

James Webb and the December 6, 1950 UFO Alert

Written by Grant Cameron

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A number of high-ranking people including the president wrote about this strange UFO event that occurred on December 6, 1950 - the same morning as a state visit to Washington by the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee.

President Truman recounted the UFO event in his memories.

"Shortly before we went into that morning meeting, Undersecretary (of Defense) Lovett called from the Pentagon, reporting that the radar screens of some air defense installations in the Far North were reporting large formations of unidentified planes approaching. Fighter planes were sent up to reconnoiter and alerts were flashed to air centers in New England and beyond. But about an hour later -- while I was meeting with Attlee -- Lovett notified me that the report had been in error. Some unusual disturbance in the Arctic atmosphere had thrown the radar off." [1]

This situation was exaggerated by the fact that only a few days before Truman had confirmed to reporters that nuclear weapons were an option against China in the Korean conflict that was not going well for the American forces. Some officials therefore viewed the unidentified objects as a possible preemptive strike by Soviet nuclear bombers against the United States.

It was also complicated by the fact that the day before there had been trouble with UFOs around a vital US defense installation. The radar used to track objects had been jammed. According to a FBI teletype, UFOs had been sighted on December the 5th and the radars tracking them had been blacked out. In a teletype from J. Edgar Hoover we read,

"DETECTION OF UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS OVER OAK RIDGE AREA, PROTECTION OF VITAL INSTALLATIONS. REURTEL DECEMBER 4 LAST REGARDING POSSIBLE RADAR JAMMING AT OAK RIDGE. ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO OBTAIN ALL FACTS CONCERNING POSSIBLE RADAR JAMMING BY IONIZATION OF PARTICLES IN ATMOSPHERE. CONDUCT APPROPRIATE INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER INCIDENT OCCURRING NORTHEAST OF OLIVER SPRINGS, TENNESSEE, COULD HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH ALLEGED RADAR JAMMING." [2]

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If Undersecretary Lovett did call the president, it is not recorded in the White House phone records. [3] According to the official White House phone records, the first documented call made by Lovett was to Stephen T. Early, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, at 11:00am.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson further claimed Lovett at told him of the alert about 10:30 am, and that the phones to the Pentagon would be shut down for all but emergency purposes. This may have occurred in person because it is also not recorded in the White House phone record. Acheson wrote of what he was told: "Our early warning radar in Canada had picked up formations of unidentified objects, presumably aircraft, headed on a southeast course that would bring them over Washington in two or three hours."

White House phone records showed that Acheson phoned Deputy Secretary of Defense Lovett first, and that was not until 11:15 am. Acheson called Lovett again four minutes later. It was not until 11:20 and 11:23 that Lovett phoned Acheson. The two had exchanged 4 calls in 8 minutes. This may have been related to call off the alert, as at exactly the same time George M. Elsey, Administrative Assistant to President, was placing a call to James Lay (Executive Secretary of the National Security Council), and Everett Gleason (Deputy Executive Secretary, National Security Council).

One of the most active following the announcement of the alert was James Webb, then Under Secretary of State. He phoned Sidney Souers (Special Consultant on Military and Foreign Affairs) 10 minutes after Truman and Acheson claimed the UFO alert had been called. He received a call from Lovett only minutes after he had finished his two calls to Acheson.

At 11:50 Souers phoned FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover (who had sent the "urgent" UFO jamming teletype the day before). This was one of two calls placed to Hoover that day. The second came from Secretary of Defense George Marshall who phoned Hoover at 3:15 pm. These calls may be significant both because of the "urgent" UFO message sent the day before by Hoover and because of a second FBI alert which would be issued two days later. On July 8th the FBI issued a memo in which they stated "counter-intelligence corps were put on immediate high alert for any information related to flying saucers." [4]

At 12:24 Deputy Secretary of Defense Lovett was again on the phone to Webb. Eleven minutes after taking that call, Webb phoned Souers again.

