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## Jimmy Carter UFO



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Written by Grant Cameron  
 Saturday, 01 August 2009 21:33  
 President Jimmy Carter  
 39th President  
 January 21, 1977– January 20, 1981

"We cast this message into the cosmos... Of the 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, some -- perhaps many -- may have inhabited planet and space faring civilizations. If one such civilization intercepts Voyager and can understand these recorded contents, here is our message: We are trying to survive our time so we may live into yours. We hope some day, having solved the problems we face, to join a community of Galactic Civilizations. This record represents our hope and our determination and our goodwill in a vast and awesome universe." President Jimmy Carter's official statement placed on the Voyager spacecraft for its trip outside our solar system, June 16, 1977

"Whatever statement you saw concerning President Carter's view on UFOs was not exactly what he said. He had seen something that he thought was unexplainable that possibly might have been a UFO and he will certainly disclose and describe any unusual phenomena he might see. He is committed to the fullest possible openness in government and would support full disclosure of material that was not defense sensitive that might relate to UFOs. He did not, however, pledge to "make every piece of information concerning the UFOs available to the public." There might be some aspects of some sightings that would have defense implications that possibly should be safeguarded against immediate and full disclosure." Walter Wurfel, Carter Deputy Press Secretary February 28, 1977

### Psychological Profile

Liberal Democrat.

Prior to being elected, President Jimmy Carter served as the Governor of Georgia. As a governor he came to Washington with no foreign policy experience. He was the first president in Washington without Washington experience since Woodrow Wilson.

He was the first southern president since Zachary Taylor in 1848.

He campaigned openly against Washington insiders.

At 18, Jimmy Carter started teaching Sunday school. By the mid-1990s, he had taught Sunday school thousands of times. He considered himself a born-again Christian. He vowed prior to being elected never to "do anything as President that would be a contravention of the moral and ethical standards that I would exemplify in my own life as an individual."

He was considered to be very suspicious of the CIA. He cut hundreds of agents from the CIA payroll after becoming President.

Many of these personal traits would restrict the amount of highly classified information such as UFO information that would be given to Carter.

### The UFO President

President Jimmy Carter has often been referred-to as the "UFO President" due to the fact that he publicly claimed to have had a UFO sighting prior to becoming president. Moreover, he was the only president on record to actually file a UFO sighting report related to his sighting. Thirdly, on at least one occasion while campaigning for president, Carter declared that, if elected, he would "make every piece of information this country has about UFO sightings available to the public and **scientists**."

Many in the UFO community were optimistic that the election of Jimmy Carter would initiate a period of openness related to the UFO subject where the truth would be given to the public. It was not to be.

In any review of President Carter and his White House's dealings with UFOs, it is important to note the significance of the time period when Carter was president. All these timing signals appeared to be positive.

Carter was elected in 1976 just after the end of the Vietnam War, and following the scandal of Watergate. Part of his campaign for president had been aided by representing himself as an honest man running against the national disgraces of "Watergate, Vietnam, and the CIA."

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It was a time of peace and stability. It was also a time when the public was disillusioned with the dishonesty of politicians, and in military solutions to problems. In times following war, such as the years when Carter was in the White House, there tends to be less tolerance for excessive government secrecy by society. During the Vietnam War, the population was willing to trade personal freedoms and openness in government in exchange for security and a victory on the war front. Once the war ended, American society felt free to again speak openly, question things, and criticize their political leaders.

There were some small changes that occurred during the Carter years that advanced the cause of UFO openness. One of these changes occurred in the field of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The Freedom of Information Act was passed in 1966 to guarantee citizens the right of access to government documents. In many respects, however, the passing of the FOIA legislation did little in terms of releasing documents. This was especially true in terms of UFO documents.

When President Carter took office, all this changed. Many of the logjams researchers had incurred with the FOIA regulations were removed. In a news conference one month after taking office, Carter outlined his personal support for new Freedom of Information Act laws:

In general, I favor the freedom of information laws... When there is a sense among American citizens that they are being misled or that illegalities are taking place within our own Government... I think under those circumstances that there is an excessive pressure on Government for information. If that same citizen had a sense that he could trust us, there would be much less inclination to demand access to the files... I think I might, as President, assume more responsibility in that field..."

In 1978 President Carter took action which strengthened the access to documents using the FOIA. He did this by signing an Executive Order, which in effect revamped the government's security classification system. The new executive Order changed the way in which documents were to be viewed in legal appeals over document releases. President Carter's order introduced the "public interest balancing test" which became an important consideration in the way UFO (and any other subject) FOIAs were dealt with. The test introduced a new aspect to judicial reviews. Courts in reviewing UFO documents for release "were forced to consider the public's interest when deciding declassification requests under the Freedom of Information Act."

Carter also instructed the Department of Justice to instruct agencies "to release information that could legally be withheld if the release could not be clearly harmful." The security system was revamped to "eliminate needless initial classification... reduce the time that documents remain classified. Carter estimated that 250 million pages of documents would be released because of the changes."

Carter, had by his actions, set the stage for what has come to be known in the UFO world as the "golden years," during which the UFO documents began to surface. During the four years of the Carter administration, the CIA, FBI, NSA, State, Army, USAF and the Navy department released thousands of pages of UFO documents.

There was one restriction, however, made by Carter, which turned out to be the "total" undoing of UFO openness the UFO community had hoped for. This restriction dealt with "protection of legitimate national security secrets." These secrets included information about sensitive intelligence matters and Special Access Programs that were given the green light to continue as a result.

Carter was elected in large part because of his pledge of openness in government. He also was elected because of his claim of being outside the beltway, running against all the Washington insiders. Once elected, those insiders with the power immediately tried to reign in Carter to protect what they considered to be vital national security issues.

These efforts to silence Carter had their effect.

Two weeks before Carter entered the White House, for example, he received a letter from thirteen members of the House of Representatives, complaining about the leaking of intelligence related to "National Security Estimates." The thirteen members urged President-elect Carter to retain the process as "pristine and uncontaminated."

President Carter responded to this letter only two days after entering the White House, and his reply indicated that his approach to security issues would be fair, and in many ways reflective of the status quo. "I want to be supplied with objective intelligence information," wrote Carter, "and believe that nothing in the information gathering process which may deal with matters of national security or interest should be exposed to public debate or pressure."

The pressure to draw back on "openness" came also from Carter's reaction to leaks on his own staff. Carter found out early on in his Presidency that much of what he said was being leaked. This experience forced him to keep many more things to himself than he had planned to before he became elected. The pressures of the Presidency were quickly silencing the President that many UFOlogists thought would "tell all." In an interview with Newsweek editor Thomas M. Defrank, Carter stated:

I have found it difficult to accept the complete absence of confidentiality. I have just come to expect that when I have a conversation about a sensitive matter in private, that it is going to be made public very quickly. And I have to be a little more cautious about my expression of opinion on a tentative basis or when it affects some personal, potentially personal embarrassing subject.

The Carter promise of a complete release of UFO information, made before the election, changed slowly until in a statement made in a letter written by Deputy Press secretary Walter Wurfel, the campaign pledge to release UFO information had completely disappeared.

He (Carter) is committed to the fullest possible openness in government and would support full disclosure of material that was not defense sensitive that might relate to UFOs. He did not, however, pledge to "make every piece of information concerning the UFOs available to the public." There might be some aspects of some sightings that would have defense implications that possibly should be safe-guarded against immediate and full disclosure.

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The words "have defense implications that possibly should be safe-guarded against immediate and full disclosure," should have sounded an alarm bell to all Ufologists waiting for a full release from the Carter White House.

In 1950, Wilbert Smith, a Department of Transport engineer, in a Top Secret memo to the Canadian government, wrote that the subject of flying saucers "was the most highly classified" subject in the United States. USAF consultant Dr. J. A. Hynek had also been quoted many times stating that the good UFO cases were going somewhere else other than to USAF Project Blue Book files.

If Dr. Hynek's claim of an independent system had been set up for top quality UFO cases is true, it is no surprise that none of the roughly 3,000 pages of UFO documents released during the Carter administration contained the smoking gun. There were a lot of documents, but nothing in the Top Secret or compartmentalized Top Secret areas.

There were some embarrassing documents. Some documents showed the CIA had been quite active collecting UFO information, despite their long held claim that they had not been involved since their Robertson Panel investigation in January 1953. When the FOIA fight over CIA documents began in the mid seventies, the CIA claimed they had no documents. When the legal battle with Ufologists was over, the CIA embarrassingly turned over almost 1,000 pages of documents on UFOs.

There were also embarrassing surprises found in FBI's UFO files that were released during the Carter administration. It was found, for example, that the FBI had maintained large files on many UFO investigators and witnesses.

In addition, authors Lawrence Fawcett and Barry Greenwood, discovered in 1978, a year after Carter Press Secretary Jody Powell approached the FBI about their UFO efforts, that suddenly the FBI Academy at Quantico, Virginia "began monitoring and collecting newspaper clippings that dealt with the UFO subject...under the curious file reference of TRANSPORTATION."

The first clipping in the file was a January 12, 1979 story of the CIA release of hundreds of previously classified documents into the public domain.

After a legal battle between the Citizens for UFO Secrecy and the NSA, the FOIA people at the NSA released a number of UFO documents, and then waged an embarrassing public battle with the organization Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS) for 135 others. The NSA argument to the court was that all the documents had to be withheld – under 5 US Code, Section 552 (b)(1) – in the interests of national security. This, despite their continuing argument that the documents contained nothing important related to UFOs. The NSA had come a long way from its 1976 claim to researcher Robert Todd, "please be advised that NSA does not have any interest in UFOs in any manner."

President Carter did have a great deal of UFO documents released during his administration. The period has often been called "The Golden Years" within the UFO community. The release of documents included:

1. In response to a suit filed by William Spaulding and his group known as Ground Saucer Watch, the CIA made a release of 892 pages of UFO documents on December 15, 1978.
2. In 1980 the NSA released two documents, and made history withholding 135 others on the grounds of "national security." It's argument was made in a 21 page Top Secret affidavit presented to the Judge "in-camera." It was so secret that CAUS lawyers were not even allowed to see it.
3. In response to an FOIA filed by Dr. Bruce Maccabee, the FBI released 1600 pages of UFO documents. Later, in response to another FOIA they released 128 pages on cattle mutilations.
4. Other agencies that released UFO documents in response to FOIA filed during the Carter administration included State, Army, Navy, USAF, Defense, and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

In the end, the ultimate UFO secrecy was maintained despite the large number of documents forced out under the Carter FOIA regulations. President Carter had managed to shake some leaves off the tree, but the fruit remained solidly attached to the branches.

### The Carter UFO Sighting

As previously mentioned, Jimmy Carter is one of two U.S. Presidents who have reported seeing a UFO before becoming the President. In the various recountings of the sighting told over the years, there have been many items about the Carter sighting that have been recorded incorrectly. Later on, there would also be many mistakes made in the evaluation of the investigations of the sighting.

The first mistake made in recording Carter's UFO sighting related to the date that the sighting occurred. The sighting was first filed by then governor Jimmy Carter on September 18, 1973, based upon a request from Hayden C. Hewes, director of the International UFO Bureau. The date that Carter gave in his sighting report was October 1969. Later research indicated that the actual date was more probably January 6, 1969. Some people reporting on the Carter sighting were even using the 1973, date when Carter filed the details of the sighting as the date for the event.

