



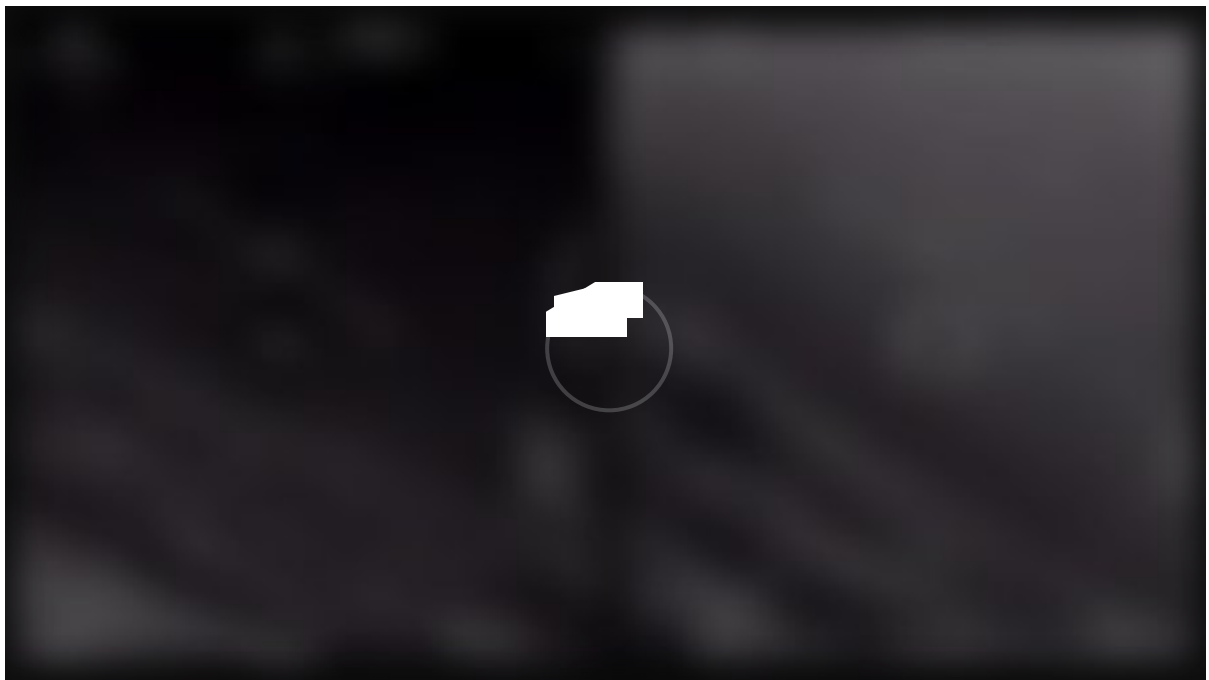
House Panel to Hold Public Hearing on Unexplained Aerial Sightings

A subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee will hear testimony next week from two Pentagon officials.

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A video shows an encounter between a Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet and an unknown object. It was released by the Defense Department's Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program. U.S. Department of Defense

By **Leslie Kean** and **Ralph Blumenthal**

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A House subcommittee is scheduled to hold next week the first open congressional hearing on unidentified aerial vehicles in more than half a century, with testimony from two top defense intelligence officials.

The hearing comes after the release last June of a [report](#) requested by Congress on “unidentified aerial phenomena.” The nine-page “Preliminary Assessment” from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence focused on 144 incidents dating back to 2004 and was able to explain only

one.

The report declined to draw inferences, saying that the available reporting was “largely inconclusive” and noting that limited and inconsistent data created a challenge in evaluating the phenomena. But it said most of the phenomena reported “do represent physical objects.”

The assessment concluded that the objects were not secret U.S. technology and that “we currently lack data to indicate any UAP are part of a foreign collection program or indicative of a major technological advancement by a potential adversary.”

The hearing, scheduled for next Tuesday, is intended to focus on the work of a group within the Pentagon that is following up on the national security and flight-safety questions raised by the report.

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“Since this is an area of high public interest, any undue secrecy can serve as an obstacle to solving the mystery, or it could prevent us from finding solutions to potential vulnerabilities,” said Representative André Carson, Democrat of Indiana and the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee’s subcommittee on counterterrorism, counterintelligence and counterproliferation, which is holding the hearing. “This hearing is about examining steps that the Pentagon can take to reduce the stigma surrounding reporting by military pilots, and by civilian pilots.”

Scheduled witnesses include Ronald S. Moultrie, under secretary of

defense for intelligence and security, and Scott W. Bray, deputy director of naval intelligence.

“The federal government and intelligence community have a critical role to play in contextualizing and analyzing reports,” said Representative Adam B. Schiff, the California Democrat who is chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. He said the purpose of the hearing was to illuminate “one of the great mysteries of our time and to break the cycle of excessive secrecy and speculation with truth and transparency.”

The report delivered to Congress last June was done by the intelligence community along with the Pentagon’s Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force, which the Pentagon replaced in November with a new office, the Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronization Group. The group’s job is to “detect, identify and attribute objects of interest in Special Use Airspace and to assess and mitigate any associated threats to safety of flight and national security.”

Mr. Moultrie oversees that new group, which will be a focus of the upcoming hearings.

Last December, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Democrat of New York, and Representative Ruben Gallego, Democrat of Arizona, succeeded with bipartisan support in inserting an [amendment](#) into the annual National Defense Authorization Act that directs that the Pentagon work with the intelligence community on the issue and make public reports about its findings. The amendment expanded the scope of the research beyond what the Pentagon group was already conducting.

Congress has not held any open hearings on U.F.O.s since the Air Force closed a public investigation known as Project Blue Book in early 1970.

In 1966, Gerald R. Ford, then the House Republican minority leader from Michigan, organized a hearing in response to reports of U.F.O.s by over 40 people, including 12 policemen. The Air Force explained them away as “swamp gas,” which Mr. Ford said was “flippant.”

“I believe the American people are entitled to a more thorough explanation than has been given them by the Air Force to date,” Mr. Ford said in a letter to two House committees on March 28, 1966. Air Force officials testified about the sightings.

Two years later, Congress held a second hearing in which scientists from outside the Air Force presented papers on their own studies of the

phenomenon and called for continued study of unidentified flying objects.

The Air Force concluded in 1969 that no U.F.O. had ever threatened national security; that the objects did not display technology beyond what was present-day knowledge; and that there was no evidence indicating the objects were extraterrestrial. The Air Force concluded that no further investigation was warranted.

In recent years, intelligence reports and statements by officials have cited concerns about a national security threat from U.F.O.s through advanced technology hinted at by [reports from pilots](#) of, for example, vehicles traveling at extreme speeds without visible means of propulsion. Officials have voiced doubt that they could be tied to known adversaries.

“I’ve gotten some chuckles but it’s something I’m passionate about and I think I can take the heat,” Mr. Carson said. “This may be the very thing that brings Democrats and Republicans together, at least for an hour or two.”

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