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1. There were various versions of what actually was picked up. These included,
2. Truman who stated, "Some unusual disturbance in the Arctic atmosphere had thrown the radar off." [\[5\]](#)
3. Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett who according to Dean Acheson said, "His guess was that they had been geese."
4. The International News Service reported that the objects off the Maine coast had turned out to be a "North American C-47 aircraft," which was approaching from Goose Bay Labrador.
5. The objects had been UFO related and one crashed along the Mexican United States border. This story is based mainly on a story told by Retired AF Col. Robert Willingham and investigative research done Todd Zechel. This explanation of an crash possibly on the Mexican side of the border would explain why James Webb, the Undersecretary of State, was involved.

[1] Truman, Harry S "Memoirs of Harry S. Truman: Years of Trial and Hope 1946-1952" Page 405 Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1955-56.

[2] A very similar blocking case occurred later in 1959 at the [National Photographic Interpretation Center](#) where all U-2, SR-71, and spy satellite photos had been processed. Through a series of events, key NPIC personnel, including NPIC Director Arthur Lundahl, became involved a case where a Navy intelligence officer made communication with an alien in orbit around the earth. During a July 6, 1959 channeling session Lundahl asked the alien to fly by the window as proof of his existence. As Lundahl wrote in a CIA memo, and in confirmations of the incident to Jacques Vallee and producer Robert Emenegger a silver saucer flew by the window and hovered over the Capitol building. One of the CIA officers in the room raced to phone Washington air traffic controllers, who stated the radar had been blocked out in the sector where the saucer had appeared only moments before. For the complete story of this event check out www.presidentialufo.com/affa_cia.htm and the Lundahl memo at www.presidentialufo.com/cia_memo.htm

[3] In checking the White House records against the accounts of the main players in this episode, it appears that the White House records are missing many calls. Other examples of missing calls include a call Acheson said he made to Oliver Franks (the British ambassador) right after Lovett had informed him of the alert. This call was to Oliver Franks told him of the UFO alert, and informing him the President had not cancelled the 11:30 meeting with Prime

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Minister Atlee. More importantly a memo written in the afternoon by Air Force Col. Charles Winkle to Secretary of Defense George Marshall stated that the President's Air Force Aide, Brig. General Robert Landry (who in his oral history for the Truman library stated that he briefed Truman on UFOs every three months) was notified and that he would notify the President. There was no record in the White House Records of a call to Landry.

There were other UFO incidents at the Oak Ridge nuclear plant in the days before and after the December UFO radar jamming incident. These included October 13, 1950, October 18, 1950, October 20, 1950, November 10, 1950, December 14, 1950, and December 20, 1950

[4] Maccabee, Bruce "RADAR-INSPIRED NATIONAL ALERT Northeastern United States December 6, 1950" 30 Jan 1998. The actual teletype read "This office very confidentially advised by Army Intelligence, Richmond, that they have been put on immediate high alert for any data whatsoever concerning flying saucers. CIC here states background of instructions not available from Air Force Intelligence, who are not aware of reason for alert locally, but any information whatsoever must be telephoned by them immediately to Air Force Intelligence. CIC advises data strictly confidential and should not be disseminated (sic). (teletype message is contained in file 62-83894, the flying disc file of the FBI). Researcher Nick Redfern also notes in a December 1, 2003 e-mail message that "At the bottom of the document is a barely legible, scribbled message that includes the word 'Sandia,' where the El Indio wreckage was supposedly taken, according to MJ-12 papers."

[5] This atmospheric explanation was also part of the transcript of the early December 6th 11:30 am meeting between Truman and Prime Minister Atlee (who was on a state visit to Washington concerned over the state of affairs in Korea, and the declining state of affairs with China and the Soviet Union). It read, "At this point (in the meeting) Mr. Connelly entered the room and handed the President a report from Deputy Secretary of Defense Lovett. Mr. Lovett was reporting that the alert that had reached the President an hour earlier when it was thought that a large number of unidentified airplanes were approaching the northeast coast of the United States, had now been due to erroneous interpretation of atmospheric conditions."