The second mistake made by storytellers related to the 1969 UFO sighting, was that Carter was not the governor of Georgia at the time of the sighting. He did not become Georgia's 76th governor until January 12, 1971.

Carter's UFO sighting began shortly after dark on a windless night. Jimmy Carter was standing outside the Lion's Club in Leary, Georgia, waiting for a meeting to start. Suddenly, he and ten or more witnesses, sighted a red and green orb radiating in the western sky. Carter described an object that "it seemed to move towards us from a distance, stop, move partially away, return, then depart. Bluish at first; then reddish – luminous – not solid."

"At times," reported Carter, "it was as bright as the moon, and about as big as the moon – maybe a bit smaller. The object was luminous; not solid."

In an interview with the Atlanta Constitution, Carter described the moving nature of the event. He described the sighting as a "very remarkable sight." This is an important event, because many of the skeptical investigations done on the Carter sighting, have tried to paint the event as a ho-hum occurrence. None of the descriptions Carter has made of the event have ever described it as ho-hum.

Jimmy Carter's mother Lillian also confirmed that Carter had been very impressed by what he had seen. "The UFO made a huge impression on Jimmy," she stated. "He told me about the sighting many times. He's always been a down-to-earth no-nonsense boy, and the sighting by him, as far as I am concerned, is as firm as money in the bank."

Carter had, in fact, described the UFO sighting many times in the years since it occurred. In every instance, including the latest known telling of the story at Emory University in 1997, Carter has never backed off on the spectacular nature of the event. He has also never conceded that what he saw was some misidentification of a natural phenomena.

Carter estimated that the object was three hundred to one thousand yards away. He estimated that the event had lasted 10 minutes. Then the object disappeared. Carter was so impressed by what he had seen, he recorded his impressions of the event on a tape recorder at the time.

In the ensuing years, there has been a great deal of discussion as to what the UFO had been. Skeptical UFO buffs, such as Robert Sheaffer, struggled to explain Jimmy Carter's sighting away, by stating that Carter had viewed the planet Venus. Sheaffer, the vice-chairman of the UFO subcommittee for the **Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal**, wrote up his guess as to what the object Carter and the others had seen in the July 1977 Humanist Magazine. Many UFO "researchers" wanting to show that they, too, can be "discriminating" joined in stating Carter had viewed the planet Venus.

Others stepped forward quickly to challenge the accuracy of Sheaffer's claim. Sheaffer's response to these challenges ended up taking his Venus explanation from the shaky to the bizarre. For example, Sheaffer argued UFO researchers challenging his conclusions were wrong because they relied on eyewitness testimony, and eyewitness testimony is unreliable. There are, wrote Sheaffer, "volumes of **scientific analysis documenting unreliability of unsubstantiated human eyewitness testimony.**" Yet Sheaffer, in his own analysis of the case, had used eyewitness testimony for one hundred percent of the data that he collected to come to his Venus conclusion.

In a response to a letter written to the Skeptical Inquirer by Jon Beckjord, published in the Winter 1980-81 Skeptical Inquirer, Sheaffer cited four books and articles Beckjord could refer to that would show you "can't take unsubstantiated testimony at face value."

In the very next sentence of his reply, however, Sheaffer retreated to eyewitness testimony. "I note that Beckjord fails to mention," Sheaffer wrote, "that many UFO proponents agree with me that the Carter UFO sighting is a very poor one and that another Georgian standing with Carter, as my Humanist piece makes clear, [was] quite unimpressed with the light they saw in the sky." Sheaffer's Venus conclusion relied on the assumption that Carter's eyewitness testimony was inaccurate, but the other eyewitness accounts were accurate.

In the end, it is safe to conclude that the object was not Venus, no matter how bad witness testimony might have been. A review of the evidence would show:

- Venus was in the southwestern sky on January 6, 1969, not in the west as claimed by Sheaffer. Carter who had spent watches, while in the Navy doing watches in cruisers and destroyers, as a navigation officer, taking star shots with a sextant, stated the object was in the western sky.
- Carter described the object as being the "size of the moon" or "slightly smaller than the apparent size of the moon." Venus never appears this way.
- Venus at the time was at between 15 and 21 degrees over the horizon at 7:15 p.m. Carter, a trained observer stated the object was 30 degrees above the horizon, or almost double the height of Venus at the time.
- Sheaffer described Venus as "being at it's brightest" on the date in question. It wasn't at its brightest.
- The witnesses declared that the object disappeared after 10 minutes or at 7:25 p.m. Venus, on the evening in question, was visible in the clear sky till 9:20 p.m. If it had been Venus, it would still have been visible for another 115 minutes after the witnesses claimed it had disappeared in a clear sky. During these 115 minutes the planet Venus would have increased in brightness (not disappeared) as it approached the horizon. Venus does not disappear, and would have been eliminated as a suspect by a grade six astronomy class investigation.

Regardless of what the future President saw on that cold clear night in 1969, it greatly impressed him. He spoke of the sighting to many people including his Press Secretary Jody Powell. Asked about the UFO event Powell said, "I do remember Jimmy saying that he did, in fact, see a strange light or object at night in the sky which did not appear to be a star or planet or anything that he could explain. If that's your definition of an Unidentified Flying Object, then I suppose that is correct...I would venture to say he has probably seen stranger and more unexplainable things than that just during his time in government."

Many years after being President, when asked about the sighting by citizens, Carter would still describe in detail the events that he witnessed. On September 24, 1997, for example, Carter spoke at the 16th annual Emory town Hall Meeting in Atlanta. When the question and answer session began, the first question was about the UFO sighting that Carter had experienced 28 years before. As he had on so many previous occasions Carter described in detail what he had seen. In conclusion to the story he stated that "he knew of no extraterrestrials and he did "not think any were on the UFO he saw."

#### Campaign UFO Talk

At a Southern Governors Conference a few years after the sighting Carter stated "I don't laugh at people anymore when they say they've seen UFOs. I've seen one myself. It was the darndest thing I have ever seen. It was big, it was bright, it changed colors and it was about the size of the moon."

In 1975 Carter again mentioned the UFO as he was campaigning for President. He told a Washington Post reporter, "A light appeared and disappeared in the sky. It got brighter and brighter... I have no idea what it was... I think the light was beckoning me to run in the California primary."

In June 1976, Jimmy Carter was quoted by the National Enquirer as promising, "If I become President, I'll make every piece of information this country has about UFO sightings available to the public and **scientists.** I am convinced that UFOs exist because I have seen one."

This widely quoted statement led to a deluge of UFO mail into the White House. What was not widely disclosed was the fact that Carter never said this to the National Enquirer reporter Jim McCandlish. McCandlish, a free lancer for the National Enquirer, approached Carter on the campaign trail and asked him about his sighting, and plans to deal with UFOs as President. Although Carter was interested in the question, he was "nowhere near as committal as the National Enquirer made it out to be."

Carter, however, did say something very similar during a campaign stop in Appleton, Wisconsin on the morning of March 31, 1976. During a news conference at the airport, Thomas Heiman, Associate Director of the UFO Education Center in Appleton Wisconsin, asked Carter a question.

Heiman: As President, would you air what's "behind-closed-doors" today in regards to UFOs?

Carter: I don't know what to make of it. However, some of the sightings have been witnessed by 20 to 25 people, law enforcement officers, and everyone in the cockpit of a major airplane, and so forth. But I can't tell you what to make of it. If I knew, I'd be the only one in the world who does. But, yes, I would make these kinds of data available to the public, as President, to help resolve the mystery about it.

Heiman: On a public basis?

Carter: Yes, on a public basis.

Following the news conference, Jimmy Carter spoke with the questioner Thomas H. Heiman, Associate Director of the UFO Education Center in Appleton. Heiman told Carter of the extensive films and evidence held by the Center. In reply, Carter thanked Heiman for the offer to review the evidence. Further he told Heiman that "a meeting could be arranged sometime after the election" when he could meet with the group and review the material they had.

Following Carter's election, the White House staff moved to distance themselves from the UFO Education Center. One meeting, with the members of the UFO Education Center, was held in the Executive Office Building with Richard Reiman, from the Office of Public Liaison. Phone calls and letters were exchanged, but despite the fact that Carter had promised to meet with the group, in the end Fran Voorde, the Director of Scheduling for the President gave the group the kiss-off.

The President is indeed grateful for the willingness of Ms. Blob and her associates to come in and talk with him in an effort to be helpful and would like to see personally all who now are expressing this desire. If circumstances permitted, he would be glad to meet with them but, most unfortunately, the heavy demands on his time just will not allow him to do so.

Carter also expressed his view on the UFO problem in a letter to Major Colman Von Keviczky, director of the Intercontinental Galactic Spacecraft Research and Analytic Network. He stated that he "valued" the groups "views and recommendations" and their ideas would "be of help to him in further developing his policy position."

Once Carter assumed the Presidency on January 21, 1977, however, his public statements of support for UFOs dried up. Jimmy Carter stopped talking publicly about the subject. It was as if something that was told to him after becoming President had changed his mind about the importance of delivering UFO answers to the public.

The apparent withdrawal of support by Carter should have come as no surprise to Ufologists in light of the fact that in the Carter staff's 214 page compilation of Campaign pledges - called Promises, Promises, there was not a single mention of the subject of UFOs.

Moreover, Carter's science advisor, Frank Press was quoted as saying, "I'm not particularly interested in UFOs. I'm the President's assistant, and I'll work on anything he asks me to work on. But I can't take on ever problem that comes in here."

Another White House spokesman stated, when asked why Carter had suddenly become silent on UFOs, "It does not mean that Carter has lost interest in the subject, or that Promises, Promises is an exhaustive list of all the campaign pledges he intends to work on. This is a matter of priority. We have other promises to keep as well, and we have to decide what to do first. We do intend to honor our commitment."

Some researchers maintained that President Carter was given a briefing early in his administration about UFOs, and was therefore bound to secrecy because of the highly classified aspect of the program.

This briefing was reportedly held on June 14, 1977 at the White House. According to one story told by former USAF member Robert Collins, President Carter was briefed "by a lone MJ-12 briefing officer."

Also, according to Collins, a number of independent sources were present for the briefing, and they together produced a "reconstruction" of what was told to President Carter. This recollection became known as the "Executive Briefing: Project Aquarius" document. It was leaked to California researcher Bill Moore through a member of the Defense Intelligence Agency who was known by the code name "Falcon."

Moore stated that the copy of the typed notes that he released were a typed copy that the Carter oral briefing officer which had been composed as a "memo to file." Handwritten notes had been used by the officer during the briefing as an aide-memoire. A reproduction of the "Executive Correspondence: Project Aquarius" can be used at the following site.

[http://www.think-aboutit.com/ufo/project\\_aquarius.htm](http://www.think-aboutit.com/ufo/project_aquarius.htm)

A review of the schedule on June 14, 1977 shows that there was only one event that seems to jump out as a possible event where the briefing might have taken place. The event was a meeting that occurred between in the Cabinet room between 1:35 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. The meeting was set up to "discuss appropriations for intelligence affairs in the 1979 Budget of the U.S."

<http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.org/diary/1977/d061477t.pdf>

There is a possibility that another meeting was held and did not appear in the daily diary of President Carter. The diary for June 14, 1977 is not much help to confirm one way or another if the briefing did

take place.

