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10 reasons to take UFOs seriously

BY MARIK VON RENNENKAMPFF, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR - 01/19/23 12:00 PM ET

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In recent years, military aviators frequently encountered mysterious objects in tightly controlled training airspace. According to eyewitness accounts and leaked sensor data, the craft appeared to exhibit flight dynamics that bent – if not shattered – the laws of physics. In the most notable incidents, objects appeared to maneuver and move through the air without wings or discernible means of propulsion.

The years since these encounters became public have seen numerous developments that should prompt us to take UFOs seriously.

1. Military pilots and other service members reported more than 500 additional UFO incidents. Some appeared to demonstrate highly advanced technology.

as [1996](#)).

Of the [366 recently-reported UFO encounters](#), about half remain unidentified. A [previous assessment](#) identified only [one](#) out of 144 UFO reports. Despite many of the mysterious objects registering on [multiple](#) sophisticated sensor systems (such as spy [satellites](#), radar and infrared video), the majority of the 510 military UFO reports remain unidentified.

[According](#) to intelligence [analysts](#), some of the objects appear to demonstrate “unusual flight characteristics or performance capabilities.” Such cases, according to the U.S. government, “require further analysis.” Moreover, “[s]ome [UFOs] [appeared](#) to remain stationary in winds aloft, move against the wind, maneuver abruptly, or move at considerable speed, without discernible means of propulsion.”

Despite heavy redactions, [declassified UFO reports](#) make [clear](#) that fighter pilots are frequently left [stunned](#) – and [exasperated](#) – by such encounters.

Intriguingly, officials have [high confidence](#) that the objects observed by military aviators in recent years are not secret U.S. government aircraft or technology. At the same time, analysts have [no evidence](#) that the encounters “are indicative of a major technological advancement by a potential adversary” such as China or Russia.

2. Congress is taking UFOs extremely seriously.

Thanks to [in-person briefings](#) by military aviators who personally encountered UFOs, members of Congress are taking the phenomena extremely seriously.

In December, President Biden signed the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) – which includes [sweeping](#) UFO provisions – into law. Beyond bolstering a powerful new UFO office, the legislation redefines “UFO” as “unidentified anomalous phenomena” (UAP) to account for unknown objects observed in (and moving between) air, water and space. Moreover, the new law directs the Department of Defense to establish a secure mechanism for government-affiliated individuals to report UAP-related information. The legislation appears intended, in part, to [get to the bottom of](#) long-standing [rumors](#) that “legacy” UFO analysis [programs](#) may have been illegally withheld from Congress.

Intriguingly, the 2023 NDAA also mandates a sweeping accounting (dating back to 1945) of U.S. government involvement in the UFO phenomenon. Among other requirements, the Pentagon and intelligence agencies must come clean about “any efforts to

Previous legislation also requires the newly-established UFO office to: (1) provide frequent reports, analyses and briefings on UFO activity – including any links to nuclear technology and possible health effects associated with UAP encounters – to Congress and the public, (2) develop a detailed “science plan” to account for UFOs “that exceed the known state of the art in science and technology” and (3) mount rapid “field investigations of [UFO] incidents.”

Importantly, Congress gave the director of the UFO office sweeping authorities to leverage “any resource, capability, asset, or process of the Department [of Defense] and the intelligence community.” At the same time, Congress ensured that the UFO office director now reports directly to top Pentagon leadership, removing several layers of likely bureaucratic obstruction.

3. Government officials are making eyebrow-raising statements about UFOs.

Top intelligence officials (such as former director of national intelligence John Ratcliffe, ex-CIA directors John Brennan and James Woolsey and current director of national intelligence Avril Haines) have made stunning comments about UAP. Ditto for former astronaut, senator and current NASA administrator Bill Nelson.

Not to be outdone, ex-presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton gave striking answers when asked about UFOs in recent years (as have several members of Congress, especially those with intelligence committee assignments).

4. Scientists are interested in the UFO phenomenon (and have been for decades).

NASA is proceeding “full force” with a 16-member scientific scoping study of UFOs. At the same time, Harvard astronomer Avi Loeb launched the Galileo Project, which draws on a multi-disciplinary academic team to scientifically evaluate the phenomenon. Moreover, noted theoretical physicist Michio Kaku has spoken publicly about UFOs, while Stanford University’s Garry Nolan is conducting cutting-edge UFO-related research.

Similarly, a 1975 survey of more than 1,300 astronomers asked if UFOs “deserve serious scientific study.” A whopping 80 percent of respondents replied “certainly,” “probably” or “possibly.”

Two decades earlier, J. Allen Hynek, noted astronomer and scientific consultant to the Air Force’s 20-year UFO “analysis” effort, surveyed dozens of his colleagues. According to Hynek, scientists’ “general lethargy [regarding UFOs] is due to lack of information on the subject.” After explaining that “some of the sightings were truly puzzling and not at all easily explainable [the astronomers’] interest was almost immediately aroused.”

noteworthy.)

Not to be outdone, noted atmospheric physicist James McDonald presented the seminal paper on UFOs and science at a 1969 symposium organized by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

5. Public analyses corroborate eyewitness accounts of UFOs exhibiting remarkable technology.

A small group of mathematically-inclined citizens conducted exhaustive analyses of the three U.S. Navy videos that catalyzed the current focus on UFOs. In short, meticulous three-dimensional models corroborate naval aviators' specific, detailed accounts of objects maneuvering in extraordinary ways. At the same time, the analyses mathematically rule out prosaic explanations (such as misidentified aircraft or balloons) for the objects observed in the three videos.

6. Credible sources observed UFOs for decades.

Pilots and radar operators have observed airborne objects appearing to demonstrate radically advanced technologies for nearly a century. In the early 1950s, a government-contracted scientific analysis of more than 3,000 reports found that 33 percent of the most credible, highest quality encounters could not be identified. By 1952, intelligence assessments ruled out domestic or foreign origins for UFOs, convincing several high-ranking officials that the objects were "interplanetary" craft.

But in 1953, Cold War fears led the U.S. government to adopt a semi-official policy of "debunking" and discrediting UFO sightings. Analysts quickly began force-fitting absurd, unscientific "explanations" onto highly credible encounters. By 1955, with government UFO "debunking" proceeding apace, only 3 percent of reports were officially classified as "Unknown."

7. An intra-government battle over UFOs may be brewing.

There is credible evidence that competing elements of the U.S. government have split into pro- and anti-UFO factions. If this is the case, history is repeating itself.

8. The government's UFO hunt may have already hit national security pay dirt.

Preliminary reporting suggests that the government's newfound focus on UFOs uncovered at least one previously unknown foreign spying operation.

9. UFOs are a fiercely bipartisan issue.

[president's fiercest critics](#)).

Moreover, [three former presidential candidates](#) – Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) – have sponsored or cosponsored historic, unprecedented UFO legislation.

10. UFOs are an intriguing mystery — with potentially profound implications.

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Homo sapiens is an inherently inquisitive species. We are at our best not when driven by arrogance, but when we are united by curiosity about the unknown.

Even if the odds that UFOs possess the extraordinary technology described by credible witnesses (and corroborated in public, open-source analyses) are low, a robust, objective analytic effort may lead to profound – and humbling – discoveries.

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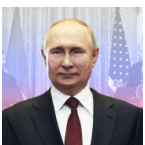
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