many of the latest reported sightings have been in my home state of Michigan.

The Air Force sent a consultant, astrophysicist J. Allen Hynek of Northwestern University, to Michigan to investigate the various reports; and he dismissed all of them as a product of college student pranks or swamp gas or an impression created by the rising crescent moon and the planet Venus. I do not agree that all of these reports can or should be so easily explained away.

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Because I think there may be substance to some of the reports and because i believe the American people are entitled to a more thorough explanation that has been given them by the Air Force to date, I am proposing that either the Science and Astronautics Committee or the Armed services Committee of the House schedule hearings on the subjects of UFO's and invite testimony from both the executive branch of the government and some of the person's who claim to have see UFO's.

I enclose material which I think will be helpful to you in assessing the advisability of an investigation of UFO's.

May I first call your attention to an column by Roscoe Drummand, published last Sunday in which Mr. Drummond says, " Maybe all these reported sightings are whimsical, imaginary or unreal: but we need a more credible and detached appraisal of the evidence we are getting."

Mr. Drummond goes on to state, " We need to get all the data drawn together to one place and examined far more objectively than anyone has done so far. A stable public opinion will come from a trustworthy look at the evidence, and not from belittling it."

"The time has come for the President or Congress to name an objective and respected panel to investigate, appraise, and report on all present and future evidence about what is going on."

I fully agree with Mr. Drummond's statements. I also suggest that you scan the enclosed articles of six articles by Buckley Griffin of the Griffin-Larrabee News Bureau here. In the last of his articles, published last January, Mr. Griffin says, " A main conclusion can be briefly stated. It is that the Air Force is misleading the public by it's continuing campaign to produce and maintain belief that all sightings can be explained away as misidentification of familiar objects, such as balloons, stars, and aircraft."

I have today just received a number of telegrams urging a congressional investigation of UFO's. One is from a retired Air Force Colonel Harold R. Brown, Ardmore, Tennessee, who says, " I have seen a UFO. Will be available to testify."

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Another from Mrs. Ethyle M. Davis, Eugene, Oregon, reads, "Nine out of ten people want the truth of UFO's. Press your investigation to the fullest."

Ronald Colier of Los Angeles, who identifies himself as " a scientist from M.I.T.," urges that you " do everything in your power to make the Air Force Project Blue Book (The AF name for its study and verdicts on UFO reports) known to the people."

Are we to assume that everyone who says that he has seen UFO's is an unreliable witness?

A UPI story of of Ann Arbor, Michigan, dated march 21, 1966, states that " at least 40 persons, including 12 policemen, said today that they have seen a strange flying object guarded by four sister ships land in a swamp near here Sunday night."

Matt Surrall of Station WJR, Detroit, cites an eye witness account of a recent UFO sighting near Emile Grenier of Ann Arbor, an aeronautical engineer employed by Ford Motor Company. He points out that an aeronautical engineer can hardly be considered as an untrustworthy witness.

In the firm belief that the American public reserves a better explanation than thus far given by the Air Force, I strongly recommend that there be a committee investigation of the UFO phenomena.

I think we owe it to the people to establish credibility regarding UFO's and to produce the greatest possible enlightenment on this subject.

Kindest person regards.

Sincerely,

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/s/

Gerald R. Ford, M.C.

GRF:plr

Enclosures

UFO Folder 1966, Press Secretary & Speech File 1947-1973 Box D9

Ford Radio Broadcast Regarding 1966 Michigan UFO Sightings Radio Tape for Fifth district Stations March 30, 1966

My friends of the fifth congressional district, this is your congressman, Jerry Ford, speaking to you from the nation's capitol.

As you know, I have requested a congressional investigation of unidentified flying objects, UFO's, as they are called.

I am most serious about this; this is the kind of subject that lends itself to some flak, a little criticism, and a shower of compliments.

One day this week, I felt an unidentified flying object whiz past my ear--my right ear naturally. Upon close inspection, I had no more trouble identifying this particular UFO than the Air Force did in telling the people of Michigan they have been seeing swamp gas.

The UFO I encountered was a brickbat tossed by an irate gentleman who believes Congress could use its time to much better advantage than in investigating what he calls "UFO hysteria."

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But this is one of the few criticisms I encountered in the more than 50 letters that I received since first proposing that UFO's be investigated by either the House Armed Services Committee or the House Science and Astronautics Committee.

Many of the letters I have received are from Michigan — from Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Algonac, Petoskey, Port Huron, Utica, Grosse Pointe, Bay City, and other points.

But there is interest all over the country, and everyone but the weilder of the aforementioned brickbat is urging that I follow up on my proposal that there be a congressional investigation of UFO's. I fully intend to do so.

A few of the letters are pretty far out — like the one which suggested that UFO's caused the failure of the Gemini 8 spacecraft, the electric power blackout last year in the East, and the recent Boeing 727 airplane accidents.