Another explanation that has been offered for President Carter's silence on UFOs is the rumored story that Carter had been threatened to keep quiet. It has been repeated often enough, that it was included in an article published by UFO magazine:

There is a rumor, and it's not much more than that, because Carter himself will not confirm it, that after Carter made this promise, a strange individual in a suit walked right into the oval office, past the Secret Service agents on guard, and threatened Carter and his family should he ever attempt any such disclosure.

Another of the possible things that might have occurred to change Carter's public position on the UFO subject is a political phenomena that was described by Victor Marchetti, a former CIA agent and author. In 1979, Marchetti went public describing how and why presidents seemingly back away from campaign promises such as the UFO one made by Jimmy Carter.

Every president of the United States, no matter what he says before he becomes president, about how he's going to clean things up, once he gets in there and finds out that's "his" agency, that's "his" intelligence community, hey, all bets are off.

Behind the scenes, however, outside the public eye, it appeared that Carter was making some efforts to get the answer to what UFO information did the federal agencies have. Requests were going out from the President to various agencies asking what documents they had, and how they dealt with UFO reports. Most of this investigation for Carter, was being done by his Press Secretary, Jody Powell.

Carter's campaign admission, of having witnessed a UFO, created a big problem in a White House, which claimed to be the White House of the common people. Carter took office in late January, and by July 1977, there were so many UFO inquiry letters coming into the White House that Carter's science officials labeled the situation a "nightmare." The White House press office, looking to deal with all the UFO letters, approached Carter's Science Advisor Frank Press to see if he could come up with a solution to the problem.

Frank Press's office conducted a quick investigation on UFOs which confirmed that the number of sightings had risen, along with the public interest in the subject. Moreover, the press was after the White House for a comment regarding the new public new interest in UFOs. "Popular interest in this (UFO subject) has been brewing for several months, slowly building up," Stanley D. Schneider, an aide to Frank Press, responded to an inquiry from the New York Times. "It was getting more than we could handle."

Schneider further stated that the letters to the Carter administration asking about UFOs had begun right after Carter was elected. Schneider attributed this influx of mail partly to the fact that Jimmy Carter had a UFO sighting, and partly to the fact that he had made UFOs a public issue prior to becoming President. Schneider, however, forgot to mention that Carter had promised to make all UFO information public if elected, and most of the letters were written, not about UFOs, but about the UFO information Carter had promised to deliver if he won the election. The journal "Science" described the dilemma:

During his presidential campaign, Carter is said to have promised he would release all government information concerning UFOs – a promise which UFO buffs have not let him forget, because of their fervent belief that for many years the government has been covering up its encounters of the third kind.

Schneider also told the New York Times that he believed the sudden interest in UFOs had been caused in part by the movie "Star Wars" that had been released the year before. According to "Star Wars" promoters, they had sold 400 million tickets to the movie by early 1977, and in 1977, there were only 200 million people in the whole of the United States. Schneider also mentioned that the movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind was about to be released, and this Schneider believed would increase the UFO interest even more.

#### Out of the Loop

The overwhelmingly supported theory about why President Carter never made a major disclosure on the UFO phenomena is that he was never able to get his hands on the information to make the release.

John Maynard, formally a military intelligence analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency, was one of those close to Carter who maintained that the President was cut out of the loop:

As far as UFOs and extraterrestrial matters go, it's right at the top – and I would say that the President has limited knowledge of it. I know that Carter did not have any knowledge whatsoever. And I worked right there in the organization; President Carter's organization. They kept it pretty secret."

Dr. Alfred Webre, who claimed to have worked on a Carter White House study on extraterrestrial intelligence while a Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for the Study of Social Policy at the Stanford Research Institute also claimed from what he had experienced, that President Carter didn't know.

We had a President of the United States who came to office under a pledge to open up the UFO issue, and an open study in the White House, and that was squelched.

A second possible explanation is that Carter, the honest President, was told and convinced that the material was of national security importance and must not be released. This would have been something like the rumored June 14, 1977 briefing discussed above.

Lastly, President Carter suffered from his perceived anti-defense and intelligence stances. Carter had derailed the B-1 bomber which many military contractors and congressmen wanted. In August 1977 Carter vetoed the annual defense budget because it contained an additional \$2 billion for an giant nuclear aircraft carrier. Carter cut out funding for production of the neutron bomb.

Carter had publicly referred to the Stealth aircraft program which alerted the military industrial community that he could not even be trusted to keep his mouth shut. At the Stealth plant in California, employees were forced to surreptitiously move parts out of the plant at night to avoid Soviet satellite surveillance which had been alerted to the program.

On the intelligence front Carter had begun his presidency by replacing republican CIA Director George Bush with his trusted friend Stansfield Turner. He cut hundreds of CIA agents in an effort to correct the ills of an agency that had become too powerful and unruly. These cuts were seen by others in the intelligence agency as an attack. Due to the fact that the President relies on the intelligence community as his eyes and ears to the world, many feel that much of Carter undoing at the end of his presidency such as the failed Iranian initiative was caused at least in part by an intelligence agency payback.

#### Spielberg and the Carter Administration

"I really found my faith when I heard that the Government was opposed to the film. (Close Encounters) If NASA took the time to write me a 20-page letter, then I knew there must be something happening. I had wanted cooperation from them, but when they read the script they got very angry and felt that it was a film that would be dangerous. I felt they mainly wrote the letter because JAWS convinced so many people around the world that there were sharks in toilets and bathtubs, not just in the oceans and rivers. They were afraid the same kind of epidemic would happen with UFOs." Steven Spielberg

The movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind was the brainchild of director/producer Steven Spielberg. The movie about the ultimate preliminary contact with extraterrestrials by the United States government, was released to the public in late 1977, only months after

President Carter took office.

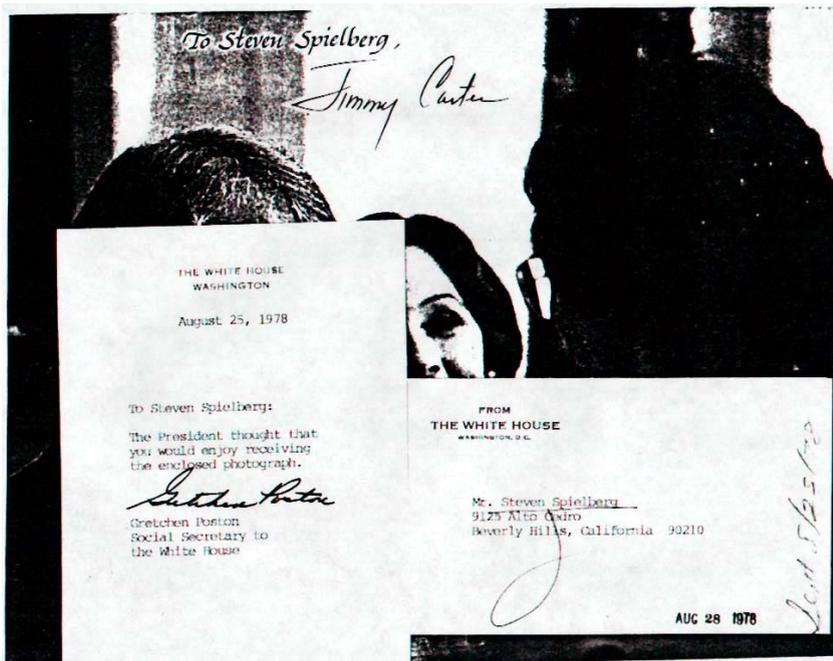
It was the first alien movie that took a benign view of human contact with the extraterrestrials. As opposed to the alien invasion movies of the fifties and sixties where evil creatures of all shapes and sizes were here to invade and take over the world, the Spielberg view was of small shy childlike spindly beings with large craniums and smiles. In making the movie Spielberg actually used six year old girls and shot them overexposed making them appear like they were not quite physical.

The movie received many bad reviews, such as William Flanagan for New York magazine, who wrote, "In my humble opinion, the picture will be a colossal flop." There was a flood of sell orders of Columbia shares in light of the negative reviews. The New York Exchange even suspended trading in the stock at one point. It was a film, whose huge budget might have shut down Columbia Studios had it not succeeded.

The film did succeed. In its first two weeks it grossed \$72 million. It was even successful overseas. Spielberg and his wife were invited to London to screen the film for Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip. Philip had long expressed open interest in UFOs. He had been a long-time subscriber to Flying Saucer Review, the most popular UFO journal in Britain.

Spielberg's was a Hollywood sensation whose success gave him access to many U.S. presidents. Carter was one of those presidents, but his Spielberg relationship was a secretive relationship. An example of this can be found in the files at the Carter presidential library.

On August 25, 1978, Carter sent Spielberg a picture with an inscription on it "To Steven Spielberg." It was signed "Jimmy Carter". Enclosed with the photo was an attached White House stationary note from Gretchen Poston, which read, "The President thought that you would enjoy receiving the enclosed photo."



Despite records in the Carter library that show no meeting or phone call between Spielberg and President Carter, the above picture shows clearly that the two men did meet. Secondly despite a search for the actual photo of the Spielberg/Carter meeting all that remains in the Carter library is this photocopy.

The White House records at the Carter library have a photocopy of the photo, which raise a number of peculiar points. The White House note from Poston had been placed in such a way that it obscured Carter's face in the photocopy. The envelope, addressed to Spielberg, partly covered Spielberg's face. No



explanation was ever provided as to why this was done.

A search, done with the help of an archivist at the Carter library, of White House photos taken during August 1978, turned up no record of the photo in question.

More unusual was the fact that, according to records held at the President Carter library, Spielberg was never in the White House. Records further showed that the two never met, corresponded, or talked on the phone. Yet the photocopied photo clearly shows that the two men met, and the letter and envelope showed at least one piece of correspondence.

The rumor in the UFO community was that Close Encounters of the Third Kind had been shown to President Carter in the White House. If Carter was afraid of making this fact public, it would explain the missing records and the unusual photocopy of letters copied over a photo.

Even Science magazine realized the problems with the President being publicly associated with the UFO film: "In the present climate," wrote Science, "then (and who knows when Close

Encounters will be shown to the First Family), it may become more difficult to avoid another UFO study." With UFO letters pouring into the White House, and with the public admission of the President that he had experienced a sighting, media reports of his viewing the blockbuster UFO movie would increase the calls to start another UFO study. Another study was something that no federal agency wanted to be stuck with.

A check of the films viewed by Carter did not turn up any record President Carter had viewed Close Encounters of the Third Kind, this, despite the fact that Carter had viewed twice as many movies as President Reagan, who was famous for his movie watching.

There was evidence that President Carter did indeed view Close Encounters. On March 18, 1978, The Phoenix Gazette stated, "Jimmy Carter's favorite movie is Close Encounters of the Third Kind. As a matter of fact, the President has seen the movie many times."

Spielberg's appeal to U.S. presidents carried on after Carter. Spielberg, and his wife Amy, would in later years dine with President Reagan and his wife prior to screening his movie E.T. for the President and his guests. Bill Clinton stayed at Spielberg's place in 1993, and Hillary Clinton jogged on the beach during California visits with Spielberg's second wife, Kate. Spielberg had a relationship with a number of presidents, even though he considered himself non-political. He had described himself as "a Democrat with a Republican lining - liberal about a lot of things - bullish about America."

Spielberg had a fascination with UFOs, even though he had never seen one. He liked to tell people that he was born in 1947, even though an investigation by the Los Angeles Times discovered he was actually born in December, 1946. Spielberg used the 1947 date, because, as he used to tell people, it was the same year as the first major UFO sighting, and the same year as the famous Roswell crash of an alien ship.

Close Encounters was not his first feature UFO movie. When only 16 in 1963, he wrote and directed Firelight, a two-hour movie about a group of **scientists** investigating UFOs. The **scientists**, in the movie, provoke a group of aliens who end up invading earth, stealing a city, and reassembling the city on another planet.

After reading the 1961 abduction account of Betty and Barney Hill, Spielberg was so impressed with the events of the abduction that he wrote Encounters, a story about two teenage lovers who witness a UFO sighting.

Close Encounters, released in the first year of the Carter administration, was actually first called Watch the Skies, which were the "words of the final warning" in the 1951 movie The Thing from Another World - a story about a frustrated Air Force officer being forced to cover up flying saucer reports.

For the events in the Close Encounters movie, Spielberg had used ideas from J. Allen Hynek's 1972 book, The UFO Experience. When Hynek, then Director of the Center for UFO Studies, questioned the unauthorized use of the material for the movie, he was given an advisor role on the movie, and a cameo role in the final dramatic UFO landing scene.

In addition to the photo from Carter, there was a second strange incident involving the Carter White House and Steven Spielberg. As will be described below, Carter approached NASA to possibly start a new investigation of the UFO phenomenon, and to help answer the mountains of UFO mail coming into the White House.

NASA declined the offer to reopen the UFO can of worms, and Carter's Science Advisor was told this. Meanwhile, however, behind the scenes, NASA was busy. While they claimed having no role in investigating UFOs, at the same while time they were telling President Carter they wanted no part of the UFO scene, they had written a letter to Spielberg trying to talk him out of releasing the movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

Spielberg was receiving indications that the government itself didn't want the movie released to the public. It was something that bolstered his faith that there was some truth to all the UFO stories, despite the fact that he had set up the movie as a work of fiction.

"I really found my faith," stated Spielberg, "when I heard that the government was opposed to the film. If NASA took the time to write me a twenty-page letter, then I knew there must be something happening."

While some of the people in Carter's administration were trying to block the release of *Close Encounters*, the skeptical UFO buffs were also whining about the promotion of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* as a cause of the increasing the number of UFO sightings..

Floundering Columbia Pictures had begun its most ambitious advertising campaign in its fifty-year history. Special two page ads, introducing the concept of UFOs and explaining the title of the movie, were placed in 27 US newspapers, including the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, a full six months before the intended release date.

In addition, the skeptics were upset about a 16-mm filmed lecture being released to planetariums by Columbia Pictures. It featured a UFO lecture by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, the technical advisor to the film. This, argued the skeptics, would also help increase the number of sightings.

Philip Klass predicted that once the movie was released in late 1977, the number of UFO sightings would skyrocket. However, no such increase occurred.

### Nine-Thousand UFO Letters

The avalanche of letters and telegrams that poured into the White House following Carter's inauguration further encouraged Carter to try to end the secrecy, and release the documents held by the Defense Department, the USAF, and the CIA. Press' office wrote to the Defense department and the CIA to inquire whether documents were being withheld, which both agencies claimed were not. The Pentagon even informed the White House that they had provided ALL USAF UFO files to the National Archives, and any citizen who wanted to see them could visit the archives, or buy a copy of the microfilm.

Now, even though White House staff were publicly talking about the *Close Encounters* movie and Carter's sightings as being the cause of the deluge of mail, behind the scenes they knew exactly why the mail was pouring in. On June 8, 1976 the *National Enquirer* published a story detailing Carter's sighting of a UFO.

The story was entitled: "Jimmy Carter: The Night I Saw a UFO." In the article, Carter was quoted as saying, "If I become President, I'll make ever piece of information this country has about UFO sightings available to the public and the **scientists**."

On May 3, 1977, *The Star*, a national tabloid, also ran a story about the 1969 sighting and the UFO actions of the new administration. This article was one of the articles that started a second, larger wave of mail into the Carter White House about UFOs.

The mail pouring in was handled by Frank Moore's office. Moore, the Director of the Congressional Liaison Office, had been given the job of collecting and answering constituent letters. Before it was over, Moore had 9,000 letters. Billy Shaddix, a white House photographer, was called in to take photos of all the mail. The piles of UFO mail had become an event worth photographing.

Frank Press was pulled in to aid the situation. He set up an investigation about how to answer all the mail. While conducting the investigation, he came across a second more serious problem - what to tell the senders. Press' initial investigation indicated that inquiries from people interested in UFOs get "the run around." Each federal agency had a different letter providing a different answer to the UFO question. Meanwhile, the Air Force, which had formally been in charge of investigating UFOs, had developed yet another form letter for UFO inquiries.

Frank Press contacted the Pentagon to solicit its help in answering the large amount of mail on account of the problems the Pentagon had created through its fragmented approach to answering UFO-related inquiries.

Carter had appeared in the *National Enquirer* as the honest President who had seen a flying saucer, and who would end the cover-up. The Pentagon, on the other hand, was sending out a form letter from the Secretary of the Air Force as a response to the sincere UFO inquiries. In the form letter, they reverted to the standard Air Force line: nothing is being withheld, there is no threat to the National Security, there is no evidence the objects are extraterrestrial, and there is nothing worth studying.

Angry respondents were writing back to the Carter White House, upset that their letters to Carter were being diverted to the Air Force, who everyone knew had been covering up the UFO mystery for 30 years. They were also sending letters to their senators and congressmen complaining about being misled yet again. Carter's people quickly abandoned the practice of using the Pentagon.

Another problem that existed with the influx of mail, was that Press' office discovered that the Air Force classified some of its inquiries of sightings made "near military bases, and by men trained to watch the skies, and a few of which are investigated by Air Force men going up in planes."

The White House was expected to answer the UFO inquiries; yet, they themselves were lacking all the necessary information. The problem was that military security works on a "need to know" basis. If the military sensors determine the White House does not have a need to know, the President is not told. Press' office claimed, through statements made to the respected magazine *Science*, classification of UFO data was one of the things that "keeps alive this belief in the cover-up. Policies like these ... need review and perhaps changing." The President's Science Advisor's investigation seemed to confirm what Ufologists had been saying for thirty years. There was a cover-up.

For the skeptical UFO buff Philip Klass, the *Science* magazine statement that the Air Force was classifying UFO reports, was more than he could handle. He contacted Deborah Shapley who had written the *Science* article, and asked her if she had checked out the claim that the Air Force was classifying UFO reports. Klass was a strong believer in the long held Air Force statement that the Air Force had released all the

information that they had to the public. Shapley told Klass that she hadn't checked the statement. The information she had used was given to her by President Carter **Scientific** Advisor's office. This confirmed, Klass told Shapley that "he believed" she had been "badly misinformed."

The public release of a claim about an Air Force cover-up in a major **scientific** journal, published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, was not the only faith shattering disclosure that was keeping the skeptical Klass awake at night. In April 1977, the White House had already determined, through questions put to the CIA, a great deal of information about UFOs was being withheld. Using the office of the Press secretary Jody Powell, the White House released a bomb-shell about possibly revealing some of the secrets. Through a background briefing with U.S. News & World Report, the White House leaked the following information:

"Before the year is out, the Government – perhaps the President – is expected to make what are described as 'unsettling disclosures' about UFOs – unidentified flying objects. Such revelations, based on information from the CIA, would be a reversal of official policy that in the past has downgraded UFO incidents."

The US News disclosure led to another wave of letters, including an offer from UFO researcher Bill Pitts in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. Pitts traveled to Washington, and during a visit to Dr. Press' office, offered to do anything he could to assist the White House in their plan to release the hidden information.

The skeptical Klass read the article about the possible CIA disclosures of information. He moved quickly to bolster his faith that the USAF and CIA had not lied, and attacked the U.S. News and World Report statement before it could be generally accepted to be true. Klass wrote to U.S. News & World Report and offered 100:1 odds that there would be no "unsettling disclosures" on UFOs before December 31, 1977. U.S. News & World Report magazine, however, ignored the Klass challenge.

Todd Zechel, then the Director of Ground Saucer Watch, a group formed to fight classification of UFO documents by the government, was also interested in the U.S. News story of a possible UFO disclosure by the Carter White House. He headed to Washington for a visit with his telephone conversation acquaintance, Arthur Lundahl, a former high ranking official with the CIA, and a person who reportedly had been a UFO briefer to at least three presidents.

Zechel had discussed the U.S. News report on the phone with Lundahl, and Lundahl had promised to check with "the boys." (Zechel assumed the boys to be former CIA Directors William Colby and Richard Helms, both close friends of Lundahl's).

After a cat and mouse game with Mr. Lundahl for most of the day they spent together, they finally got down to a one-on-one discussion about UFOs, and the rumored startling discoveries predicted by U.S. News. Other than "two interesting revelations" about the nature of UFOs, Lundahl according to Zechel "did not pry loose much specific information of the CIA's involvement with UFOs." The Carter disclosure to U.S. News & World Report remained elusive.

By September 1977 Carter's Administration had decided to ask NASA to help with the incoming UFO mail. In a September 14 letter, Dr. Press wrote the NASA administrator Dr. Robert Frosch, asking for help with the UFO mail problem, but also suggesting it might be time for another study of the UFO issue. Press suggested that a panel of prominent **scientists** such as Carl Sagan might "conduct an investigation of the validity and significance of UFO reports."

NASA, however, was not receptive to the idea, or even to the idea of having been asked. It presented a number of problems for their agency:

1. UFOs was an issue that had caused the USAF a lot of public grief before they were able to unload the responsibility in 1969. Taking up the UFO issue for the White House would be to take on something that was a "no-win situation."
2. The public view being put out by NASA was that UFOs were not worthy of study, and that many UFO witnesses were simply misinterpreting natural phenomena, or were hoaxing their experiences. As the President claimed to be one of these witnesses, NASA would be stuck in the position of putting down UFOs without trying to offend the President.
3. Turning down the White House offer to help with the UFO problem would put the agency in a position of yet further cuts in funding – in a time when budgets of many departments and agencies were being slashed.
4. NASA Administrator Robert Frosch was very aware of the bitter internal battles that came with investigating UFOs. He had previous involvement being head of the Naval Research and Development during a controversy where Dr. James McDonald was accused of using ONR funds to do his UFO research.
5. "The CIA's advice to NASA was to stay out of UFO's (sic)." In a March 21, 1977, letter to President Carter's science advisor, Robert Frosch stated, "NASA knew of no tangible evidence of UFO reality based on a check with the CIA." Later, in a letter from Kenneth Chapman, Associate Administrator for External Relations, regarding a report called "UFO Study Considerations," Chapman stated, "We specifically queried the CIA by telephone as to whether they were aware of any tangible or physical UFO evidence that could be analyzed..." The UFO report became suspect, for its joint production through both the CIA and NASA.

The importance of the NASA phone call to the CIA on UFOs is based on the fact that the CIA had previously clearly stated, "At no time prior to the formation of the Robertson Panel (January 1953), and subsequent to the issuance of the panel's report, has the CIA engaged in the study of the UFO phenomena."

If NASA took up the new investigation, it is clear that every time NASA faced a decision about the UFO phenomena, they would be forced to check with the CIA to make sure they were not crossing over into someone else's jurisdiction.