This letter writer informed me that planet people are piloting the UFO's, have superior abilities, have the anti-gravity secret, and fly about in spacecrafts that travel at 50,000 miles an hour or better. He wants a Minute Man alert whenever UFO's are sighted anywhere in the country.

Another gentleman sent me a copy of a letter he had dispatched to a friend of his in the Central Intelligence Agency.

He wrote, " Well, the Air Force has done it. By its ridiculous 'solving' of the UFO's in Michigan in a day or two, they may have doomed the Air Force. Brilliant, Absolutely brilliant. They (the planet people) were trying to establish their reality...for it must be done, if they are trying to help us. Now they are angry at being called 'swamp gas' and are going on the record that they are going to harass the Air Force just as they have been doing to NASA. Knowing what I do, if I were the Air Force, I would be scared witless. But, of course, who ever heard of marsh gas being dangerous/ To make it clear, The SI's (Saucer Intelligences) are now going to teach the Air Force a lesson it will never forget. They are turning their attention to harassment of the Air Force in a big way."

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Now, Dr. Hynek and the Air Force may not be disturbed by that letter, but they'd better beware of some astronomers in the nation. A chap in Seattle, wash., says he has absolute proof that the Air Force was dead wrong in describing Michigan pictures of an alleged UFO as " The rising crescent moon and the Planet Venus."

Well, happy landing to the Air Force. And I do think that the American people want a better explanation of UFO's than they have been getting. If my mail is any indication, there are many, many people who find it extremely difficult to believe some of the stories put out by the government on this and other subjects.

This is your congressman, Jerry Ford, saying--so--long for now, and I'll see you nest week at this same time, same station.

Jerry Ford Papers, Press Secretary& Speech Files 1948-1973, Weekly Radio reports, Box D35

Congressman Gerald R. Ford
ws ReleaseFor Sunday A.M. Release April 3, 1966

Statement by House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford, R-Michigan

As I had expected, some persons have been ridiculed by the call for a congressional investigated of unidentified flying objects (UFO's). These people are a fraction of those who have given their reaction to my proposal. The overwhelming majority of those expressing a view in letters to me believe a congressional investigation would be useful and is needed.

Those who scoff at the idea of a congressional investigation of UFO's apparently are unaware that the House Armed services Committee has scheduled a closed- door hearing on the matter Tuesday with the Air Force and that rep. Joseph E. Karth, D-Minn., headed a three man

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sub-committee which held two days of hush-hush hearings five years ago on behalf of the Science and Astronautics Committee. Karth has confirmed in conversation with a member of my staff that he conducted these secret hearings.

The present Science and Astronautics Committee chairman, Rep. George P. Millar, D. Calif., has shied away from the UFO problem at this time, saying his committee does not have the jurisdiction over the Air Force. But the late Rep. Overton Brooks, D.La., obviously had different ideas because he tapped Karth to summon Air Force witnesses and question them after a flurry of sightings in 1961.

Karth has informed me that his subcommittee made an oral report to the full committee but never released anything to the public. According to Charles F. Ducander, the committee staff director, no record was made of the conversation between Karth subcommittee and the Air Force witnesses. The hearings, he said, took place in Karth's congressional office.

I have never said that I believe any of the reported UFO sightings indicate visits to earth from another planet. Apart from the pranks and natural phenomena, some of these objects may well be products of experimentation by our own military. If this is so, why doesn't the Air Force concede it and in this way reassure the American people/ There would be no need to go into detail on the nature of the experiments.

Jerry Ford papers, 1947-1973, Folder UFOs 1966, Press Secretary & Speech File Box D9

Congressman Gerald R. Ford
Thursday, P.M. April 21, 1966

House Republican Leader

For Release on

Statement by House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford, R-Michigan

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The Air Force has informed me it is arranging for a study by high-caliber scientists of some of the UFO sightings which have never been explained.

This study will be placed under contract soon after July 1, start of the new fiscal year. It will be carried out by a university which has no close ties with the Air Force so that the findings will be completely objective, Air Force officials tell me.

Those people engaged in the study will be high-caliber scientists who have never taken a position on UFO's, the Air Force said. It will be made clear to them that they are not being hired to come up with findings in support of previous Air Force statements regarding UFO's, I am informed.

The Air Force said there is too much effort involved to ask these scientists to make this study without pay.

The report will definitely be made public, The Air Force assured me. The whole purpose of the study is to make clear the air as far as the public is concerned.

This, of course, was my purpose in recently requesting that public hearings on the subject of UFO's be conducted by either the Armed Services Committee or the House Science and Astronautics Committee.

It was as a result of my call for a congressional investigation that the Air Force now is arranging for a study of UFO's by topflight scientists not connected in any way with the Air Force.

I would have preferred a congressional investigation with witnesses to include reliable persons from among those who say they have seen UFO's. I still think this would be beneficial. But the UFO study by a panel of scientists, with the report to be made public, is a step in the right direction.

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