The Air Force was advising NASA not to help Carter investigate UFOs.

There were a couple other factors increasing the pressure on Frank Press. Peter A. Sturrock, a Stanford university astrophysicist, had just completed a survey of 1,356 responding members of the American Astronomical Society. In the survey, Sturrock had found that 53% of these trained astronomical observers stated there "certainly" or "probably" should be further investigation of the UFO phenomena. The

prevailing conclusion of the survey seemed to be that the USAF investigation from 1947–1969 had not properly done the job, and that another investigation should be done.

More pressure on the White House was also coming from Sir Eric M. Gairy, who had been asking for years for the United Nations to establish a department for UFOs. On September 9, Gairy met in the White House with President Jimmy Carter. It was in this meeting that he was inspired to pressure the United Nations to investigate the UFO situation.

In October and November 1977, Gairy and his United Nations delegate, Wellington Friday, began pressuring the United Nations. On November 28, Friday spoke at the United Nations before the United Nations General Assembly's Special Political Committee on UFOs, and "it started a debate on UFOs and how the United Nations could contribute to research on the subject."

Friday stated in his speech that the U.N. Committee should study physical sightings of alien objects, contacts with the objects, and physical exchanges with the aliens. The delegates sat "subdued," and most agreed that there would have to be a debate on the issue.

In light of all the pressure for answers to the UFOs being demanded of the White House by the public, Frank Press decided that it might be time for another investigation into UFOs.

The White House concluded that NASA should be the agency tasked to do another investigation of the UFO situation. On July 21, 1977, Carter's science advisor, Frank Press, wrote a letter to Dr. Robert Frosch, NASA administrator, asking for a new inquiry as well as a couple other things. The letter read:

Dear Bob,

We have discovered that the White House is becoming the focal point for an increasing number of inquiries concerning UFOs. As you know, there appears to be a national revival of interest in the matter with a younger generation becoming involved. Those of us in the Executive Office are ill equipped to handle these kinds of inquiries.

It seems to me that the focal point of the UFO question ought to be in NASA. I recommend two things: since it has been nearly a decade since the Condon (sic) report (see University of Colorado UFO Project), I believe that a small panel of inquiry could be formed to see if there are any new significant findings. Since this is a public relations problem as much as anything else, people who are known to be interested in the problem and also highly known, such as Carl Sagan, ought to be involved. This is a panel of inquiry that could be formed by NASA.

The second thing that I would like to suggest is that NASA become the focal point for general correspondence and those inquiries which come to the White House be sent to the designated desk at NASA.

Writer and prominent UFO researcher Jacques Vallee, met with Dr. Schneider, assistant to President Carter's Science Advisor Frank Press, shortly after Press made the request to NASA. Vallee asked Schneider why NASA had been chosen over other agencies. Formally the UFO investigation had been the responsibility of the Air Force.

The Air Force's role is to protect U.S. airspace, and that is how they had dealt with the phenomena. They evaluated whether or not the UFO phenomena was a threat to the United States. They had concluded in the final report of Project Blue Book that there was no threat, and they were therefore no longer interested.

Vallee therefore asked, "NASA deals exclusively with space technology. Has the Science Advisor's office already established that the UFO phenomena is technological in nature, and originates in space? Or is this choice merely a response to the perceptions of the public and the media."

Dr. Schneider responded to Vallee that in the mind of the public the UFO problem has to do with space, and therefore NASA is the appropriate agency to look at the problem.

Vallee then asked whether this then meant that the move to ask NASA to take up the UFO investigation was a public relations move, and would have nothing to do with science? Would there be another Condon type report? If this was what Schneider was planning, Vallee stated that his circumspect "Invisible College" (a network of **scientists** who are privately investigating the mystery) would not participate.

The reaction of NASA to being chosen to take on the UFO problem for the President was not positive. NASA was also viewed as a political hot potato that the White House was trying to pawn off to another agency.

The NASA budget had suffered from years of cutbacks, and it appeared President Carter was going to cut even further. NASA was concerned with its image, and didn't want to get involved in a controversial issue such as UFOs, which offered only a public relations nightmare. NASA wished only to return to the glory days of Apollo, and the seemingly unlimited budgets that came with the moon missions.

The NASA project officer who was reviewing UFO reports in order to see if the panel of inquiry (requested by President Carter) was justified, gave the **scientific** reasons why a new UFO investigation was a bad idea. He told the Christian Science Monitor:

To do the research we have to have a starting point. What we are dealing with is a reportorial phenomena, not hard facts.

"We don't know how to do research on this; we're not parapsychologists. We can't interface with the public with lie detectors. NASA would agree that some phenomena are extremely real to the people that experience them. But it's not proper to judge another person's reaction.

Give me one little green man – not the theory or memory of one – and we can have a multibillion-dollar program. It's a **scientific** dilemma. How do you prove that something doesn't exist?

Dave Williamson, who was NASA's assistant for special projects, further told the New York Times that NASA was "not anxious" to get into the controversy because "it's not wise to do research on something

that is not a measurable phenomena" (sic).

Williamson had been NASA's UFO point man for many years. "I've been involved, from NASA's point of view, from the early 60s, when people have had questions or when studies have been done." Williamson headed up the group that would decide whether or not NASA would take up President Carter's request to head up a new UFO investigation.

"There is no measurable UFO evidence such as a piece of metal, flesh or cloth," Williamson commented. "We don't even have any radio signals. A photograph is not a measurement.

Some bureaucrats inside NASA were less diplomatic about the request for NASA to re-open the investigation of UFO sightings. One was quoted as saying: "All of these people seeing objects in the sky are probably a little touched in the head ..."

Even the Air Force, which had been out of the investigation of UFOs since 1969, weighted in on the debate about whether or not NASA should take up a new investigation. This advice came in response to a letter written by NASA's Lieutenant General Duward L. Crow. He had written to the Air Force to obtain a UFO fact sheet, and received the standard UFO response used by the Air Force for UFO inquiries from the public.

Crow was writing to get the official Air Force position on the UFO problem to help with their decision about whether or not to reopen the UFO investigation. Crow also requested the standard Air Force UFO response letter, as the White House had requested help with answering all the UFO mail, and Crow wanted to see what the Air Force was telling the public in UFO inquiries made to the Air Force.

Colonel Charles Senn, Chief of the Community Relations Division at the Air Force, wrote back to Lieutenant General Crow. In his September 1, 1977 reply letter, Colonel Senn wrote, "I sincerely hope that you are successful in preventing a reopening of UFO investigations."

The FBI was also aware of the Air Force involving them in the decision NASA was about to make on a possible new government UFO investigation project. According to William Sessions, head of the FBI, in a letter to someone writing about the NASA situation: "After studying all the facts available, it (NASA) decided that nothing would be gained by further investigation, and the Department of the Air Force Agreed with that decision."

By December 1977, NASA had decided on its course of action. On December 21, 1977, NASA's Dr. Frosch wrote President Carter's Science Advisor to inform the White House of his decision about taking up the job of another UFO investigation. The decision was made to help with the mail, but to decline the White house offer of a new UFO investigation:

Dear Frank:

In response to your letter of September 14, 1977, regarding NASA's possible role in UFO matters, we are fully prepared at this time to continue responding to public inquiries along the same line as we have done in the past. If some new element of hard evidence is brought to our attention in the future, it would be entirely appropriate for some NASA laboratory to analyze and report upon an otherwise unexplained organic or inorganic sample. We stand ready to respond to any bona fide physical evidence from credible sources. We intend to leave the door clearly open to such possibility.

We've given considerable thought to the question of what else the United States might and should do in the area of UFO research. There is an absence of tangible or physical evidence for thorough laboratory analysis. And because of the absence of such evidence we have not been able to devise a sound **scientific** procedure for investigating these phenomena. To proceed on a research task without a disciplinary framework and an exploratory technique in mind would be wasteful and probably unproductive.

I do not feel that we should mount a research effort without a better starting point than we have been able to identify thus far. I would therefore propose that NASA take no steps to establish a research activity in this area or to convene a symposium on this subject.

I wish in no way to indicate that NASA has come to any conclusion about these phenomena as such. Institutionally we retain an open mind, a keen sense of **scientific** curiosity and a willingness to analyze technical problems within our competence.

In response to the Frosch letter, Frank Press stated that he would accept the NASA evaluation of the situation. There would be no UFO investigation, and the White House would pursue the UFO issue no further.

Like the release of the closing of the U.S.A.F. Project Blue Book, the decision that NASA would not take up the UFO issue (and that the White House had agreed) was left to a December 27 press release, and Carter's promise to do something about the UFO situation was now effectively dead.

This decision to drop the UFO issue was a controversial one that had the possibility of backfiring on the White House. Insiders, however, know that the time to make tough unpopular decisions is late December. The White House decision was therefore released after Christmas when at least half the capitol's employees take off. In addition, the Congress and their aides have gone home for holidays, and along with them the reporters and watchdog groups who cover the politicians.

#### President Carter Hunts for Answers

According to Daniel Sheehan a Harvard trained lawyer, social activist, and founder of the Christic Institute, Jimmy Carter approached the CIA, FBI, and NASA seeking answers to what the federal agencies knew about the UFO situation. Sheehan was to play a part in one of Carter's main efforts to give the public an answer to the UFO mystery.

Shortly after Carter came to power in January 1977, Sheehan, then General-Counsel to the United States Jesuit National Headquarters - National Office of Social Ministry in Washington D.C., was approached by

Marcia S. Smith, Director of the Library of Congress' Science and Technology Division of the Congressional Research Service. Sheehan was asked, "to participate in a highly classified major evaluation of the UFO phenomena, and extraterrestrial intelligence."

The Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress is a research group of over 400 people who do research for Congress and the White House. They have played more than a passing interest in the UFO problem over the years.

Marcia Smith was at the time an analyst in the Science and Technology, Science Research Division at the Congressional Research Service. He was not unknown to the field of UFOs and classified research. She was involved in at least three UFO or UFO-related publications by the Congressional research Service.

- In 1976, just before Carter had won the Presidential election she wrote "Extraterrestrial Intelligence and Unidentified Flying Objects: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography" for the Library of Congress Congressional Research Service.
- In 1975 and then in a 1978 update, Marcia Smith joined with Dr. George Gatewood, Director of the Allegheny Observatory and the NASA Ames research Center SETI Program office, to write a report for the Congressional Research Service called "Life Beyond Earth." This paper, later turned into a book, was not about UFOs. "The paper is," wrote Smith, "instead, a synthesis of past and current thought on the possibility that there is extraterrestrial life in the universe, together with discussions of the possible impacts of making contact with it."
- In 1976 Smith also co-authored a report called The UFO Enigma that was produced for the Congressional Research Service. The report was an overview of the U.S. government involvement in solving the UFO puzzle, and information that has been released under the Freedom of Information.
- In 1983 Smith produced an updated report by the same name updating the report with events that had occurred between 1976 and 1983.

Sheehan recalled his encounter with Marcia, "... she (Marcia Smith) informed me that she had been contacted by the Chairman of the Science & Technology Committee of the House of Representatives, (Congressman Olin Earl Teague) who in turn had received a directive from the President of the United States, informing the Committee that he (Carter) in fact had personally seen a UFO while he was in Georgia."

"He didn't communicate this with the Congress but I found out," continued Sheehan, "that as soon as he (Carter) had come to office ... he called in the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and he said 'I want to have the information that we have on UFOs and extraterrestrial intelligence. I want to know about this as President.' The person who happened to be the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency at that time happened to be George Bush - and George Bush told him no, that he wasn't going to give this to him ... that this was information that existed on a need-to-know basis only. Simple curiosity on the part of the President wasn't adequate."

This refusal to provide information, along with a general distrust of George Bush and the Republicans, led Carter to replace Bush as his Director of Central Intelligence. Carter hoped that by replacing Bush he could get honest answers to problems like UFOs that required the most closely-held intelligence.

Bush "pressed Carter to keep him on as Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), arguing that the post should be de-politicized and should not change with a new President." Bush reminded Carter that the last four presidents had not changed the CIA director. The last was President Eisenhower who appointed Allen Dulles 24 years earlier.

Carter stated that his appointment for DCI would be a person having "stature with the American people, whose integrity was beyond doubt and with some analytic ability." Mrs. Carter was a bit more blunt about her husband's decision, "Jimmy is going to clear the government of all vestiges of Republicans, including CIA Director Bush." Interviewed years later, Carter was asked about his decision to replace Bush. Carter replied that he had actually done Bush a favor. If he had kept him on he never would have been president of the United States.

Years later Carter also spoke to UFO researcher Stanton Friedman about dismissing Bush. Carter indirectly confirmed that he had replaced Bush to get honest answers to his key intelligence questions. The incident occurred when the two met briefly at Boston's Logan airport.

Carter was traveling with Rosalyn and a Secret Service agent. The two men were in a large waiting area for Business Express flights with lots of people around, so Freedman realized he would only have a brief moment with the ex-president. Freedman also realized that President Carter would have been briefed on UFOs, and would therefore have answers. He quickly raised the UFO issue and the difficulty he was having getting data from the NSA and the CIA.

In response, Carter flashed back to his removal of Bush. "Jimmy indicated that the reason he chose his CIA director (Stansfield Turner)," recalled Friedman, "was that they were Annapolis classmates and therefore he thought that he could be trusted to tell him the truth ... implication was that other DCIs had not informed their presidents fully."

If Carter had fired Bush to get honest answers to the UFO situation it didn't work, at least as far as his DCI appointee Stansfield Turner was concerned. Turner as DCI was responsible for providing President Carter with a Daily Presidential briefing document that was described by Carter in his memories as "a highly secret document, distributed to only five people." In addition, years later Turner provided Carter each week with a personal briefing on the subject of the President's choice.

It appears that one of the weekly topics wasn't UFOs, because Turner indicated in a correspondence with UFO researcher and author Timothy Good that he wouldn't have had much to tell Carter about UFOs, because there was nothing to tell. Good described Turner's recollections of his UFO knowledge:

In his friendly and helpful replies, the former DCI pointed out that he was not specially briefed on the subject, but in due course he did look at what information the Agency had... Regarding information still being withheld, the Admiral emphasized that it is only comparatively recently, under the Freedom of Information Act that hitherto secret information had been declassified and released to the public. There was not the slightest evidence to support the theory that sensitive information had been withheld from him.

The denial of UFO information by DCI Bush to Jimmy Carter, probably came in one of three pre-presidential briefing given by the DCI George Bush and Jimmy Carter. Carter was very interested in intelligence topics and had even requested to be briefed by the CIA even prior to winning the democratic nomination for President. "I wanted to know what was going on," said Carter. Following his win of the democratic nomination, Carter was given long briefings on July 28 and August 12 that covered the entire field of intelligence. Each session lasted six hours. It appeared that Carter has been given a complete overview of U.S. intelligence.

However, three days following the Carter November 2 election win, Bush proposed that President-elect Carter be briefed on certain "exotic and very closely held items relating to sources and methods." It would be the only briefing that Bush would give to Carter between winning the election, and taking the oath of office. This briefing occurred on November 19, 1976.

It was Carter's pattern to ask a lot of questions and this briefing was no exception. The Carter briefing was characterized by the CIA as "another multi-hour session." DCI Bush brought with him six senior CIA officers to provide answers to all the questions. The key part of the briefing came in the first 45 minutes when Bush and his assistant Jennifer Fitzgerald took Carter and Walter Mondale to the Carter living room to provide selected sensitive information. The other senior CIA agents apparently weren't cleared for this information. They remained waiting in the Carter study until this key part of the briefing was completed.

Once of the reasons Carter may have been denied information about the true UFO story is that the CIA didn't trust Carter any more than he trusted them. Years later in his biography Bush described his displeasure with Carter's attacks on the CIA, which were "frequent and vituperative." During the pre-presidential briefing Bush conducted for Carter in Plains, Bush described Carter as having his guard up. Bush felt that "beneath his surface cool, he harbored a deep antipathy to the CIA." President Carter should not have been surprised that he was cut out on the very secret information held by the CIA.

Once Carter had been denied the information on UFOs, he decided to follow a suggestion that Bush had made for getting the information that Carter wanted. "If he was going to do this he would have to follow a different procedure," continued Sheehan, "that was going to involve all the different branches of government in authorizing this information, because they were afraid that President Carter was going to somehow publicly reveal this. Bush told him that he was going have to go to the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Representatives, in the legislative branch, and ask them to ask the Congressional Research Service, and have them issue a request to have certain documents declassified so that this process could go on."

"They were," said Sheehan, "trying to stall this thing. That was going to take a long time... the NSA, the CIA... all these groups were going to hold back the documents. So the President much chagrined, decided that rather than having a major confrontation with Mr. Bush, (he) would follow this process. He contacted the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Representatives. They in turn contacted the Library of Congress Research Service, and they undertook two major investigations:

1. To determine whether Extraterrestrial Intelligence existed in our galaxy; and,
2. What the relationship of this UFO phenomenon might be to Extraterrestrial Intelligence.

With DCI Director Bush gone, Carter moved on with his plan to get to the answers about UFOs. He stayed with the route of using the Congressional Research Office as suggested by George Bush.

Sheehan was appointed a special consultant to the Congressional Research Service by Marcia Smith. As part of his consultant role he was asked to give a presentation to the top 50 people at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, about the "Religious implications of extraterrestrial contact."

To prepare for this presentation Sheehan asked for and received access to the classified portions of the USAF Project Blue Book files. Project Blue Book was the official USAF investigation into UFOs, which had run from 1947 to 1969 when it was shut down. Sheehan's disclosure of a classified section to Project Blue Book was in direct conflict with the official line about Project Blue Book that had been quoted by agency after agency in the United States government for decades. "The secretary of the Air Force announced the termination of 'Project Blue Book,' and the Air Force furnished all documents regarding its investigation of UFOs to the National Archives and Records Administration."

Sheehan stated that he viewed roles of microfilm on Saturday afternoon in 1977 in the basement vault area of a new building built for the Library of Congress, called the Madison Building. There on the microfilm Sheehan viewed information related to extraterrestrial life and UFOs.

As there were dozens of boxes of microfilm to review, and only a short time to review it, Sheehan began searching for photographic evidence. While searching for evidence, he came across a collection of photos showing a classic saucer-shaped craft "embedded in a bank with snow all around."

Sheehan stated that the metallic looking craft was sitting at angle and was surrounded by USAF personnel wearing parkas. They were measuring the craft and the photos were so clear that Sheehan could read the name tags.

As well as photos of the craft, Sheehan stated that there were close-up photos of symbols on the side of the craft that he carefully traced on to the hard back cover of a yellow legal pad that he had taken into the vault.

Sheehan reported back to Marsha Smith what he had seen in the vault, and the Congressional Research Service prepared two reports for the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Representatives. The two reports were sent to the President.

The first of the two reports dealt with Extraterrestrial Intelligence. According to Sheehan, "The Congressional Research Service of the Official United States Congressional Library in its official report to the President through the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Representatives concludes that there are from two to six highly intelligent, highly technological developed civilizations in our own galaxy, over and above our ours."

The second report, according to Sheehan, dealt with UFOs. It had drawings of different types of UFOs that had been sighted, based on investigations that had been done by the United States Air Force and others. The report stated that the investigation was "unable to discount" that at least one of these

vehicles was not from one of the two to six civilizations described in the extraterrestrial intelligence report.

Sheehan retains custody of the tracing of the symbols found on the side of the saucer. He has never, for whatever reason, published the symbols. This author did see Sheehan draw out the symbols for a participant in a workshop at the UFO Expo in Santa Clara, California, in September 2001. The symbols resembled a combination of slashes and dots.

#### Carter and Grenada Prime Minister Sir Eric Gairy

"The Time will come... when everyone on Earth will have to pay attention to the UFO phenomena." - Sir Eric Gairy

Eric Gairy was the first Prime Minister of the 120,000 population of the Caribbean Island of Grenada, following its independence from Britain in 1974. Gairy had an avid interest in UFOs due to sightings he had while living in Grenada. "I have myself seen an unidentified flying object," Eric Gairy told the General Assembly of the United Nations in October 1977, "and I have been totally overwhelmed by what I have seen."

On September 9, 1977, Prime Minister Gairy arrived in the United States for a state visit to Washington. As a part of this state visit Gairy met with President Carter in the White House. It was a meeting fit for the tabloids. The "UFO Prime Minister" was about to meet the "UFO President."

Although, the archivists at the Carter Library could find "no transcripts or briefing notes" for the 45-minute meeting between Eric Gairy and President Carter, it appears certain that the subject of UFOs was raised during the White House meeting. In a 1997 conversation with a Connecticut-based journalist, W.E. Gutnam, Gairy hinted not only that he had discussed UFOs with Carter, but that it was during that meeting that Gairy first "called for a worldwide inquest" into UFOs.

Carter had after all openly discussed a sighting he had in 1969. Gairy had spotted a "covey of brightly lit elliptical objects hovering high over the ministerial mansion then darting silently at tremendous speeds toward the southeast back in Grenada". Gairy therefore viewed the coincidence of two world leaders seeing UFOs, as a sign that the time was right for an open worldwide discussion of the UFO mystery."

Meanwhile, the White House made no statement or comment about the Gairy visit, beyond the fact that the two leaders had met. An unnamed U.S. official confirmed that the topic of UFOs had been raised during the Gairy meeting. He refused, however, to state how President Carter had responded to Gairy on the UFO issue.

Later Leonard Stringfield, a UFO researcher who was working as a consultant to the Grenada delegation to the United States at the time, also revealed that President Carter had discussed UFOs with Gairy. Stringfield further reported that Carter had even presented Prime Minister Gairy with a copy of the 1969 Condon Committee Report on UFOs.

The presentation of this report by Carter raises many questions as to the state of Carter's mind regarding UFOs during this time period (September of 1977). Had President Carter suddenly concluded that Condon's committee was the final answer on UFOs, and there was therefore no UFO evidence worth scientific consideration? Perhaps Carter's sudden reversal on UFOs meant he had been briefed on the real facts about UFOs, and was now being forced into a position of having to protect U.S. classified material? Perhaps, it was felt Gairy did not have a "need to know," and thus Gairy was being given the non-classified USAF position on UFOs, the same given to the public since 1969.

The absolute silence in White House records about the discussions between Carter and Gairy would tend to support the version that Carter knew much more about the classified aspects of UFOs. President Carter has never openly discussed the evolution of his UFO thinking, so these questions will probably never be answered.

The press, in their covering of the story had, according to Gairy, "a burning interest in whether he had raised the UFO topic" during his meeting with Carter. Eric Gairy was reluctant to discuss the details of his discussion with Carter. He added, though, that he might get around to talking about it at a later time. He never did.

One month later on October 7th, inspired by his discussions with President Carter, Prime Minister Gairy made good on his promise to President Carter to call for a worldwide inquest into the UFO problem. In a speech in front of the General Assembly at the United Nations he stated:

In the same way that this planet is the accepted inheritance of all humanity, knowledge is also to be shared for the benefit of all mankind, and, in this light, one wonders why the existence of UFO's, or flying saucers as they are sometimes called, continue to remain a secret to those whose archives repose useful information and other data. While we appreciate that some countries consider this to be in the interest of military expedience, I now urge that a different view be taken because it is my firm conviction that the world is ready, willing and ripe enough to accept these phenomena in relation to man and his existence on the earth planet and life in outer space... My first humble submission has been to repeat the call for an establishment of a department or agency devoted to psychic research. My second has been to ask the powers concerned, to share with other governments and peoples of our planet their information and other data on UFOs.

Sir Gairy's call for an open worldwide investigation of the UFO phenomena in the October speech was not the first time UFOs had been brought up as an issue inside the United Nations.

The first calls for a UFO study group inside the United Nations had come from Major Coleman Von Keviczky who approached Secretary General U Thant in 1966 and recommended the installation of an U.N. UFO authority; a World Authority for Spatial Affairs. Von Keviczky, then a member of the United Nations Office of Public Information, decided that it would be a good idea to bring all UFO sightings under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. He also believed that only the United Nations should be allowed to openly contact craft and their occupants.

Even though U Thant had admitted in an interview to the New York Post on June 27, 1967, that "UFOs are the most important problem facing the U.N. next to the War in Vietnam", no action was taken

regarding Von Keviczky's requests.

On November 1971, UFOs again became a subject of discussion at the United Nations. The Ugandan representative to the United Nations asked the Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to "encourage astronauts who encountered UFOs to treat them respectfully."

A month after his October 1977 speech, Gairy and his Grenada delegation presented a draft resolution before the General Assembly designed to place the UFO question on the UN agenda for serious review. The draft further proposed that steps be taken to establish an agency for "coordinating and disseminating the results of its research."

Gairy felt compelled to take the issue to the world stage as he had first proposed in his meeting with President Carter: "The sightings were so anomalous, their potentiality so out of character with the dignity of my office" Gairy told Honduras This Week, "that I felt compelled to rouse the world out of its torpor and exhort it to take a closer look. I was worried that these apparitions might seriously impact world security."

As part of his November 1977 appeal to the delegates of the United Nations, Sir Eric Gairy called a United Nations meeting on the subject of UFOs. Delegates were shown Steven Spielberg's just released Close Encounters of the Third Kind movie to prepare them for the message to be presented by the Grenada Ambassador, Dr. Wellington Friday. Unfortunately for Gairy and his delegation, most countries only sent female delegates to the presentation, believing that the issue was of low importance.

The main thrust of the Grenada appeal was to get Kurt Waldheim, the United Nations Secretary-General at this time, to take up the UFO issue, and to convene UFO hearings in the General Assembly. Waldheim was sympathetic to the outer space issue. He had, after all, taped a message that traveled on the Voyager spacecraft sent to its unknown destination outside the solar system. Waldheim's Voyager message placed would hopefully be found by another race on another planet sometime in the distant future. Waldheim was also sensitive to the UFO issue.

Kurt Waldheim, offered Prime Minister Gairy his sympathy, and assured the Grenadan head of state that the matter would be addressed as soon as "126 global issues ranging from disarmament, to human rights and terrorism had been shelved..."

On November 28th Gairy and his delegation got their chance to present their draft resolution to the General Assembly on the UFO issue. The morning of the address, Dr. Wellington Friday who was to make the Grenada delegation's appeal, received many calls from other United Nations delegations including the United States of America.

John Feigle, a Coast Guard Commander spoke to Friday on behalf of the U.S. delegation. Feigle expressed "hopeful support" for the Grenada UFO position, but wanted to know from Dr. Friday what the final objectives of the UFO appeal would be. Friday did not provide an answer.

Feigle then stated, after consulting with the Carter White House, that the official United States position on the UFO resolution would be "based on the Condon Report." President Carter had presented Gairy with a copy of the Condon report during their September 9th meeting at the White House. Now, for a second time, a Carter representative was presenting the Condon report to the Grenadan Prime Minister, as the answer to the UFO issue.

An annoyed Ambassador Friday responded to Feigle that the Grenada delegation was quite aware of the Condon report. He added further, that the Grenada delegation was also aware of new UFO data available since the release of the report in 1969, which had made the Condon Report's conclusion invalid.

Realizing that the United States delegation was probably not going to be supporting the draft resolution, the Grenada delegation held a quick meeting. The meeting concluded that, despite the lack of U.S. support, they would proceed with 3 p.m. speech.

Dr. Friday made his presentation to the U.N. General Assembly. UFOs were now an issue in front of the United Nations.

In December 1978, as the Carter White House looked on, Prime Minister Gairy and the Grenada delegation were actually able to agenda Draft 33/426 on the record. The decision that was tabled was titled: "Establishment of an agency or a department of the United Nations for undertaking, coordinating and disseminating the results of research into unidentified flying objects and related phenomena."

Point one of the decision of the "consensus text" acknowledged that the General Assembly had taken note of the resolutions put forward by Grenada. Point two and three of the decision were much of a challenge to the Carter White House silence on UFOs.

2. The General Assembly invites interested Member States to take appropriate steps to coordinate on a national level **scientific** research and investigation into extraterrestrial life, including unidentified flying objects, and to inform the Secretary-General of the observations, research and evaluation of such activities.
3. The General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to transmit the statements of the delegation of Grenada and the relevant documentation to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, so that it may consider them at its session in 1979."

On November 27 and December 8, 1978, Eric Gairy held a presentation for United Nations delegates aided by three UFO experts: J. Allen Hynek, Jacques F. Vallee, and Lt. Col. Larry Coyne. The presentation was made in front of the prestigious Special Political Committee which forwarded the following resolution to the General Assembly.

The Special Committee decided by consensus this morning to recommend to the General Assembly that it invite interested Member States "to take appropriate steps to coordinate, on a national level, **scientific** research and investigation into extraterrestrial life, including unidentified flying objects."

Just when it appeared that the Grenada delegation was about to get some sort of real action from the United Nations General Assembly, their luck ran out.

In March 1979, only one day after flying to New York to begin discussion on the UFO draft, Gairy's government was overthrown by a left-wing revolutionary party, known as the New Jewel Movement headed by Maurice Bishop. Grenadians at a rally following the coup chanted, "Freedom come, Gairy go, Gairy gone with UFO. The UFO draft at the United Nations was immediately put on ice.

The question naturally arises whether the Bishop revolutionaries were given help or encouragement to overthrow the Gairy government. Grenada is a small country with very little influence on the world scene. The placement of a small pro-Soviet government on the island of Grenada might have been a lesser evil than allowing this small island nation to create a world stage for the study and discussion of UFOs on the floor of the General Assembly. If the Grenada draft had been passed by the U.N. delegates, a lot would have changed.

The actions of Eric Gairy, Grenada's leader in 1979, would have created great havoc within MJ-12, or within various government circles if he had been able to institutionalize the discussion, and study of UFOs within the United Nations. Such studies would be out of the reach and influence of most intelligence groups. Seen in this light, those people and groups harboring the absolute truth about UFOs must have sighed with relief when the Marxist New Jewel party declared that they were now in control of the Grenada capitol.

#### Carter Answers his UFO Mail

The Carter White House received more mail than any other White House on the issue of UFOs. Despite this, there is no evidence that President Carter even read any of the thousands of letters. He certainly didn't answer any of them personally.

The evidence, in fact seems to indicate that Carter and those around him went out of their way to avoid the letters that poured in. None of those writing President Carter on UFOs received any serious attention.

The apparent ignoring of the thousands of UFO letters that poured into the Carter White House is strange in light of the fact that President Carter was the only President to openly declare that he had experienced a UFO sighting. His pre-election statements lead UFO witnesses and researcher to believe that he would support any and all efforts to uncover the answer to the UFO mystery.

Carter's UFO encounter was written up in The National Enquirer on June 8, 1976 while Carter was still campaigning for the White House. The bold front page story headline read "Jimmy Carter: The Night I saw a UFO." With a weekly sales figure at the time of five million, and a readership estimated at double this figure, the short, couple of hundred-word article initiated a deluge of UFO letters into the White House. People from all walks of life, wrote letters; from children to military old-timers, from housewives to professionals. Some had written to express an opinion; some had written to tell the President that he was not alone - they too, had experienced a UFO sighting. Most people wrote asking about President Carter's campaign promise to reveal the government's knowledge about UFOs.

Frank Moore, the Assistant to the President for Congressional Liaison, handled the letters. Moore was one of the "Georgia Carter Clan" that came to Washington following Carter's election. He had been with Carter since working as a campaign aide with Carter during Carter's 1966 Gubernatorial campaign.

Among the letters, that came in about UFOs, was one from researcher Larry W. Bryant, who by 1977 had already been regularly writing letters to Presidents and others in the Washington political elite for 20 years related to UFOs. Bryant worked in the Pentagon as a writer and editor for U.S. Army publications.

He wrote his letter to the newly-elected Carter on February 6, 1977. Placing the letter in the mailbox, Bryant was not optimistic. "After all," he wrote, "considering my then, already 20-years of needling officialdom... how could I expect to receive any more than the dismissive, formula response that I've always received? I had expected no substantive reply. I wasn't disappointed."

In his letter to President Carter, Bryant stated that he realized that he was probably one of many letters to Carter about UFOs, due to Carter's public admission that he had witnessed a UFO. He wrote that he realized that his letter, along with the others would be:

Referred by your office to Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, for direct reply - despite the fact that the Air Force disavows its continued, formal involvement in the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of the UFO-sighting reports; and despite the fact, that back in the days of its UFO public-relations instrument known as Project Blue Book, it persistently denied to newsmen and to other private citizens that Blue Book managers were arbitrarily and systematically withholding reports from public scrutiny...

In his letter, Bryant encouraged Carter to look into the roles of the FBI, National Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, and National Security Council in the cover-up. He encouraged Carter to publish his study of his findings:

As a long-time critic of the politics of UFOlogy, I'm hoping that your examination of these roles would culminate in a formal report of your findings to the public, in the course of which you undoubtedly will have fulfilled your campaign promise to disclose all UFO data now being kept secret by the federal government.

As expected, Bryant's letter was replied to on February 16, by the Air Force on behalf of President Carter. It was the standard letter every UFO researcher was seen or received many times. Colonel L.E. Seminare Jr. wrote that the Air Force was no longer in the UFO business, but all the records of Project Blue Book could be viewed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

Further, Seminare wrote that the Air Force was not covering-up anything, and that there is no evidence to indicate the Air Force should do any further study concerning the phenomena. Moreover, if there were reason to continue the study, Seminare stated there was no money because of the "present constraints on available resources."

"Hopefully," Seminare concluded the letter, "the forgoing information will clarify the Air Force position on this matter."

The letter written to President Carter had not even mentioned Carter's name outside the first line. It did not deal at all with the Presidential or White House position on the UFO subject. Sadly, the letter had

become simply a defense of Air Force policy on UFOs. Even more sadly, the response was exactly what Larry Bryant had expected.

More than any other White House, the UFO letters were simply ignored, and did not even receive the story of the Air Force's history of investigating UFOs. It didn't seem to matter how important the person writing was. Tom Sheets, for example, wrote President Carter and did not receive a reply. Sheets was at one time the chief of police in College Park, Georgia. He was also an avid investigator into UFOs, serving as Georgia M.U.F.O.N. state director.

Sheets importance to President Carter was this: He had actually foiled an attempt by a man to abduct the President's daughter, Amy Carter. His letter was simply ignored.

Sometimes it took more than one letter to President Carter to get a "kiss-off" letter from the Air Force. A telegram from Larry McCann, the producer of a new television show in New York called "UFO Update" was a prime example. A few months after Carter took office, McCann wrote to ask for more details on the sighting Carter had experienced, and about his campaign promise to disclose everything that the government knew about UFOs. McCann waited and received no reply.

On July 26, 1977, McCann wrote again. This time his letter was a lot less friendly. In addition to repeating his request for information about Carter's campaign promise, McCann made reference to Air Force officers losing their lives chasing UFOs. McCann took this allegation from Air Force General Benjamin Chicklaw in the book entitled Situation Red, which had just been published.

The new approach worked, but not well enough to get a reply from Carter. Once again Air Force Col. Seminare was answering President Carter's mail. The letter was the standard Air Force UFO denial letter received by Larry Bryant, except for a strong denial about Air Force pilots dying while pursuing UFOs. "Further," wrote Seminare, "the United States military has no record of any military aircraft ever engaging in combat with a so-called UFO."

One letter that was sent in the first months of the Carter Presidency from four members of the House of Representatives in Puerto Rico who had been inspired by Carter's openness regarding his sighting, and the pro-UFO statements that Jimmy Carter had made to the National Enquirer: "Inspired by your views on this interesting matter" the four members had "introduced a resolution - H.R. 151 - whose sole purpose is to create a House committee to gather statements from citizens who may have evidence on the existence of this type of **scientific** phenomena."

In the end, President Carter was able to get NASA to answer the UFO letters that were being sent to him. Each letter writer was provided a NASA fact sheet on UFOs. It stated that no government agency was "involved with or responsible for investigations into the possibility of advanced alien civilizations on other planets or for investigating Unidentified flying Objects."

Further, the fact sheet informed UFO letter writers that, "NASA was asked to examine the possibility of resuming UFO investigations. After studying all the facts available, it was determined that nothing would be gained by further investigation, since there was an absence of tangible evidence."

The Carter presidency started out the most optimistic period for a possible disclosure on UFOs. In the end, it turned out to be a presidency that was forced to hide behind one of its agencies, to avoid addressing the countless letters asking for responsible action on the subject.

The use of NASA to answer UFO letters, and the use of the NASA fact sheet on UFOs, is still in operation today by the present White House.

#### Carter Talks UFOs as Ex-President

Having sighted a UFO, and having declared he would release UFO information if elected President, it is no surprise that President Carter was followed with the UFO question long after he left the Presidency. The number of questions asked after he left office was also high for two distinct reasons:

President Carter had made public statements on UFOs promising to release the government's UFO information.

Ex-president Carter wrote over a dozen books, and the publicity tours done for the books made it rather easy to pose UFO questions to the ex-President.

There were times when Carter would not talk about the UFO subject such as when Kevin Barry, a documentary producer was making a one hour special for the Arts and Entertainment Network approached the ex-President's office. Barry was interviewing celebrities such as Dennis Weaver, Patricia Neal, and Mercury astronaut Gordon Cooper about their UFO experiences and beliefs. When he finally got through to Carter's office, his request for an interview was "politely turned down."

Some of those who came to see Carter during a speech or a book signing felt that Carter had betrayed the UFO disclosure movement. They felt that Carter had made a promise to release all the UFO material if elected, and that he did not keep his promise.

One such incident occurred during one of Jimmy Carter's book signing sessions. A man pressed the UFO issue after arriving at the table with his book. He made eye-to-eye contact with Carter and said, "President Carter, you promised to tell the American people, when you were campaigning, that you would find out about UFOs. What happened?" The man reported that Carter stopped cold, and tears formed in his eyes. For a religious man like Carter who promised to help, and to tell the truth, the UFO secret had to be a hard one keep.

In 1995, Carter was asked about UFOs during his term as President, and Carter in his answer, made reference to the CIA using an (unnamed) California psychic to locate "a special secret plane" that had gone down in Zaire. President Carter admitted that he had not been told about this during his time as President. He learned of it when the use of psychics and remote viewers became public in 1995. The intelligence community had gone public stating that they were getting out of the remote viewing business.

There are stories, however, that Carter was very interested in psychic phenomena while he was president. It may have been an element of the paranormal that fit neatly into the teachings of his

theological Baptist background.

Uri Geller, a prominent Israeli clairvoyant, telepathist and psychokineticist, stated publicly that Carter was one of the many executives in the White House that he had illustrated his powers to. He had, for example, bent spoons for President John Kennedy.

Vice President Al Gore contacted the head of the U.S. foreign relations committee invite Geller to the 1996 International Nuclear Treaty negotiations? ``My task," Uri told the San Francisco Examiner, `` was to mentally bombard the Russians to sign the treaty."

President Carter, while president, had his own role for the talented psychic. Carter had him work with the CIA. His job was to board airplanes with KGB agents aboard and mentally erase floppy disks that the enemy agents were carrying.

Knowing this tendency for presidents to get into the psychic when no one was looking, I asked a question of "Skip" Atwater following a presentation he gave at the World UFO Congress in Laughlin, Nevada in March 2002.

Atwater was the initiator of a "unique remote-viewing surveillance program" run by the U.S. Army using remote viewing. The program later became known as "Star Gate." Atwater acted as the Operations and Training officer for this program from 1978 - 1987.

As the head of the program it appeared that he might be the one to actually brief the president on the successes of the program. Carter, as described above seemed interested in the subject, and the other president Atwater would have dealt with was Reagan whose love of the paranormal is well-known. I put the following question to Atwater:

Q: When asked about the UFO phenomena, former President Jimmy Carter started to recount some incident about find a plane in Africa using remote viewing. In addition, former President Ronald Reagan who was president during the time you ran this program was also known to love anything that went bump in the night. Can you tell me if you know if the presidents during your period were briefed on remote viewing?

A: Yes. I know the answer to that question. (He then stood quietly waiting for me to sit down.)

It was apparent from the answer that the presidential involvement in the history of remote-viewing is still classified. This is supported by the fact that there were no records of remote viewing in either the Carter or Reagan library. Atwater's silence on the subject, however, was a clear signal that the president was being fully informed about the latest discoveries in remote-viewing.

In the same interview Carter where Carter launched into a discussion about remote-viewing, he was questioned if he knew of any information that would indicate the world was being visited by extraterrestrials. The answer Carter gave was unusual, and hinted at an attempt to say no when he knew the answer was yes. "I never knew of any instance where it was proven that any sort of vehicle had come from outer space to our country and either lived here or left."

Under the Carter presidency, an enormous number of UFO documents were released to the public. Credit for these releases went to the UFOlogists who went to court using the Freedom of Information Act to get the documents released. Part of the credit, however, goes to President Carter who signed an Executive Order changing the way that documents were viewed to determine whether or not they should be declassified and released. There were almost 1,000 released by the CIA and 1,600 from the FBI.

Some people believed that Carter did nothing once he became president to release government information. Therefore, he received a number of questions about his pre-election promise regarding UFO information. In 1997, ex-President Carter was interviewed by a UK television show The Paranormal World of Paul McKenna. (A well-known stage hypnotist in the UK) The interview done for the show was done with Carter as he was leaving a building with some colleagues. He was questioned about his 1969 sighting in Georgia to which he obligingly provided details.

As a conclusion to the interview, Carter was asked " In 1976 you said you'd try and get release of all information to the public and to **scientists** about other UFO sightings. Do you think you achieved that?"

President Carter responded, " I'm not sure, but we did release a lot of information..." (This may have been a reference to materials released under the Freedom of Information Act due to changes President Carter made to the rules used to determine what should be released.)

Then after a pause, in a more serious tone Carter added, "but I don't know how much was not released."

Many times when Carter was speaking, despite all his accomplishments related to world peace and aid to the underprivileged, the UFO question would often be the first one asked following a speech. Such was the case in Sept 1997 when Carter spoke at the 16th Annual Emory University town hall meeting. A member of the audience asked Carter about his often-mentioned UFO sighting that he had seen in the late-sixties.

Carter recounted the experience; still believing what he had seen was a UFO, despite all the articles that had been written claiming that he had misidentified the planet Venus for an alien space ship. As he explained what had happened Carter tried to include some humor. He said he knew of no extraterrestrial beings and he did not think any were on the object that he had seen outside the Lions Club in January 1969.

Probably the most dramatic revelation made by ex-President Carter came in comments that he made to actress Shirley MacLaine sometime after Shirley had written her book *Out On a Limb*.

Shirley had always been a believer in UFOs, and was known to support other new age ideas such as reincarnation and channeling. Her book, *Out on a Limb*, related, in-part, UFO experiences that she had while in South America.

The Carter angle to the story began in late April- early May, 1995 when actor Nicholas Cage appeared on the NBC late-night David Letterman show. During his interview with Letterman, Nicholas recounted how,

in a conversation with Shirley MacLaine, she had told him that in conversations with the ex-President, Carter told MacLaine that he had seen a crashed flying saucer and the occupants.

This statement seems at first glance to back up what researchers like Robert Collins, a former Air Force Officer claims regarding the Presidents. Collins states "Every President of the United States has been informed about the visitors, or "read in" as the insiders call it.

There was no reaction to that the Nicholas Cage disclosure until a couple weeks later on the Larry King show. The guest on the show that night was Shirley MacLaine. During a phone-in call from Cocoa Florida, the question was asked: "Hello, Good evening Larry and Shirley. About two weeks ago, Nicholas Cage was on the Letterman Show and said Shirley had told him that President Carter had told her he had seen recovered alien spacecraft and aliens in a hanger. Can you tell me exactly what President Carter said?"

Shirley MacLaine replied to the Florida caller: "He didn't tell me that, but he told me many times that when I first wrote Out On A Limb that he would support me, that it was true, that there were crafts, that he believed there were occupants, why should we be the only people in the universe. He wanted to shine the sunshine laws on intelligence, to expose it, to see how the people would react, but he didn't and wouldn't and couldn't as he explained to me."

Other than this Larry King interview Shirley MacLaine has not commented further on what President Carter told her in connection with what he learned as President about the UFO situation. The Carter library has stated that the records reviewed so far show MacLaine did not visit the White House or correspond with Jimmy Carter.

The story told by MacLaine seems to place Carter's statement to her in the nineties when she wrote Out on a Limb. These Carter records are still in President Carter's possession and have not arrived at the library. This author sent a letter to Ms. MacLaine, asking her to comment on the statements she and Nicholas Cage made in 1995. The letter was never answered.

Carter, in retrospect, was a very curious President who asked a lot of questions during briefings that were given to him. "Carter was a very careful and interested listener," wrote a CIA author, "and an active participant. All who were present remember that he asked a great many questions, often in minute detail.

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